

MEMMO

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Israel Boosting Humanitarian Efforts in Gaza

Israel has dramatically stepped up its efforts to provide humanitarian aid to Gaza to alleviate the suffering of innocent civilians despite continuing rocket attacks against its own civilians. Hamas bears responsibility for this conflict and the resulting impact on Palestinians in Gaza because it abandoned the six-month “calm” and escalated rocket attacks on Israel. Hamas has exacerbated the situation in Gaza by stealing food and medicine intended for those in need and using innocent civilians as human shields in schools, hospitals and mosques.

Israel has dramatically stepped up its delivery of humanitarian assistance to Gaza despite continuing rocket attacks against its civilians.

- Israel is working closely with the U.N. and other humanitarian organizations to facilitate the delivery of goods into Gaza.
- Since Dec. 27, 1,202 trucks loaded with more than 29,000 tons (58,000,000 pounds) of food and medicine have been transferred into Gaza.
- Israel is implementing four-hour truces each day to help ensure that humanitarian supplies are distributed.
- Ten ambulances and 3,000 blood units have been transferred to Gaza during the past two-and-a-half weeks. Nearly three dozen Gazans have entered Israel for treatment since Dec. 27 and teams of foreign physicians have entered Gaza.
- Since the operation began, Israel has transferred more than 370,000 gallons of diesel fuel to support the Gaza power plant, hospital generators and humanitarian aid vehicles. Israel is also facilitating the entry of needed supplies to rehabilitate Gaza’s electrical network.
- The president of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Jakob Kellenberger, visited Shifa Hospital on Tuesday and said doctors “did not complain about the lack of equipment or material,” *The New York Times* reported.
- During the six-month calm—June to December—Israel facilitated the transfer into Gaza of more than 14,000 trucks, 185,000 tons of foods, more than 7,000 tons of heating gas and more than 10 million gallons of fuel.



More than 29,000 tons of food and medicine have been trucked into Gaza since Israel began its defensive operations on Dec. 27.

Hamas has deliberately exacerbated the situation by preventing aid from reaching its intended recipients.

- Humanitarian aid has routinely been delayed from entering Gaza due to attacks on the crossing points between Israel and Gaza. On Jan. 13, the IDF found a terrorist tunnel at the Nahal Oz fuel depot, the main location for fuel transfers into Gaza. The fuel transfer was made from another area.
- On Jan. 12, Hamas raided 100 aid trucks as they entered Gaza, stole their contents and sold the goods to the highest bidders, according to a Jan. 12 *Jerusalem Post* report.
- A significant portion of the medical aid being sent into Gaza has been stolen by Hamas to treat terrorists at a Hamas-run hospital, according to senior Israeli defense officials.
- Aid has repeatedly been delayed by attempts to smuggle prohibited items into Gaza. On Jan. 12, Israeli forces uncovered night vision surveillance cameras in four trucks carrying supplies intended to rehabilitate Gaza's electrical network. The aid was eventually transferred after a delay.

Hamas places civilians at risk by launching rockets from civilian areas and storing weapons in homes, schools and places of worship.

- Hamas deliberately and cynically fires rockets from civilian areas to make it more difficult for Israel to target the terrorists and to increase the likelihood of civilian casualties if Israel responds. Rockets have been fired from schools, cemeteries, near hospitals and in dense urban settings.
- Hamas has booby-trapped hundreds of civilian buildings it uses for storing weapons and ammunition and attacking Israelis, forcing Israel to destroy civilian infrastructure. In one Gaza City neighborhood, 30 of the 150 homes searched by the IDF were rigged with explosives.
- Weapons, including RPG launchers, grenades and AK-47 assault rifles were also found inside schools. On Jan. 6, for example, a missile launcher and a number of anti-tank missiles were discovered hidden in a Palestinian school yard in Sajalya, northern Gaza Strip.
- Many of Hamas' senior members are hiding in mosques and hospitals to avoid detection. Hamas is using an underground command center beneath Shifa hospital to hold meetings and dispense salaries, according to Israeli Minister of Internal Security Avi Dichter.
- Hamas admits it uses civilians as human shields. Hamas MP Fathi Hammad told Al-Aqsa TV on Feb. 29, 2008, "For the Palestinian people, death has become an industry. ... This is why they have formed human shields of the women, the children, the elderly, and the mujahedeen..."

Israel takes every precaution to minimize civilian casualties.

- While Israel makes every effort to minimize civilian casualties, international law precludes Hamas from using civilians to protect legitimate military targets, as Hamas regularly does. Article 28 of the Fourth Geneva Convention clearly states, "The presence of a protected person may not be used to render certain points or areas immune from military operations."
- Israel routinely gives up the element of surprise to warn civilians to evacuate areas of Hamas terrorist infrastructure prior to any action. One million leaflets have been dropped in Gaza, in addition to tens of thousands of phone calls and radio broadcasts.
- Israeli Air Force pilots deploy small munitions to frighten away civilians gathered in buildings used by Hamas prior to destroying the buildings and have guided munitions away from their intended targets when it becomes clear terrorists have moved into areas where civilians are located.