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Navy intercepts weapons-building material bound for Gaza as Hamas bids to rearm

The Israel Navy has intercepted multiple attempts to smuggle weapons manufacturing material into Gaza since the end of the war in August, a senior navy commander told The Jerusalem Post on Thursday. Hamas fires rockets into the sea every few days, as part of its weapons upgrade program. "They are doing experiments and checking their rockets. This is a part of their domestic weapons production. We did not doubt, at the end of the war, that their focus would be on building more weapons. We monitor every such launch, noting the quality of the rocket and its range," said Cmdr. Eli Soholitski, who has commanded the navy's Squadron 916 for two years. "We continue to see attempts to smuggle weapons or material to build them. The sea is a very convenient platform for smuggling. The terrorists still have one big smuggling tunnel, and it's called the Mediterranean," said Soholitski. "The activities of Squadron 916 did not begin with Operation Protective Edge. Most of the time, we are not in the headlines, but we are carrying out Sisyphean tasks around the clock, preventing arms transfers and blocking elements that can threaten our security. It's a heavy workload."

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