



The Meir Amit Intelligence and
Terrorism Information Center

News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

February 1-7, 2012



Mahmoud Abbas meets with Khaled Mashaal in Qatar, and the decision is made to appoint an interim government headed by Mahmoud Abbas (Hamas' Palestine-info website, February 5, 2012).

Overview

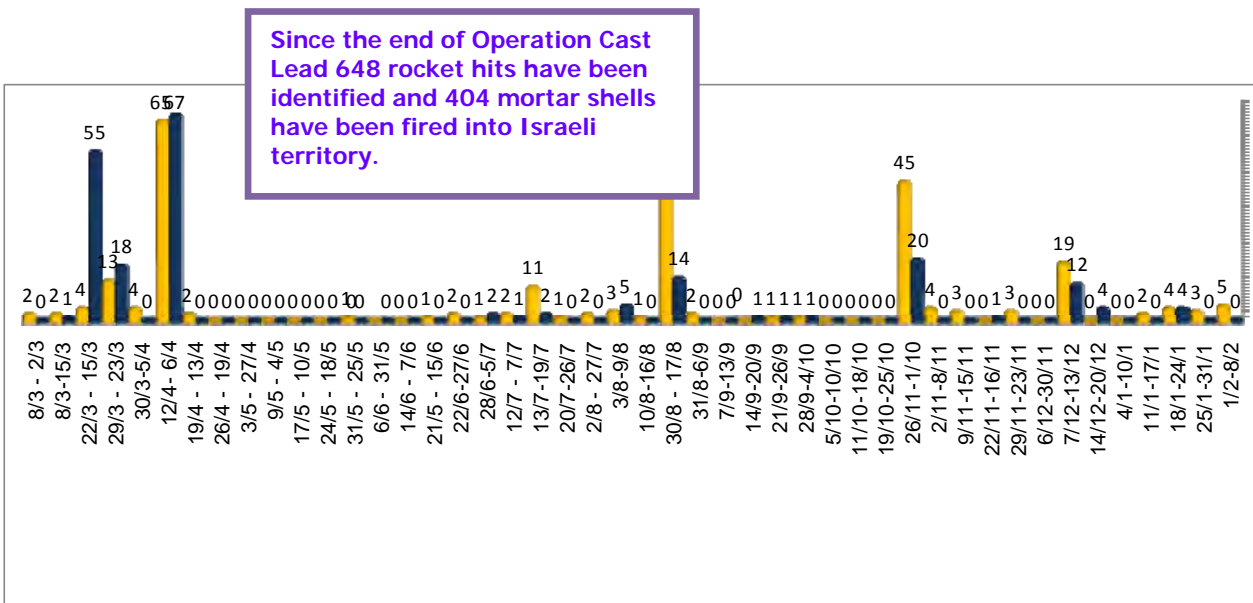
- This past week there was an increase in the amount of rocket fire originating in the Gaza Strip and targeting the western Negev. Five rocket hits were identified in Israeli territory. In response Israeli aircraft struck several terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip.
- Mahmoud Abbas and Khaled Mashaal met in Qatar with the participation of the emir of Qatar. The two agreed on the formation of an interim government of technocrats headed by Mahmoud Abbas; the government will be primarily responsible for elections. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that the agreement meant the Palestinians were abandoning the peace process and that the Palestinian Authority was joining Hamas. He called on the Palestinian Authority to choose between the Hamas and peace with Israel, saying that "Hamas and peace do not go together."

Important Terrorism Events Israel's South

Rocket Fire

■ After a number of weeks of relative quiet, this past week there was an increase in rocket fire from the Gaza Strip into the western Negev, and **five rocket hits were identified in Israeli territory**. Four of them were fired on February 1 and landed in open areas in the western Negev. There were no casualties and no damage was done.

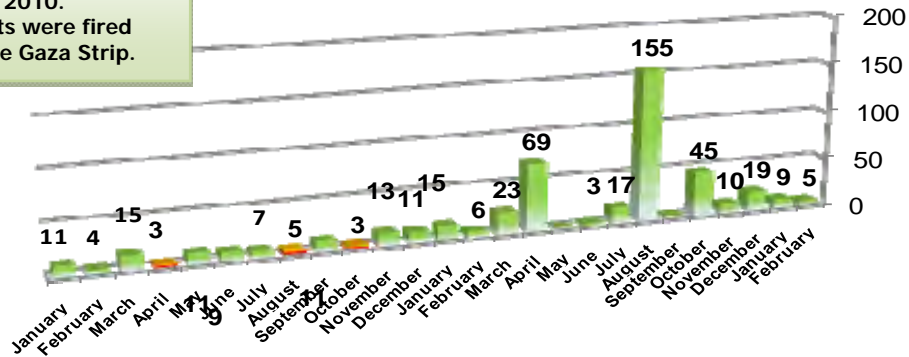
Rockets and Mortar Shells Fired into Israeli Territory¹



¹ The statistics do not include rockets and mortar shells fired which fell inside the Gaza Strip. As of February 7, 2012.

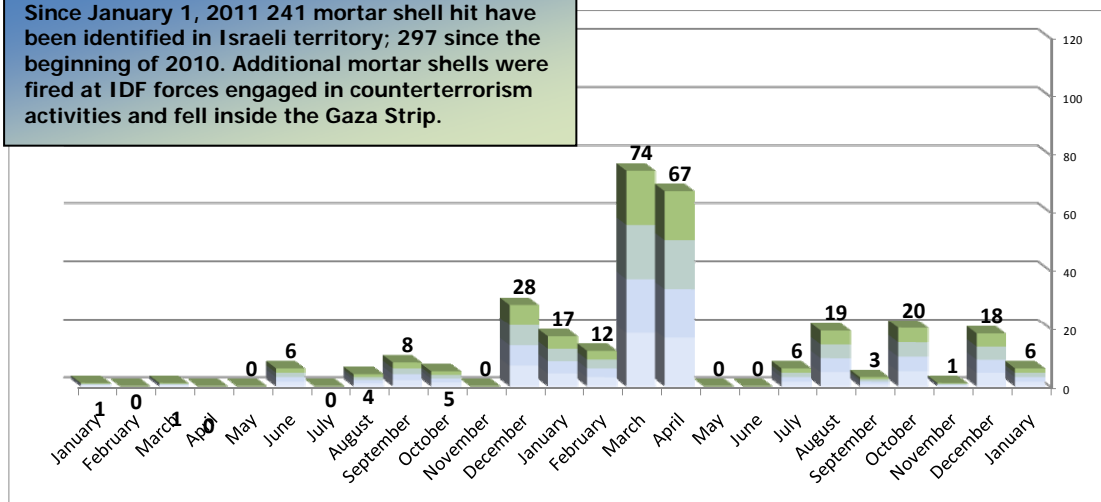
Rocket Fire – Monthly Distribution

Since January 1, 2011 390 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory; 608 since the beginning of 2010. Additional rockets were fired and fell inside the Gaza Strip.



Mortar Shell Fire – Monthly Distribution

Since January 1, 2011 241 mortar shell hit have been identified in Israeli territory; 297 since the beginning of 2010. Additional mortar shells were fired at IDF forces engaged in counterterrorism activities and fell inside the Gaza Strip.



Israeli Air Force Attacks

■ In response to the rocket fire, on February 3 Israeli aircraft attacked several terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip, among them:

- Two weapons storage sites in the northern Gaza Strip.
- Three terrorist tunnels in the southern Gaza Strip.
- A weapons manufacturing site in the central Gaza Strip.

■ In some instances, secondary explosions were identified, indicating the presence of weapons and explosives (IDF Spokesman, February 3, 2012).

■ The Palestinian media reported that a girl and boy were wounded in the attacks. They were evacuated to a hospital for treatment (Safa News Agency and the alresalah.net website, February 3, 2012).

UN Secretary General Ban-ki Moon Visits the Gaza Strip

■ **On February 2 UN Secretary General Ban-ki Moon paid a visit to the Gaza Strip** during his tour of the region. His convoy was attacked with stones and other objects by dozens of relatives of imprisoned Palestinian terrorists. After the Gaza Strip **he went to the Sapir College, located in the vicinity of the Gaza Strip in the southern part of Israel, and met with students. He told them that "Nothing justifies the indiscriminate firing of rockets and mortars into Israel. It is completely unacceptable to target and terrorize citizens on a near-daily basis. It must stop. Any such attack must be condemned"** (ITIC emphasis).²

■ Ban-ki Moon angered the families of the imprisoned Palestinian terrorists by refusing to meet with them, claiming that he had already met in Ramallah with Issa Qaraq, who holds the Palestinian prisoners portfolio. Hamas said in an official statement that his refusal proved the double standard used when dealing with the Palestinian people, and appealed to the UN agencies to secure justice for the Palestinians (website of Hamas' information bureau, February 2, 2012). Several senior Palestinian officials refused to attend a meeting scheduled with Ban-ki Moon (Al-Sharq Al-Awsat and Qudsnews, February 2, 2012).

■ Ban-ki Moon told the Gazans that the crossings should be open for the passage of civilians and the entrance of building materials and exit of exports. He added that he would urge the Israeli authorities to do so. He expressed worry over the condition of the Palestinians imprisoned in Israel and said that the minister for prisoner affairs in the Palestinian Authority had given him a letter about the matter (UN website, February 2, 2012).

²http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocus/sgspeeches/search_full.asp?statID=1453



Ban-ki Moon visits a UNRWA school in the Gaza Strip (Photo by S. Sarhan, UN website, February 2, 2012).

Exporting Agricultural Produce from the Gaza Strip to Jordan

■ On February 6 export of tomatoes from the Gaza Strip to Jordan began. A shipment of 30 tons of tomatoes left the Gaza Strip and entered Israel through the Kerem Shalom crossing and from there was carried by truck, entering Jordan through the Allenby crossing. Agricultural produce is also exported from the Gaza Strip to markets in Europe (IDF Spokesman, February 7, 2012).

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. Riots continued and stones were thrown at Israeli civilians and security forces. There were no casualties and no damage was done.

Released Prisoner Detained after Return to Terrorism

■ **On the night of January 31 an IDF force detained Ayman al-Sharawna Ismail Salma, a resident of the village of Dura (near Hebron), who had been released in the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal. He was detained on suspicion of having returned to terrorist activities in Hamas.** Ayman Sharawna had been jailed in Israel because of his involvement in a terrorist attack in Beersheba in May 2002 in which 18 civilians were injured.³ He was sentenced to 38 years in prison and released on October 18 as part of the prisoner exchange deal, reducing his sentence by 28 years (IDF Spokesman, January 31, 2012).

³On the morning of May 11, 2002, two Palestinian terrorists placed an IED near a group of civilians in the Old City in Beersheba and fled the scene. A technical fault prevented the IED from exploding fully. Eighteen civilians were injured. Israeli security forces captured one of the terrorists, and pursued and captured the second.

Palestinian Islamic Jihad Statements Regarding a Prisoner on Hunger Strike

■ Senior Palestinian Islamic Jihad figures threatened to attack Israel if a prisoner named Hidar Adnan, who is on a hunger strike in an Israeli jail, is harmed. They appealed to the other terrorist organizations to understand their position (Al-Hayat, February 1, 2012). Hidar Adnan, who is considered one of the PIJ's leaders in Judea and Samaria, has been on a hunger strike for more than 50 days.

Hamas' Political Activity

Ismail Haniya's Travels (Second Round)

■ Ismail Haniya, head of the de-facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip, is heading a Hamas delegation on a tour of Arab states. So far he had gone to **Qatar and Bahrain**. According to the Arab media, he is being pressured not to go to Iran.

■ In **Qatar** he met with the emir, Sheikh Hamad ibn Khalifa al-Thani, and informed him of the latest developments in the Palestinian arena (Qatari News Agency, January 31, 2012). According to Haniya they discussed the Arab Spring and its influence on the Arab world in general and the Palestinian cause in particular. They also spoke about the rebuilding of the Gaza Strip and the execution of various projects to improve the conditions of Palestinian civilians (Qatari News Agency, January 31, 2012). Ismail Haniya also met with **Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi**, Hamas' highest religious authority, at his home in Doha. One of the issues discussed was Jerusalem (Hamas information bureau website, February 3, 2012).



Ismail Haniya and Yusuf al-Qaradawi in Qatar (Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades website, February 5, 2012).

■ On February 4 the delegation went from Qatar to **Bahrain** where they met with the king of Bahrain, Hamad ibn Issa Aal Khalifa. They discussed Jerusalem, the so-called Israeli "siege" of the Gaza Strip and the economic situation in the Gaza Strip (Safa News Agency, February 5, 2012). He also met with the chairman of the Bahraini parliament (Bahraini News Agency, February 5, 2012).



Ismail Haniya and the king of Bahrain
([Hamis' Palestine-info website](#), February 5, 2012).

■ **According to the Arab media, Ismail Haniya was also planning to visit Iran.** So far, no such visit has been made. Within Hamas appeals were made to prevent the visit because it might be interpreted as support for the regime and there was concern that during the visit pressure would be exerted on Haniya for Hamas to change its position regarding the Syrian regime. According to a highly placed source in Haniya's office, the de-facto Hamas administration hoped it would not need Iranian support and would instead be supported by Turkey and various Arab states ([Al-Sharq](#), February 4, 2012).

Evacuation of Hamas Headquarters in Syria

■ The issue of evacuating Hamas headquarters in Syria continues to be of interest to the Palestinian media. According to "a highly-placed Palestinian source," **Hamas has left a small number of officials in Damascus, mostly those of second and third rank**, while the top figures left during the past few weeks. For example, **Khaled Mashaal**, head of Hamas' political bureau, left for Doha, the capital of Qatar, and his deputy, **Musa Abu Marzouk**, went to live in Cairo, making it easier to maintain contacts with the Gaza Strip. Other members of the political bureau went to **Jordan** ([Qudsnews website](#), February 4, 2012). It was also reported that **Imad al-Almi**, a member of the Hamas political bureau, left Syria for the Gaza Strip, entering through the Rafah crossing ([AP](#), February 5, 2012).

Hamas – Switzerland

■ During the Hamas visit to Switzerland **Musheir al-Masri**, spokesman for the Hamas faction in the Palestinian Legislative Council, claimed that Switzerland had removed Hamas from its list of terrorist organizations and allowed Swiss institutions to collaborate with the Hamas administration to execute various projects. He said Switzerland was also attempting to have Hamas removed from the EU list of terrorist organizations ([Al-Sharq \(Saudi Arabia\)](#), February 4, 2012).

Hamas-Fatah Relations

■ As part of the dialogue between Hamas and Fatah, **Mahmoud Abbas met with Khaled Mashaal in Qatar on February 5 with the Qatari emir in attendance**. After the meeting it was reported that the two had **agreed on the formation of a government of technocrats** which would serve as an interim government. They also agreed that Mahmoud Abbas would head the interim government, **whose duty would be mainly responsibility for the elections** (Hamas' Palestine-info website, February 5, 2012). According to Nabil Shaath, a member of Fatah's Central Committee, the forming of the government would be announced on February 18 (AKI News Agency, February 6, 2012).

■ Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that "If Abu Mazen implements what has been signed in Doha, **he will have chosen to abandon the way of peace and to join with Hamas... Hamas and peace do not go together...** I say to Abu Mazen: You cannot hold the stick by both ends. **It is either peace with Hamas or peace with Israel; you cannot have it both ways**" [ITIC emphasis].⁴

■ Senior figures in the Palestinian Authority praised the agreement: **Salam Fayyad**, Palestinian Authority prime minister, said he hoped the agreement would be implemented quickly, including the formation of a government headed by Mahmoud Abbas and the holding of elections (Wafa News Agency, February 6, 2012). **Yasser Abd Rabbo**, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee, said that the government had to be small and include independent figures, and lead to elections (Voice of Palestine Radio, February 6, 2012).

■ **Senior Hamas figures also publicly expressed support for the agreement**. **Ismail Haniya**, head of the de-facto Hamas administration, praised the agreement and expressed readiness to implement it (Hamas' Palestine-info website, February 6, 2012). **Izzat al-Rishq**, a member of Hamas' political bureau, said that the agreement was part of an overall agreement reached by the two sides (Al-Quds TV, February 6, 2012). However, "knowledgeable" Palestinian sources in Cairo claimed that **disagreements** existed within the Hamas leadership, especially among members of the political bureau, regarding Khaled Mashaal's agreement to Mahmoud Abbas' heading the interim government (The PIJ's Paltoday website, February 6, 2012). However, Hamas spokesman **Fawzi Barhoum denied that any disagreement existed** (Hamas' Palestine-info website, February 6, 2012).

⁴<http://www.pmo.gov.il/PMOEng/Communication/Spokesman/2012/02/spoketguva060212.htm>.

The Peace Process

Attempts to Renew the Peace Process with Israel

- According to the Arab media, while the UN secretary general was in Ramallah on February 1, he presented Mahmoud Abbas with a proposal which **included a new "package of incentives" from the International Quartet in return for renewing the negotiations with Israel without the precondition of a freeze on construction in the settlements.**
- **Nimer Hamed**, Mahmoud Abbas' political advisor, **denied** the report. He claimed that the Palestinian leadership was still examining the request to continue the talks and that the Palestinians would respond only after a meeting of the Arab League's monitoring committee (Al-Watan and the Chinese News Agency, February 2, 2012).

Propaganda Events

The World March to Jerusalem

- In preparation for the World March to Jerusalem, which is supposed to take place on March 30, 2012, **on February 2 and 3 meetings were held in Pakistan**, attended by representatives from Asian countries. According to the plans, the Asian convoy, which is supposed participate in the march, will leave India for Jordan on March 9, 2012. It is expected to stop in a number of countries along to the way where meetings and press conferences will be held (WM2J website, February 5, 2012). **The previous Asian convoy passed through Iran**, where its members met with senior leaders of the Iranian regime and its passage through the country was exploited by the regime for propaganda purposes.⁵

The Viva Palestina Convoy

- The website of an organization called **Viva Palestina Arabia** posted a notice about a new aid convoy to the Gaza Strip. According to the website, it will leave from **London** on April 22, 2010, and reach the Gaza Strip on May 15 (Nakba Day). According to the organizers, the convoy will symbolize the return to "Palestine," the so-called "right of the return" and the return of the issue of the Palestinian refugees to the center of attention.

⁵For further information see the December 12, 2010 bulletin "A convoy from India and other Asian countries left New Delhi to reach the Gaza Strip at the end of December..." at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/ipc_e146.pdf.

- The convoy organizers are seeking volunteers to participate and donors who will contribute to financing the purchase of vehicles. The volunteers have to be at least 23 years old, have held driver's licenses for at least five years and to have international driver's licenses as well. In addition, their passports cannot bear Israeli stamps.



The Viva Palestina Arabia logo (Viva Palestina website, February 6, 2012)