



The Meir Amit
Intelligence and Terrorism
Information Center

News of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict

November 30 - December 6, 2011



Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli opposition leader Tzippi Livni meet in Amman (Wafa News Agency, December 1, 2011)

Overview

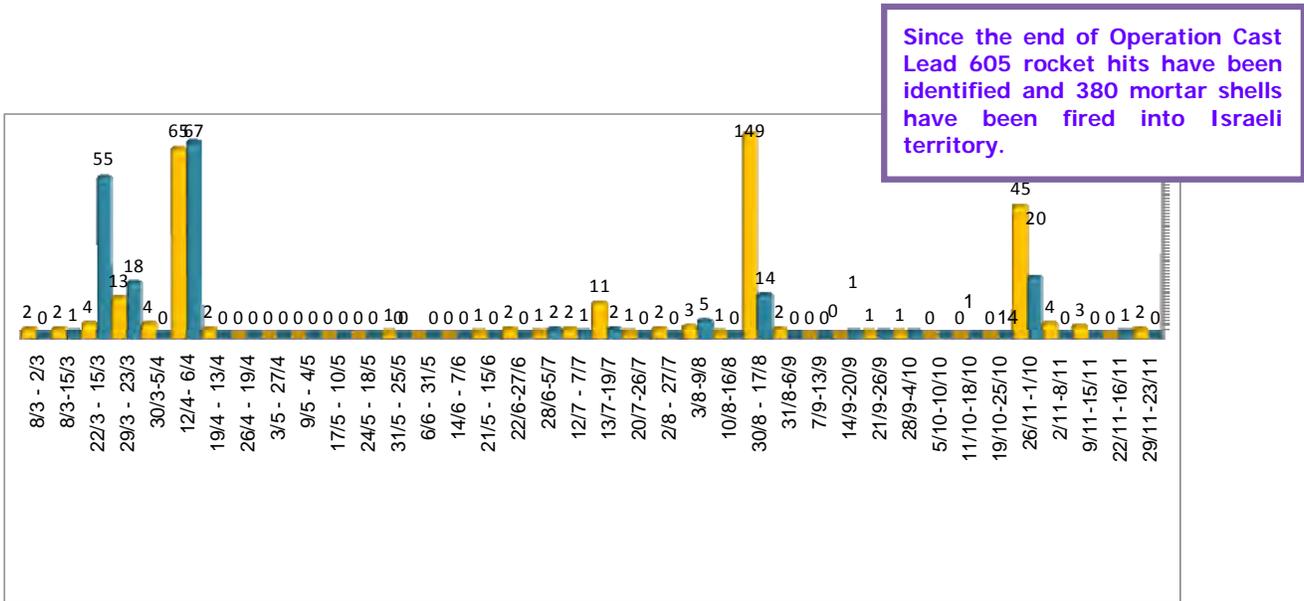
- This past week one rocket was fired into the western Negev from the Gaza Strip. In Lebanon, an organization affiliated with the global jihad called the Abdullah Azzam Brigades claimed it was not responsible for the rockets fired into the western Galilee on November 28-29 (after previously claiming responsibility for them).
- Reuters and the Israeli morning newspaper Haaretz, relying on Palestinian sources, reported that Hamas operatives were leaving the movement's headquarters in Damascus and that Hamas was examining options in other Arab states for moving its headquarters. Hamas continues denying the reports, claiming that they are a "wasted attempt" to cause tension with Syria.
- High-ranking Hamas figures expressed satisfaction with the victory of the Muslim Brotherhood (Hamas' parent movement) in the Egyptian elections. The victory was represented as serving Hamas' interests and would, according to Hamas, increase Egyptian support for the Palestinian cause.

Important Terrorism Events Israel's South

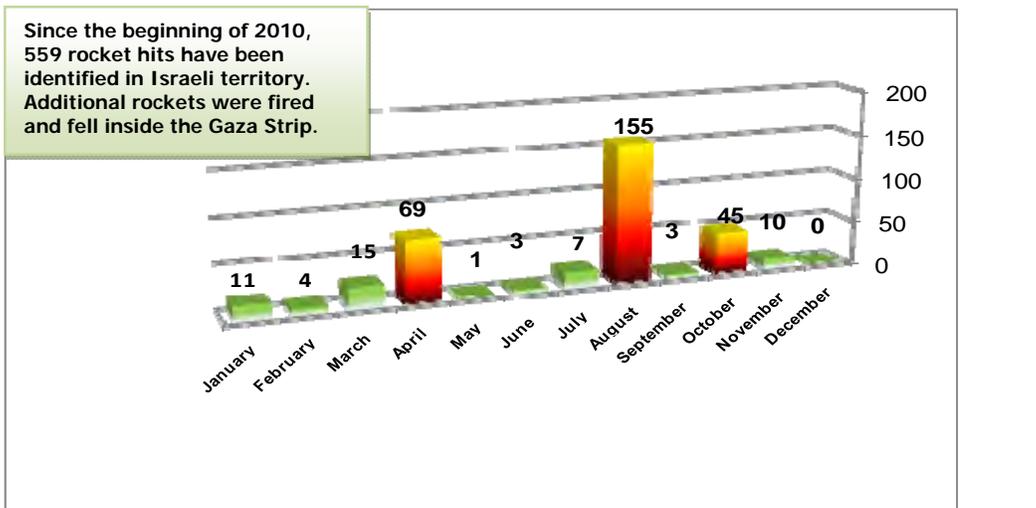
Rocket Fire into Israel

- This past week one rocket hit was identified near the security fence in the western Negev. There were no casualties and no damage was done.

Rockets and Mortar Shells Fired into Israeli Territory¹

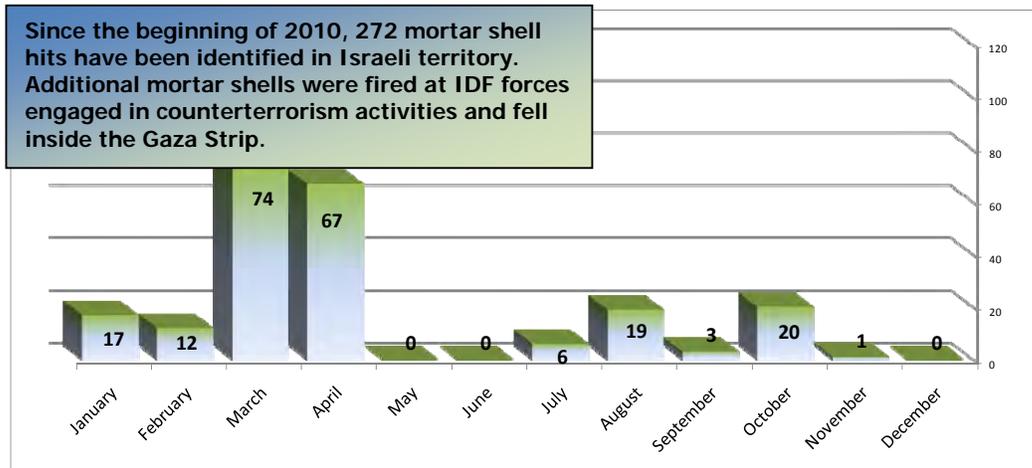


Rocket Fire – Monthly Distribution



¹ The statistics do not include rockets and mortar shells fired which fell inside the Gaza Strip. As of November 29, 2011.

Mortar Shell Fire – Monthly Distribution



Judea and Samaria

The Situation on the Ground

- This past week the IDF carried out routine counterterrorist activities in Judea and Samaria, detaining Palestinians suspected of terrorist activities and confiscating weapons. Palestinians continue throwing stones and Molotov cocktails at Israeli security forces and vehicles.
- The most prominent incidents were the following:
 - On **December 1** about 200 Palestinians gathered near Beit Ummer (southwest of Bethlehem) and threw stones at Israeli security forces. The forces used riot control equipment to disperse them. There were no casualties (IDF Spokesman, December 1, 2011).
 - On **December 3** IDF soldiers found a knife in the possession of a Palestinian at the Jatt intersection west of Nablus. The knife was confiscated (IDF Spokesman, December 3, 2011).
 - On **December 3** about 15 Israeli settlers threw stones at Palestinian vehicles south of Nablus. There were no casualties. Three of the Palestinian vehicles and one Israeli vehicle were damaged (IDF Spokesman, December 3, 2011).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

The Crossings

- During November 5,390 trucks entered the Gaza Strip with merchandise (about 150,000 tons) through the Kerem Shalom crossing. In comparison, 3,939 trucks entered in October (Website of the Israeli government coordinator for the territories, December 5, 2011).



Picking strawberries in the Gaza Strip
(Hamas' Palestine-info website, December 4, 2011)

Easing Passage at the Rafah Crossing

- According to Egyptian sources plans are being made, to be carried out in a number of weeks, to ease the passage into the Gaza Strip through the Rafah crossing. Many Palestinians who are currently forbidden to enter the Gaza Strip will be permitted entry. According to the sources, the latitude reflects new, post-revolution Egyptian policy (The PIJ's Paltoday website, December 4, 2011).

Hamas' Relations with Egypt and Syria

Hamas Encouraged by Egyptian Elections

- **High-ranking Hamas figures** have been encouraged by the initial results of the elections in Egypt, which show a victory for the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas' parent movement:
 - **Ahmed Bahar**, deputy chairman of the Palestinian Legislative Council, said that the Palestinian cause was flourishing because the Arab revolutions had led to an

increase in the strength of the Islamist movements. He said the national and Islamist forces leading in the elections in several Arab states would reinforce the Palestinian cause (Hamas' Felesteen, December 4, 2011).

- **Aatef Adwan**, head of the economic committee in the Palestinian Legislative Council, said that the victory of the Islamists in the elections would **strengthen the relations between Egypt and "Palestine," and especially with Hamas**. He said the Israeli "siege" of the Gaza Strip and the agreement reached regarding the Rafah crossing would receive preferential treatment from any future Egyptian government (Alresalah.net website, December 1, 2011).

- **Musa Abu Marzouk**, deputy head of Hamas' political bureau, said that the Islamist victory would restore Egypt's role as a supporter of the Palestinian cause and **serve Hamas' interests**, which were also Palestinian interests. He said that the relations between Egypt and Hamas had come stronger since the revolution because Mubarak had not trusted Hamas' relations with the Muslim Brotherhood (Filastin Al-Yawm and Fars News Agency, Iran, December 2, 2011).

Hamas Activists Leave the Movement's Headquarters in Damascus

- According to the news media, including **Reuters**, several dozen Hamas activists and their families recently left Damascus and returned to the Gaza Strip through Egypt. According to Reuters, the Hamas headquarters in Damascus, which was once staffed by several hundred Hamas activists, now has only a few dozen. The exodus from Damascus accelerated after the Arab League decided to boycott Syria. According to Reuters, although Hamas owed a great deal to Syria, it did not want to find itself "on the wrong side of pan-Arab public opinion" (Reuters, December 4, 2011). According to reports in the Israeli morning newspaper Haaretz, based on "Palestinian sources" Hamas is leaving its headquarters in Damascus and examining options in other Arab states (Haaretz, December 5, 2011).
- **The heads of Hamas have denied the reports** of the mass exodus from Damascus. **Izzat al-Rishq**, a member of Hamas' political bureau, said that the reports were "lies and completely baseless," and that there had been no change in the number of workers in Hamas' offices in Syria (The PIJ's Paltoday website, December 5, 2011). Hamas spokesman **Fawzi Barhoum** said that Hamas would continue to operate in Syria as usual and was not looking for another location for its political bureau. He said that all the news reports were "wasted efforts" to cause tension between Hamas and Syria (Alresalah.net website, December 5, 2011).

Fatah-Hamas Relations

Fatah-Hamas Reconciliation

- After the Mahmoud Abbas–Khaled Mashaal meeting in Cairo, the dialog continues. On the agenda are **the conference of the Palestinian organizations**, which will be held in Cairo on December 20 and **preparations for the May 5, 2012 general elections**.

The December 20 Conference of Palestinian Organizations

- Egypt has recently sent the various Palestinian organizations invitations for bilateral meetings in preparation for the meeting planned for December 20 (Palpress website, November 30, 2011). **Khalil al-Hayeh**, a member of Hamas' political bureau, said that Hamas had pressured Egypt into sending invitations to the Palestinian organizations (Qudspress website, December 1, 2011).



Khalil al-Hayeh, (Hamainfo.net website, December 3, 2011).

- On receipt of the invitation **Ramadan Shallah**, secretary general of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, arrived in Cairo, heading a delegation. He was updated by the Egyptians about the Mahmoud Abbas–Khaled Mashaal meeting. According to Ramadan Shallah, several issues were discussed during the meeting which demanded clarification, for example the issue of the "popular resistance" (Al-Hayat, December 1, 2011). On the eve of their departure from Cairo, representatives of the delegation expressed their complete readiness to support the Fatah-Hamas reconciliation as long as took into consideration the Palestinian Islamic Jihad's "particular view" of the "resistance" [i.e., terrorism], its refusal to recognize Israel and its rejection of the Oslo Accords (Al-Hayat, December 3, 2011).
- **Rizag Arouk**, a member of the **Popular Resistance Committees' political bureau**, said that his organization had received an invitation from Egyptian General

Intelligence for a bilateral meeting in Cairo (The PIJ's Paltoday website, November 30, 2011). **The Popular Front, the Palestinian Liberation Front and the Popular Struggle Front** received similar invitations (PalPress website, November 30, 2011).

Dialogs for the Establishment of an Interim Government and Elections

- **Salah al-Bardawil**, Hamas activist in the Gaza Strip, said that **May 5, 2012**, was the date decided on by Mahmoud Abbas and Khaled Mashaal for general elections. The date would be finalized at a meeting of the Palestinian [terrorist] organizations in Cairo, he said, and participation in the elections would be discussed. He called for the establishment of an national unity government regardless of who won (Alresalah.net website November 30 date, 2011).
- **Azzam al-Ahmed**, a member of Fatah's Central Committee, said that the Palestinian organizations would meet in Cairo on December 22 to **form a new government of independent technocrats**, whose job would be to oversee the May elections. He said the first step would be to establish police and civil security apparatuses to help supervise the elections, and that other apparatuses would be set up in collaboration with Egypt and the Arab League (Ma'an News Agency, November 30, 2011).
- **Mahmoud al-Zahar**, a member of Hamas' political bureau who is skeptical of a possible reconciliation, said that **there would be no reconciliation** because Mahmoud Abbas would either postpone or not implement it. He said the demand for elections in May 2012 was unrealistic because in addition to the issue of elections, there were many other complicated problems. He said that in his opinion the most serious obstacle was "Mahmoud Abbas' bet that the Israeli-American axis" would veto the reconciliation (Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, November 30, 2011).

The Political Campaign

The Palestinian Authority Activity and the International Quartet

- **Mahmoud Abbas**, chairman of the Palestinian Authority, recently presented International Quartet representatives with new suggestions for the borders of the Palestinian state and security arrangements with Israel. **Nimer Hamad**, his advisor, said that the suggestions for drawing the borders included readiness for a territorial exchange of 1.9%, in accordance with a proposal discussed with the Olmert government during the Annapolis Process (Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda, December 2, 2011).

- **Saeb Erekat**, a member of the Palestinian negotiating team, said that in talks with the International Quartet the Palestinians had demanded the establishment of two states with the 1967 borders, and that they agreed to have a foreign force deployed along the border with Israel in return for a full Israeli withdrawal from the Palestinian territories (Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda, December 2, 2011).

Transmitting Tax Funds to the Palestinian Authority

- On November 30 **Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ordered the transfer of tax funds to the Palestinian Authority** after a meeting of the eight-minister forum (Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, November 30, 2011). **Salam Fayyad**, prime minister of the Palestinian Authority, said that **the PA was in the middle of its worst fiscal crisis since its establishment**. He said currently the PA's top priority was to make sure that Israel would not freeze transferring the Palestinian tax funds again (AP, December 1, 2011).

Mahmoud Abbas Meets Tzippi Livni

- **Mahmoud Abbas**, chairman of the Palestinian Authority, and Tzippi Livni, head of the Israeli opposition and leader of the Kadima party, met in Amman. Mahmoud Abbas said that as far as he was concerned, negotiations and peace were the only way to establish two states with the 1967 borders and reach an agreement about the core issues. He added that the Palestinian application for admission to UN agencies was not intended to isolate Israel but rather to establish and promote the idea of two states (Al-Ayam, December 1, 2011).

Rocket Fire into Northern Israel – Update

- Following the rocket fire into Israel during the night of November 28, an organization affiliated with the global jihad called the Abdullah Azzam Brigades issued a press report claiming responsibility (Al-Nashra website, November 29, 2011). A few days later **the organization said in a statement that it had not been responsible for the rocket fire, and that the responsibility lay with a group with ties to Hezbollah and the Syrian regime** (Global jihad network forum, December 3, 2011).