

December 2008

**ISRAEL'S MILITARY
OPERATION IN GAZA:
THE BACKGROUND**



Terrorists in Gaza Launching rockets into Israel.

Between January 2001 and December 2008, terrorists in Gaza launched 8,165 rockets and mortar attacks on civilian communities in southern Israel.

On Dec. 27, 2008 Israel began its military operation, "Cast Lead," against Hamas and other terrorists in Gaza.

2005 ISRAEL WITHDREW FROM GAZA TO PROMOTE PEACE

In August 2005, the Israeli government evacuated all Jews from the thriving Gaza communities they had built over the previous 30 years. The decision was divisive and wrenching for Israelis, pitting soldier against civilian, family against family. Israel left Gaza for peace.

Israel hoped that the removal of any Jewish presence would reduce friction, and help Palestinians begin nation building. The Israeli government left the flourishing Jewish greenhouses intact for the Palestinians to use and develop their own economy.

The disengagement did not bring peace or prosperity. The Palestinians were angered with the Israeli presence in Gaza and they were angered with the departure as well.

Palestinians immediately destroyed the greenhouses, and used the hundreds of million of dollars they received in international aid to build their terrorist infrastructure, not to build their economy.

Hamas and other terrorist groups felt empowered, claiming their violence had driven the Israelis out of Gaza.

Terrorist attacks from Gaza increased over 500% within months.

IDF soldiers comfort the anguished evacuees even as they enforce the disengagement.

A child being evacuated from her home.

2005-2007
TERRORISM ESCALATES: HAMAS WINS ELECTIONS AND SEIZES
CONTROL OF GAZA IN A VIOLENT COUP D'ETAT

Escalation: Rocket and mortar attacks against southern Israel following
disengagement

- Hamas, a terrorist group that ignores international law, tortured and murdered its Fatah rivals to seize full control of Gaza in June 2007.
- Iran sponsors Hamas, supplying training for terrorists and giving them over \$250 million a year.
- Hamas used Iranian money and humanitarian international aid to build up its terrorist infrastructure, weapons capacity, and arms smuggling tunnels, not to build Gaza's civil society and economy. Hamas smuggled over 130 tons of explosives into Gaza in the two years following Israel's disengagement.
- Hamas abducted IDF soldier Gilad Shalit in June, 2006, and has held him incommunicado, violating international law by refusing to allow the Red Cross or other humanitarian agencies access to him.
- Hamas' political objective, in accordance with its founding document, is the murder of Jews, "obliteration" of Israel, and replacement of Israel with a Muslim theocracy. It denounces all negotiations and compromise, and violently opposes a two-state solution. (Hamas Charter, 1988)
- Hamas' strategic tactic is ongoing terrorism:
 "Rockets against Sderot will cause mass migration, greatly disrupt daily lives and government administration and can make a much huger impact on the government... We are succeeding with the rockets. We have no losses and the impact on the Israeli side is so much." Hamas minister Mahmoud A-Zahar, Aug., 2007
 Hamas and other terrorist groups felt empowered, claiming their violence had driven the Israelis out of Gaza. Terrorist attacks from Gaza increased over 500% within months.
 2005: 1255 ATTACKS. 2006: 1771 ATTACKS. 2007: 2774 ATTACKS

2005-2007
THE DEFENSELESS VICTIMS OF HAMAS TERRORISTS: MEN, WOMEN
AND CHILDREN IN SOUTHERN ISRAEL

- Lethal attacks: 12 civilians murdered and 275 seriously injured in rocket and mortar attacks 2005-2007.
- Psychological Trauma: Palestinians target civilian communities, especially nearby Sderot. Kindergartens, hospitals, schools, day care centers, homes, and playgrounds have all been hit by mortar and rocket fire.
- On Sept. 3 2007, terrorists timed a barrage of rockets to hit when parents were taking their children to school and day care centers. The terrorists claimed it was a "gift" for the first day of school.
- When the Red Alert siren warns of an incoming attack, Israelis have only 15 seconds to flee to the safety of bomb shelters.
- 94% of children in Sderot suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome. Others suffer from nightmares, bedwetting, and severe anxiety.
- Daily life is haunted by terror of the Red Alert suddenly warning of another rocket attack.

Afik Zahavi, who was four years old, killed by rocket attack when he came to school with his grandfather who was also murdered on the same day by the same rocket afik was an only child, born to a woman after years of infertility.

2005-2007
ISRAEL'S RESTRAINED RESPONSE:
PIN-POINT COUNTER-ATTACKS & CONTINUED HUMANITARIAN AID

Israel mounted periodic defensive operations that targeted rocket launching sites, munitions depots and terrorists preparing to carry out bombing missions.

Hamas uses human shields and embeds its infrastructure in schools, hospitals, and densely populated communities, violating international law. Israel, which upholds international law and tries to minimize civilian casualties, was forced to limit its defensive operations.

Despite incessant rocket and mortar attacks from Gaza terrorists, Israel continued to transfer thousands of tons of humanitarian aid, fuel and general supplies into Gaza through designated crossings.

Terrorists frequently attacked the Gaza crossings, making deliveries life-threatening for Israelis, and forcing temporary closures. The Karni crossing has been attacked repeatedly. On Dec. 25, 2007, rockets targeted the Kerem Shalom and Sufa crossings.

Terrorists tried to use the humanitarian deliveries to transport explosive material. On Dec. 29, 2007, the IDF revealed that 6 tons of potassium nitrate, used for making explosives and rocket propellants, was packed in sugar bags with EU markings.

Despite Hamas' incessant attacks, Israel continued to allow patients from Gaza to enter Israel for medical treatment. Israel granted 4,932 medical permits in 2006, and 7,176 in 2007.

On May 30, 2007 - Two women used false medical information to enter Israel for treatment . They planned to commit a double suicide bombing. Twenty such incidents of terrorists abusing medical permits have occurred since the disengagement.

Hamas's Al-Aqsa TV and PalMedia Website called upon civilians to form a human shield at the home of Abu al-Hatal in the Sajaiya neighborhood (in Al-

Sha'af according to other version) because the IDF had threatened to blow it up (March 1).

The inscription reads: " Hamas calls upon on [the Palestinian] public to Come to the house of Abu al-Hatal in al-Sha'af [neighborhood] to act as human shields" (Al-Aqsa TV, March 1).http://www.terrorism-into.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/html/ct_020308e.htm

2008 COUNTDOWN TO CONFRONTATION: HAMAS INCREASES ITS ATTACKS & CAPABILITIES

The number of attacks soared: January and February: 862 mortars and rockets, an average of one attack every 3 hours.

January to June 19th: 2,284 rockets and mortars fired into Israel's southern communities.

Hamas upgraded its weapons capabilities to raise the number of Israeli casualties with each attack. It smuggled in Iranian GRAD rockets which have a longer range and more lethal impact than the Kassam rockets. The longer-range GRADS put 250,000 Israelis in rocket range.

Hamas launched 23 GRAD missiles. Most of them hit Ashkelon, a city 12 miles north of Gaza.

Israel's reaction: Restraint.

Even as the rockets rained down, Israel attempted to transport goods and humanitarian aid to Gaza. 35,000 trucks carrying almost 814,000 tons of goods arrived between Feb. 27th and June 19th.

Nonetheless, Hamas repeatedly claimed Israel was causing a humanitarian crisis. Hamas manufactured the crisis for media consumption by refusing to distribute the goods, seizing them for Hamas fighters, and attacking the crossings where the goods were transported.

Hamas distributed these pictures to imply Israel had cut off Gaza's electric supply. But they forgot to turn out the street lights.

A GRAD struck an Ashkelon shopping mall on May 14, 2008, wounding 90 people, including young children.

JUNE 19TH-DECEMBER 19TH: HAMAS EXPLOITS A TEMPORARY TRUCE

- On June 19th, Israel accepted a 6-month truce with Hamas, brokered by Egypt.
- Hamas exploited the "calm" to continue its war against Israel.
- Hamas fired 362 missiles and rockets into southern Israel during the truce.
- Hamas strengthened its terrorist infrastructure, smuggling weapons, intensifying terrorist training, and building a network of underground tunnels to reach Israel for terrorist acts and kidnapping of Israelis.
- Hamas leaders continued to incite murderous hatred of Jews. "The annihilation of the Jews here in Palestine is one of the most splendid blessings for Palestine. This will be followed by a greater blessing, Allah be praised, with the establishment of a Caliphate that will rule the land and will be pleasing to men and God." Hamas cleric Muhsen Ab It'a, July 13, 2008
- Iran, Hezbollah, Syria, and terrorist groups continued to provide support, arms, training, and money to Hamas.

**DECEMBER 27TH- 2008
TURNING POINT:
ISRAEL LAUNCHES OPERATION "CAST LEAD"**

- The truce ended on Dec. 19th. Israel sought to extend it. Despite Hamas' abuse of the agreement, Israel exhausted every diplomatic channel to persuade Hamas to renew the truce.
- Hamas adamantly refused. Instead, the number of attacks against Israel soared.

Between Nov 4th and Dec. 19th, Hamas launched 340 rockets and missiles.

- In the seven days after the truce ended, Hamas launched over 280 rockets and mortars—an average of 40 a day—that targeted the men, women, and children of southern Israel.
- Israel had no choices left. Hamas had renewed its brutal war. No nation can allow its citizens to be intentionally targeted, attacked, and killed by enemies fanatically sworn to their destruction.
- Every sovereign nation has the duty to defend its citizens from armed aggression.

ISRAEL'S GOAL:

To disable Hamas and its terrorist infrastructure while avoiding a humanitarian crisis. Even as it fights the terrorists, Israel is providing humanitarian aid. In the first four days of its military operation, Israel ensured that 10 ambulances 186 trucks carrying supplies reached Gaza.

ESSENTIAL FACTS ABOUT OPERATION "CAST LEAD"

- Israel did not want war. Hamas declared war on Israel.

For seven years, Gazan terrorists had barraged southern Israel with thousands of rockets and mortars, and Israel had not gone to war. But in Dec. 2008, Hamas refused to renew a 6-month truce. Instead, in the week after the truce ended, it fired over 300 rockets and mortars that targeted the hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children living in southern Israel.

- Israel's goal is to destroy the terrorist infrastructure and armed fighters through surgical air strikes that minimize harm to civilians.

"Residents of Gaza, we are not your enemies and we are not fighting against you. This terrorist organization has brought disaster to two peoples.... Our precise intelligence... enabled maximum strikes at those involved in terrorism and minimized harm to innocents. This is how we will act in the future...." –Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Dec. 27, 2008.

- Hamas' goal is not an end of "occupation" or of Israeli "closures" of Gaza. Hamas' oft-stated goal is genocide: murdering Jews, "obliterating" Israel, and replacing it with an Islamist theocracy.

Israel turned every centimeter of Gaza over to the Palestinian Authority and emptied Gaza of all Israelis in 2005. Hamas could easily end the closures by terminating its terrorist attacks.

"The annihilation of the Jews here in Palestine is one of the most splendid blessings for Palestine. This will be followed by a greater blessing, Allah be praised, with the establishment of a Caliphate that will rule the land and will be pleasing to men and God." Hamas cleric Muhsen Abu It'a, July 13, 2008

Two Palestinian youths were transferred from Gaza to Israel In addition to the two youth, approximately 20 chronically Gaza Strip to Israeli hospitals. January 2, 2009

- Israel's response is not "disproportionate."

A proportionate response is when the military objective of ending the enemy's aggression and capacity for aggression is balanced by the harm to civilians. It does not limit the defending nation to the same weaponry and tactics as the aggressor. It does not mean civilians will not accidentally be harmed.

Hamas admitted that the vast majority of Palestinians casualties have been Hamas "fighters."

- The disproportion is that Hamas violates international and humanitarian laws while Israel upholds them above and beyond what is normally required or expected.

- Israel strictly adheres to international law and tries to minimize Israeli and Palestinian civilian casualties, while Hamas ignores international law, targets Israeli civilians, and intentionally endangers Palestinian civilians by using them as human shields.

Israel phones residents of buildings that Hamas uses, alerting them of impending attack so they can flee to safety.

Hamas has not aimed at military targets. It has aimed at Israeli civilians, with the intention of causing the maximum number casualties possible

- In the first 5 days of Operation Cast Lead, Israel ensured the delivery into Gaza of 6,500 tons of humanitarian aid, and admitted 12 Gazans into Israel for medical treatment, including two children who had been injured by Hamas rockets. Israel to receive medical treatment at Israeli hospitals. chronically ill were transferred from the Shifa Hospital in the

On Dec. 31, the World Food Programme temporarily ended its transports because Gaza's food warehouses were full.

- Hamas is not acting alone. It is a proxy for Iran, the country that calls for Israel to be "wiped off the map," sponsors and arms Hamas, and strives to export its Islamist revolution to the region.
- Hamas has been destructive of its own people while Israel strives to ensure that Gaza's residents do not face a humanitarian crisis.

While Hamas has tortured and murdered its political rivals, used children as human shields, and manufactured humanitarian crises, Israel has ensured that humanitarian aid continues arriving in Gaza. Over 100 truckloads laden with tons of food, medicine, and other goods have been transported into Gaza since Operation Lead Cast began.

- Hamas alone is responsible for casualties and suffering inflicted on Gaza's residents.

Hamas declared war on Israel, forcing Israel to launch defensive operations, callously uses human shields, and demands that its armed terrorists fight to the death.

Leaders across the Arab world have condemned Hamas for launching this war, and hold it responsible for any suffering.

- Hamas opposes negotiations and a two-state solution. Israel wants peace with its neighbors.

"The difference between us and them is that they wait passionately for the day they can return home safely, while we bid farewell to our families and hope to die as martyrs." —Hamas fighter, Jan. 1, 2009