

# MEMMO

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## Cynical Hamas Attacks Undermine Humanitarian Efforts

**Hamas and other terrorist groups are deliberately disrupting humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people. Hamas' attacks on critical infrastructure on Israel's borders complicate Israel's efforts to transfer goods and services to the very people that Hamas purportedly claims to represent. Hamas is cynically seeking to manipulate international opinion against Israel and undermine U.S.-backed Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. Despite these cruel attacks, Israel continues to facilitate the transfer of humanitarian assistance.**

Hamas and other terrorists are targeting the very border crossings and facilities intended to help the Palestinians.

- A Palestinian terrorist on April 25 killed two Israeli security guards in the West Bank outside the Nitzanei Shalom industrial park, which employs 700 Palestinians. The attack occurred shortly after Israel removed a checkpoint in an effort to ease Palestinian movement.
- Terrorists have repeatedly attacked the Kerem Shalom crossing, where hundreds of trucks with food and medicine enter Gaza on a weekly basis.
- On April 19, terrorists carried out a coordinated attack on Kerem Shalom, detonating two explosive-laden vehicles under the cover of heavy gunfire and mortar barrages. Thirteen Israeli soldiers were wounded in the attack.
- On April 9, Palestinian terrorists shelled and stormed the Nahal Oz fuel terminal, which delivers nearly 800,000 gallons of gasoline and industrial fuel each week to Gaza hospitals and to the Gaza City power station. The attack killed two Israeli civilians working at the terminal.



**Palestinian terrorists regularly launch mortar attacks against humanitarian border crossings.**

Hamas is seeking to create a humanitarian crisis in order to manipulate world opinion against Israel.

- Hamas has repeatedly blocked the distribution of more than 250,000 gallons of fuel that Israel has pumped into Gaza. According to a U.N. official quoted by Agence France Presse, "Israel cannot pump more fuel because there is no place to store it."
- The Palestinian Authority Health Ministry charged Hamas with withholding fuel for hospitals and clinics. In April, Hamas members seized fuel-filled trucks intended for hospitals, generators, and ambulances and instead gave the fuel to Hamas security forces.

- The European Union condemned Hamas' obstruction of humanitarian efforts, saying, "Hamas and other militant groups in Gaza have their share in aggravating the humanitarian situation, including through carrying out the attacks on Nahal Oz and Kerem Shalom crossings."
- Hamas routinely carries out attacks against Israel from civilian areas as a way to complicate Israel's response to the violence. U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon issued a statement on April 28, telling Hamas that "civilian areas within Gaza should not be used as a base from which to launch its actions [against Israel]."

Hamas continues to carry out rocket attacks against Israel and expand its military infrastructure to prepare for future conflict with Israel.

- Since Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005, Palestinian terrorists have hit Israel with nearly 4,000 rockets and mortars, including longer-range, Iranian-supplied rockets. More than 250,000 Israelis living in southern cities such as Ashkelon are now within striking range.
- A report by the Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center (ITTC) in Israel states that Hamas has more than 20,000 armed fighters organized in semi-military formations under improved command and control. Many of these fighters are receiving training in Iran and Syria.
- The report also states that Hamas is preparing for a large-scale battle with Israel, building underground bunkers similar to those used by Hizballah during the 2006 war in Lebanon, and planting explosive devices on roads the Israeli army might use during an operation in Gaza.
- Hamas, according to the report, also has acquired at least 80 tons of explosives since last summer and continues to smuggle advanced weaponry, including shoulder-fired RPG anti-tank missiles, anti-aircraft missiles and the longer-range, Katyusha-style rockets used to hit Ashkelon.

Despite such cynical exploitation, Israel continues to facilitate the transfer of aid to the Palestinians as it takes steps to defend its citizens.

- Israel continues to allow the transfer of food, medicines and energy supplies to Gaza despite repeated attacks on the very people who deliver them. Since Hamas took over Gaza in June 2007, Israel has transferred more than 500,000 tons of humanitarian supplies to Gaza.
- Israel has shown extreme restraint in the face of ongoing rocket and other terrorist attacks. However, like every other sovereign nation, Israel has the right and duty to defend its citizens.
- Israel's military response in Gaza 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 and vehicles carrying Qassam rockets and armed terrorists. Terrorists have deliberately launched rockets from densely populated areas in order to complicate Israel's efforts to respond.
- The PA's failure to launch a sustained effort to dismantle the terrorist infrastructure in the West Bank has forced Israel to continue its security presence in the area to prevent attacks.