

MEMMO

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Hamas Undermines Calm with Barrage of Attacks

Hamas has stepped up its rocket attacks, weapons smuggling and infiltration efforts during the past several weeks. Since early November, Hamas has fired 170 rockets and mortars into Israel. Israel remains committed to reduce hostilities and facilitate humanitarian assistance while simultaneously defending its citizens against attack. Further violence directed at Israeli civilians from Hamas-controlled Gaza may require Israel to take tougher measures in self-defense.

Hamas is stepping up rocket and terror attacks.

- While rocket and mortar attacks were sporadic during the first five months of the truce, Hamas has launched 170 rockets and mortars since the beginning of November.
- Hamas has used the calm to further strengthen its capabilities and develop more effective attack plans. On Nov. 4, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) was forced to enter Gaza to destroy a tunnel that was to be used shortly thereafter to kidnap Israeli soldiers.
- Hamas terrorists have planned other border attacks. On Nov. 12, four Hamas members attempted to place explosives along the border with Israel, forcing Israel to thwart their efforts.
- Hamas has enhanced the range of its weaponry from the 4-5 mile Qassam to the Grad – which can hit targets more than 15 miles away. On Nov. 14, terrorists fired five Grad rockets—the longest-range rocket in their arsenal—that hit southern Ashkelon, a major coastal city of 120,000.
- Since Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005, terrorists have fired more than 4,000 rockets and mortars at Israeli villages near the border with Gaza.



Police remove the remains of a Katyusha rocket fired at the Israeli city of Ashkelon on Nov. 14.

Hamas continues to increase its rocket and other weapons capabilities by smuggling technology into Gaza from Egypt.

- Hamas terrorists are now using underground Qassam launch silos to make it more difficult for the IDF to find and destroy them. The launchers, similar to those used by Hizballah, can also be operated by remote control.

- With assistance from Iran, according to Israeli security officials, Hamas has developed special rockets that can be broken down into small parts to make it easier to smuggle into Gaza. The rockets can easily be reassembled to launch attacks against Israel.
- Hamas is using advanced propellants—smuggled into Gaza during the destruction of the border wall with Egypt in January 2008— allowing rockets to be stockpiled for longer durations and terrorists to fire a larger number of rockets in a single barrage.
- In addition to increasing its rocket capabilities, Hamas has smuggled into Gaza from Egypt shoulder-fired RPG anti-tank missiles, assault rifles, high-quality explosives and anti-aircraft missiles, according to Israeli security officials.

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.
- As terrorists continue to develop plans to abduct soldiers using tunnels from Gaza—the very way Gilad Shalit was kidnapped in June 2006—Israel will continue to take measures to disable these tunnels infiltrating Israel.
- While Israel continues to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza, it needs to take precautions in the face of the escalating violence. Israeli intelligence, according to reports, has indicated that Hamas is attempting to kidnap soldiers and to carry out a mass casualties attack, forcing Israel to limit activity at the crossings on the border with Gaza.
- Despite the increased rocket and mortar attacks, Israel facilitated the transfer of 33 truckloads of aid into Gaza on Nov. 17 and continues to allow patients who need medical care to cross into Israel.
- Israel also continues to provide 70 percent of Gaza’s electricity. Hamas has routinely diverted such energy for its own purposes and has sought to create blackouts to manipulate public opinion.
- When Israel has taken measures against Hamas, the IDF has specifically targeted Hamas operations centers, Palestinian rocket-launching devices, trucks carrying mass amounts of Qassam rockets, and vehicles carrying armed Palestinians.