



August 23, 2011

The Meir Amit Intelligence and  
Terrorism Information Center

## Ceasefire in Israel's South – Update<sup>1</sup>

### The Situation on the Ground

#### Overview

1. **During the daylight hours of August 23 the lull in the fighting** announced by Hamas on the night of August 21 **was honored**, including by the Popular Resistance Committees. During the previous night it was violated by sporadic rocket and mortar shell fire targeting the western Negev. The last rocket was fired around midnight, and since then Israel's south has been quiet (as of 1600 hours, August 23).

#### Main Developments

2. On August 21 the Hamas-affiliated media reported that the terrorist organizations operating in the Gaza Strip had agreed to a lull, **and it would go into effect on the night of August 21 at 2200 hours** (Israeli time). In reality **the lull has been repeatedly violated**, principally **by the PRC**, which publicly claimed responsibility for several rocket attacks.

3. On the afternoon of August 22 a spokesman for the main PRC faction (the Al-Nasser Salah al-Din Brigades) that **the organization had agreed to a temporary lull in the fighting** "for the sake of the interests of the Palestinian people" (Paltoday, August 22, 1215 hours). During the afternoon the de facto Hamas administration **formally announced that the various organizations had committed themselves before the Hamas administration**

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<sup>1</sup>Update of the August 23 ITIC bulletin ["News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, August 17-22, 2011."](#)

to honor the lull in the fighting as long as Israel honored it (Hamas' Al-Aqsa TV, August 22, 2011).

4. The ceasefire proclaimed by Hamas and accepted by the PRC **has not been honored, and on the ground sporadic and mortar shell fire into Israeli territory continues.** Since the lull in the fighting went into effect (August 21, 2200 hours), Israel has been attacked with **14 rockets and at least four mortar shells.** The rockets fell in the western Negev north and east of the Gaza Strip, and some fell inside the Gaza Strip itself. The time since the ceasefire went into effect can be divided into four periods:

1) **Rocket and mortar shell fire on the morning of August 22:** Between **0400 and 0800 hours** 11 rockets and a number of mortar shells were fired into the western Negev (including the region of the city of Ashqelon). Responsibility for two of the attacks (rocket fire and three mortar shells) was claimed by the PRC.



The PRC claims responsibility for firing mortar shells at an IDF vehicle east of Rafah (0500 hours, August 22) (Qaweim.com website)



The PRC claims responsibility for firing a rocket (Nasser-3) at the western Negev (0600 hours, August 22) (Qaweim.com website).

2) **Quiet during the day, August 22:** Between **0800 and 1930 hours** the ceasefire was honored. During the afternoon, as noted, the main PRC faction (the Al-Nasser Salah al-Din Brigades) declared it would join the lull in the fighting, and during the afternoon Hamas formally announced that **the various organizations operating in the Gaza Strip had committed themselves to honoring the lull.**

3) **Rocket fire targeting the southern Israeli city of Ashqelon on the night of August 22:** Between 1930 and 2400 hours three rockets fell in the western Negev near Ashqelon. There were no casualties; one rocket caused a fire. **No organization claimed responsibility for the attack.**

4) **Quiet during August 23:** Since 2400 hours Israel's south has been quiet (as of 1600 hours, August 23).

## Claiming Responsibility for Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire (Supplementary Information)

5. The **Palestinian Islamic Jihad** issued a statement detailing the rocket attacks in which the organization was involved between August 19 and 21. According to the announcement, the organization fired **17 standard Grad rockets, nine 107mm rockets, three Quds rockets** [of local manufacture], **and 22 mortar shells** (PIJ's Jerusalem Battalions website, August 23, 2011). The main faction of the **PRC** (the Salah al-Din Brigades) reported that **its operatives had fired dozens of rockets into southern Israel during the last round of attacks**. Thus it can be seen that **both organizations played a major role in rocket attacks against Israel in the latest round of escalation** (160 rockets were fired at Israel, 120 of them landing in Israeli territory).



The PIJ claims responsibility for rocket fire into Israeli territory between August 19 and 21 (From the PIJ's Jerusalem Battalions website)

## The Gaza Strip Crossings Operate Normally during the Escalation

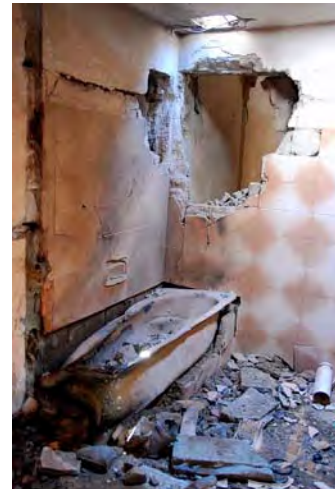
6. During the escalation **the border crossings between Israel and the Gaza Strip operated routinely** despite the fact that several rockets landed near them. Since last Thursday (August 18), **80 trucks carrying food, cooking gas and building materials entered the Gaza Strip**. (Note: During the week preceding the escalation a significant amount of merchandise entered the Gaza Strip.)



Trucks carrying merchandize enter the Gaza Strip during the recent escalation (Israeli government coordinator for the territories, August 23, 2011).

7. In addition, **more than 100 Palestinians** from the Gaza Strip in need of medical treatment entered Israel and **dozens of foreign volunteers** were permitted to enter the Gaza Strip (Websites of the Israeli government coordinator for the territories and the IDF Spokesman, August 23, 2011).

### Pictures from the Rocket Attacks of the Recent Escalation



A house in Ofakim, hit by a rocket and totally destroyed, August 20 (Photos by Noam Badin, courtesy of the Sderot Media Center, August 20 2011).