

MEMMO

February 7, 2008

Hamas Increases Rocket Attacks, Calls for More Suicide Bombings in Israel

Hamas continues to launch daily, indiscriminate rocket attacks into Israel and called for a renewed wave of suicide bombings in Israel to follow the recent attack in Dimona that the terrorist group hailed as a “heroic act.” Despite the intensified violence, Israel is continuing to negotiate with Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas and to allow humanitarian aid to enter Gaza. At the same time, Israel has been forced to take increased measures to defend its citizens after demonstrating tremendous restraint in the face of the rising violence.

Hamas has intensified daily rocket attacks into Israel and called for a renewed wave of suicide bombings.

- Since the beginning of January, some 400 rockets and mortars fired from Gaza have landed in Israeli towns and villages. Two Israeli girls playing in the yard outside their home were injured by a rocket attack on Feb. 6.
- Since Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005, some 4,000 rockets and mortars fired from Gaza have landed in Israeli towns and villages.
- In addition to the crude Qassam rockets that have a range of five to seven miles, Hamas is also using more sophisticated weaponry smuggled into Gaza from Egypt. In January, terrorists fired an Iranian-made Katyusha rocket at Ashkelon from more than 10 miles away, marking the farthest north a rocket has ever been fired into Israel from Gaza.
- Hamas’ premeditated action to destroy the wall along the Gaza-Egypt border allowed the terrorist group to bring into Gaza cash, weapons, explosives and other materials to build the Qassam rockets and suicide vests used to attack Israel.
- Hamas’ representative in Iran, Abu-Osama Abed Al-Ma’ati, said in a statement on Hamas’ web site that the Feb. 4 suicide attack in Dimona that killed an Israeli woman and wounded 11 signaled the beginning of a new round of attacks inside Israel.



A paramedic service volunteer prepares to clean bloodstains at the scene of the Palestinian suicide bombing in Dimona.

Israel has demonstrated tremendous restraint in the face of continuing attacks, but must take action to defend its citizens.

- Israel has demonstrated extreme restraint in the face of ongoing rocket attacks. However, like every other sovereign nation, Israel has the right and duty to defend its citizens from terror attacks.

- While Israel is facilitating the delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza, it needs to take precautions in the face of continuing violence. IDF forces recently discovered more than two tons of fertilizer, which is used to construct explosives, in a humanitarian aid truck bound for Gaza.
- Israel's military response has been carefully calibrated to reduce rocket fire and ensure the safety of Israeli citizens while at the same time making every effort to limit Palestinian civilian casualties.
- Israel's actions have targeted Hamas operation centers, Palestinian rocket-launching devices, trucks carrying mass amounts of Qassam rockets, and vehicles carrying armed Palestinians.
- The United States has consistently backed Israel's right to defend itself against Palestinian attacks. White House Press Secretary Dana Perino told reporters Jan. 22: "When ... upwards of 150 rockets a day are landed on your territory and injuring or potentially injuring your citizens, you have a right to defend yourself. Imagine if that was happening here. We would certainly defend ourselves."

Israel continues to pursue peace efforts with the Palestinians and allow humanitarian aid to enter Gaza despite increased terrorism by Hamas.



Paramedics evacuate a wounded Israeli woman moments after a rocket struck the city of Sderot on Feb. 5.

- While Israel in January briefly limited fuel supplies to the Gaza power plant, it has continued to provide more than 70 percent of Gaza's electricity directly from the Israeli power grid. Rather than distribute the power equally across Gaza, however, Hamas chose to black out sections of northern Gaza to create a crisis.
- Israeli continues allow the entry of supplies into the Gaza Strip. During the week of January 20-28, 647,221 gallons of industrial gasoline, 227,187 gallons of diesel fuel for generators, 14,529 gallons of petrol and 1,090 tons of cooking gas entered Gaza, according to U.N. figures.
- Since early January, Israel has allowed more than 500 sick Palestinians and 450 companions to enter the Jewish state from Gaza to receive treatment in Israeli hospitals.
- Despite the incessant rocket and mortar attacks from the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip and ongoing violence in the West Bank, Israeli Prime Minister Olmert has continued to hold substantive talks with PA President Mahmoud Abbas, most recently on Jan. 27. On Jan. 14, Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni met with top Palestinian negotiator Ahmed Qurei.
- Since the Annapolis conference, Israel has implemented a series of goodwill gestures, including releasing 429 Palestinian prisoners, resuming cooperation with the PA civil administration to grant 19,000 entry permits for West Bank merchants into Israel, easing travel restrictions and transferring Palestinian tax revenues to the PA.