

# MEMMO

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## Israel Forced to Defend Citizens After Years of Attacks

**Israel began forceful action this past weekend to quell Hamas' terrorist threat to Israeli civilians. Since Israel's 2005 withdrawal from Gaza, Hamas has indiscriminately fired more than 6,300 rockets and mortars—including 600 in the past six weeks—at Israeli population centers. Last spring, Israel tested whether Hamas would move toward peace by accepting Egypt's proposal for a six-month lull in the fighting. Instead, Hamas significantly enhanced its arsenal, and ultimately resumed its rocket assaults. Despite Hamas' aggression, Israel continues to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance and is acting to limit civilian casualties in Gaza.**

Israel demonstrated extreme restraint in the face of years of attacks on its citizens after it fully withdrew from Gaza in 2005.

- Israel fully withdrew all of its soldiers and settlements from Gaza in 2005, a move designed to reduce violence and create better conditions for improved relations between Israel and the Palestinians.
- Instead of seizing this historic opportunity to build a better life for the people of Gaza, Hamas and other terrorist groups have turned the area into a launching pad for more than 6,300 rocket and mortar attacks against Israel, killing more than a dozen Israelis and wounding and traumatizing countless others.
- As Hamas abandoned a sixth-month lull in fighting with Israel, the Iranian-backed terrorist group fired more than 600 rockets and mortars into Israel.
- Like every other sovereign nation, Israel has the right and duty to defend its citizens from attack. Hamas' actions left Israel no choice but to take stronger measures to defend its citizens.



**Palestinian terrorists in Gaza continue to fire rockets indiscriminately at Israeli civilians.**

Hamas used the six-month calm to increase its rocket and other weapons capabilities by smuggling arms into Gaza from Egypt.

- Hamas used the lull to double its stockpile of rockets—today an estimated 8,000 to 10,000—and to acquire rockets with longer range capabilities, including Iranian-supplied Katyusha rockets.

- An estimated 500,000 Israelis are now within range of Hamas' rocket arsenal, including Ashdod—Israel's fifth largest city and home to 200,000 people and Israel's largest port. An Israeli woman was killed yesterday by shrapnel from a rocket that hit the city, which is 23 miles from Gaza.
- Hamas has been engaged in the "Hizballization" of Gaza. Hamas terrorists are now using underground Qassam launch silos to make it more difficult for the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) to find and destroy them. The launchers, similar to those used by Hizballah, can also be operated by remote control to allow Hamas to fire more rockets at one time.
- With assistance from Iran, according to Israeli security officials, Hamas has developed special rockets that can be broken down into small parts to make them easier to smuggle into Gaza. The rockets can easily be reassembled to launch attacks against Israel.
- Hamas is using advanced propellants that allow rockets to be stockpiled for longer durations and terrorists to fire a larger number of rockets in a single barrage.
- Hamas has been transforming itself from a terrorist group into a terrorist army like Hizballah with a force of 15,000 armed-men. Many of the leaders of this force have been sent to camps in Iran and Lebanon to receive training from Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.
- In addition to increasing its rocket capabilities, Hamas has smuggled into Gaza from Egypt shoulder-fired RPG anti-tank missiles, sniper rifles, high-quality explosives and anti-aircraft missiles, according to Israeli security officials.

Israel is taking steps to limit civilian casualties while facilitating humanitarian assistance to Gaza.

- Israel's actions have specifically targeted Hamas command centers, security installations, rocket-launching sites, weapons stockpiles and weapons smuggling tunnels.
- The vast majority of Palestinians killed have been Hamas forces, as Israel seeks to limit civilian casualties. Indeed, Israel has transmitted specific warnings to Gazans within the immediate vicinity of an impending pinpoint air strike allowing them to clear the area before a Hamas target is hit.
- Unfortunately, Hamas locates its terrorist infrastructure in civilian population centers to make it more difficult for Israel to target and to increase the likelihood of civilian casualties when Israel takes action.
- Hamas was using labs at the Islamic University—which Israel targeted on Sunday—to develop sophisticated explosives and mortars, while rockets and mortars were stored in campus buildings.
- Israel is working closely with the U.N., Red Cross, and World Health Organization to ensure the humanitarian assistance reaches Palestinian civilians in Gaza. On Dec. 28 and 29, as Hamas continued to fire rockets into Israel, more than 60 truckloads of humanitarian supplies and 105,000 gallons of fuel were transferred to Gaza. Israel also continues to provide 70 percent of Gaza's electricity.
- During the six-month calm, Israel facilitated the transfer into Gaza of more than 14,000 trucks, 185,000 tons of foods and other supplies, more than 7,000 tons of heating gas and more than 10 million gallons of fuel.