

Date and Time: Thursday, May 2, 2024 6:43:00PM EEST

Job Number: 223362230

Documents (100)

1. [*Hamas vows violent retaliation*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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News

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2. [*Hamas gains grassroots edge*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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3. [*Hamas wins elections for Gaza councils;*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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4. [*HAMAS MOURNS, ISSUES THREATS*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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5. [*HAMAS VOWS BLOODY REVENGE*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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6. [*Palestinians give Hamas strong backing in elections*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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7. [*Hamas takes aim at Israeli leaders*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to
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8. [*Israelis kill 14 in strike at Hamas*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Narrowed by
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Dec 01, 2005

9. [*Hamas is strong in its 1st election*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Narrowed by
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10. [*Gaza vote seen as test for Hamas*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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11. [In Loss of Leaders, Hamas Discovers a Renewed Strength](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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12. [Hamas vows revenge on Israel](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Content Type
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13. [Vows of revenge - Hamas's reply to killing](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

14. [Hamas Surprisingly Strong in Palestinian Election](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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News

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15. [Israel threatens to kill Hamas founder;](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

16. [Israelis Airstrikes Hit Gaza After Hamas Fires Rockets](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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17. [Hamas founder vows to continue attacks](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Content Type
News

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18. [Under Israeli attack, Hamas loses leaders but widens its support](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

19. [Israel plans Hamas hits in payback](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Content Type
News

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20. [Israel 's offensive on Hamas justified](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Content Type
News

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21. [Israel Orders Army to Quell Rocket Fire; Hamas Ends It](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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News

Narrowed by
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22. [Hamas founder is defiant after Israeli 's warning](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
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23. [HAMAS REJECTS COALITION OFFER](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

24. [Israel 'will retaliate by killing Hamas founder'; NEWSBRIEF](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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News

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25. [Revenge vow as Hamas chief killed](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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News

Narrowed by
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26. [ISRAEL ANNOUNCES INTENTION TO KILL HAMAS FOUNDER](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
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Dec 01, 2005

27. [*First Hamas female bomber hailed as hero at her funeral*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
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Dec 01, 2005

28. [*Bomb puts Hamas back on Israel 's hit list*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Dec 01, 2005

29. [*ISRAEL TARGETS HAMAS LEADER AFTER SUICIDE ATTACK*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Dec 01, 2005

30. [*Hamas mourners vow to avenge another 'martyr'*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to
Dec 01, 2005

31. [*Gaza vote a test of Hamas' influence; Group seeks to legitimize itself*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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32. [*Female bomber a Hamas first*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

33. [*Hamas mortar kills Gaza settler*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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34. [*No dancing and no gays if Hamas gets its way*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

35. [*International Roundup : Hamas defiant Palestinians shocked at use of suicide mother*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

36. [*Hamas' threat: First female bomber won't be its last*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

37. [HAMAS ADMITS ITS GUNMEN SHOT BETROTHED WOMAN IN 'HONOUR KILLING'](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

38. [Shadowy Hamas Leader Issues Threat to Israel and Cautions Abbas Not to Seize Guns](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

39. [Female bomb maker part of Hamas: Israel](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

40. [HARD-LINER NAMED HAMAS LEADER; ISRAEL TO KEEP TARGETING ROOTS OF PALESTINIAN VIOLENCE](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

41. [Israel threatens assassinations: Defence minister responds to Hamas threats of abductions](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

42. [HAMAS LEADER ASSASSINATION: Yassin sought to destroy Israel](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

43. [Hamas calls cease-fire after 3 days of attacks ; Barrage of rockets from Gaza brought Israeli airstrikes](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

44. [GRIEVING PALESTINIANS PLEDGE BLOODY REVENGE FOR KILLING OF HAMAS LEADER; MIDDLE EAST CRISIS](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

45. [Israel begins 'crushing' retaliation: Major Gaza operation launched after Hamas fires 35 rockets at Israeli towns](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Content Type
News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

46. [For one Hamas leader, only long term counts ; Globalist](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

47. [Hamas promises 100 retaliations to avenge leader](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

48. [Terror group threatens U.S. Palestinians promise to avenge assassination of Hamas leader](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

49. [Minister threatens to assassinate terrorists: Move in response to Hamas' vow to kidnap soldiers](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

50. ['Hamas will not be defeated': New leader's name kept secret as thousands vow revenge](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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News

Narrowed by
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51. [Hamas vows revenge for killing , Israeli missile strike kills spiritual leader, seven others](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

52. [Historic voting first step toward Palestinian state: Fatah, Hamas compete at local polling stations](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

53. [*Sheikh 'marked for death': Hamas's spiritual leader ignores warning by top Israeli , vows violence will continue*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

54. [*Hamas' 1st suspected female bomb-maker is university grad*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

55. [*Gaza weapons crackdown begins: Hamas agrees to obey ban on guns in public*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

56. [*Palestinians out in force for council elections: Test of popularity for Hamas*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

57. [*Israel hints it will strike against Syria for bombings: Anyone who harbours Hamas terrorists a target for retaliation, Sharon warns*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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58. [Female bomber a first for Hamas](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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59. [4 ISRAELIS DIE AS HAMAS USES WOMAN AS BOMB; Mother of two tricks guards at crossing](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

60. [Hamas and Big Bird feature at Iranian book fair](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

61. [The failed promise of Arafat's death: Ineffective Abbas has difficulty slowing Hamas](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

62. [Justice served in assassination of Hamas leader](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

63. [Hamas, Decimated](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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64. [Arafat shrugs off assassination threat: Hamas takes credit for overnight killing at West Bank settlement](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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65. [Israel blames Syria for 2 suicide bombing attacks; Israeli leader warns of 'additional steps' for harboring leadership of the Hamas militant group](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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66. [Hamas chief's killing may unify militants; It has brought rival groups closer together and hardened their resolve to wreak havoc in Israel](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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67. [DEFIANT HAMAS SHOWS WORLD SUICIDE MUM WITH CHILDREN. Gaza Strip female suicide bomber Reem Raiyshi, with her son Obida, aged three, who is holding a mortar shell](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Dec 01, 2005

68. [*Israel bus bombings kill 16, injure 100: Hamas claims responsibility for suicide attacks*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Dec 01, 2005

69. [*Israel on threshold of the 'gates of hell': The opportunistic killing of Hamas's Sheikh Yassin has left Israel braced for total carnage*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to
Dec 01, 2005

70. [*Hezbollah, Hamas illustrate power at ballot box; Voters reward groups with strong Islamic ties*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to
Dec 01, 2005

71. [*Israel says bomb maker is female college grad: Hamas denies charge; Agency sees sharp rise in militants' use of women*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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Dec 01, 2005

72. [*Hamas uses mother of two as suicide bomber: Four israeli security people killed*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

73. [*Palestinians release Hamas member*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

74. [*Authorities probe Kosovo shooter's ties to Hamas: Third American corrections officer dies of wounds*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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News

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75. [*18 die as suicide bombs rock Israel ; Death toll may rise, Hamas takes blame as buses blow up 15 seconds apart*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

76. [*Three generals and a martyr; OPINION: URI AVNERY looks beyond the simplistic portrayal of Hamas and compares it to Zionist terror groups in 1940s Palestine .*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

77. [*Hamas's Canadian cheerleader*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to
Dec 01, 2005

78. [Israel warns of retaliation against Syria up rhetoric over attack: Threatens to attack: Hamas leader is being harboured by Damascus](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to
Dec 01, 2005

79. [SECRET BID TO END BOMBING; FOCUS MI6 IN UNDERCOVER TALKS WITH HAMAS AS BLAIR WOOS PALESTINIAN MILITANTS](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to
Dec 01, 2005

80. [1.2 "50% UNEMPLOYMENT RESULTED IN APPEARANCE OF A NEW HAMAS"\[\]](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to
Dec 01, 2005

81. [Israel shaken by return of the suicide bombers: After months of failed attempts, Hamas penetrates security to kill 16 and injure 100 in attack on buses](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to
Dec 01, 2005

82. [Five-month lull ends with Israeli bus bombings: Hamas claims responsibility for 16 deaths in Beersheba](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

83. [Hundreds Gather To Denounce Assassination of Hamas Leader](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

84. [Hamas attacks; Israel hits back An Israeli American died in the shelling of her Gaza Strip settlement. An Israeli missile killed a Palestinian.](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

85. [Palestinian police free Hamas guerrilla who shot at officers Move belies pledge to crack down on militant groups](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

86. [Palestinian mother kills 4 Israelis, self; Seven people, including four Arabs, were injured at the Gaza checkpoint. It was called Hamas' first use of a female bomber.](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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87. [Militants seek gains in Gaza vote](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

88. [Fighting flares in Gaza Strip; Israel bombs facilities after rocket attacks](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

89. [Mideast erupts Crisis as Palestinian leader killed](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

90. [A victory against terrorism](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

91. [How to address the goals beyond Gaza GEOFFREY ARONSON](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

92. [Bomber buried as hero: Israel closes Gaza Strip to workers. Before violence erupted in 2000, about 100,000 Gazans worked in Israel](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

93. [AS BOMBER IS BURIED, ISRAEL CLOSES GAZA STRIP](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

94. [Israel blows up hardline leader](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

95. [Israel seals off Gaza Strip](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

96. [Assassinate militant leaders, Israeli defence minister says](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

97. [Israel waging its own war on terrorism](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

98. [ISRAEL SEALS GAZA AFTER KILLINGS](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

99. [West Bank Palestinians vote in municipal elections](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

100. [Islamic Jihad sees little to gain from moves for peace](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language - Expanded Results

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jan 01, 2004 to Dec 01, 2005

Hamas vows violent retaliation

Geelong Advertiser (Regional Daily)

April 19, 2004 Monday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 377 words

Body

HUNDREDS of thousands of Palestinians calling for revenge thronged the streets of Gaza City yesterday during the funeral for slain **Hamas** leader Abdel-Aziz al-Rantissi.

Israel killed Rantissi and two of his bodyguards yesterday in an airstrike on his car as it drove near his house in the Sheik Radwan neighbourhood in Gaza.

"Yesterday they said that they killed Rantissi to weaken **Hamas**. They are dreaming. Every time a martyr falls, **Hamas** is strengthened," Ismail Haniyeh, a **Hamas** leader, told more than 70,000 mourners at the city's largest mosque. "**Hamas** might have a crisis at hand after losing its leaders, but it will not be defeated."

Hamas supporters chanting "God is great" and "revenge, revenge" threw flowers at the three men's stretchers as they were carried through the streets in a funeral procession.

The number of mourners approached several hundred thousand, more than attended the funeral last month of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, **Hamas**' co-founder. However, Israel had closed two key checkpoints at the time of Yassin's funeral, cutting Gaza in three and preventing many of Gaza's 1.3 million people from attending.

"You can see (the future of) the movement in the sea of people here today," said Mahmoud Zahar, who had been Rantissi's second in command. **Hamas** chose a new Gaza leader yesterday, but kept it secret fearing another Israeli attack. Israeli Army Radio reported Zahar was the new leader.

During the funeral procession through the streets, Rantissi was covered in a green **Hamas** flag with his face exposed and a green **Hamas** headband around his forehead. His bodyguards, who were badly mangled in the explosion, were completely covered by green flags.

About 200 armed **Hamas** militants lined both sides of the road and gave the bodies a military salute as they approached Rantissi's house. Outside the house, a large green and blue mourning tent was set up and his brothers and children stood nearby greeting mourners.

Armed men fired into the air and many in the gathered crowd raised their fists in anger. **Women** threw candy and flowers to the crowd. Mourners carried **Hamas** flags and pictures of Rantissi.

"You got what you've always dreamed of Abu Mohammed, you won," read graffiti on a nearby wall, referring to Rantissi by his nickname. -- REUTERS

Hamas vows violent retaliation

Load-Date: April 19, 2004

End of Document

Hamas gains grassroots edge

Christian Science Monitor (Boston, MA)

December 27, 2004, Monday

Copyright 2004 The Christian Science Publishing Society

Section: WORLD; Pg. 06

Length: 1010 words

Byline: By Ben Lynfield Correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor

Dateline: OBADEIAH, WEST BANK

Highlight: **Hamas** made significant gains against the ruling Fatah party in Thursday's municipal elections.

Body

Huddling near a gas heater in the mayor's office of this small town near Bethlehem, Fatah campaign manager Atef Rabaya is still reeling.

"I'm trying to wake up from this shock," he says. "The Imams in the mosques must have persuaded people to sympathize with the Islamists."

The shock that Mr. Rabaya was dealt was the stunning victory by **Hamas**, the Islamic Resistance Movement, in his town of Obadeiah, in Thursday's municipal elections.

The elections, the first phase of polling that is to eventually include all West Bank and Gaza Strip municipalities, saw **Hamas** score victories against the ruling Fatah movement, which nevertheless carried a majority of the councils.

When **Hamas** candidates assume office shortly, it will be the biggest hold on power for a movement that until now has functioned largely as an opposition - and is perhaps best known for its suicide bombings against Israeli targets.

"This is the first time **Hamas** will take responsibility in the society," says Hafez Barghouthi, editor of the Palestinian Authority (PA) affiliated al-Hayat al-Jadida newspaper. "It is the first time it will have to go beyond criticism of the PA, to work in the field like a party responsible for coordinating daily life, and as a party with a duty to society."

The elections marked the first local balloting since 1976, when PLO candidates swept most towns to the dismay of Israeli military authorities. From the start of self-rule in 1994 until now, PA appointees ran the municipalities.

Interpreting the results

Mr. Barghouthi believes the municipal elections should not be interpreted as a vote on whether people favor **Hamas**'s stress on violence or Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) chairman Mahmoud Abbas's stress on diplomacy as the means to end Israeli occupation.

"This is not about the Oslo agreement or the road map, it is about who offers services for the people" he says.

Hamas gains grassroots edge

But in the view of Hisham Ahmed, a political scientist at Bir Zeit University, the results of the local elections can be viewed as an expression of dissatisfaction with Mr. Abbas, the Fatah leader favored to win the Jan. 9 election that will choose a successor for the late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

"While he may be popular in the West, he is not popular among many Palestinians because of his political views, his lack of charisma, and his statements," Mr. Ahmed says. Abbas has called for an end to the armed intifada.

Because the PA released the winners by name and not political party, and because many candidates ran as independents, it was difficult to determine Sunday precisely how many of the 26 local councils that were elected were won by Hamas.

Fatah leaders said they had won sixteen councils, while Hamas leaders claimed to have won twelve.

Ahmed estimates that Hamas won nine councils, with Fatah gaining 13 or 14, and the remainder as yet unclear. He described the results as "absolutely a very strong showing" for Hamas, since, he says, the contested localities had been considered Fatah strongholds.

"No longer can one group declare it has the exclusive power in Palestinian society," Ahmed says.

The successes in the municipal elections, analysts say, will likely encourage Hamas to take a further step, participating in May elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council. And the high turnout - 81 percent, according to PA officials - and the absence of major disruptions are seen as positive signs in advance of the January presidential elections.

Hamas is boycotting those elections, saying they emanate from the 1993 Oslo agreements with Israel, which it rejects.

Woman power

In Obadeiah, there was another surprise in store, even for Hamas itself: Three women were among the seven candidates on its affiliated Reform Bloc list to win seats on the eleven-member local council.

One of them, Huda al-Asa, says that as a town councilor, the competition between Hamas and Fatah for the loyalties of Palestinians will not concern her.

"Hamas and Fatah should work together now. I have run to serve my town, not to deal with politics. My priority would be to serve the women and children in general," says the diminutive and soft-spoken Ms. Asa, wearing a navy blue hijab. "Our platform calls for building a public library and a medical compound."

One of the biggest problems facing Obadeiah - soaring unemployment after Israel stopped allowing workers from the town into its territory - is beyond the capability of the municipality to solve, she admits. Israel says the strictures are necessary to prevent terrorist attacks.

Asa, a nurse who is a mother of five, says it was her experience running a charitable association, the Abadiya Women's Society, along with the two other women candidates, that contributed to her appeal. "I used to volunteer during sieges and closures, helping women deliver babies and helping injured people," she says.

According to a quota system, women are guaranteed two seats on each council. But in Obadeiah, the three women were elected without the quota. "We insisted that we could beat the men face to face," says Asa.

Rabaya, the Fatah campaign manager, offers another explanation for Hamas's success in Obadeiah. He says Hamas was more astute in translating clan loyalties - a major factor in local Palestinian politics - into votes for its candidates. Many Fatah supporters voted for Hamas candidates out of clan solidarity, he says.

Hamas gains grassroots edge

But Hassan Youssef, the senior **Hamas** political figure in the West Bank, says **Hamas**'s experience in running trade unions and professional associations and its reputation as being clean of corruption came to play in the polling. "People have seen us working in the administrative level and trust us with their daily lives," he says.

Bethlehem Governor Zuhair Manasra, a member of the Fatah Revolutionary Council, says the gains by **Hamas** in the municipal elections may set the stage for further advances in the legislative elections. "It has a psychological effect on people," he says. "People by nature like to associate themselves with the successful."

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Load-Date: December 26, 2004

End of Document

Hamas wins elections for Gaza councils;

Morning Star

January 29, 2005

Copyright 2005 People's Press Printing Society Ltd

Section: Pg. 4

Length: 429 words

Byline: by Our Foreign Desk

Body

PALESTINIAN Islamist group **Hamas** won an overwhelming victory in local elections in 10 Gaza Strip towns, election officials said yesterday, in a setback for the Fatah party of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

The **Hamas** victory reflected widespread support in Gaza for the armed Islamist movement, which provides welfare, schools and kindergartens to the impoverished residents of the territory at a time when the Palestinian Authority is increasingly unable to provide services.

Last year, demonstrations in Gaza showed that there is widespread anger over corruption in the Fatah-dominated Palestinian Authority.

Thousands of **Hamas** supporters took to the streets of Gaza yesterday to celebrate the election victory.

Chanting "**Hamas** is the real way for reform and rebuilding, " the supporters waved green **Hamas** flags and distributed sweets.

Hamas won 77 out of the 118 seats in 10 districts, the election officials said. **Hamas** said that it now controls seven out of the 10 towns.

Fatah won 26 seats, independents took 14 and the radical Popular Front won one seat, the officials said. Nine of the independents are affiliated with Fatah.

Palestinian Authority Local Affairs Minister Jamal al-Shobaki put the overall turnout at 85 per cent and said that 20 **women** had been elected.

The poll results could give **Hamas** more leverage in its negotiations with Mr Abbas over power sharing.

They could also herald a similar strong showing for **Hamas** in legislative elections which have been set for July.

Mr Abbas has been striving to co-opt militants into the Palestinian political system, recently winning a promise from them to temporarily halt attacks on Israel.

"We consider this victory a victory of the Palestinian people, " said **Hamas** spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri.

"It's not the victory of somebody against somebody. The competition was to serve our people's interests."

Hamas wins elections for Gaza councils;

Hamas ran in nine of the towns, under the slogan "Change and Reform."

Thursday's vote was the first ever municipal election in the coastal strip and a key electoral test for **Hamas**.

Another **Hamas** spokesman claimed that the victory was a vindication for the group's strategy of armed struggle.

"This is a big victory for the resistance, " said the spokesman, Mushir al Masri. "It seems that resistance and Qassam rockets that used to be fired have won, " he said.

The Gaza voting follows December 23 local elections in 26 West Bank towns and villages, in which **Hamas** made a strong showing and took control of several towns from Fatah.

The local elections mark the first time **Hamas** is competing for voter support.

Graphic

DEMOCRACY: A **Hamas** supporter voting in Beit Hanoun on Thursday.

Load-Date: February 3, 2005

End of Document

HAMAS MOURNS, ISSUES THREATS

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

April 19, 2004 Monday

SOONER EDITION

Copyright 2004 P.G. Publishing Co.

Section: WORLD,

Length: 900 words

Byline: KEN ELLINGWOOD LOS ANGELES TIMES

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

Fury filled dusty streets yesterday as tens of thousands of Palestinians mourned the death of **Hamas** leader Abdel Aziz Rantisi, killed a day earlier by an Israeli missile strike not far from his home.

Punctuated by chanting and occasional gunfire, the angry funeral procession in Gaza City was similar in size and tone to that of Rantisi's predecessor, **Hamas** founder Sheik Ahmed Yassin, who also was slain in an Israeli airstrike less than a month earlier.

Once again, **Hamas** promised to strike hard at Israel in revenge. Amid extraordinarily tight Israeli security after the Yassin assassination, the group did not carry out any successful attacks, spurring some to wonder if, in spite of its fiery rhetoric, it had lost some of its capability for organizing large-scale retaliation.

Hamas stalwarts insisted that Rantisi's killing would not hobble the organization, which is popular on the streets of the Gaza Strip for its schools and social-service programs. Mourners lashed out at Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon -- calling him the "head of the snake" -- and at President Bush and the United States. Many said they believed the United States had approved the killing in advance, despite American denials.

But the killing appeared to strengthen Sharon's hand, giving him new momentum in the campaign to persuade members of his Likud Party to back his plan to evacuate all 21 settlements in the Gaza Strip and four others in the West Bank. Sharon still faces opposition, but yesterday, he won the backing of two important swing votes: Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Education Minister Limor Livnat.

Before withdrawing from the Gaza Strip, Israeli officials hope to weaken **Hamas**, and Israel promised after the Yassin assassination that it would target the entire **Hamas** leadership.

On the streets of Gaza, a group of Palestinian **women** chanted, "Revenge! Revenge!" from the entrance of a shopping center. **Hamas** fighters in military-style fatigues carried Rantisi's flag-wrapped body along a packed commercial street toward the city's largest mosque.

Joining the procession were squads of masked gunmen, toting Kalashnikov rifles, and young boys wearing the trademark green headband of **Hamas**, a movement founded by Yassin in 1987 that rejects Israel's existence.

HAMAS MOURNS, ISSUES THREATS

A **Hamas** spokesman said the group had chosen a new leader to replace Rantisi -- a 56-year-old physician known for his hard-line views toward Israel -- but was keeping the identity secret for security reasons.

Israel already had vowed to carry out more of its "targeted killings" of militant leaders. Sharon yesterday said he would continue a policy of "hitting the terrorist organizations and their leaders."

Hamas spokesman Mahmoud Zahar insisted that his organization remained potent, despite the loss of two of its best-known leaders in a month's time. He said the Yassin killing had sparked an unprecedented wave of donations by Gaza residents.

"Israel tried to suppress **[Hamas]**. They used all aggression ... but still **Hamas** is stronger and gaining more power," he said.

Zahar was mentioned among the possible successors to Rantisi. Asked if he had been named to the post, Zahar declined to comment.

The latest killing drew criticism from some European countries and fierce protests from Palestinian officials. The Palestinian foreign minister, Nabil Shaath, said the assassination made it impossible to move forward with peace talks with Israel. Demonstrations broke out in cities across the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Rantisi replaced Yassin a day after the cleric was assassinated March 22 while leaving a mosque in his wheelchair. Rantisi lacked the wide popular following of Yassin, who was the movement's spiritual leader, and spent most of his short tenure as **Hamas** leader in hiding.

But that did not appear to have diminished the public outpouring. Throngs of mourners filled the streets as Rantisi's body was carried from the hospital where he was declared dead Saturday night to his family's home, then to the mosque for midday prayers and finally along the three-mile walk to the same cemetery where Yassin was buried last month.

Mourners lashed out at both Israel and the United States. Palestinians were angered by Bush's watershed endorsement last week of Sharon's plan to evacuate Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip, a declaration that included recognition of Israeli claims to retain large settlement blocs in the West Bank. About 7,500 Jewish settlers now live in the Gaza Strip among about 1.3 million Palestinians.

"There is no peace. Anyone who is calling for peace should be put to death," said Shadi Sharif, a Palestinian police officer. "Palestine will not be liberated if we keep talking about peace and not fighting. The only way to liberate Palestine is to fight and eliminate stupid words."

Hamas depicts the proposed Israeli withdrawal as a victory for its military resistance, an image the Israelis are eager to dispel before exiting.

One way to do that is to hammer the group's leadership so that it can no longer organize major attacks. **Hamas** is responsible for a large share of the more than 100 suicide bombings against Israelis during the 42-month intifada.

Palestinians said **Hamas** would keep fighting.

"**Hamas** will be stronger," said a 27-year-old militant of the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, an armed group tied loosely to the separate Fatah faction of Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat.

Graphic

HAMAS MOURNS, ISSUES THREATS

PHOTO: Khalil Hamra/Associated Press: A Palestinian relative of **Hamas** leader Abdel Aziz Rantisi cries as his body is brought to the family home during his funeral in Gaza City yesterday.

PHOTO: Mohammed Ballas/Associated Press: Palestinians shout slogans as one of them carries a portrait of slain **Hamas** leader Abdel Aziz Rantisi in the West Bank town of Jenin yesterday.

Load-Date: April 20, 2004

End of Document

HAMAS VOWS BLOODY REVENGE

Evening Gazette

March 22, 2004, Monday

Copyright 2004 Gazette Media Company Ltd

Section: Final Edition; NEWS; Pg. 4; Newspaper

Length: 704 words

Body

Israel killed **Hamas** founder Ahmed Yassin in a helicopter missile strike outside a Gaza City mosque today, prompting threats of unprecedented revenge by Palestinian militants against Israel and the United States.

Yassin was the most prominent Palestinian leader to be killed by Israel in three years of fighting, and his assassination was seen as a major escalation.

In a spontaneous outpouring of rage and grief, tens of thousands of Palestinians took to the streets in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

A cloud of black smoke hung over Gaza City, as angry mourners burned tyres in protest.

"Words cannot describe the emotion of anger and hate inside our hearts," said **Hamas** official Ismail Haniyeh, a close associate of Yassin.

Israeli Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz, in turn, pledged "the battle against **Hamas** will continue," suggesting there will be more air strikes and raids.

The United States urged restraint.

At daybreak today, Israeli helicopters fired three missiles as the wheelchair-bound Yassin, his bodyguards and dozens of others left a neighbourhood mosque in Gaza City.

Yassin and seven others were killed, including several bodyguards. Seventeen people were wounded.

The Yassin assassination was seen as an enormous gamble by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who is trying to score a decisive victory against **Hamas** ahead of a possible Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, but risks triggering an escalation in bloodshed.

Mofaz, the Israeli defence minister, said Yassin was the "Palestinian bin Laden," referring to fugitive Saudi terror mastermind Osama bin Laden.

Gideon Meir, an Israeli Foreign Ministry official, said Yassin was directly responsible for the scores of suicide attacks **Hamas** unleashed since 2000.

"He is the one who is sending children and **women** to explode themselves," Meir said.

HAMAS VOWS BLOODY REVENGE

The Palestinian Authority said in a statement: "Israel has exceeded all red lines with this cheap and dirty crime", and declared three days of mourning.

Flags at Yasser Arafat's headquarters in the West Bank town of Ramallah were lowered to half-staff, and the Palestinian Cabinet was to hold an emergency session later today.

Fearing revenge attacks, Israel clamped a closure on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, barring all Palestinians from entering Israel.

In Nablus about 15,000 people flocked to the city centre.

"This morning, dozens came to us volunteering to be suicide bombers," one masked man said at the rally.

Thousands demonstrated in Jenin and in the West Bank town of Hebron, dozens of Palestinians threw stones at Israeli soldiers, who fired tear gas.

West Bank schools were closed, and a one-day commercial strike was declared.

Hamas promised a harsh response.

"Yassin is a man in a nation, and a nation in a man. And the retaliation of this nation will be of the size of this man," said Abdel Aziz Rantisi, a **Hamas** leader in Gaza who escaped an assassination attempt last June.

For the first time, **Hamas** also threatened the United States, saying America's backing of Israel made the assassination possible.

Palestinian militants fired ten home-made rockets toward an Israeli settlement in Gaza. **Hamas** also fired rockets toward the Erez crossing between Gaza and Israel, but there were no reports of injuries.

Israel had tried to kill Yassin in September when a warplane dropped a bomb on a building where **Hamas** leaders were meeting, but Yassin escaped with a small wound to his hand.

Announcing Yassin's death today over mosque loudspeakers, **Hamas** said, "Sharon has opened the gates of hell, and nothing will stop us from cutting off his head."

Later tens of thousands of Palestinians carrying billowing green **Hamas** flags flooded the streets of Gaza City for the funeral procession.

Mourners jostled to touch the flag-draped coffin while two Israeli helicopters flew above. About 2,000 demonstrators gathered outside Arafat's headquarters, screaming for revenge.

The attack also drew criticism in Israel. Opposition leaders and even some members of Sharon's government warned the cycle of violence would increase..

Yassin founded **Hamas** in 1987. He was held in Israeli prisons for several years before being released in 1994.

Israel blamed him for inspiring **Hamas** bombers and attackers.

Comment: Page 6

Load-Date: March 22, 2004

Palestinians give Hamas strong backing in elections

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

December 25, 2004 Saturday

FIVE STAR LIFT EDITION

Copyright 2004 St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Inc.

Section: NEWS; Pg. A10

Length: 340 words

Byline: THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: NABLUS, West Bank

Body

The radical **Hamas** movement made a surprisingly strong showing in local Palestinian elections, preliminary results show.

The results signal a drop in popularity for the ruling Fatah movement heading into next month's presidential poll.

Elections for local councils were held Thursday in 26 communities perceived as Fatah strongholds. In all, 150,000 voters chose from among more than 800 candidates. Sixteen percent of the 360 local council seats were reserved for **women**.

Preliminary results obtained Friday show that Fatah won a majority of council seats in 14 towns. **Hamas** was participating for the first time in Palestinian elections and took control in nine communities. In two towns, a joint **Hamas**-Fatah slate won, indicating that local issues and clan loyalties could blunt the rivalry.

"This is an outstanding result for **Hamas**," said Palestinian analyst Ali Jerbawi, a former head of the Palestinian Election Commission. "The 26 localities were selected from the beginning (as) strongholds of Fatah. So the results should have been more for Fatah than **Hamas**."

Hamas has been at the forefront of anti-Israeli violence, carrying out suicide bombings and other attacks. And **Hamas** has emerged as the strongest political challenger to Fatah, the PLO faction that was led by the late Yasser Arafat.

A **Hamas** spokesman in Gaza, Sami Abu Zuhri, said the result reflected strong support for his group. But he suggested that **Hamas** was ready to forge coalitions with Fatah. "The coming stage is one of development and rebuilding our society, and we will cooperate with everyone to strengthen our society," he said.

Hamas is boycotting the Palestinian presidential elections on Jan. 9. But its strong showing in the municipal poll could indicate faltering support for interim leader Mahmoud Abbas, the presidential front-runner.

In Israeli-Palestinian violence Friday, Israeli soldiers killed three armed Palestinians in the West Bank town of Tulkarem, the army said. The three were members of the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, a violent group with ties to Fatah.

Graphic

photo

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS - Palestinian men line up to vote in municipal elections in the village of Arrabah in the West Bank on Thursday. Voters' support of Hamas signaled a drop in popularity for the ruling Fatah movement.

Load-Date: December 27, 2004

End of Document

Hamas takes aim at Israeli leaders

The Record (Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario)

March 25, 2004 Thursday Final Edition

Copyright 2004 Metroland Media Group Ltd

Section: FRONT; Pg. A5; NEWS

Length: 835 words

Dateline: GAZA CITY, GAZA STRIP

Body

The militant group **Hamas** backed off its initial threats against the United States yesterday, saying that it would focus on attacking Israel, and trying to kill Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, in retaliation for the assassination of its founder in an Israeli missile strike.

The Syrian-based leader of **Hamas**, Khaled Mashaal, addressed mourners in a Gaza City soccer stadium by telephone hookup yesterday, promising victory over Israel and appealing for Palestinian unity.

"Who is America and who is this ugly world and who is Sharon and who is Mofaz?" Mashaal asked in a show of contempt. Shaul Mofaz is Israel's defence minister.

Associated Press

Hamas has killed hundreds of Israelis in suicide bombings and other attacks in recent years.

Israel has been on the highest possible alert since killing **Hamas** founder Ahmed Yassin on Monday. Immediately after Yassin's death, the Islamic resistance group made veiled threats to retaliate against the United States.

But Abdel Aziz Rantisi, a hardliner named Tuesday as **Hamas**' new Gaza chief, said the group's militant activities are aimed solely at Israel.

"We are inside Palestinian land and acting only inside Palestinian land," Rantisi told reporters in Gaza. "We are resisting the occupation, nothing else.

"Our resistance will continue just inside our border, here inside our country."

Rantisi also denied reports **Hamas** will now team up with al-Qaida, calling it "Zionist propaganda."

Hamas' armed wing issued a statement Monday saying Washington's support of Israel made Yassin's assassination possible.

"All the Muslims of the world will be honoured to join in on the retaliation for this crime," the statement said.

U.S. President George W. Bush said after the statement that the United States takes the threat seriously. On Tuesday, the State Department repeated a longstanding warning urging Americans not to travel to the Gaza Strip.

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat said yesterday he opposed targeting civilians.

Hamas takes aim at Israeli leaders

"We are against any attack on civilians, whether they were Israel or Palestinian," he said.

Israel's army chief hinted Tuesday that Israel would put Arafat on its hit-list as well.

Hamas said yesterday it was considering targeting Sharon in retaliation for Yassin's killing.

Khaled Mashaal, **Hamas**' overall leader, who is based in Syria, said the group's military wing would have to see whether its capabilities would allow it to kill Sharon.

"I hope that the holy warriors can retaliate against this awful crime by targeting the most prominent Zionist leaders . . . including Sharon," Mashaal said in an interview posted on a **Hamas**-affiliated website.

For its part, Israel has decided to target the entire **Hamas** leadership. Israel says **Hamas** has killed 377 Israelis in hundreds of attacks, including 52 suicide bombings, since the latest Palestinian uprising against the decades-old Israeli occupation began more than three years ago.

Rantisi, who survived an Israeli assassination attempt last June, said yesterday he was not concerned.

"It's death by killing or cancer," said Rantisi, a physician. "If it's cardiac arrest or an Apache (helicopter), I prefer to be killed by an Apache."

Rantisi, 54, has appeared in public frequently since Yassin's death, but always in crowds that deter an attack.

Tens of thousands of Palestinians at a Gaza City soccer stadium cheered the announcement Tuesday that Rantisi had been chosen leader. One by one, senior **Hamas** officials swore loyalty to him.

Rantisi rejects even a temporary suspension of attacks on Israel.

He led about 1,000 people in noon prayers yesterday at the stadium, where **Hamas** has organized mourning ceremonies. As he spoke to reporters afterward, he was surrounded by about 25 youths wearing green **Hamas** bandanas.

Meanwhile, several hundred **women** gathered in a mourning tent near Yassin's home in Gaza City. Many wore **Hamas** headbands, and some wrapped themselves in long pieces of green **Hamas** flags.

"Rantisi, give weapons to the **women**," they chanted.

Israel stepped up security throughout the country, and malls, restaurants and buses have been empty as people stay close to home.

The Israeli military went on the offensive in Gaza and along the Lebanese border to prevent Palestinian attacks. A total of four Palestinian militants were killed in the fighting.

The army said that troops had killed two armed Palestinian militants who had tried to infiltrate the Gaza settlement of Morag late Tuesday. Troops also confiscated a bag of explosives. **Hamas** claimed responsibility for the failed attack.

In the Khan Younis refugee camp, Israeli forces razed four Palestinian farms, partially demolished two houses and destroyed a road linking two parts of the shantytown during an overnight raid, Palestinian officials said. Early yesterday, the troops withdrew from the area.

The Israeli army said it had removed some brush and two abandoned buildings that were used to fire on settlements. It said troops opened fire after being attacked by an anti-tank missile and gunfire. No casualties on either side were reported.

Graphic

Photo: Abdel Aziz Rantisi, the new **Hamas** chief in Gaza, says he would rather be killed fighting for the Palestinian cause than die of natural causes.

Load-Date: March 25, 2004

End of Document

Israelis kill 14 in strike at Hamas

The Australian

September 8, 2004 Wednesday All-round Country Edition

Copyright 2004 Nationwide News Pty Limited

Section: WORLD; Pg. 11

Length: 565 words

Byline: Abraham Rabinovich

Body

Jerusalem

AT least 14 Palestinians were killed and 45 wounded yesterday when Israeli helicopter gunships, warplanes and tanks attacked a sports field in eastern Gaza used as a training ground by militant group Hamas.

The assault on the outskirts of the Hamas stronghold of Shijaia came a week after the group claimed responsibility for the suicide bombings of two buses in the city of Beersheba that killed 16 Israelis.

"This is an ongoing war," Hamas spokesman Mushir al-Masri said yesterday.
AFP

"One day for us and one day for them."

The latest deaths take the toll from the September 2000 start of the Palestinian intifada, or uprising, to 4291, including 3277 Palestinians and 943 Israelis.

Palestinian sources said all of yesterday's casualties were Hamas members. A Hamas statement said the sports field was a camp where a group of fighters was training.

Just after midnight, local time, tanks stationed at the Nahal Oz border crossing between Israel and Gaza opened fire on Shijaia, a suburb of Gaza City, and fighter jets and helicopters launched missiles from above.

Dozens of members of Hamas's military wing were reportedly meeting in a building adjoining the field when the attack began. Palestinian sources said helicopter gunships continued to hover over the site and fired additional rockets when Hamas members arrived at the scene.

Crowding the bloodied wards of Gaza's Shifa Hospital, hundreds of Hamas men carried their dead comrades aloft crying "Allahu Akhbar" (God is great) and vowing revenge.

Palestinian Foreign Minister Nabil Shaath condemned the "terrorist attack by Israeli occupation forces".

The precision and timing of the night-time assault reflected the close monitoring of Palestinian militants by Israeli military intelligence.

Israelis kill 14 in strike at Hamas

In the wake of last week's double suicide bombing, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon ordered the army to step up its attacks on Hamas and to escalate the assassination of its leaders.

The Hamas spokesman vowed vengeance. "This ugly Israeli crime will not pass unpunished," he said.

Not long after he spoke, a makeshift rocket fired from Hamas's stronghold in the Gaza Strip landed in the southern Israeli town of Sderot but caused no injuries.

The largest number of Palestinian fatalities from an air attack to date occurred two years ago when an Israeli warplane dropped a one-tonne bomb on a building in Gaza housing a senior Hamas field commander, killing him and 14 others, including women and children.

Yesterday's attack was on a non-residential target. An Israeli army spokesman said the field in Gaza was used by Hamas to train personnel in firing rockets and mortars, hijacking vehicles, and assembling bombs.

Meanwhile, Egypt has reportedly brokered an agreement with Hamas and Islamic Jihad under which the militant organisations would refrain from attacks on Israel from the Gaza Strip if Israel implemented Mr Sharon's plan to withdraw from the area next year.

A Palestinian source told Associated Press the organisations agreed violence would cease, and that they would turn their weapons over to the Palestinian Authority three months after Israel's withdrawal. It is not clear, however, whether this agreement is dependent on Israel accepting Egyptian proposals that the Palestinians be permitted to operate their own air and sea ports, something Israel says would lead to uncontrolled import of armaments.

Load-Date: September 7, 2004

End of Document

Hamas is strong in its 1st election

Charleston Gazette (West Virginia)

December 25, 2004, Saturday

Copyright 2004 Charleston Newspapers

Section: News; Pg. P7A

Length: 301 words

Byline: Ali Daraghmeh The Associated Press

Body

NABLUS, West Bank - **Hamas** made a strong showing in local elections in the West Bank, the first time the Islamic militant group competed at the polls, according to preliminary elections results obtained Friday.

The apparent show of support for **Hamas** came as leaders of its main rival in the election - the ruling Fatah movement - are pushing to resume peace talks with Israel.

Hamas is pledged to Israel's destruction and opposes negotiations.

Elections for local councils were held in 26 communities on Thursday, with some 150,000 eligible voters choosing from among more than 800 candidates. Sixteen percent of the 360 local council seats were reserved for **women**.

The vote was the first in municipalities since 1976. Polling stations were jammed throughout the day, with high voter turnout reported. Elections were held in many of the major Palestinian cities or large towns. Voting in an additional 600 towns and villages was expected to be held next year.

According to preliminary results obtained by The Associated Press, Fatah movement won a majority of council seats in 14 towns, while **Hamas** took control in nine communities. In two towns, a joint **Hamas**-Fatah slate won, indicating that the rivalry was at times blunted by local issues and clan loyalties.

The outcome of the vote in one community, Yabed, was not immediately available.

Hamas officials said the group won a majority in at least 17 local councils, based on reports from their election observers.

The discrepancy could not immediately be explained. However, on the local level, membership in a political faction is now always clear-cut, and some candidates could have been claimed by the rival groups.

A **Hamas** spokesman in Gaza, Sami Abu Zuhri, **Hamas** spokesman, said the result was a reflection of strong support for the group among Palestinians.

Load-Date: December 27, 2004

Hamas is strong in its 1st election

End of Document

Gaza vote seen as test for Hamas

National Post (f/k/a The Financial Post) (Canada)

January 28, 2005 Friday

National Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. A11

Length: 718 words

Byline: Margaret Coker, Cox Newspapers

Dateline: ZAH'RA, Gaza Strip

Body

ZAH'RA, Gaza Strip - Standing outside a polling station yesterday in ankle-deep sand drifts that pass for a road, political novice Amal al-Louri needed no coaching on the mantra that all politics are local.

The **Hamas** matron, wrapped in the head-to-toe attire of a devout Muslim, engaged in some last-minute campaigning and eagerly urged neighbours to select her name on the ballot.

"I will build your children a park. I will work hard to solve your problems," Ms. al-Louri, a mother of five, told streams of veil-covered **women** using their lunch breaks to vote for a new town council.

Some 90,000 Gazans went to the polls yesterday in the territory's first-ever vote to select municipal leaders. This dose of democracy in Gaza, home to 1.3 million Palestinians, is being seen as a testing ground for the future of the terrorist group **Hamas**.

The organization, which has enjoyed popularity through the years in the impoverished territory, wants to use the vote as a bridge to become a legitimate political party. **Hamas** has long carried out welfare programs and other community services in Gaza and the West Bank, separate from its violent acts against Israelis.

"Resistance is **Hamas**' main focus, and we call for its continuation, but it is our duty to progress," said Sami Abu Zuhri, a senior member of the group in Gaza.

"These elections show that we are a vital part of society and that we believe in democracy."

The current round of local elections is taking part in stages. The first phase, held Dec. 23 in several West Bank villages, saw **Hamas** gain significant headway into historic strongholds of Fatah, the mainstream party founded by Yasser Arafat, which has run Palestinian affairs for five decades.

In yesterday's vote across Gaza, **Hamas**-backed candidates were expected to make a strong showing as well, since Gaza is the birthplace of the movement. Official results are not expected for at least two days, but early exit polls indicated that turnout exceeded 80% and that **Hamas** candidates could have won at least 30% of the 118 seats up for grabs.

Gaza vote seen as test for Hamas

For Hamas, a public shift from terrorist operations is crucial to its survival within a society that is tired of fighting and deep in economic distress, analysts said.

"Hamas faces a critical choice of life or death. Getting into the Palestinian political system gives them a future. Standing outside [of the political arena] as they always have in the past would mean the end of them," said Ghazi Hamid, the editor of the al-Raisa newspaper and a confidant of Hamas leaders.

Hamas is responsible for the majority of suicide attacks against Israelis during the past four years of violence. In its official statements, it is committed to Israel's destruction and building an Islamic state from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River.

It also runs one of the most effective social development organizations in the Gaza Strip, including schools, health clinics, summer camps and mosques in impoverished neighbourhoods.

This devotion to welfare could give Hamas a significant advantage in the municipal elections.

"Hamas listens and responds to the peoples' needs. Those in Fatah take care only of themselves," said Attalah Zuweideh, a 25-year-old resident of Beit Hanoun, referring to the establishment party founded by Mr. Arafat.

(Story can end here; optional material follows.)

Among the 414 candidates who participated in yesterday's elections, 68 are women. Hamas, despite its traditional Islamic leanings, has put forward multiple female candidates, as did Fatah. Palestinian election law reserves 20 percent of all seats for female candidates.

In Zah'ra, a township of roughly 14,000 people, the eight female candidates are all old friends. Despite their different party affiliations, their platforms share the same goals. They want more attention paid to children's welfare and basic public services, two areas they said were ignored by the old male-dominated council appointed by Mr. Arafat.

Asked whether having Hamas members on the town council would be a positive or negative development, Fatah candidate Hanaan Kashalu said that as long as the officials worked hard, nothing else mattered.

"We are all Palestinians first. Our first obligation is to help our people. Hamas has good experience in this, despite what the Israelis say about them," Kashalu said.

Load-Date: January 28, 2005

In Loss of Leaders, Hamas Discovers a Renewed Strength

The New York Times

April 25, 2004 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2004 The New York Times Company

Section: Section 1; Column 3; Foreign Desk; Pg. 6

Length: 1324 words

Byline: By GREG MYRE

Dateline: GAZA STRIP, April 23

Body

The leaders of Hamas gathered under a tent at a dusty soccer stadium last Sunday, joined by thousands of mourners offering condolences for the group's slain chief in Gaza, Dr. Abdel Aziz Rantisi. When the service ended, the Hamas officials vanished, making perhaps their last joint public appearance for a long time.

Israeli missile strikes that have killed two Hamas leaders in the past month have driven the surviving senior officials deep underground and raised questions about the group's ability to elude Israel's defenses and resume attacks inside Israeli cities.

While Hamas now lacks a high-profile leader here, and is perhaps less potent, there is a flip side. Each Israeli killing only seems to enhance the popularity of Hamas on the street, particularly in its Gaza stronghold, where it draws recruits from a society that is extremely poor and deeply religious.

The outpouring of support during the three-day mourning period that concluded Tuesday demonstrated the broad backing Hamas has gained. Women who were dressed in black from head to toe wrapped the emerald green Hamas headband around their veils. Youths plastered Dr. Rantisi's "martyr poster" on every available flat surface.

The Palestinian Authority, which officially opposes Hamas's bombing campaign, was prominently represented by Gaza's police chief, Ghazi al-Jabali, who was trailed by an entourage of policemen as he exchanged hugs with Hamas figures.

"Hamas may not be able to carry out a large number of attacks right now, and they have been shaken by the loss of their leaders," said Ziad Abu Amr, a moderate Palestinian legislator and a former cabinet member who has had broad political contact with Hamas. "But this is a group that enjoys an extensive presence here. It is not easy to dismantle Hamas."

One public opinion survey released this week found that for the first time, Hamas outpolled the long dominant Fatah movement, headed by the Palestinian leader, Yasir Arafat.

Thirty-one percent said they would now vote for Hamas in an election, compared with 27 percent for Al Fatah. The poll, conducted by the Palestinian Center for Research and Cultural Dialogue, surveyed 506 Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza and said it had a margin of error of 3.5 percentage points.

In Loss of Leaders, Hamas Discovers a Renewed Strength

The survey was taken after the March 22 killing of the Hamas founder, Sheik Ahmed Yassin, and Hamas appeared to be riding a wave of sympathy that might not last. Still, support for Hamas has grown steadily during the three-and-a-half years of the current Palestinian uprising.

In opening the campaign to kill Hamas leaders, Israel's prime minister, Ariel Sharon, has changed the rules of battle, and Hamas is changing the way it operates.

Hamas has carried out the greatest number of suicide bombings since the Palestinian uprising began in September 2000. While the bombmakers and the bombers operated from the West Bank with the utmost secrecy, Hamas's top leaders have been prominent public figures in Gaza. Sheik Yassin and Dr. Rantisi were fixtures at Hamas rallies.

The Israeli military has waged a concerted campaign that has smashed many Hamas cells in the West Bank, but the public leaders in Gaza appeared to be off limits.

This seeming immunity ended abruptly last summer, and since then Israel has killed three senior leaders and wounded one more. Mr. Sharon says any Palestinian figure linked to violence could be singled out by Israel. On Friday, he said he no longer felt bound by a pledge he had made to President Bush not to harm Mr. Arafat.

Hamas has vowed to increase its attacks, but so far the opposite has happened. The group has been responsible for more than 50 suicide bombings since 2000, but the pace has slowed since last summer.

The combative Dr. Rantisi spent most of his time in hiding during the four weeks he served as Hamas's leader. On the day of his death, April 17, he made a rare visit to see his family at their modest home in a typical Gaza City neighborhood. He arrived before dawn and stayed until the evening. He was killed shortly after he left the house in his car, according to family members.

The following day Hamas said it had chosen a successor, but refused to divulge his name out of concern he would be next on Israel's hit list. In Gaza, there are rumors that the group has settled for a collective leadership, at least temporarily.

Despite the threats, the group has carried out just one suicide bombing, killing one Israeli policeman, since Sheik Yassin's death nearly five weeks ago.

If Hamas can no longer carry out regular large-scale attacks against Israel, its reputation could suffer among Palestinians, who remain largely supportive of suicide bombings. For now, many Palestinians appear patient, believing Hamas needs time to prepare for a major attack.

Ahmed Baher, one of the senior Hamas leaders, said the timing was not important. "Look around and see all these people who are supporting our choice of holy war and resistance," Mr. Baher said at the mourning service.

Israel says Hamas and the other Palestinian factions are still trying to attack daily, but the security forces have become much more effective in thwarting the bombers.

The security forces are now stopping 80 percent to 90 percent of Palestinian attacks, compared with 50 percent or fewer in the early days of the Palestinian uprising, according to Ariel Merari, a counterterrorism expert at Tel Aviv University.

"The capabilities of these groups have been reduced," said Eli Karmon, an official at the private International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism, outside Tel Aviv. "Many of the midlevel and senior-level operatives have been arrested or killed."

Hamas is still capable of a "big operation," Mr. Karmon said, "but not the same number of operations, at the same tempo, as before."

In Loss of Leaders, Hamas Discovers a Renewed Strength

With Hamas's public profile reduced in Gaza, greater attention has been placed on the group's overall leader, Khaled Mashaal, who is based in Syria. Mr. Mashaal, considered a hard-liner within the group, survived a botched assassination attempt by Israeli agents in Amman, Jordan, in 1997. Israel says he could be a target again.

Hamas has often said its fight is only with Israel and has not carried out attacks elsewhere. But the group says the Bush administration's strong support for Israel has made it complicit in the killing of Hamas leaders. The group has hinted that the United States could become a target.

Adopting such a strategy could be extremely risky.

Hamas has raised large sums of money from Arab countries, particularly those in the Persian Gulf, as well as in Europe and the United States. Staging attacks against American targets in any of those places could bring a backlash, making it more difficult to operate abroad.

Israel and the United States have long regarded Hamas as a terrorist organization, and last year the European Union added all wings of Hamas to its list of terror groups.

The group's bombing campaign is not regarded as hugely expensive. But Hamas does need tens of millions of dollars annually to maintain its large network of social programs, which include schools and medical clinics. This work bolsters Hamas in the eyes of many Palestinians, who see the group as dedicated to the poor, while the Palestinian Authority, led by Mr. Arafat, is widely viewed as corrupt and inept.

Hamas is also facing the question of how to respond to the prospect of an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza.

The group already is claiming credit, saying its attacks have made it too costly for Israel to keep its soldiers and settlers in Gaza.

Hamas has always refused to take part in the Palestinian Authority, but now says it is considering helping run Gaza if the Israelis depart.

"We want a real role in making decisions," said Ismail Haniya, another senior Hamas leader in Gaza. Hamas's influence, he said, "should reflect the balance of power that has come about as a result of our resistance to Israel."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photo: Rival Palestinian groups met last week in Gaza to mourn Dr. Abdel Aziz Rantisi, the Hamas leader killed by Israel. Mohammed al-Hindi, center, and Nafiz Azim, right, of Islamic Jihad, greeted Hamas's Ismael Hania. (Photo by Agence France-Presse--Getty Images)

Load-Date: April 25, 2004

Hamas vows revenge on Israel

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

April 19, 2004 Monday

Home Edition

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The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Section: News;

Length: 1133 words

Byline: CRAIG NELSON, MARGARET COKER

Body

Gaza City, Gaza Strip --- Tens of thousands of Palestinians vowed revenge against Israel on Sunday as the body of **Hamas** leader Abdel Aziz Rantisi, assassinated by an Israeli missile strike a day earlier, was carried through the streets of Gaza City to a sandy grave in Martyrs' Cemetery.

Meanwhile, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, reaffirming his government's determination to hunt down Palestinian militants, won the support of two key members of his right-wing Likud Party for an upcoming party referendum on his plan to pull out Jewish settlers and some Israeli soldiers from the Gaza Strip.

During a regular Sunday meeting of his Cabinet, Sharon praised his security forces for Saturday's missile strike and said Israel would relentlessly pursue and kill any Palestinians in the Gaza Strip it deemed dangerous before any withdrawal from the narrow strip of seaside land that is home to 1.2 million Palestinians. He told Cabinet members that the military campaign was half of a two-track policy.

For the Journal-Constitution

"The policy is an effort on the one hand to progress on the diplomatic process and on the other to harm the terror organizations and those who lead them," he said.

Israel's successful helicopter missile strike against Rantisi --- the second assassination of a top **Hamas** leader in less than a month --- underlined its determination to eliminate the leadership of Palestinian militant groups by any means necessary. The message apparently was received by **Hamas**, which secretly appointed Rantisi's successor early Sunday, but refused to reveal his identity.

Hours later, thousands of mourners --- some estimates said hundreds of thousands --- jostled with each other to touch the remains of Rantisi as his funeral cortege wound through Gaza's streets on the way to the cemetery. There, he was buried just yards away from the grave of Sheik Ahmed Yassin, the founder and spiritual leader of **Hamas** who was killed in an Israeli helicopter strike on March 22.

Hamas vows revenge on Israel

Masked militants fired volleys into the air and occasionally set off hand grenades, while some 2,000 female followers of Hamas, covered head-to-toe in the traditional black abaya, marched in formation separately from the men, many waving the green flag of Hamas. Meanwhile, teenage boys wielding cans of spray paint added Rantisi's name on cement walls alongside that of last month's martyr, Yassin.

'100 unique retaliations'

As they did after Yassin's assassination, Hamas faithful vowed revenge, although to date no massive retaliation for the killing of the revered Yassin has occurred.

"Our guns are aimed at the Israelis. Rantisi and Yassin have the same place in our hearts. We have principles. We have methods. We have Islam," said Abu Anas, 38, as Rantisi's body, wrapped except for his head in Hamas's green flag, was borne past on the shoulders of the group's heaving, sweating followers.

Hamas posted a statement on its Web site pledging "100 unique retaliations" that will rock Israel. The group, which has claimed responsibility for most of the suicide bombings that have terrorized Israelis in the past 3 1/2 years, said it had declared a state of emergency in the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip until vengeance was achieved.

"Yesterday they said that they killed Rantisi to weaken Hamas. They are dreaming. Every time a martyr falls, Hamas is strengthened," Ismail Haniyeh, a Hamas leader, told thousands of mourners gathered Sunday at Gaza City's largest mosque. "Hamas might have a crisis at hand after losing its leaders, but it will not be defeated."

The Israeli military has not disclosed whether the missile that tore open the white sedan carrying the 56-year-old pediatrician and two others Saturday evening was guided by laser, an unmanned drone or by the intercepted signal of a mobile phone.

Whatever the case, Rantisi initially survived the missile strike on Gaza City's al-Labidi Street, according to Saud Abu Awad, 54, who said he and a neighbor reached the mangled car first. "Leave me. Take care of the other two guys," Awad quoted Rantisi as saying. The Hamas leader died five minutes after arriving at a local hospital, however.

In Washington, Bush's national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice, denied that the president had approved the killing of Rantisi during his White House meeting with Sharon several days earlier. Appearing on ABC News, she repeated past administration statements that Israel has the right to defend itself, but urged Israel to "take into consideration the consequences of anything that it does."

Reaction was tougher elsewhere. British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw condemned the killing as "unlawful, unjustified and counterproductive." U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan also condemned it as illegal.

Israeli officials defended the killing, however, saying it was an act of self-defense. They accused Rantisi of planning a large attack on Israel to retaliate for Yassin's killing. Slaying someone who poses an imminent threat is self-defense, not assassination, Israel has argued.

Political bargains made

Domestic political considerations also appeared to play an important role in the targeting of Rantisi.

Sharon, who has been battling an unruly Likud Party faction over the Gaza plan with which he hopes to crown his political career, received accolades from his Cabinet on Sunday morning for his tough stance against Hamas. He also received praise for the guarantees he secured last week from President Bush --- specifically, support for six large Jewish settlement blocs in the West Bank remaining in Israeli hands.

Both of these political developments played a role in persuading two key Likud Party insiders, Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Education Minister Limor Livnat, to change their minds about the Gaza withdrawal plan, the pair said Sunday.

Hamas vows revenge on Israel

Sharon told his Cabinet that no withdrawal would occur until the fence Israel is building to separate Palestinians from Israelis on the West Bank is completed, a key demand by Netanyahu.

Livnat said she was assured by Dov Weisglass, Sharon's chief of staff, that the West Bank Jewish settlement of Ariel would remain within the security barrier under construction. She also said Weisglass reassured her that there would be no Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip before the fence is complete, and major settlement blocs will expand to accommodate natural population growth.

Livnat said on Israeli Army Radio that she was told that the security fence will be built before any withdrawal takes place and will surround the settlements of Ariel, Maale Adumim and Emanuel. According to the understandings with the Americans, Livnat added, the large settlement blocs --- including Gush Etzion, Maale Adumim and Ariel --- would not be included in any future negotiations with the Palestinians.

Graphic

Photo: Palestinians in southern Lebanon carry a photo of Abdel Aziz Rantisi, the second **Hamas** chief slain in a month. / MOHAMAD ZAATARI / Associated Press

Load-Date: April 19, 2004

End of Document

Vows of revenge - Hamas's reply to killing

The Daily Telegraph (Sydney, Australia)

April 19, 2004 Monday

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Section: WORLD-BIOG- ABDEL-AZIZ AL-RANTISSITABLE; Pg. 24

Length: 485 words

Byline: IBRAHIM BARZAK

Body

HUNDREDS of thousands of Palestinians calling for revenge thronged the streets of Gaza City yesterday during the funeral for slain **Hamas** leader Abdel-Aziz al-Rantissi.

Israel killed Rantissi and two of his bodyguards on Saturday in an air strike on his car as it drove near his house in the Sheik Radwan neighbourhood in Gaza.

"Yesterday they said that they killed Rantissi to weaken **Hamas**. They are dreaming. Every time a martyr falls, **Hamas** is strengthened," Ismail Haniyeh, a **Hamas** leader, told more than 70,000 mourners at the city's largest mosque.

MATP

"**Hamas** might have a crisis at hand after losing its leaders but it will not be defeated."

Hamas supporters chanting "God is great" and "revenge, revenge" threw flowers at the three men's stretchers as they were carried through the streets in a funeral procession.

The number of mourners approached several hundred thousand, more than attended the funeral last month of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, **Hamas** co-founder.

However, Israel had closed two key checkpoints at the time of Yassin's funeral, cutting Gaza in three and preventing many of Gaza's 1.3 million people from attending.

"You can see [the future of] the movement in the sea of people here today," said Mahmoud Zahar, who had been Rantissi's deputy.

During the funeral procession through the streets, Rantissi was covered in a green **Hamas** flag with his face exposed and a green **Hamas** headband around his forehead.

His bodyguards, who were badly mangled in the explosion, were completely covered by green flags.

About 200 armed **Hamas** militants lined both sides of the road and gave the bodies a military salute as they approached Rantissi's house.

Outside the house, a large green and blue mourning tent was set up and his brothers and children stood nearby greeting mourners.

Vows of revenge - Hamas's reply to killing

Armed men fired into the air and many in the gathered crowd raised their fists in anger. Women threw candy and flowers to the crowd.

Mourners carried Hamas flags and pictures of Rantissi. One picture showed Rantissi and Yassin sitting together and laughing. Loudspeakers blasted Rantissi's former speeches.

"You got what you've always dreamed of Abu Mohammed, you won," read graffiti on a nearby wall, referring to Rantissi by his nickname.

Quotes from Rantissi covered the wall of his house and green Hamas flags and black mourning flags hung from nearby homes.

Marked for death

* Co-founder of Hamas in 1987, AbdulAziz al-Rantissi was named the group's leader after Israel's killing of Ahmed Yassin on March 22

* An Egyptian-trained paediatrician, he long acted as Hamas spokesman before succeeding Mr Yassin

* Jailed off and on for years by Israel, Mr Rantissi was among 415 men associated with Hamas and Islamic Jihad expelled to southern Lebanon in 1992. Facing international pressure, Israel allowed them to return

* In June 2003 MrRantissi and his teenage son were wounded in a helicopter missile strike on his car in Gaza City

Load-Date: April 18, 2004

End of Document

Hamas Surprisingly Strong in Palestinian Election

The New York Times

December 25, 2004 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2004 The New York Times Company

Section: Section A; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 5

Length: 488 words

Byline: AP

Dateline: NABLUS, West Bank, Dec. 24

Body

The militant group **Hamas** made a surprisingly strong showing in local Palestinian elections, according to preliminary results obtained Friday, signaling a drop in popularity for the ruling Fatah movement before next month's presidential poll.

Some 150,000 people were eligible to vote Thursday in the elections for local councils in 26 communities that had been thought to be Fatah strongholds. In all, more than 800 candidates were running to fill 360 local council seats, and 16 percent of the spots were reserved for **women**.

According to preliminary results obtained by The Associated Press, Fatah won a majority of council seats in 14 towns, while **Hamas**, taking part for the first time in Palestinian elections, took control in nine.

In two towns, a joint **Hamas**-Fatah slate won, indicating that local issues and clan loyalties blunted the rivalry at times.

The outcome of the vote in one community, Yabed, was not immediately available.

Hamas has been at the forefront of anti-Israeli violence, carrying out suicide bombings and other attacks, even as it has emerged as the strongest political challenger to Fatah, the Palestinian Liberation Organizations faction formerly led by Yasir Arafat.

A **Hamas** spokesman in Gaza, Sami Abu Zuhri, said the result reflected strong support for the group but suggested that **Hamas** was ready to forge coalitions with Fatah.

"The coming stage is one of development and rebuilding our society, and we will cooperate with everyone to strengthen our society," he said.

The vote was the first in municipalities since 1976. Polling stations were jammed, with high voter turnout reported. Elections were held in major Palestinian cities or large towns. Voting in an additional 600 towns and villages was expected to be held next year.

Hamas Surprisingly Strong in Palestinian Election

Hamas is boycotting the Palestinian presidential elections on Jan. 9, but its strong showing in the municipal poll could indicate faltering support for the interim Palestinian leader, Mahmoud Abbas, also known as Abu Mazen, the presidential front-runner.

"Abu Mazen won't have an overwhelming majority," said Ali Jerbawi, a political analyst and a former head of the Palestinian Election Commission.

"I think he will win with 55 or 58 percent," he said.

Mr. Jerbawi said he doubted that the weak Fatah showing in the municipal elections would have any affect on fledgling Israeli-Palestinian peace moves, despite **Hamas**'s strong opposition to them and its continuing calls for Israel's destruction.

Israeli-Palestinian rhetoric has been muted since Mr. Arafat's death on Nov. 11. Both sides have raised the possibility of improved relations after the Jan. 9 election.

In the West Bank on Friday, Israeli troops shot and killed three armed Palestinians in the West Bank town of Tulkarm, the military said. The three were said to be members of Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades, a militant group with ties to Fatah.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Load-Date: December 25, 2004

End of Document

Israel threatens to kill Hamas founder;

Morning Star

January 17, 2004

Copyright 2004 People's Press Printing Society Ltd

Section: Pg. 3

Length: 388 words

Byline: by Our Foreign Desk

Body

ISRAEL vowed yesterday to hunt down and kill Hamas founder Sheik Ahmed Yassin in retaliation for Wednesday's deadly attack on Israeli border guards.

Sheik Yassin, who is a quadriplegic, did not try to hide yesterday, making his way to a Gaza City mosque near his home in a wheelchair pushed by an assistant.

"We do not fear the threat of death, " he said outside the mosque. "We will not bow to pressure and resistance will continue until the occupation is destroyed."

Sheik Yassin said that he was not personally involved in planning attacks, denying allegations by Israeli security officials that he had approved Wednesday's bombing in which a female suicide bomber killed four Israelis at the Erez crossing into Israel.

The Israeli officials also said that Sheik Yassin had issued a religious ruling allowing women to become bombers, after Hamas initially recruited only male assailants.

Israeli security officials met on Wednesday at the Defence Ministry to weigh a response to the latest Hamas bombing.

One official said that targeted killings of senior Hamas members are likely to resume after a lull of several months.

Deputy Defence Minister Zeev Boim said that the organisation's founder is a key target.

"Sheik Yassin is marked for death and he should hide himself deep underground where he won't know the difference between day and night. And we will find him in the tunnels, and we will eliminate him, " Mr Boim said on Israeli Army Radio.

However, several security officials said that Sheik Yassin had not been mentioned specifically in the discussions at the Defence Ministry.

Killing the Hamas founder would require approval by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, the officials said.

An Israeli strike against Sheik Yassin, who is also revered by Palestinians who do not support Hamas, would probably provoke revenge bombings.

Israel threatens to kill Hamas founder;

Sheik Yassin already dodged one Israeli attempt to kill him in September. A warplane dropped a 550-pound bomb on a building where he and other **Hamas** leaders were meeting, but he escaped with just a small wound to his hand.

After several other high-profile but ineffective attacks against Palestinian leaders in the summer, Israel scaled back its attacks in concert with a significant drop in **Hamas** bombings.

However, there was never evidence of even an unspoken agreement between the two enemies.

Graphic

APPRECIATION: Palestinian children at a ceremony yesterday in honour of British peace activist Thomas Hurndall at the Gaza site where he was shot.

Load-Date: March 1, 2004

End of Document

Israelis Airstrikes Hit Gaza After Hamas Fires Rockets

The New York Times

September 25, 2005 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section 1; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 8

Length: 738 words

Byline: By GREG MYRE<

Dateline: JERUSALEM, Sunday, Sept. 25

Body

Israel carried out airstrikes in the Gaza Strip early Sunday and gathered ground forces just outside Gaza's borders, while the defense minister threatened a forceful response to an overnight rocket barrage by the Islamic faction **Hamas**.

Less than two weeks after Israel completed its withdrawal from Gaza, Israel and the Palestinians faced a potential showdown after a series of confrontations on Friday and Saturday.

"We have to make it clear to the Palestinians that Israel will not let the recent events pass without a response," Israel's defense minister, Shaul Mofaz, said in a statement after conferring with senior security officials. "The response needs to be crushing."

A Saturday afternoon missile strike killed two **Hamas** members as they traveled in a car through Gaza City, according to the Palestinian Interior Ministry, though medical officials had earlier reported that four Palestinians had been killed.

The airstrikes began on Saturday morning and continued into the early hours of Sunday. Israel said that before dawn on Sunday it hit two facilities used to make and store weapons. But Palestinian witnesses and hospital officials said that one of the sites was the Dar el-Arqam elementary school, which is run by **Hamas**, and that about 20 people were hurt in the area. **Women** and children were among the wounded.

An early morning round of airstrikes hit two workshops that Israel suspected were being used to manufacture weapons.

Israel also carried out a large-scale arrest operation in the West Bank, targeting members of **Hamas** and Islamic Jihad, and 150 suspects were detained overnight, the military said. The military also sealed off the West Bank and the Gaza Strip on Saturday, though the measure was largely symbolic because few Palestinians have permission to enter Israel.

The relative calm of recent weeks was shattered by the turmoil that erupted Friday and included an Israeli raid in the West Bank and the airstrikes in Gaza, as well as the rocket fire from Gaza.

Israelis Airstrikes Hit Gaza After Hamas Fires Rockets

The event most responsible for the increased tensions occurred Friday evening during a Hamas parade in Gaza, when a truck carrying rockets exploded, killing 15 Palestinians and wounding more than 80. The dead included leaders of Hamas's armed wing and spectators in the Jabaliya camp, just north of Gaza City.

The Palestinian Authority and Israel said the blast was caused by Hamas explosives that went off accidentally, and they dismissed Hamas's allegation that an Israeli airstrike caused the explosion.

The Palestinian Interior Ministry said Hamas should take responsibility for the blast "instead of making accusations against others."

Speaking in the West Bank city of Ramallah, Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian leader, said, "We must stop parading our weapons and stop using guns among the people."

But Hamas has continued to insist that Israel was responsible for the Gaza explosions and unleashed a barrage of rocket fire that lasted through the night and into Saturday morning.

Hamas called on its "cells to respond to the crimes of the enemy and hit them in every spot of our occupied land."

The group launched more than 30 of its crude, homemade Qassam rockets, directing most toward the Israeli town of Sederot, just outside Gaza, the Israeli military said.

The rockets are extremely inaccurate, and most crashed harmlessly, but five Israeli civilians were wounded, Israeli officials said.

In addition to the airstrikes on Saturday, Israeli aircraft dropped leaflets in Gaza City that said Hamas was firing rockets at Israel "to cover its responsibility in the killing of Palestinians in the procession which it held."

Hamas and other Palestinian factions have fired hundreds of rockets from northern Gaza in recent years, prompting periodic Israeli military incursions. The Israeli troops usually pulled back after a few days, and the rocket fire would subsequently resume.

But Israel has warned for months that if the rocket fire continued after its withdrawal from Gaza, it was prepared to hit back much harder than it had in the past.

"We are demanding that the Palestinian Authority take responsibility for security and that they stop the rocket fire toward Israel," said Maj. Avital Leibovich, a spokeswoman for the Israeli military.

Mr. Abbas and his aides have called for an end to the rocket fire, but the Palestinian security forces have taken only limited steps to prevent such attacks.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photo: A Gaza City school hit by an Israeli airstrike this morning. The Israelis said the school was a front for Hamas, which fired rockets into Israel overnight. (Photo by Abid Katib/Getty Images)

Load-Date: September 25, 2005

Israelis Airstrikes Hit Gaza After Hamas Fires Rockets

End of Document

Hamas founder vows to continue attacks

The Toronto Star
January 17, 2004 Saturday
Ontario Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A16

Length: 666 words

Byline: Karin Laub, Associated Press

Highlight: Ignores Israel's 'marked for death' warning Threats follow bombing at Gaza checkpoint

Body

Hamas founder Ahmed Yassin brushed off warnings by a top Israeli official that he is "marked for death" and, in a defiant appearance yesterday at a Gaza City mosque, said his Islamic militant group will continue to attack Israelis.

The exchange of threats following a deadly **Hamas** bombing this week further spoiled chances for a ceasefire, the starting point for a U.S.-backed peace plan.

Israeli security officials said targeted killings of senior **Hamas** members would likely resume after Wednesday's bombing killed four Israeli border guards at the Erez crossing between Gaza and Israel. Pinpointed Israeli strikes on Palestinian militants have triggered revenge bombings before.

Deputy Defence Minister Zeev Boim initially told Israel Army Radio that Yassin would be targeted, the first time an Israeli official was so specific.

"Sheik Yassin is marked for death, and he should hide himself deep underground where he won't know the difference between day and night. And we will find him in the tunnels, and we will eliminate him," Boim said.

But Boim later said high-level defence ministry discussions on a response to the Erez bombing did not include a specific decision to kill Yassin.

Security officials said killing Yassin would require approval from Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. "We never comment on specific cases," Sharon adviser Raanan Gissin said.

In the summer, Israel unleashed several air strikes against leading **Hamas** figures, killing one but missing three others, including Yassin, 69, who escaped the bombing of a Gaza City building in September with minor injuries. The **Hamas** founder is a quadriplegic from a childhood sporting accident.

An Israeli strike against Yassin would likely provoke bloody **Hamas** attacks and boost support for the group, said Palestinian legislator Hanan Ashrawi. "If they target **Hamas** leaders, I don't think anybody can control the (**Hamas**) military wing," she said.

In Washington, U.S. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher reiterated U.S. policy against targeted assassinations and criticized **Hamas** and other groups for violent acts that make peacemaking more elusive.

Hamas founder vows to continue attacks

The European Union also spoke out against any plan to kill Yassin as counterproductive to peace efforts.

Israeli security officials said Yassin personally approved Wednesday's bombing and issued a religious ruling allowing women to carry out such attacks. Hamas recruited a 22-year-old woman for the Erez attack, a first for the fundamentalist group.

Appearing at a Gaza City mosque for Friday noon prayers, part of his weekly routine, Yassin denied he was involved in planning attacks.

"We do not fear the threat of death," he told reporters outside the mosque, sitting in his wheelchair. "We will not bow to pressure, and resistance will continue until the occupation is destroyed."

After a spike in violence in the summer, there was a lull in Israeli missile strikes and Palestinian bombings which some attributed to an unspoken agreement between the two sides to lower tensions. However, Israel said it forced a drop in attacks by arresting as many as 30 potential suicide bombers.

Also yesterday, Israeli TV reported that Sharon is considering changing the route of a separation barrier Israel is building in the West Bank to cut costs and reduce Palestinian suffering. Sharon aides are to present proposed changes to U.S. officials next week, the reports said. Gissin declined comment.

The World Court in The Hague, Netherlands, is to hear arguments next month on the legality of the barrier.

In other developments yesterday, 70 Israeli reservists who refuse to serve in occupied territory protested for peace at Israel's border with the Gaza Strip, Reuters reports.

It was the first joint demonstration by reservist pilots, elite commandos and infantry troops who signed separate letters stating their refusal to serve in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

A few metres away more than 100 settlers, many of them women and children, chanted, "This is our land and we won't give it to anyone."

Graphic

KEVIN FRAYER/AP Spiritual leader of the Palestinian militant group Hamas, Sheik Ahmed Yassin, attends Friday prayers at a mosque in Gaza City. Israel is set to resume targeted killings of Hamas militants and warned the elderly cleric he tops the list.

Load-Date: January 17, 2004

Under Israeli attack, Hamas loses leaders but widens its support

The International Herald Tribune

April 26, 2004 Monday

Copyright 2004 International Herald Tribune

Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 773 words

Byline: Greg Myre

Dateline: GAZA:

Body

The leaders of Hamas gathered under a tent at a dusty soccer stadium on April 18, joined by thousands of mourners offering condolences for the group's slain chief in Gaza, Abdel Aziz Rantisi. When the service ended, the Hamas officials vanished, making perhaps their last joint public appearance for a long time.

Israeli missile strikes that have killed two Hamas leaders in the past month have driven the surviving senior officials deep underground and raised questions about the group's ability to elude Israel's defenses and resume attacks inside Israeli cities.

While Hamas now lacks a high-profile leader here, and is perhaps less potent, there is a flip side. Each Israeli killing only seems to enhance the popularity of Hamas on the street, particularly in its Gaza stronghold, where it draws recruits from a society that is extremely poor and deeply religious.

The New York Times

The outpouring of support during the three-day mourning period that concluded last Tuesday demonstrated the broad backing that Hamas has gained. Women who were dressed in black from head to toe wrapped the emerald-green Hamas headband around their veils. Youths plastered Rantisi's "martyr poster" on every available flat surface.

The Palestinian Authority, which officially opposes Hamas's bombing campaign, was prominently represented by Gaza's police chief, Ghazi al-Jabali, who was trailed by a large entourage of police officers as he exchanged hugs with senior Hamas figures.

"Hamas may not be able to carry out a large number of attacks right now, and they have been shaken by the loss of their leaders," said Ziad Abu Amr, a moderate Palestinian legislator and a former cabinet member who has had broad political contact with Hamas. "But this is a group that enjoys an extensive presence here. It is not easy to dismantle Hamas."

A public opinion survey released last week found that for the first time, Hamas outpolled the long dominant Fatah movement, headed by the Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat.

Thirty-one percent said they would now vote for Hamas in an election, compared with 27 percent for Al Fatah. The poll, conducted by the Palestinian Center for Research and Cultural Dialogue, surveyed 506 Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, and said it had a margin of error of 3.5 percentage points.

Under Israeli attack, Hamas loses leaders but widens its support

The survey was taken after the March 22 killing of the Hamas founder, Sheik Ahmed Yassin, and Hamas appeared to be riding a wave of sympathy that might not last. Still, support for Hamas has grown steadily during the three-and-a-half years of the current Palestinian uprising.

In opening the campaign to kill Hamas leaders, Israel's prime minister, Ariel Sharon, has changed the rules of battle, and Hamas is changing the way it operates. Hamas has carried out the greatest number of suicide bombings since the Palestinian uprising began in September 2000. While the bomb makers and the bombers operated from the West Bank with the utmost secrecy, Hamas's top leaders were prominent public figures in Gaza. Yassin and Rantisi were fixtures at Hamas rallies.

The Israeli military waged a concerted campaign that smashed many Hamas cells in the West Bank, but the public leaders in Gaza appeared to be off limits. This apparent immunity abruptly ended last summer, and since then Israel has killed three senior leaders and wounded one other.

Hamas has vowed to increase its attacks, but so far the opposite has happened. The group has been responsible for more than 50 suicide bombings since 2000, but the pace has slowed since last summer.

The combative Rantisi spent most of his time in hiding during the four weeks he served as Hamas's leader. On the day of his death, April 17, he made a rare visit to see his family at their modest home in the city of Gaza. He arrived before dawn and stayed until the evening. He was killed shortly after he left the house in his car, according to family members.

The following day Hamas said it had chosen a successor, but refused to divulge his name out of concern that he would be next on Israel's hit list. In Gaza, there are rumors that the group has settled for a collective leadership, at least temporarily. Hamas has carried out just one suicide bombing -- killing one Israeli policeman -- since Yassin's death five weeks ago.

"The capabilities of these groups have been reduced," said Eli Karmon, an official at the private International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism, outside Tel Aviv. "Many of the midlevel and senior-level operatives have been arrested or killed." Hamas is still capable of a "big operation," Karmon said, "but not the same number of operations, at the same tempo, as before."

Load-Date: April 26, 2004

Israel plans Hamas hits in payback

The Australian

September 2, 2004 Thursday All-round Country Edition

Copyright 2004 Nationwide News Pty Limited

Section: WORLDPHOTO; Pg. 10

Length: 658 words

Byline: Abraham Rabinovich

Body

Jerusalem

ISRAEL will step up its campaign to assassinate Hamas leaders after twin suicide bombings by the Palestinian militant group killed 16 Israelis and injured 100 in the southern city of Beersheba on Tuesday.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon ordered the renewed drive to hit Hamas's upper echelon after the group said its attacks -- the first in Israel in five months -- were in retaliation for the assassination this year by Israel of its leaders, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and Abdel Aziz Rantisi.

Asked on Al-Jazeera television why it took so long to strike, a Hamas spokesman in Gaza said: "We had to prepare for this operation meticulously." A leaflet distributed by Hamas said: "You (Israelis) were mistaken if you thought that killing our leaders would lessen our determination."

Reuters, AFP, AP

Israeli officials say Hamas was unable to mount a successful attack inside Israel in recent months despite considerable efforts because of the Israeli security services' success in preventing scores of would-be attacks.

The two suicide bombers, from the West Bank city of Hebron, boarded buses in Beersheba's central bus station mid-afternoon and detonated themselves when the vehicles reached the city's main street and were full of passengers. The driver of the second bus pulled over after hearing the first explosion and about 15 passengers managed to get off before it too blew up.

The double blast was the deadliest since an attack on a restaurant in the port city of Haifa on October 4, 2003, which left 21 people and the female bomber dead.

The last Palestinian attack in Israel was on July 11, when a young woman soldier was killed in a blast at a bus stop just days after the International Court of Justice declared Israel's West Bank barrier illegal.

It was the first suicide bombing in Beersheba. City officials noted that the barrier Israel was building on the West Bank had stopped bombers from reaching the country's centre but had not yet closed off access to the southern city.

Israeli officials linked the bombings to Syria, noting that the senior Hamas command was located in Damascus. "It isn't the public relations department (of Hamas) sitting in Damascus," one official said. "It is their operational command."

Israel plans Hamas hits in payback

However, Mr Sharon is not expected to lash out at Syria or to change his plans to pull out of the Gaza Strip, a **Hamas** stronghold, before the end of next year.

He had earlier unveiled an accelerated timetable for the Gaza plan, brushing aside opponents by predicting it would win parliamentary approval in early November.

After a late-night briefing from security officials, Mr Sharon ordered construction of the West Bank barrier to be speeded up and a series of steps aimed at **Hamas**. "Combating terror is the policy of this Government and it is my policy," he said.

The army ordered a curfew in Hebron and began a search for militant leaders, particularly Imad Kawasma, the uncle of one of the Beersheba bombers and leader of **Hamas**'s military wing in the city. A dozen arrests were made yesterday and the houses of the two attackers -- Ahmad Qawasmeh, 22, and Nassim Jabari, 22 -- blown up. A similar crackdown was reportedly under way in the Gaza Strip.

Because of relative tranquillity in Hebron in recent months, the Israeli army recently removed a number of roadblocks and checkpoints in and around the city and commercial life in the city had almost returned to normal. Restrictions are now expected to be reimposed.

Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia condemned the bombings. "The attack does not do service to the Palestinian issue," he said.

A possible third bombing was foiled at an exit from the Gaza Strip when a man attempting to pass into Israel, ostensibly for work, aroused the suspicions of a soldier.

He was ordered to strip and was found to be wearing underpants with explosives sewn into them. Officials said there was apparently no connection between this would-be bomber and the Beersheba bombers.

Load-Date: September 1, 2004

End of Document

Israel's offensive on Hamas justified

The Advertiser

April 23, 2004 Friday

Copyright 2004 Nationwide News Pty Limited

Section: OPINION; Pg. 18

Length: 480 words

Byline: Andrew FRIEDMAN

Body

ONE of the most revealing developments to come out of Israel's weekend attack on Hamas leader Abdel Aziz Rantissi is the fact that organisational chairman Khaled Mashaal has decided to keep the identity of the new leadership secret.

While Rantissi's death may not completely disable Hamas, Israel's effort to target any and all Palestinians complicit in the death of Israelis is bearing dividends, and the organisation is running scared.

Rantissi was the head of an organisation committed not only to a political struggle for the West Bank and Gaza Strip but to a to-the-death struggle with Jews. By any reasonable definition, Rantissi was a combatant in a war he played a major part in conducting.

There can be no serious question about the legality or morality of targeting him.

Predictably, remaining Hamas leaders have pledged a "volcano" of revenge against Israel, as they did following a similar attack on Hamas spiritual head Sheikh Ahmed Yassin last month.

But it is not at all clear that the organisation retains the functional ability to attack Israel as it once did. Even before the present spate of attacks, Yassin defended his organisation's use of a female suicide bomber in January, admitting it was because Israel's pursuit of the organisation made it difficult for potential bombers to penetrate Israeli security.

Until now, leaders such as Yassin and Rantissi have mostly viewed themselves as exempt from Israeli reprisal raids, mostly with good reason. But by driving the organisation deep underground, Israel has forced Hamas leaders such as Mashaal to concentrate on watching their heads, rather than on attacking Israelis.

Any military campaign alone is ultimately insufficient to defeat the global terrorist scourge. Israel's campaign against Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Yasser Arafat's al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigada, like the coalition fight against radical Shiite insurgents in Najaf and the near-global pursuit of Osama bin Laden, must be combined with a concerted campaign to dry up sources of funding to all terror groups.

The military efforts in Israel, Iraq and Afghanistan must be accompanied by effective non-military sanctions. By acting to prevent terror cells from incubating in this country, Australia sends a strong message to would-be terrorists around the world: Australia will not be complicit in any way with the intentional murder of civilians and will not provide safe haven for such elements.

Israel 's offensive on Hamas justified

To be sure, the decision to kill Rantissi is fraught with danger for Israel. But, given **Hamas** has killed more than 500 Israelis since the Oslo process began in 1993, the argument that by attacking Rantissi Israel has "inflamed the situation" is preposterous. For this reason, Israel's continuing offensive against **Hamas** leaders is legal, moral and completely justified.

* Andrew Friedman is a Middle East analyst for the Australia/Israel Jewish Affairs Council.

Load-Date: April 22, 2004

End of Document

Israel Orders Army to Quell Rocket Fire; Hamas Ends It

The New York Times

September 26, 2005 Monday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2005 The New York Times Company

Section: Section A; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 10

Length: 1000 words

Byline: By GREG MYRE

Dateline: JERUSALEM, Sept. 25

Body

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel said Sunday that he had given the military free rein to act against Palestinian factions firing rockets at Israel. Hours later, the militant group Hamas announced that it was halting all attacks from the Gaza Strip.

The surprise statement by Hamas, delivered late Sunday night in Gaza City by a senior Hamas leader, Dr. Mahmoud Zahar, offered the possibility that the violence of the past three days could be brought to a halt.

The region had been relatively calm in recent weeks, but a major confrontation loomed after Hamas began firing rockets from northern Gaza into southern Israel on Friday night, and Israel responded with airstrikes.

"There are no restrictions on the use of any measure in order to strike at the terrorists," Mr. Sharon said Sunday morning at his weekly cabinet meeting. "This phenomenon must be stopped."

On Sunday night, an Israeli airstrike killed an Islamic Jihad leader, Muhammad Khalil, and another member of the faction as their car traveled along a coastal road in Gaza City. Earlier Sunday, about 20 Palestinians, including women and children, were wounded in strikes against facilities suspected of being used by Hamas, including a school.

But late Sunday night, Dr. Zahar said Hamas "declares an end to its operations from the Gaza Strip against the Israeli occupation." He also said Hamas would abide by a pledge that several Palestinian factions made early this year for a temporary suspension of attacks against Israel.

[On Monday, Israel launched multiple missile strikes in Gaza, hours after the Hamas announcement, Reuters reported. While Hamas said it was halting attacks, not all militant factions have followed suit. Israeli aircraft attacked at least five targets across the Gaza Strip, including a metal workshop and buildings used by Hamas, Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.]

In recent months, Hamas has carried out far fewer attacks than in recent years, but it has unleashed rocket fire on several occasions, saying it was in response to Israeli military action.

Asked about the Hamas statement, Maj. Gen. Yisrael Ziv, the army's chief of operations, said Israel would continue its offensive.

Israel Orders Army to Quell Rocket Fire; Hamas Ends It

In the wake of Israel's withdrawal from Gaza, which was completed two weeks ago, Mr. Sharon and the Palestinian leader, Mahmoud Abbas, said they wanted it to remain calm. The Palestinian Authority criticized Hamas after it began firing rockets into Israel on Friday night.

In the West Bank, the Israeli military arrested more than 200 Palestinians in an overnight sweep through the main Palestinian cities. It was the biggest such raid since the Israelis and Palestinians announced a truce in February.

Soldiers seized mostly Hamas and Islamic Jihad members. Two of the most senior Hamas leaders in the West Bank, Hasan Yousef and Muhammad Ghazal, were among those detained, Hamas said.

Israeli tanks and armored vehicles had been moved to Gaza's borders on Saturday, though as of Sunday night there was no sign that a ground invasion was imminent. The last Israeli troops left Gaza on Sept. 12, after a 38-year presence.

Mr. Sharon was also dealing Sunday with a political drama inside his own Likud Party, where, despite his popularity with the public, his opponents on the right are trying to oust him.

As Mr. Sharon began a speech to the party central committee on Sunday, a saboteur poured water on an electrical system, cutting the sound system, party officials said. Mr. Sharon, stern-faced, left without delivering his speech.

The 3,000 members of the Likud Central Committee will cast ballots on Monday on whether to hold a primary election for party leader next spring, as Mr. Sharon would like, or move it up to this November, as Mr. Sharon's main rival, Benjamin Netanyahu, is urging.

Mr. Sharon argues that it makes no sense for Likud to force early elections, risking its hold on power. Israel is not required to hold national elections until November 2006, and Mr. Sharon's coalition government appears relatively stable.

But his opponents say Mr. Sharon's Gaza pullout was a "reward for terrorists" that went counter to the spirit and tradition of Likud, which has consistently pushed for an expanded Israeli presence in the West Bank and Gaza.

Mr. Netanyahu, who spoke before the sound system was cut, said the Hamas rocket fire showed Israel's departure from Gaza was a mistake. "I ask you, what have we received in return for this anguish?" he said of the Gaza pullout. "Has this move strengthened our security? No. Has it brought peace closer? No."

Several opinion surveys indicate that Likud voters are leaning toward the early primary in November, though the ballot on Monday looks close. If a November primary were held and Mr. Netanyahu won, the likely outcome would be the collapse of the government and new national elections early next year.

The latest confrontation between Israel and Hamas began Friday night. Hamas was holding a parade in the Jabaliya refugee camp in Gaza to celebrate the Israeli pullout. A Hamas pickup truck loaded with rockets exploded, killing at least 15 people and wounding more than 80. Hamas claimed an Israeli airstrike caused the explosion. But the Palestinian Authority and Israel say the blast was set off by Hamas explosives that detonated by accident. The Israeli military, which routinely acknowledges airstrikes, denied that any took place.

"The truth is crystal clear" that the explosion was accidental, Tafiq Abu Khossa, a spokesman for the Palestinian Interior Ministry, said Sunday on the Voice of Palestine radio. "All the citizens of Jabaliya were witness to the event."

But several hours after the blast, Hamas began firing the first of nearly 40 rockets aimed at the Israeli town of Sederot and other communities just outside Gaza's perimeter fence. Six Israelis have been hurt, Israeli officials said.

Israel responded with airstrikes that began early Saturday.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photo: Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, far right, faced a challenge within his party led by Benjamin Netanyahu, far left, at a party meeting yesterday. But someone sabotaged the sound system before Mr. Sharon could speak. (Photo by Rina Castelnovo for The New York Times)

Load-Date: September 26, 2005

End of Document

Hamas founder is defiant after Israeli's warning

The Philadelphia Inquirer

JANUARY 17, 2004 Saturday CITY-D EDITION

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The Philadelphia Inquirer

Found on Philly.com

Section: NATIONAL; Pg. A02

Length: 468 words

Byline: Karin Laub ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Hamas founder Ahmed Yassin brushed off warnings by a top Israeli official that he was "marked for death" and, in a defiant appearance yesterday at a Gaza City mosque, said his group would continue to attack Israelis.

The exchange of threats after a deadly **Hamas** bombing this week complicated chances for a cease-fire, the starting point for the U.S.-backed road map peace plan.

Israeli security officials said targeted killings of senior **Hamas** members would likely resume after Wednesday's bombing killed four Israeli border guards at the Erez crossing between Gaza and Israel. Such Israeli strikes have triggered revenge bombings in the past.

Deputy Defense Minister Zeev Boim initially told Israel Army radio that Yassin would be targeted - the first time an Israeli official was so specific.

"Sheikh Yassin is marked for death," Boim said, "and he should hide himself deep underground where he won't know the difference between day and night. And we will find him in the tunnels, and we will eliminate him."

Boim later said high-level Defense Ministry discussions on a response to the Erez bombing did not include a specific decision to kill Yassin.

Security officials said killing Yassin would require approval from Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. "We never comment on specific cases," said Raanan Gissin, a Sharon adviser.

During the summer, Israel unleashed several air strikes against leading **Hamas** figures, killing one but missing three others - including Yassin, 69, who escaped the bombing of a Gaza City building in September with minor injuries. The **Hamas** founder is a quadriplegic from a childhood sporting accident.

Israel has killed more than 140 suspected militants in targeted attacks during more than three years of fighting.

Hamas founder is defiant after Israeli 's warning

An Israeli strike against Yassin would likely provoke bloody Hamas attacks and boost support for the group, Palestinian legislator Hanan Ashrawi said. "If they target Hamas leaders, I don't think anybody can control the [Hamas] military wing," she said.

In Washington, State Department spokesman Richard Boucher reiterated U.S. policy against targeted assassinations and criticized Hamas and other groups for violent acts that make peacemaking more difficult.

Israeli security officials said Yassin personally approved Wednesday's bombing and issued a religious ruling allowing women to carry out such attacks. Hamas recruited a 22-year-old woman for the attack, a first for the group.

Appearing at a Gaza City mosque for Friday noon prayers, part of his weekly routine, Yassin denied that he was involved in planning attacks. However, he said that "Israel will pay for its crimes" and that Hamas would continue resisting occupation - a phrase that generally refers to shootings and bomb attacks on Israelis in the West Bank and Gaza.

"We do not fear the threat of death," he said.

Load-Date: August 21, 2005

End of Document

HAMAS REJECTS COALITION OFFER

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

July 5, 2005 Tuesday

SOONER EDITION

Copyright 2005 P.G. Publishing Co.

Section: WORLD,; WORLD BRIEFS

Length: 568 words

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip -- **Hamas** rejected an invitation from Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas to join his government, **Hamas** spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri said yesterday.

Abbas made his offer this week after **Hamas** demanded that a committee be formed to oversee the transfer of power in Gaza. Abbas rejected that demand, inviting **Hamas** to join his Cabinet instead.

Israel is worried the lack of unity among security forces in Abbas' government will lead to chaos in the Gaza Strip after an evacuation. But Israel also expressed dismay about the possibility that **Hamas** could join Abbas's government.

/ Canada frees sex slayer

MONTREAL -- Canada's most notorious **female** inmate was secretly spirited from prison yesterday after serving 12 years for the rapes, torture and murders of three teenage girls, including her younger sister.

"I don't want to be hunted down," Karla Homolka, 35, told RDI, the CBC's French language news network, after her release.

The former veterinarian assistant is the most reviled woman in Canada, after she sealed what was dubbed by the media in 1993 as the "deal with the devil." Prosecutors gave her 12 years in return for her testimony against her ex-husband, Paul Bernardo.

Months after prosecutors made the deal, however, Bernardo's attorneys handed over homemade videotapes by the couple that indicated she was a willing participant.

Her lawyers and father have said she intended to resettle in Montreal, having learned French during her 12 years in a Quebec prison.

/ Aruba frees two

ORANJESTAD, Aruba -- Two Surinamese brothers jailed in the disappearance of an Alabama teenager were freed yesterday on the orders of a judge, but the 17-year-old son of a top justice official was jailed for 60 more days.

HAMAS REJECTS COALITION OFFER

The justice official's son, Joran van der Sloot, and Surinamese brothers Deepak Kalpoe, 21, and Satish Kalpoe, 18, had been held since June 9 on suspicion they had knowledge about the disappearance of 18-year-old Natalee Holloway, of Mountain Brook, Ala. The three have acknowledged that they were with her the night she disappeared.

/ Germany awaits decision

BERLIN -- Germany's president has stepped out of his normally ceremonial role to play kingmaker: Will he give Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder the new election he wants, or refuse and risk a political crisis?

With party leaders uneasily awaiting his decision, President Horst Koehler has until July 22 to rule on whether Friday's vote of no-confidence means Schroeder truly lacks the support to govern.

Most expect Koehler, 62, to set an election for Sept. 18, paving way for a confrontation between Schroeder and opposition leader Angela Merkel. Her Christian Democrats enjoy a double-digit lead in polls.

/ Landmark falls in

SYDNEY, Australia -- One of nine limestone stacks that made up the famous 12 Apostles landmark off Australia's southern coast collapsed into the Indian Ocean on Sunday -- apparently a victim of coastal erosion.

Park ranger Alex Green said a family of sightseers watched in amazement as the 150-foot tower collapsed.

The formation off Victoria State, called the 12 Apostles even though there had been only nine outcroppings, draws tens of thousands of tourists each year.

/ Haiti migrants die

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti -- A boat carrying dozens of migrants fleeing Haiti sank off the island's coast, killing two people and leaving 11 others feared dead.

The victims were all from about 19 to 25 years old.

Load-Date: July 5, 2005

Israel 'will retaliate by killing Hamas founder';
NEWSBRIEF

Irish News

January 17, 2004

Copyright 2004 The Irish News Limited

Section: Pg. 14

Length: 621 words

Body

ISRAEL will kill the founder of Hamas, Sheik Ahmed Yassin, in retaliation for a suicide attack on border guards, Israel's deputy defence minister said in the bluntest warning yet against leaders of the Islamic militant group.

Sheik Yassin, a 67-year-old quadriplegic, did not try to hide yesterday, making his way to a Gaza City mosque near his home in a wheelchair pushed by an assistant.

"We do not fear the threat of death, " Sheik Yassin said. "We will not bow to pressure and resistance will continue until the occupation is destroyed."

Sheik Yassin said he was not personally involved in planning attacks, denying allegations by Israeli security officials that he had approved this week's bombing in which a young mother blew herself up and killed four Israelis at the Erez crossing into Israel.

The Israeli officials also said Yassin issued a religious ruling allowing women to become bombers, after Hamas initially recruited only male assailants.

Israeli security officials met to weigh a response to the latest Hamas bombing and one official said targeted killings of senior Hamas members are likely to resume after a lull of several months.

Deputy defence minister Zeev Boim said Sheik Yassin is a key target.

"Sheik Yassin is marked for death and he should hide himself deep underground where he won't know the difference between day and night. And we will find him in the tunnels, and we will eliminate him, " Mr Boim told Israel army radio.

Israeli officials have said in the past they would go after Hamas leaders in retaliation for deadly bombings, but Mr Boim's comment marked the first time a senior official spoke in public about a particular militant being targeted.

Several security officials said Sheik Yassin was not singled out and killing the Hamas founder would require approval by prime minister Ariel Sharon, the officials said.

An Israeli strike against Sheik Yassin, who is revered also by Palestinians who do not support Hamas, would likely provoke revenge bombings.

Israel 'will retaliate by killing Hamas founder'; NEWSBRIEF

Palestinian MP Hanan Ashrawi said an attack on Yassin would also boost support for militants among the Palestinians.

"It doesn't take much brains to know that assassinating the political leadership of Hamas will have serious implications locally and regionally, " she said.

Sheik Yassin, who founded Hamas in 1987 and spent several years in Israeli prisons, already dodged one Israeli attempt to kill him in September.

A warplane dropped a 550-pound bomb on a building where he and other Hamas leaders were meeting but Sheik Yassin escaped with just a small wound to his hand.

In the summer, Israel also launched several high-profile attacks on other Palestinian leaders, killing Ismail Abu Shanab, considered a relative pragmatist in the group. Two others, Abdel Aziz Rantisi and Mahmoud Zahar, narrowly escaped missile strikes.

Toward the end of the summer, Israel scaled back its attacks in concert with a significant drop in Hamas bombings.

However, there was never evidence of even an unspoken agreement between the two sides. Israel insisted it forced a drop in attacks by arresting as many as 30 potential suicide bombers.

Hamas leaders, though often in hiding to avoid Israeli strikes, kept up their militant pronouncements and rebuffed efforts by Palestinian prime minister Ahmed Qureia and Egyptian mediators to declare a halt to attacks against Israelis.

Sheik Yassin reiterated yesterday that Hamas would not agree to a ceasefire.

The suicide bombing on Wednesday put an end to the "so-called quiet period", Israeli air force commander, Major General Dan Halutz, said.

Without giving details, Maj Halutz said the air force and military intelligence have developed "pinpoint" methods to "hit only those who deserve it".

Graphic

BOMBER: Mourners carry the casket during the funeral of female suicide bomber Reem Raiyshi (22), in Gaza City
PICTURE: Hatem Moussa/AP

Load-Date: January 23, 2004

Revenge vow as Hamas chief killed

The Advertiser

March 23, 2004 Tuesday

Copyright 2004 Nationwide News Pty Limited

Section: NEWS; Pg. 5

Length: 383 words

Byline: By IBRAHIM BARZAK in Gaza City

Body

ISRAEL killed **Hamas** founder Ahmed Yassin in a helicopter missile strike outside a mosque in Gaza City yesterday, prompting threats of revenge by Palestinian militants against Israel and the United States.

Yassin was the most prominent Palestinian leader to be killed by Israel in more than three years of fighting.

Within hours, tens of thousands of Palestinians took to the streets of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. A cloud of black smoke hung over Gaza City, as angry mourners burned tyres in protest.

"Words cannot describe the emotion of anger and hate inside our hearts," said **Hamas** official Ismail Haniyeh.

Israeli Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz, in turn, pledged that "the battle against **Hamas** will continue," suggesting there would be more strikes.

The US has urged both sides to show restraint.

At daybreak yesterday, Israeli helicopters fired three missile as the wheelchair-bound Yassin, his bodyguards and dozens of others left a neighbourhood mosque in Gaza City.

Yassin and seven others were killed. Seventeen people were wounded.

Two more Palestinians were killed soon after - one while handling explosives and the second by Israeli army fire, during a protest against the Yassin killing.

Israel held Yassin responsible for the deaths of hundreds of people.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, a former army general, was updated throughout the operation.

The Yassin assassination was seen as an enormous gamble by Mr Sharon, who is trying to score a decisive victory against **Hamas** ahead of a possible Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, but risks triggering a dramatic escalation in bloodshed that could turn the public's mood in Israel against him.

Gideon Meir, an Israeli Foreign Ministry official, said Yassin was directly responsible for the scores of suicide attacks **Hamas** unleashed since 2000.

"He is the one who is sending children and **women** to explode themselves," Mr Meir said.

Revenge vow as Hamas chief killed

The Palestinian Authority said in a statement that "Israel has exceeded all red lines with this cheap and dirty crime" and declared a three-day mourning period.

Fearing revenge attacks, Israel closed off the West Bank and Gaza Strip, barring all Palestinians from entering Israel.

Hamas promised a harsh response and, for the first time, also threatened the US, saying America's backing of Israel made the assassination possible.

Load-Date: March 22, 2004

End of Document

ISRAEL ANNOUNCES INTENTION TO KILL HAMAS FOUNDER

Western Mail

January 17, 2004, Saturday

Copyright 2004 Western Mail and Echo Ltd

Section: NEWS; Pg. 4; Newspaper

Length: 246 words

Body

ISRAEL will kill the founder of Hamas, Sheik Ahmed Yassin, in retaliation for a suicide attack on border guards, Israel's deputy defence minister said in the bluntest warning yet against leaders of the Islamic militant group.

Yassin, a 67-year-old quadriplegic, did not try to hide yesterday, making his way to a Gaza City mosque near his home in a wheelchair pushed by an assistant.

'We do not fear the threat of death,' Yassin said outside the mosque. 'We will not bow to pressure and resistance will continue until the occupation is destroyed.'

Yassin said he was not personally involved in planning attacks, denying allegations by Israeli security officials that he had approved this week's bombing in which a young mother blew herself up and killed four Israelis at the Erez crossing into Israel.

The Israeli officials also said Yassin issued a religious ruling allowing women to become bombers, after Hamas initially recruited only male assailants.

Israeli security officials met to weigh a response to the latest Hamas bombing and one official said targeted killings of senior Hamas members are likely to resume after a lull of several months.

Deputy Defence Minister Zeev Boim named Yassin as a key target.

Palestinian MP Hanan Ashrawi said an attack on Yassin would boost support for militants among Palestinians.

'It doesn't take much brains to know that assassinating the political leadership of Hamas will have serious implications locally and regionally,' she said.

Load-Date: January 20, 2004

First Hamas female bomber hailed as hero at her funeral

Times Colonist (Victoria, British Columbia)

January 16, 2004 Friday Final Edition

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Section: News; Pg. A11; News

Length: 313 words

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP) -- The first **female Hamas** suicide bomber was given a hero's funeral Thursday, a day after killing four Israeli border guards, and Israel sealed the Gaza Strip to review security at border crossings.

The closure prevented thousands of Palestinian workers from getting to their jobs in Israel and a nearby industrial zone. The workers, among the few with jobs in the impoverished region, worried life would only become more difficult but few were willing to openly blame terrorists for their new hardship.

Associated Press

Top Israel army commanders met at the Defence Ministry Thursday to consider a response to the latest attack, a security official said. Targeted killings of senior **Hamas** terrorists were expected to resume, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Wednesday's attack at the Erez border crossing between Israel and Gaza was the first time the Islamic terrorist group **Hamas** dispatched a **female** suicide bomber, and the group threatened more violence.

"She is not going to be the last (attacker) because the march of resistance will continue until the Islamic flag is raised, not only over the minarets of Jerusalem, but over the whole universe," **Hamas** leader Mahmoud Zahar said.

The Israeli security official said **Hamas** spiritual leader Sheik Ahmed Yassin issued a religious edict permitting **women** to carry out bombings, something **Hamas** had resisted. He said Yassin personally approved Wednesday's attack.

The bombing was carried out by Reem Raiyshi, 22, a mother with two young children. She had been escorted into a room for a security search when she blew herself up. The attack was jointly claimed by **Hamas** and the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, a group linked to Yasser Arafat.

Thousands marched through Gaza City during her funeral. Masked gunmen from **Hamas** and Al Aqsa carried her coffin, draped in the **Hamas** green flag.

Load-Date: January 16, 2004

Bomb puts Hamas back on Israel's hit list

The Weekend Australian

January 17, 2004 Saturday All-round Country Edition

Copyright 2004 Nationwide News Pty Limited

Section: WORLD; Pg. 15

Length: 268 words

Byline: * Correspondents in Jerusalem and Gaza City

Body

ISRAEL was expected to resume targeted killings of senior Hamas militants following this week's suicide bombing at a Gaza crossing, according to a security official.

Top Israeli army commanders met at the Defence Ministry yesterday, the official said, to consider a response to Wednesday's attack by a Palestinian woman that killed four Israelis.

AP, AFP

After high-profile but ineffective attacks against Palestinian leaders in the northern summer -- bombing of a house where the entire Hamas leadership was meeting, and a helicopter strike aimed at the top Hamas spokesman -- Israel had scaled back its attacks in concert with a significant drop in Hamas bombings.

However, there was never evidence of even an unspoken agreement between the two enemies. Israel insisted the downturn was attributable to its own security forces, claiming they arrested as many as 30 potential suicide bombers.

Meanwhile in Gaza City, the young Palestinian mother-of-two -- Hamas's first woman suicide bomber -- was buried as her hardline Islamic group vowed she would not be their last female "martyr". Palestinians had mixed feelings about the path chosen by 22-year-old Reem Saleh al-Riyashi, who killed herself and four Israeli security men at a crossing.

About 2000 people -- all men, in line with Islamic tradition -- took part in her funeral. Masked gunmen carried her coffin, draped in the green Hamas flag.

"The martyr Reem is a heroine since she gave up everything. This was a young married woman who left behind a husband and children to go to paradise," said Hamas leader Mahmud Zahar. "She won't be our people's last."

Load-Date: January 16, 2004

ISRAEL TARGETS HAMAS LEADER AFTER SUICIDE ATTACK

Belfast News Letter (Northern Ireland)

January 17, 2004, Saturday

Copyright 2004 Century Newspapers Limited

Section: NEWS; Pg. 18

Length: 263 words

Body

ISRAEL will kill the founder of Hamas, Sheik Ahmed Yassin, in retaliation for a suicide attack on border guards, Israel's deputy defence minister said in the bluntest warning yet against leaders of the Islamic militant group.

Yassin, a 67-year-old quadriplegic, did not try to hide yesterday, making his way to a Gaza City mosque near his home in a wheelchair pushed by an assistant.

"We do not fear the threat of death," Yassin, wrapped in a brown blanket, said outside the mosque. "We will not bow to pressure and resistance will continue until the occupation is destroyed."

Yassin said he was not personally involved in planning attacks, denying allegations by Israeli security officials that he had approved this week's bombing in which a young mother blew herself up and killed four Israelis at the Erez crossing into Israel.

The Israeli officials also said Yassin issued a religious ruling allowing women to become bombers, after Hamas initially recruited only male assailants.

Israeli security officials met to weigh a response to the latest Hamas bombing and one official said targeted killings of senior Hamas members are likely to resume after a lull of several months.

Deputy Defence Minister Zeev Boim said Yassin is a key target.

"Sheik Yassin is marked for death, and he should hide himself deep underground where he won't know the difference between day and night. And we will find him in the tunnels, and we will eliminate him," Boim told Israel Army Radio.

Israeli officials have said in the past they would go after Hamas leaders in retaliation for deadly bombings.

Load-Date: January 17, 2004

Hamas mourners vow to avenge another 'martyr'

The Times (London)
April 19, 2004, Monday

Copyright 2004 Times Newspapers Limited

Section: Overseas news; 13

Length: 814 words

Byline: Ian MacKinnon in Gaza

Body

Militants say their organisation will only be strengthened by al-Rantissi's assassination, reports Ian MacKinnon in Gaza.

FOR the second time in a month tens of thousands of angry, grieving Palestinians crammed into the shabby streets of Gaza City yesterday for the funeral procession of a Hamas leader killed by the Israelis.

They cried for revenge as hundreds of heavily armed Palestinian fighters joined Abdel-Aziz al-Rantissi's funeral cortege. They stretched out their hands in a desperate attempt to touch the bloodied corpse of their "martyr" as it was borne aloft from Gaza's al-Omari Mosque.

They professed themselves glad that the uncompromising 57-year-old paediatrician had got his wish of "martyrdom". Last June he came close to fulfilling that wish, narrowly escaping another Israeli missile that reduced his car to a burning wreck.

The Israelis "said that they killed al-Rantissi to weaken Hamas", Ismail Haniyeh, a Hamas leader, told the mourners. "They are dreaming. Every time a martyr falls, Hamas is strengthened."

"When the opportunity presents itself we will deliver a widescale response. It will come," vowed Mahmud alZahar, another Hamas leader.

Yesterday Dr al-Rantissi's 25-year-old son, Muhammad, sat under the traditional mourning awning outside the family home and told how he knew within minutes of the strike that his father had died.

"I heard there'd been an explosion and I knew it was him," he said, echoing calls for his father's death to be avenged. "He was a fugitive and didn't live at home any more. He slept in a different place each night. I went to the scene and knew he was gone. I came straight back here immediately to receive the mourners."

Ahmad Abdullah Jawad, 35, was sitting outside his mineral water business when the saloon car was struck without warning by the missile fired from a helicopter. The wrecked vehicle careered for another 30 yards before grinding to a halt in a ball of flames.

Mr Jawad hesitated with others about rushing to the aid of those in the car, fearing a second missile from the Apache helicopter high overhead and out of sight.

Hammas mourners vow to avenge another 'martyr'

"But then I went inside and grabbed a fire extinguisher," he said. "I tried to put out the flames. The two men in front had died instantly. But the other man, who I didn't realise at first was Dr al-Rantissi, was still alive. His face was burnt and there was blood coming from his nose and mouth."

His rescuers took almost ten minutes to free his legs and pull him from the tangled mess. The **Hammas** chief was bundled into a passing car and taken to the Shifa Hospital, where he died.

The only evidence of the attack yesterday were charred scraps in the road.

At dawn over Gaza yesterday morning the air was thick with black smoke from burning tyres set alight as a mark of mourning and protest. Thousands had spent the night on the streets decrying Israel's killing of the **Hammas** leader.

His bloodied body was taken the short distance to the family home, his unmistakable bearded face on view, though missing his trademark glasses.

A sea of flags greeted the procession as the fatigue-clad pall-bearers from the Qassam Brigades, **Hammas**'s military wing, muscled their way through the crush. The varied hues that garlanded the mosque's entrance told of mixed allegiances: **Hammas**, Fatah's al-Aqsa Brigades, Islamic Jihad and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

Knots of **women** in distinctive white hijabs held in place with green **Hammas** headbands chanted calls for revenge, their voices struggling above gunfire and chants of "Our blood, our souls, we sacrifice to you, Rantissi".

But there were those among the mourners who saw virtue in necessity. Amin Abdullah said: "They (our leaders) wanted to be martyrs, otherwise they would have asked for a ceasefire. Others will come in their place. Their deaths are a step towards freedom."

Some accepted that that day might be some way off, knowing **Hammas** has suffered not only the death of its leaders but the arrest of many commanders in the West Bank.

A Palestinian was killed and another seriously wounded by Israeli gunfire during a protest last night at a village northwest of Jerusalem.

Emotion-charged but peaceful protests erupted in Palestinian refugee camps, towns and universities throughout the region after the **Hammas** leader's killing.

Gunfire ripped through the sky for 20 minutes in Ain el-Helweh Palestinian camp, the largest in Lebanon with 60,000 inhabitants, overnight on Saturday as thousands protested. In Tripoli, northern Lebanon, some 5,000 Lebanese and Palestinians left the main mosque after midday prayers crying for revenge.

Nafez Rantissi, one of Dr al-Rantissi's brothers, was among thousands of protesters who took to the streets of the Jordanian capital. "For years we had expected him to be martyred and today we are both sad and happy," he said in Amman.

Mick Hume, page 16

Leading article, page 17

Load-Date: April 19, 2004

**Gaza vote a test of Hamas' influence;
Group seeks to legitimize itself**

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

January 28, 2005 Friday

Home Edition

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**The Atlanta
Journal-Constitution**

Section: News;

Length: 548 words

Byline: MARGARET COKER

Body

Zah'ra, Gaza Strip --- Standing outside a polling station Thursday in ankle-deep sand drifts that pass for a road, political novice Amal al-Louri needed no coaching on the mantra that all politics is local.

The **Hamas** matron, wrapped in the head-to-toe attire of a devout Muslim, engaged in some last-minute campaigning and eagerly urged neighbors to select her name on the ballot.

"I will build your children a park. I will work hard to solve your problems," al-Louri, a mother of five, told streams of veil-covered **women** using their lunch breaks to vote for a new town council.

Cox International Correspondent

About 90,000 Gazans went to the polls Thursday in the territory's first-ever vote to select municipal leaders. This dose of democracy in Gaza, home to 1.3 million Palestinians, is being seen as a testing ground for the future of the militant group **Hamas**.

The organization, which has enjoyed popularity through the years in the impoverished territory, wants to use the vote as a bridge to become a legitimate political party. **Hamas** has long carried out welfare programs and other community services in Gaza and the West Bank, separate from its violent acts against Israelis.

"Resistance is **Hamas**' main focus, and we call for its continuation, but it is our duty to progress," said Sami Abu Zuhri, a senior member of the group in Gaza. "These elections show that we are a vital part of society and that we believe in democracy."

Some Israeli politicians are wary about **Hamas**' attempts to legitimize itself. But others, especially Israeli military officials, say that a pragmatic **Hamas** could be key to establishing calm in Gaza if Israel withdraws its soldiers and settlers later this year under a plan by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

Gaza vote a test of Hamas' influence; Group seeks to legitimize itself

The current round of local elections is taking part in stages. The first phase, held Dec. 23 in several West Bank villages, saw Hamas gain significant headway into historic strongholds of Fatah, the mainstream party founded by Yasser Arafat that has run Palestinian affairs for five decades.

In Thursday's vote across Gaza, Hamas-backed candidates were expected to make a strong showing as well, since Gaza is the birthplace of the movement. Official results are not expected for at least two days, but early exit polls indicated that turnout exceeded 80 percent and that Hamas candidates could have won at least 30 percent of the 118 seats up for grabs.

For Hamas, a public shift from militant operations is crucial to its survival within a society that is tired of fighting and deep in economic distress, analysts said. The death of Arafat and the election earlier this month of his successor, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, has revived hopes that peace with Israel can be pursued.

"Hamas faces a critical choice of life or death. Getting into the Palestinian political system gives them a future. Standing outside [of the political arena] as they always have in the past would mean the end of them," said Ghazi Hamid, the editor of the al Raisal newspaper and a confidante of Hamas leaders.

Hamas is responsible for the majority of suicide attacks against Israelis during the past four years of violence.

It also runs one of the most effective social development organizations in the Gaza Strip, including schools, health clinics and camps.

Graphic

Photo: A Palestinian man casts his vote Thursday in the first-ever municipal elections in the Gaza Strip. It is a key test for the militant group Hamas, which is seeking political legitimacy. / ADEL HANA / Associated Press

Load-Date: January 28, 2005

Female bomber a Hamas first

The Toronto Star
January 15, 2004 Thursday
Ontario Edition

Copyright 2004 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: NEWS; Pg. A10

Length: 722 words

Highlight: Young mother kills 4 at Gaza crossing Feigned limp to trick checkpoint staff

Body

A young Palestinian mother, feigning a limp and requesting medical help, blew herself up yesterday at the entrance to a security inspection centre for Palestinian workers, killing four Israeli security personnel and wounding seven people.

The bomber, Reem Raiyshi, 22, said in a video released after the attack: "It was always my wish to turn my body into deadly shrapnel against the Zionists and to knock on the doors of heaven with the skulls of Zionists."

The attack signalled a new tactic by Hamas militants, who had never before dispatched a female suicide bomber.

Raiyshi left behind a 3-year-old son and a 1-year-old daughter. Her attack in an industrial zone at the northern edge of the Gaza Strip was the first Palestinian suicide bombing to kill Israelis since a Dec. 25 blast at a bus stop outside Tel Aviv, which also left four dead.

Israel responded by immediately shutting down the industrial zone - which provides crucial jobs in an area where 60 per cent of working-age people are unemployed - and sending home roughly 4,000 Palestinian factory workers.

"Palestinian terrorists are not only committed to striking Israelis at every opportunity, they are also bent on destroying their own economy," said David Baker, an aide to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

The blast came as efforts to restart peace talks remained stalled, with Israel's leaders threatening to impose a new boundary on the Palestinians if no progress is made soon.

Palestinians have carried out more than 100 suicide bombings in the past three years. But such attacks have been extremely rare in the fenced-in Gaza Strip, where Palestinian contact with Israelis is largely limited to security checks at such places as Erez.

Raiyshi was able to carry out her bombing by momentarily deceiving soldiers with her claim that she needed medical treatment inside Israel. She joined the line where Palestinians go through a security check each morning as they enter the industrial zone.

As she approached the building's entrance, which had a metal detector, she was limping, witnesses said. She told soldiers she had a recent leg operation, and a metal pin had been implanted that the detector would register.

Female bomber a Hamas first

She was allowed to pass, and when the alarm sounded, soldiers told her to wait while they called a **female** soldier to search her, the Israeli military said. Seconds later, Raiyshi detonated her bomb, packed with ball bearings and screws.

The blast tore apart the simple structure, sending part of the roof skyward and leaving behind dangling strips of metal. The floor was sticky with blood and littered with body parts, and bloodstains speckled the walls.

Two soldiers, a border police officer and a civilian security guard were killed, and seven people were injured, including both Israeli security personnel and Palestinians. Two of the dead were immigrants from the former Soviet Union.

A smiling Raiyshi, who came from a middle-class family in Gaza City, appeared in her video wearing combat fatigues, with an automatic rifle in her hands and a rocket-propelled grenade launcher in front of her.

"God gave me the ability to be a mother of two children who I love so," she said. "But my wish to meet God in paradise is greater, so I decided to be a martyr for the sake of my people. I am convinced God will help and take care of my children."

The Islamic group **Hamas** and Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, a faction loyal to Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement, jointly claimed responsibility for the bombing, saying it was revenge for Israel's killing of Palestinians.

"This was a distinguished operation," **Hamas** spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin said.

Hamas, the main group behind the bombings of the last three years, had not carried out a suicide attack for the past four months. Senior Israeli military officials said last month they believed **Hamas**, which is sworn to Israel's destruction, had temporarily suspended such attacks.

But Yassin said yesterday: "There is no truce."

Hamas said it sent a woman for the first time because of growing Israeli security "obstacles" facing its male bombers. Smaller militant groups have deployed **female** bombers several times.

Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia declined to condemn the attack, saying continued Israeli attacks and restrictions on Palestinians are leading to "escalation on both sides."

The Star's wire services

Graphic

LEFTERIS PITARAKIS/AP Israeli soldiers and investigators survey the scene of a suicide bombing that killed four security workers yesterday at the Erez crossing between Israel and the Gaza Strip. **Hamas** bomber Reem Raiyshi makes a statement in a video released after suicide attack. **Hamas** bomber Reem Raiyshi makes a statement in a video released after suicide attack.

Load-Date: January 15, 2004

Hamas mortar kills Gaza settler

The Record (Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario)

September 25, 2004 Saturday Final Edition

Copyright 2004 Metroland Media Group Ltd

Section: FRONT; Pg. A12; NEWS

Length: 309 words

Dateline: GAZA CITY, GAZA STRIP

Body

Palestinian guerrillas killed an Israeli-American woman yesterday in the first deadly shelling of a Jewish settlement in the Gaza Strip in four years of Israeli-Palestinian fighting.

The attack, just hours before the start of Yom Kippur, the holiest day on the Jewish calendar, was likely to mobilize further opposition to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plan to withdraw from the Gaza Strip next year.

The Palestinian resistance group **Hamas** claimed responsibility for firing two mortar bombs at the Neve Dekalim settlement in southern Gaza.

Associated Press

A **Hamas** video showed three masked fighters setting up and firing a mortar. After the shell was fired, heavy gunfire could be heard -- apparently Israeli return fire at the nearby Palestinian town of Khan Younis. The Israeli fire wounded two Palestinians, including a four-year-old boy, witnesses said.

One of the **Hamas** mortars hit a house in Neve Dekalim, wounding two **women** who were taken to a hospital in southern Israel for treatment.

One of the **women**, identified as Tiferet Tratner, died of her wounds, and the second was slightly hurt. Eran Sternberg, a settler spokesman, said Tratner also held U.S. citizenship.

Palestinians have fired hundreds of crude mortars and rockets at Jewish settlements in Gaza and Israeli border towns since the latest uprising against the occupation began in 2000.

But yesterday's attack marked the first time a resident of a Gaza settlement had been killed.

In June, two Israelis were killed in a rocket attack on the Israeli town of Sderot.

Eli Moses, a resident of Neve Dekalim, said Sharon is to blame because he is going ahead with a plan to withdraw Israeli troops and settlers from Gaza.

The shelling came a day after Palestinians killed three Israeli soldiers in an attack on the nearby Morag settlement in southern Gaza. The three attackers also died in the battle.

Load-Date: September 25, 2004

Hamas mortar kills Gaza settler

End of Document

No dancing and no gays if Hamas gets its way

The Times (London)

October 7, 2005, Friday

Copyright 2005 Times Newspapers Limited

Section: Overseas news; 41

Length: 217 words

Byline: Stephen Farrell

Body

A VISION of an Islamic society that bans mixed dancing and sternly disapproves of homosexuality has been given by Mahmoud Zahar, the most senior leader of **Hamas** in Gaza (Stephen Farrell writes).

After controversies when a **Hamas**-led council halted a dance festival and Islamist gunmen stopped a rap band performing in Gaza, Dr Zahar defended the enforcement of a strict interpretation of Islam.

"A man holds a woman by the hand and dances with her in front of everyone. Does that serve the national interest?" Dr Zahar said on the Arabic website Elaph. "If so, why have the phenomena of corruption and prostitution become pervasive in recent years?"

Because of successes by **Hamas** in municipal polls and its likely strong showing in January's parliamentary elections, secular Palestinians fear that it will try to impose its ultraconservative vision on them. Its Gaza heartland has no cinemas or bars, yet the West Bank has a brewery and Ramallah restaurants serve wine.

Dr Zahar condemned homosexual marriage, saying: "Are these the laws for which the Palestinian street is waiting? For us to give rights to homosexuals and to lesbians, a minority of perverts and the mentally and morally sick?"

He denied that **Hamas** wanted a puritancial regime, and said its political and social institutions included **women**.

Load-Date: October 7, 2005

International Roundup : Hamas defiant Palestinians shocked at use of suicide mother

The Guardian (London) - Final Edition

January 27, 2004

Copyright 2004 Guardian Newspapers Limited

Section: Guardian Foreign Pages, Pg. 18

Length: 325 words

Byline: Chris McGreal in Jerusalem

Body

Hamas has defied widespread criticism among Palestinians for using a young mother as a suicide bomber by publishing photographs of Reem Riyashi and her two small children posing with weapons.

Mrs Riyashi, 22, blew herself up and killed four Israelis at a Gaza border crossing a fortnight ago after faking a disability to bypass a security check.

She was the first **female** suicide bomber for **Hamas**, leading to considerable speculation as to her motives, and criticism of the organisation even among some supporters.

Mrs Riyashi left behind two young children: a three-year-old son, Obedia, and her daughter, Doha, who is 18 months. In the photographs, the boy is clutching what appears to be a mortar shell and, like his mother, is wearing a **Hamas** headband. Another picture shows her gazing at both children.

Hani Almasri, a writer on the Palestinian newspaper Al-Ayyam, told the Associated Press that the decision by **Hamas** to release the pictures damaged the Palestinian cause.

"I think the military operations are not attracting large support from Palestinian people as before, so I think this factor will not work for **Hamas**'s interests," he said.

But **Hamas** has defended the photographs by saying that the pictures show both the depth of despair among Palestinian **women** and their desire to defeat the occupation.

After the bombing, Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, the spiritual leader of **Hamas**, said Mrs Riyashi had opened the door for more **women** to die in the fight against Israel, and he urged more to volunteer.

Hamas has denied reports in the Israeli press that Mrs Riyashi was coerced into becoming a human bomb to restore her family honour and atone for an extramarital affair. Some reports said her husband drove her to the site of the attack at a checkpoint between the Gaza strip and an industrial park.

Israeli intelligence officials said Mrs Riyashi had suffered from depression for many years and had tried to commit suicide before.

International Roundup : Hamas defiant Palestinians shocked at use of suicide mother

Load-Date: January 27, 2004

End of Document

Hamas' threat: First female bomber won't be its last

The Philadelphia Inquirer

JANUARY 16, 2004 Friday CITY-D EDITION

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The Philadelphia Inquirer

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Section: NATIONAL; Pg. A07

Length: 430 words

Byline: Ibrahim Barzak ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

The first **female Hamas** suicide bomber was given a hero's funeral yesterday, a day after killing four Israeli border guards, and Israel sealed the Gaza Strip to review security at border crossings.

The one-day closure prevented thousands of Palestinian workers from getting to their jobs in Israel and a nearby industrial zone. The workers, among the few with jobs in the impoverished region, worried that life would only become harder - but few were willing to openly blame **Hamas** or other groups for their new hardship.

Wednesday's attack at the Erez border crossing between Israel and Gaza was the first time **Hamas** dispatched a **female** suicide bomber.

"She is not going to be the last," **Hamas** leader Mahmoud Zahar said, "because the march of resistance will continue until the Islamic flag is raised, not only over the minarets of Jerusalem but over the whole universe."

An Israeli closure shut down the Erez crossing and a nearby industrial park, where 6,000 Palestinians work. The army said that only those with humanitarian needs could cross.

Some workers, while unwilling to directly criticize **Hamas**, questioned the wisdom of the target. "I think we have the right to fight to end the occupation, but at the same time we have to think 100 times before any act," said Fawaz Radwan, 42, who works in a factory near the Israeli town of Ashkelon.

Even such veiled criticism is relatively rare, though some Palestinians grumble privately about tighter travel bans or other hardships prompted by attacks on Israelis. In a society where consensus is valued, criticizing the armed groups openly is seen by many as a betrayal.

The bomber was Reem Raiyshi, 22, the mother of two young children. Raiyshi had been escorted into a room for a security search, then blew herself up in an attack jointly claimed by **Hamas** and the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade, which is linked to Yasir Arafat's Fatah movement.

Hamas' threat: First female bomber won't be its last

Thousands marched through Gaza City during her funeral. **Hamas** and Al Aqsa gunmen carried her coffin, draped in the **Hamas** green flag.

Three of those killed were border police; the fourth was a private security guard. The army said four of the seven wounded were Palestinians.

Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia declined to condemn the attack. Palestinian leaders usually denounce attacks on civilians in Israel, but not on soldiers or settlers in the West Bank and Gaza, which they view as legitimate targets.

Also yesterday, Israel's High Court decided, after a petition by a human-rights group, to hold a hearing within a month on the legality of a barrier Israel is building in the West Bank.

Load-Date: August 21, 2005

HAMAS ADMITS ITS GUNMEN SHOT BETROTHED WOMAN IN 'HONOUR KILLING'

The Independent (London)

April 13, 2005, Wednesday

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Section: First Edition; FOREIGN NEWS; Pg. 30

Length: 810 words

Byline: BY DONALD MACINTYRE IN BEIT LAHIA, GAZA

Highlight: Yusra Azzami was a member of Hamas at university while her fiance was in the rival, Fatah

Body

Hamas has mounted a desperate damage-limitation exercise after one of its units shot dead a 20-year-old Palestinian woman for 'immoral behaviour' as she enjoyed a day out with her future husband.

Angry residents of Beit Lahia, close to Gaza City, have demanded "so far in vain" that the Islamic armed faction hands over three of the gunmen still at large to the Palestinian Authority after what the victim's family believes was a tragically unjustified type of 'honour killing'.

The masked Hamas gunmen shot dead Yusra Azzami as she sat in the front passenger seat of her fiance's Mitsubishi after they had forced it to stop. They went on to beat up her fiance, Ziad Zaranda, and his brother, Rami, before escaping in the victims' car. Yusra's terrified sister, Magdalen, who was engaged to Rami, ran away before she too was beaten.

Two senior officials from Hamas, which has admitted that members of the faction killed the woman, were turned away by her grief-stricken family this week when they visited to present their condolences. Both sisters and brothers were to be married this Friday in a joint ceremony.

The killing casts a spotlight on the chronic "and in the view of some residents deteriorating" weakness of law and order in the Strip. But it may also have a seriously adverse effect on Hamas's campaign in a series of municipal elections in Gaza next month, including in Beit Lahia itself.

A Hamas spokesman said the woman was shot because there was a mistaken 'suspicion of immoral behaviour' by the couples. But it was not clear yesterday whether inter-factional rivalry had also played a part since Yusra Azzami was a Hamas member at the Islamic university while her fiance was in Fatah.

Other factions have been quick to condemn the killing, and gunfire was exchanged between Hamas and Fatah at the victim's funeral last Saturday. Hamas also provoked outrage among some residents by claiming her as one of its 'martyrs'. The faction, which seeks to enforce the strictest Islamic codes on alcohol consumption and pre-marital contact, has issued leaflets in the town saying the killing was a mistake, promising to punish the culprits and that its members will abide by 'the law of God'.

Both couples had exchanged married certificates after their betrothal. Although they were not yet living together, they were married according to Islamic law. Leaflets produced by angry locals named three of the five member

HAMAS ADMITS ITS GUNMEN SHOT BETROTHED WOMAN IN 'HONOUR KILLING'

gang " two of whom were arrested as they tried to escape " as members of the Daghmash family, one of the most powerful in Gaza, and demanded that they be handed over for trial and punishment.

The Azzami and Zaranda families said the engaged couples had spent the afternoon shopping for the women's wedding dresses and then bought shwarma (takeaway meat sandwiches). Because the weather was warm, the couples went to the beach and ate their sandwiches by the sea.

Rami had then decide to withdraw some cash from an ATM in the city before they headed for home in the Mitsubishi at around 9pm. They realised that they were being followed by two cars, one of which a Subaru. It suddenly overtook their car and forced it to stop.

Ziad Zaranda, 25, said: 'Five men got out and started firing their guns at us. They shot about nine bullets at us. Two went through the window and one of these hit Yusra in the head.' He said that as his fiancée slumped in the front passenger seat, fatally wounded, the men beat the two brothers with clubs.

The men then dragged Yusra's bleeding body from the car and made their escape in the Mitsubishi. Bystanders took the victims to the city's Shifa hospital where Yusra died half an hour later. Ziad required 18 stitches and Riad 27.

Yusra's sister, Magdalen, 17, said she had run away to her nearby house shouting 'My sister, My sister' because she thought she too was being beaten. Magdalen said she did not know if they had been watched as they walked by the sea. 'Rami was trying to touch my hand but I was saying 'let me eat my sandwich'. Even if were not married Hamas does not have the authority to act like this.' The Zaranda family was sceptical about whether 'morality' was the motive saying that the stolen vehicle had Palestinian Authority markings and that it might have been an attempt to blame Fatah for mounting chaos in Gaza.

Ziad said: 'Hamas is worse than Israel, worse than Sharon.'

Mushira Masri, a Hamas spokesman, said last night that the gunmen had not known the couples were betrothed. 'The brothers who did this made a mistake. There was suspicion of immoral behaviour.'

Asked if they gunmen who fled were going to be handed over to the PA, he said: 'If the families want to han d them over to the PA they can do that.' He added: 'Palestinian law allows crimes to happen like adultery and wine drinking. There have been recent increases in these crimes and no one is punished.'

Load-Date: April 13, 2005

Shadowy Hamas Leader Issues Threat to Israel and Cautions Abbas Not to Seize Guns

The New York Times
August 28, 2005 Sunday
Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section 1; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 11

Length: 1133 words

Byline: By STEVEN ERLANGER

Dateline: GAZA, Aug. 27

Body

One of Israel's most wanted men, the **Hamas** military leader Muhammad Deif, issued a video on Saturday in which he warns the Palestinian Authority not to try to confiscate **Hamas**'s weapons and promises Israelis that "all of Palestine will become a hell" for them.

"Today you have left the hell of Gaza in shame but have not gotten out completely, as you continue to occupy Palestine," said Mr. Deif, whose face is in shadow as he spoke in his hallmark deep voice and identified himself by name. "We tell the Zionists who have tarnished our soil, we tell you that all of Palestine will become a hell."

The video was released as details emerged here of a separate challenge to the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas. Knowledgeable Palestinians disclosed in interviews that the release of a French television journalist on Monday was a result of a deal between Mr. Abbas and leaders of a prominent clan, who had kidnapped the journalist. Mr. Abbas released six members of the Issa clan from prison last week, including convicted murderers, to secure the release of the journalist Muhammad Ouathi, 46.

Until now, no motive had been given for the kidnapping. Mr. Abbas had been pressured by the French president, Jacques Chirac, to do all he could to free Mr. Ouathi, a television soundman.

Some senior Palestinian officials and some advisers to Mr. Abbas here, including a prominent psychiatrist, Dr. Eyad Sarraj, said that they had counseled him against the release but that he felt he had to act, even against the advice of his attorney general. Some considered the release a humiliation for Mr. Abbas and warned that it could lead to further kidnappings. They said the episode was an indication of the lawlessness that continues in Gaza and of the power of the clans, or hamullas.

Mr. Deif, 39, is the commander of **Hamas**'s armed wing, the Izzedine al-Qassam Brigades. He was born in Khan Yunis, lost an eye when the Israeli military rocket attacked his car in September 2002 and is accused of directing a series of suicide bombings and other attacks on Israel from 1996 to the present. Few images of him exist.

His video, which was delivered to news agencies in Gaza City, has a harsh warning for Mr. Abbas, who has called on **Hamas** and other radical militant groups, like Islamic Jihad, Fatah's Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades and the local Popular Resistance Committee, to disarm after Israel's pullout from the Gaza Strip.

Shadowy Hamas Leader Issues Threat to Israel and Cautions Abbas Not to Seize Guns

"We warn all those who try to touch the weapons of those who liberated Gaza," Mr. Deif said. "These arms must be used to free our occupied motherland."

Mr. Abbas argues that negotiation and an end to the armed struggle is the best way to achieve an independent Palestinian state. He insists that the militants keep the truce and not give Israel any reason to attack them or torpedo any agreements.

But Mr. Deif's comments echo the Hamas claim that it is the "resistance" that has forced Israel to pull out of Gaza, primarily because of Hamas's rocket, mortar and suicide bombing attacks, and the Hamas insistence that the war must continue to free the West Bank, Jerusalem and, under the Hamas charter, all of British Mandate Palestine, including Israel.

"To the brothers of the Palestinian Authority, the liberation of Gaza has been realized thanks to the sincere actions of the mujahedeen, and as a consequence our weapons will stay in our hands," he says on the video.

His position was reflected in a huge Hamas march in the bright sun on Friday from Jabaliya refugee camp to Beit Lahiya to celebrate the supposed victory of Hamas in driving Israel out of Gaza. More than 5,000 people, including a number of young children, marched under green Hamas banners that vowed, "We will continue," carried flags that combined the Palestinian and Hamas standards and wore green Hamas baseball caps stating, "There is no god but God and Muhammad is his prophet."

One banner read in English, for the foreign press, "Four years of pain is better than 10 years in vain." But the Arabic version was clearer: "Four years of resistance is better than 10 years of negotiation."

Mr. Deif's brigades make up a well-equipped, well-trained and motivated army of at least 5,000 men, Avi Dichter, the former head of Shin Bet, Israel's counterterrorism agency, said in an interview.

On Friday, perhaps 500 of his men marched with antitank rockets, automatic rifles and submachine guns. The Palestinian Authority has said that militants should not carry guns in the street. Hamas marchers, unusually, did not fire their weapons into the air, even though a van with a loudspeaker played recordings of automatic weapons fire and of explosions that were described as the suicide bombings of martyrs.

New posters showed a Rambo-like masked Hamas fighter stepping on the red-tile roofs of Israeli settlement homes while small, black-clad settlers in side-curls fled in terror.

There were also many women marching, a number of them wearing full covering -- swathed in black, including the hands, with slits to see through, and topped by the green Hamas caps. Some carried or led young boys and girls dressed in military uniforms, carrying plastic guns.

One mother, Naima Abdullah, 35, called herself "a daughter of Hamas" and said that she had "chosen the path of God." Hamas, she said, "played the largest role in the resistance," and she added, "Now it's time for Hamas to participate in the government of Palestine."

Samah Bader, 15, when asked why she would walk so far in the hot sun, said: "Happiness. Happiness makes the walking easy."

Ayshah Kahlout, 70, a refugee from Ashkelon, sat in the shade watching the men of Hamas march by with their guns. "I feel like ululating," she said. "I'm very happy. This is part of my land." Asked about the little children in uniform, she said, "I wish I could be pregnant again so I could bear more kids to be soldiers."

But pressed, she said the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza "is a tiny thing, and the evacuation of these little settlements, that's nothing." Hamas was exaggerating its deeds, Mrs. Kahlout said. "The real objective will be all the lands. And the Israelis still control the crossings, the airspace and the sea. This is not even one-quarter of the liberation."

Shadowy Hamas Leader Issues Threat to Israel and Cautions Abbas Not to Seize Guns

Bush Calls for Terrorism Crackdown

CRAWFORD, Tex., Aug. 27 (Reuters) -- President Bush demanded Saturday that the Palestinians respond to the Israeli pullout from Gaza and parts of the West Bank by cracking down on terrorism.

"The way forward is clear," Mr. Bush said in his weekly radio address. "The Palestinians must show the world that they will fight terrorism and govern in a peaceful way."

"We demand an end to terrorism and violence in every form because we know that progress depends on ending terror," he added.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Photo: Palestinians in the Jabaliya refugee camp on Friday celebrated what ***Hamas*** has said was its victory in driving Israel out of the Gaza Strip. (Photo by Valdrin Xhemaj/European Pressphoto Agency)

Load-Date: August 28, 2005

End of Document

Female bomb maker part of Hamas: Israel

The Calgary Herald (Alberta)

October 12, 2005 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A11

Length: 282 words

Byline: Ali Daraghmeh, The Associated Press

Dateline: TULKAREM, West Bank

Body

Hamas's first **female** bomb maker is a 22-year-old university graduate who was recruited in Gaza and sent to the West Bank to teach others to assemble explosives, Israeli security officials say, noting a sharp rise in the use of **women** by militant groups in the past two years.

The male-run **Hamas** denied Tuesday that it is promoting **women** into central roles, while relatives of the suspected bomb maker, Samar Sabih, said the newlywed rarely left home and had no contact with militants.

Sabih was arrested at her home in the West Bank town of Tulkarem in late August, in a nighttime raid involving more than a dozen jeeps and a helicopter, said her father-in-law, Jaber Sabih. Israel's Shin Bet security service announced the arrest Monday, after lifting a gag order.

The Shin Bet said Sabih was recruited by **Hamas** in Gaza's Jebaliya refugee camp, where she grew up, and was taught to build bombs. Sabih, a graduate of Arab language studies at Gaza City's Islamic University, was engaged to her cousin, Rasmi, 22, a construction worker in Tulkarem, and obtained a rare permit from Israel to move to the West Bank in order to join him.

Shin Bet officials said Sabih confessed to the charges during interrogation. In a photo taken shortly before her arrest, Sabih, her round face framed by a white scarf, posed with her husband, who was arrested by Israeli troops a day after she was taken.

Since the outbreak of Israeli-Palestinian fighting five years ago, 96 Palestinian **women** have been involved in violence against Israel, with more than half the incidents taking place in the past 18 months, according to Israeli government statistics. Statistics say only 15 **women** were engaged in violence in 2003.

Load-Date: October 12, 2005

HARD-LINER NAMED HAMAS LEADER;
ISRAEL TO KEEP TARGETING ROOTS OF PALESTINIAN VIOLENCE

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

March 24, 2004 Wednesday

SOONER EDITION

Copyright 2004 P.G. Publishing Co.

Section: WORLD,

Length: 779 words

Byline: GREG MYRE, THE NEW YORK TIMES

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

The Palestinian Islamic movement **Hamas** named one of its most combative figures, Dr. Abdel Aziz Rantisi, as its leader in the Gaza Strip yesterday following Israel's killing of the group's founder, Sheik Ahmed Yassin.

Meanwhile, senior Israeli security officials said top **Hamas** leaders would continue to be targets as part of an ongoing campaign against Palestinians linked to violence against Israel.

"Everyone is in our sights. There is no immunity for anyone," said Tzachi Hanegbi, Israel's minister of internal security.

Rantisi, a pediatrician in his mid-50s, has already survived one such Israeli effort. He suffered multiple wounds last June, when his car was hit by a missile on a Gaza City street, but he quickly recovered.

While a major figure in the movement, he lacks the towering stature of Yassin, who established the group in 1987. The sheik was killed in an Israeli helicopter strike as he left a Gaza City mosque following Monday morning prayers.

President Bush did not repeat statements made Monday by State Department spokesman Richard Boucher that the administration was "deeply troubled" by the killing of Yassin. Instead, the president told reporters that he was "worried about terrorist groups targeting America." He added, "Whether it be a **Hamas** threat or an al-Qaida threat, we take them very seriously in this administration."

Rantisi, who speaks frequently to journalists, has been the most visible and fiery **Hamas** spokesman in recent years. He vowed that under his leadership of **Hamas** from its Gaza stronghold, the group would continue to push hard to carry out suicide bombings and other attacks.

"The Israelis will not know security," Rantisi yesterday told the crowd at a memorial service for Yassin. "We will fight them until the liberation of Palestine, the whole of Palestine."

And in remarks directed at the military wing of **Hamas**, he said: "The door is open for you to strike all places, all the time and using all means."

HARD-LINER NAMED HAMAS LEADER; ISRAEL TO KEEP TARGETING ROOTS OF PALESTINIAN VIOLENCE

The **Hamas** leadership structure is fuzzy -- Yassin held the title of spiritual leader -- and the full extent of Rantisi's authority was not immediately clear.

Khaled Mashaal, based in Syria, remains head of **Hamas**' political bureau, a key decision-making body, **Hamas** officials said.

In an interview last night with the Arab satellite television network Al Jazeera, Rantisi said he would "obey" the political bureau. In the past, there has been tension between **Hamas** leaders in the Palestinian territories and those in exile.

The killing of Yassin seemed -- at least in the short term -- likely to increase regional violence, as Palestinian groups called for retaliatory attacks.

Israeli aircraft carried out an attack last night just across the border in southern Lebanon against a group of militants assembling a missile launcher, the Israeli military said. Two Palestinian militants were killed, and one was injured, The Associated Press reported from Beirut, citing a Lebanese security official.

Also, Israeli troops shot and killed an armed Palestinian who was crawling as he attempted to approach the Jewish settlement of Morag in the southern Gaza Strip.

In **Hamas**, a group defined by its extreme positions, Rantisi is known as the leader who makes the most vitriolic statements and opposes any form of compromise with Israel. When **Hamas** and other Palestinian factions declared a unilateral truce with Israel last summer, Rantisi was a vocal critic of the decision. The truce never fully took hold and within a couple months had collapsed.

Rantisi no longer practices medicine and in recent years has taught medical courses at the Islamic University, where many students support **Hamas**.

He spent years imprisoned by Israel and was sent into exile in Lebanon in 1992 along with several hundred other **Hamas** activists. The Palestinian Authority, which he frequently criticizes, also jailed him for about two years in the late 1990s.

While Rantisi describes himself as a political figure, Israel says there is no distinction between the political and military wings of **Hamas** and that Rantisi is among those who have orchestrated the group's suicide bombing campaign, even if they have not planned the details of attacks.

The death of Yassin brought a deluge of international criticism directed at Israel, and it also produced a measure of Palestinian political unity, at least temporarily.

The Fatah movement, which is more nationalist than religious, is headed by Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Prime Minister Ahmed Qurei and is the main rival of **Hamas** in Palestinian politics. But Fatah leaders have lavished praise on Yassin, and Qurei traveled from the West Bank to Gaza to attend yesterday's memorial service.

Graphic

PHOTO: Oded Balilty/Associated Press: Israeli **female** soldiers walk next to a coffee shop on their way to be deployed in downtown Jerusalem yesterday. Amid increased security, army troops have been reinforcing police units in the city.

PHOTO: Kevin Frayer/Associated Press: **Hamas** leader Dr. Abdel Aziz Rantisi talks on a cell phone next to a poster of Sheik Ahmed Yassin at his mourning tent in Gaza City yesterday.

HARD-LINER NAMED HAMAS LEADER; ISRAEL TO KEEP TARGETING ROOTS OF PALESTINIAN
VIOLENCE

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Israel threatens assassinations: Defence minister responds to Hamas threats of abductions

The Star Phoenix (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan)

February 2, 2004 Monday Final Edition

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Section: World; Pg. D6; News

Length: 397 words

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

JERUSALEM (AP) -- The leaders of violent Islamic groups are targets for assassination, Israel's defence minister said Sunday, raising the possibility of a further escalation in the three years of Israeli-Palestinian bloodshed.

Shaul Mofaz issued the threat in response to a declaration by the spiritual leader of **Hamas**, Sheik Ahmed Yassin, that the group plans an all-out effort to kidnap Israeli soldiers.

"The statements of Yassin just emphasize the need to strike the heads of **Hamas** and the Islamic Jihad," Mofaz told the weekly meeting of the Israeli cabinet, according to an Israeli official who attended the meeting.

Associated Press

The statements by Mofaz and Yassin threaten to inflame an already violent confrontation that has led to the deaths of more than 3,500 people on both sides during three years of fighting.

Last week, Israel killed eight Palestinians in a shootout in Gaza City, while a Palestinian suicide bomber killed 11 people in Jerusalem.

Hamas took responsibility for the bombing, a day after a claim from the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, loosely linked to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement.

Sunday marked the beginning of the four-day Eid al-Adha holiday, and **Hamas** officials were not available to react to Mofaz's comments.

During more than three years of violence, Israel has carried out many pinpoint attacks aimed at leaders of **Hamas** and Islamic Jihad -- often prompting a violent response.

In September, Yassin narrowly escaped an Israeli air strike in the Gaza Strip.

But Israel has greatly reduced the number of targeted killings in recent months.

Last month, Mofaz's deputy, Zeev Boim, retracted comments calling for Yassin's assassination, saying later that no decision had been made.

Hamas, responsible for dozens of suicide bombings over the last three years, also appeared to have scaled back its activities until a **Hamas female** suicide bomber killed four Israelis at a Gaza-Israel checkpoint Jan. 14.

Israel threatens assassinations: Defence minister responds to Hamas threats of abductions

Also Sunday, Israeli troops raided the town of Jericho for the first time in months, killing a Palestinian militant. The fighting forced many residents to stay indoors on the first day of Eid.

The military said troops entered the town to arrest fugitives planning an attack. In the ensuing shootout, one fugitive was killed and another wounded.

There were no Israeli casualties, and the army withdrew in the afternoon.

Graphic

Photo: Associated Press; A Palestinian youth stands Sunday atop the rubble of at least three houses in the West Bank town of Jericho

Load-Date: February 2, 2004

HAMAS LEADER ASSASSINATION: Yassin sought to destroy Israel

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

March 29, 2004 Monday

Home Edition

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The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Section: Editorial;; Column

Length: 516 words

Byline: HAROLD KIRTZ

Body

Let there be no mistake. Israel is in its own war against terrorism. When Israeli Defense Forces killed Sheik Ahmed Yassin, the founder and leader of **Hamas**, last week, it eliminated a hardened enemy of the state of Israel. For the Journal-Constitution

Israel cannot back away from the fight against terrorism. That was made painfully clear to Israel after it unilaterally left its defensive positions in southern Lebanon in early 2000. Shortly afterward, in September 2000, the Palestinians started the current intifida (uprising). Yasser Arafat learned from the Lebanon episode that Israel is vulnerable to the type of harassing attacks that Hezbollah committed in Lebanon.

Under the leadership of Yassin, **Hamas** has been a central foe of Israel during the intifida. Yassin was not interested in simply moving the Israelis out of Gaza and the West Bank. He repeatedly called for the elimination of Israel.

Yassin unequivocally rejected the idea of a two-state solution for the Israeli-Arab conflict. He even recently stated that any formation of a Palestinian state would be just the first step to the eventual destruction of Israel. Israel has a right to exist and has a right to defend itself against the forces attempting to destroy it.

Hamas should be interested in helping the Palestinian people. It already provides some social services, which were Yassin's sole focus in the 1970s and early 1980s. But then he switched to tactics of violence, and those are what have now led to his death.

Yassin's severe personal handicap did not inhibit his ability to command the violence of the last 10 years. His personal approval, for example, of the March 27, 2002, suicide bombing of the dining room of the Park Hotel was particularly heinous --- 30 people were killed and 140 injured in the midst of their Passover holiday Seder meal.

During the last three years, **Hamas** has perpetrated 425 attacks, including 52 suicide attacks, and killed 377 Israelis and wounded 2,076, including many **women** and children, fathers and mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers.

HAMAS LEADER ASSASSINATION: Yassin sought to destroy Israel

Yassin's contempt does not stop at Israel. Last May, he praised Osama bin Laden, wishing that Allah grant bin Laden the possibility to continue his fight against the United States.

By contrast, Israel is fighting this war on terrorism by targeting and trying to eliminate only the Palestinian leaders who plan, approve and carry out attacks mostly on Israeli civilians, including young children. In fact, Israel has shown great restraint in waiting for Arafat to live up to his pledge to curtail the violence, because Israel could have wiped out Yassin and others years ago.

Terrorism must be defeated for Israel and the Palestinians to have an opportunity to resolve their differences peacefully around a negotiating table. Israel's action against Yassin can ultimately diminish **Hamas**' terrorist capability and enhance the prospects for peace. As the new Passover season approaches, we pray for the redemption of all peoples of the Middle East.

Harold Kirtz is chair of the Community Relations Committee of the Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta.

Graphic

Photo: Harold Kirtz; Photo: A Palestinian youth holding a poster of **Hamas** spiritual leader Ahmed Yassin hurls stones at Israeli soldiers during clashes in the West Bank city of Hebron. Yassin was slain in an Israeli missile strike. / NASSER SHIYOUKHI / Associated Press

Load-Date: March 29, 2004

End of Document

***Hamas calls cease-fire after 3 days of attacks ;
Barrage of rockets from Gaza brought Israeli airstrikes***

The International Herald Tribune

September 26, 2005 Monday

Copyright 2005 International Herald Tribune

Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 962 words

Byline: Greg Myre

Dateline: JERUSALEM:

Body

Amid escalating violence, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said Sunday that he had given the Israeli military free rein to act against Palestinian factions firing rockets at Israel. Hours later, **Hamas** announced that it was halting all attacks from the Gaza Strip.

The surprise statement by **Hamas**, delivered Sunday night in Gaza City by a senior **Hamas** leader, Mahmoud Zahar, offered the possibility that three days of fighting could be brought to a halt.

The region had been relatively calm in recent weeks, but a major confrontation loomed after **Hamas** began shooting rockets from northern Gaza into southern Israel on Friday night and Israel responded with airstrikes.

The New York Times

"There are no restrictions on the use of any measure in order to strike at the terrorists," Sharon said Sunday morning at the beginning of the weekly cabinet meeting. "This phenomenon must be stopped."

On Sunday night, an Israeli airstrike killed a leader in the Islamic Jihad faction, Muhammad Khalil, and another member of the faction as their car traveled along a coastal road in Gaza City. Earlier Sunday, 20 Palestinians were wounded in strikes against suspected **Hamas** facilities, including a school. The wounded included **women** and children.

But late Sunday night, Zahar said that **Hamas** "declares an end to its operations from the Gaza Strip against the Israeli occupation."

Before Zahar spoke, **Hamas** said that it would launch repeated attacks against Israel.

The Israeli government did not immediately comment on the **Hamas** announcement. Still, it was highly unusual for the group to publicly make such a statement.

In the wake of Israel's withdrawal from Gaza, which was completed two weeks ago, Sharon and the Palestinian leader, Mahmoud Abbas, said they wanted the volatile territory to remain calm.

After **Hamas** began firing rockets on Friday night, it came under criticism from the Palestinian Authority, as well as facing the prospect of a major Israeli military operation.

Hamas calls cease-fire after 3 days of attacks ; Barrage of rockets from Gaza brought Israeli airstrikes

In the West Bank, the Israeli military arrested more than 200 Palestinians in an overnight sweep through the main Palestinian cities.

It was the biggest such raid since the Israelis and Palestinians announced a truce in February.

Israeli soldiers seized mostly Hamas and Islamic Jihad members, and the largest number of arrests took place in and around Ramallah, where 70 suspects were arrested, the military said. Two of the most senior Hamas leaders in the West Bank, Hasan Yousef and Muhammad Ghazal, were among those arrested, Hamas said.

Israeli tanks and armored vehicles were moved to Gaza's borders on Saturday, although as of Sunday night there was no sign that a ground invasion was imminent. The last Israeli troops left Gaza on Sept. 12, after a 38-year presence in the territory.

Sharon, meanwhile, was also dealing with a political drama inside his own rightist Likud party.

The prime minister remains broadly popular among the Israeli public but is struggling to retain control of his party, where hard-liners are attempting to oust him.

The prime minister had planned to address the Likud Central Committee in Tel Aviv on Sunday evening, in advance of an important party vote on Monday. But Likud has a long history of rough-and-tumble internal battles, and someone poured water on an electrical system, cutting the sound system just as Sharon began speaking, party officials said.

A stern-faced Sharon left the meeting without delivering his speech.

The 3,000 members of the Likud Central Committee will vote Monday on whether to hold a primary election for party leader next spring, as Sharon would like, or move it up to this November, as Sharon's main rival, Benjamin Netanyahu, is urging.

Israel is not required to hold national elections until November 2006, and Sharon's coalition government appears relatively stable for now.

Sharon argues that it makes no sense for Likud, the party in control of the government, to depose him and force early elections, risking Likud's hold on power.

But the hard-liners say Sharon's Gaza pullout was a reward for terrorists and went completely against the spirit and tradition of Likud, which has consistently pushed for an expanded Israeli presence in the West Bank and Gaza.

Netanyahu, who spoke to the party members before the sound was cut, said the Hamas rocket fire showed that Israel's departure from Gaza was a mistake.

"I ask you, what have we received in return for this anguish?" Netanyahu said of the Gaza pullout. "Has this move strengthened our security? No. Has it brought peace closer. No. This is not our way."

Several opinion surveys indicate that Likud voters are leaning toward the early primary in November, although Monday's ballot looks to be close.

If the party primary is held in November, and if Netanyahu defeats Sharon, the likely outcome would be the collapse of the government and new national elections early next year.

The Israeli news media have been filled with speculation about what Sharon might do if he loses the coming party battles.

One theory holds that Sharon could leave Likud and establish a new party. He could then seek a coalition with centrist parties to try to remain in power. Sharon has been prime minister for four and a half years, an unusually long time in Israel's fractious political system.

Hamas calls cease-fire after 3 days of attacks ; Barrage of rockets from Gaza brought Israeli airstrikes

The latest clash between Israel and Hamas began Friday night.

Hamas was holding a parade in Gaza's Jabaliya refugee camp to celebrate the Israeli pullout. During the rally, a Hamas pickup truck loaded with rockets exploded, killing at least 15 people and wounding more than 80, including Hamas members and spectators.

Hamas, without producing plausible evidence, charged that an Israeli airstrike caused the explosion.

But the Palestinian Authority and Israel say the blast was set off by Hamas explosives that detonated by accident.

Load-Date: September 26, 2005

End of Document

GRIEVING PALESTINIANS PLEDGE BLOODY REVENGE FOR KILLING OF HAMAS LEADER; MIDDLE EAST CRISIS

The Independent (London)

April 19, 2004, Monday

Copyright 2004 Independent Print Ltd

Section: First Edition; NEWS; Pg. 4,5

Length: 1108 words

Byline: DONALD MACINTYRE IN GAZA Amid the chants of revenge and grief and volleys of gunfire and grenade blasts, the body of Abdel Aziz Rantissi, the newly appointed **Hamas** leader, is borne through the streets of Gaza city packed with armed and masked militants and thousands of angry mourners, many carrying his portrait AP

Body

HAMAS MOVED swiftly yesterday to build a new underground leadership in the aftershock of Israel's assassination of Abdel Aziz Rantissi little more than three weeks after he took over as head of the faction in Gaza.

It secretly designated the third Gaza leader in a month to replace Mr Rantissi, who was assassinated by a helicopter missile that destroyed his car on Saturday near his home. His driver and bodyguard were killed instantly.

Khaled Mashaal, chairman of the **Hamas** political bureau in Damascus, ordered **Hamas** to choose a new leader in the Strip but not to name him in the hope of preventing him becoming an immediate target for a fresh assassination. **Hamas** used the second huge funeral procession in Gaza within a month to mount a defiant and emotional demonstration of support and continuity in the face of the loss of the hardline and utterly uncompromising figurehead Israel holds personally responsible for the deaths of scores of its own citizens in suicide attacks.

As tens of thousands of chanting supporters packed into the narrow streets of Gaza City's old souk district to accompany Mr Rantissi's body from his home to the al-Omari mosque, **Hamas** activists handed out hastily printed leaflets to bystanders announcing the decision on the new leadership. The leaflets pledged "to the Palestinian and Arab nation that the resistance will continue".

Discolouration was still visible on Mr Rantissi's pallid and bearded face as his body, covered with a sheet and green **Hamas** flag, left the mosque on an open stretcher borne through a dense, swaying crowd by armed balaclava-clad pallbearers from the faction's Qassam military wing. There were volleys of gunfire into the air as the procession wound away from the mosque beneath a 30ft green banner proclaiming the faction's religious slogan: "There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is the messenger of Allah".

As the procession wound towards the Sheikh Bedwan cemetery, the crowd chanted: "Our blood, our souls, we sacrifice for you Rantissi."

On the side of Lababidi street in Gaza city yesterday, there were still fragments of charred debris from Mr Rantissi's burnt-out white Subaru where it had slewed to a halt opposite a mineral water shop some 30 yards on from where it took the missile hit.

GRIEVING PALESTINIANS PLEDGE BLOODY REVENGE FOR KILLING OF HAMAS LEADER; MIDDLE EAST CRISIS

Amal Abdul Jawad, 35, who runs the shop, said he had been outside at the time. "I heard a very loud explosion. I rushed into my house because the glass had broken and I wanted to see if my family was all right. Then I came down with a fire extinguisher and helped to put the fire out. My brothers also came with water from the shop."

He said the two men in front had been killed instantly, and that Mr Rantissi, whom he had not immediately recognised, was in the back. "People tried to pull him out but the front seats had collapsed on his knees. He was moving but he couldn't speak and he was bleeding from the mouth and nose." Mr Jawad said that the Hamas leader had finally been pulled out by his shoulders. No ambulance arrived so bystanders had stopped a passing motorist to take him to Shifa Hospital, where he died. Mr Jawad said the process had taken longer because passers-by feared another missile attack.

Of the repeated calls for retaliation against Israel for Mr Rantissi's death, some of the most strident came from hejab-clad members of Hamas's women's movement, bussed in earlier to join the procession, who chanted: "Revenge, revenge militias of Qassam."

The green flags of the Hamas supporters mingled in a show of unity with the yellow and black banners of Islamic Jihad, the yellow ones of the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades and the occasional red one of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). Ahmed Jebril, secretary general of the PFLP-GC (General Command), based in Damascus, warned of an "open war against the Zionist-American enemy and Arabs ... who side with them".

Hamas activists repeatedly pledged through loudspeakers that the faction would easily survive the assassination as it had that of Sheikh Yassin, leading incantations of "Your leader? Rantissi. Your way? Resistance. Your movement? Hamas. Your hope? To be martyrs."

With repeated grenade explosions and gunfire, Mr Rantissi was buried on the slopes of Sheikh Bedwan amid a huge crowd of mourners and watched by several hundred more packed on the half-mangled concrete floors of what had once been a multistorey building overlooking the cemetery.

Earlier, in the green mourning tent close to the Rantissi home, the Hamas leader's son Mohammed, 25, who had originally been reported as having been in the car, said he had gone to the scene of the attack. After he was told of his father's death he had gone home to join his mother and receive condolences. His father had not been living at home in the days before the attack, he said. "He was a fugitive; he stayed in different houses at different times."

Asked whether he expected retaliation in vengeance for the assassination of his father, he said: "God willing", adding that this was a matter for the military wing of Hamas.

Before the funeral procession left the neighbourhood, hundreds of the mourners pointed skywards shouting "Allah akbar" (God is great). A Hamas activist declaimed: "Our leaders are presented to death before our normal soldiers. Millions of Hamas supporters will follow you, Mr Rantissi, until we gain the whole of Palestine."

Unsurprisingly, most bystanders expressed strong support for Hamas and its assassinated leader. "Now every Palestinian is required to get revenge for this, not just Hamas," said Mohammed al-Haj, 28, as he watched the funeral procession. "Israel didn't have to get any green light from America for this because it is already a state of America."

But one of his friends, who gave his name only as Ameen, said that for all the dire predictions of revenge after Sheikh Yassin's killing, none had yet materialised. "Hamas has taken many losses in the West Bank," Ameen, 26, admitted. "There will be a retaliation but it may take time and new techniques."

Mr Rantissi had said in a BBC interview that if he had the choice between dying because of a heart attack or an Apache helicopter he would choose the latter. An unknown graffiti writer covered a wall near Mr Rantissi's home with his own epitaph in Arabic: "You've got what you wanted, Abu Mohammed. You win."

GRIEVING PALESTINIANS PLEDGE BLOODY REVENGE FOR KILLING OF HAMAS LEADER; MIDDLE
EAST CRISIS

w Israeli prosecutors yesterday indicted a 16-year-old would-be suicide bomber whose globally televised surrender last month brought condemnation of Palestinian militants. Hussam Abdu had a bomb strapped to his body when soldiers stopped him at a checkpoint near Nablus.

Leading article, page 30

Andreas Whittam Smith, page 31

Load-Date: April 19, 2004

End of Document

Israel begins 'crushing' retaliation: Major Gaza operation launched after Hamas fires 35 rockets at Israeli towns

Ottawa Citizen

September 25, 2005 Sunday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A6

Length: 658 words

Byline: Ibrahim Barzak, The Associated Press

Dateline: GAZA CITY

Body

GAZA CITY - Israel launched a "crushing" retaliation yesterday against **Hamas** in Gaza with deadly airstrikes, troops massed at the border and a planned ground incursion after terrorists fired 35 rockets at Israeli towns -- their first major attack since the Gaza pullout.

Israeli aircraft struck three suspected weapons-storage facilities in Gaza and a school in a crowded Gaza City neighbourhood late yesterday and early today, wounding 17 people, Palestinian officials said. Earlier, Israeli aircraft fired missiles at cars carrying terrorists in Gaza City, killing two **Hamas** terrorists.

The escalation threatened to derail a shaky seven-month-old truce and quashed hopes that Israel's ceding the coastal strip to the Palestinians would invigorate peacemaking. Israel's reprisals drew new **Hamas** threats of revenge, while Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas came under growing Israeli pressure to confront the extremists.

The crisis erupted just before a major challenge to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's leadership in his hardline Likud Party, and could strengthen the hand of Mr. Sharon's main rival, Benjamin Netanyahu, who has warned the Gaza pullout endangers Israel. A Likud vote tomorrow could determine whether Mr. Sharon quits the party -- a move that would likely bring early elections and prompt Mr. Sharon to form a new centrist party to capture mainstream voters.

Yesterday evening, Mr. Sharon convened his security cabinet to approve a series of military operations proposed by Mr. Mofaz, culminating with a ground incursion into Gaza.

Security officials said that "Operation First Rain" would include artillery fire, air strikes and other targeted attacks. The operation will grow in intensity, leading up to a ground operation unless the Palestinian security takes action to halt the rocket attacks or **Hamas** ends the attacks itself.

Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz told security chiefs that "the ground of Gaza should shake."

The officials said the army planned to create a buffer zone in northern Gaza by ordering residents to leave their homes, and said a closure barring Palestinian labourers from entering Israel would remain in effect.

Israel begins 'crushing' retaliation: Major Gaza operation launched after Hamas fires 35 rockets at Israeli towns

Shortly after the security cabinet's meeting, Israeli aircraft struck two suspected weapons-storage facilities in southern Gaza and a school in a crowded Gaza City neighbourhood. Officials said 17 people, including women and children, were lightly wounded.

The Gaza City attack hit the Al-Arkam school, established by Hamas' founder, Sheik Ahmed Yassin, who was killed in an air strike last year. The army said the school was used by Hamas to raise funds, recruit terrorists and assist families of suicide bombers.

Early today, Israeli helicopters fired three missiles in the northern Gaza Strip, striking a weapons-storage facility and the offices of a Palestinian militant group, the army said.

The army said it attacked a weapons-storage facility in the Jebaliya refugee camp and struck a building in Beit Hanoun housing the offices of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

"It was decided to launch a prolonged and constant attack on Hamas," said Maj. Gen. Yisrael Ziv, the army's head of operations, hinting that Israel was preparing to resume targeted attacks against top Hamas leaders. Asked whether the leaders were in danger, he said: "Let them decide for themselves."

The chain of events began Friday afternoon, with an explosion at a Hamas rally in Gaza's crowded Jebaliya refugee camp in which at least 15 Palestinians were killed and dozens wounded. Hamas blamed Israel, claiming Israeli aircraft fired missiles into the crowd, and said its rocket attacks on Israeli towns were meant as retaliation. However, the Palestinian Authority held the Islamic terrorists responsible, saying they mishandled explosives at the rally. Israel denied involvement.

In a speech yesterday, Mr. Abbas also blamed Hamas and renewed demands that armed groups stop flaunting their weapons in public.

Load-Date: September 25, 2005

For one Hamas leader, only long term counts ;
Globalist

The International Herald Tribune

January 19, 2005 Wednesday

Copyright 2005 International Herald Tribune

Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 975 words

Byline: Roger Cohen

Dateline: GAZA

Body

For a Hamas leader in Gaza, staying alive is hard work. Israel killed Sheik Ahmed Yassin and Dr. Abdel Aziz Rantisi in airstrikes last year. That was a signal for any senior Hamas figure to lie low. So Dr. Mahmoud Zahar lives underground. "Nobody knows where I will go at any time, not even my family," he says. On Sept. 10, 2003, his son was killed by a bomb from an Israeli plane. The attack broke his wife's back and demolished his house. "Such things are not talked about," he observes, "as if we were animals." Just what Zahar and the rest of the Hamas leadership have in mind has become a critical issue in the post-Arafat Middle East. Mahmoud Abbas, the newly elected Palestinian leader, wants the militant group to stop attacks he believes are counterproductive. Zahar, his son dead, his associates killed, his life uprooted, feels cause for a patient hatred. He is unready to abandon the option of violence. "Sharon is leaving Gaza because it is costing him to be here," he says, referring to the Israeli prime minister's plans to dismantle settlements in Gaza this year. "The Israelis will not go without military pressure, so we have to go on firing."

International Herald Tribune

Zahar is a short, heavysset man with a glint in his pale brown eyes. He moves slowly. His speech is deliberate, his English good. In 1990, well before Hamas was designated a terrorist organization, he visited the United States at the invitation of a Minnesota hospital. His conclusion: "America is a good country full of simple people who unfortunately know nothing about what is running in the world."

What Americans should know, he continues, is that it would be "a historic mistake to consider Islam the new enemy." "Islam is not the Soviet Union that could be destroyed from the inside," he says. "Millions are ready to stand under the Islamic flag."

Their anger, he suggests, is fueled daily by the sight of Palestinians defending themselves "against the superpower of American guns and helicopters." "Every Muslim is deeply disgusted by Israeli military attacks against us," he adds.

Resistance is the word Zahar uses to describe Hamas's attacks and suicide bombings -- resistance to what he calls Israeli aggression and occupation. For Israel, he is a terrorist with blood on his hands. That is why a bomb was dropped on his house 16 months ago in an attempt to kill him. Between those two words -- resistance and terrorist - - stretches the gulf that has fed more than a half-century of conflict. Between those two words -- resistance and terrorist -- lurks part of the complexity of the war on terror. Look at Zahar one way: an educated man, a doctor

For one Hamas leader, only long term counts ; Globalist

trained to save human life, a man indignant at the loss of his son, his home, his land. Look at Zahar another way: a terrorist ready to dispatch would-be martyrs to blow up Israeli women and children. It is easy enough to see him one way or the other, as those who love or loathe him would. It is less easy to see the whole picture. Victim? Or murderer? Or both?

Yeats suggested the best "lack all conviction" while the worst are full of "passionate intensity." By that measure, there are plenty of the worst on both sides of this conflict. I know one thing: The peacemaker must seek knowledge. To understand, it is helpful to look somebody in the eye. Zahar's gaze is steady. He has advice for Abbas, who is popularly known as Abu Mazen. He must clean up the "corrupt mafia" within his own Fatah movement, those who "took millions at the expense of the Palestinian people."

He must be prudent in seeking an end to Palestinian violence because "trying to disarm the military wings in Fatah, in Hamas, in Islamic Jihad will create a confrontation." He must persuade Israel to "stop their settlements, their aggression." The problem, of course, is that any gesture from Israel will depend on a Palestinian dismantlement of its terror cells, a lasting end to violence. But Zahar wonders what the Palestinians would get in return. As ever, the problem is trust. "From Oslo, we achieved nothing," this Hamas leader says. "So if Abu Mazen stops the armed struggle, what will the Palestinian method be to achieve its goals?"

Behind the defiant rhetoric, however, some readiness to compromise seems to lurk. Hamas, Zahar says, shares Abbas's "focus on the 1967 borders." If Israel will leave Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem, Hamas will set aside its guns for a decade, more than a decade. But will it recognize Israel? "We are not yet ready," he says. "We want a long cease-fire to verify their actions. We do not trust the killers or our people."

Zahar takes the long view. Time, he says, is part of medicine. If he himself fails, "the next generation will achieve our aims." He cites the British exit from the Middle East, the French from Algeria. "All history," he argues, "indicates one day we will prevail. People who want to achieve their goals must try negotiation, but be ready to use other means."

He smiles. The smile says there we are, it's like that, we are not in a hurry. Behind the smile lies steady anger. He cites Palestinian villages lost in 1948, he mentions that his son was to have been married three days after he was killed. He asks what "the crime is the Palestinians committed against the Jews." He asks why America does not tell Israel to leave the West Bank. He notes that Americans are advised not to go to Somalia or Yemen and, laughing, asks: "Why? Because people there admire Americans?"

I suggest the recrimination can go on without end. I suggest that the Palestinians are losing. Just look at the dusty mayhem of Gaza. Compare it with first-world Israel. Zahar is unimpressed. "We believe the weaker are not weaker forever," he says. "And the stronger are not stronger forever." * E-mail: rcohen@iht.com ** Tomorrow: Alan Riding looks at religious challenges to artistic freedom.

Load-Date: January 19, 2005

Hamas promises 100 retaliations to avenge leader

DAILY MAIL (London)

April 19, 2004

Copyright 2004 Associated Newspapers Ltd.

Section: ED_3RD; Pg. 2

Length: 542 words

Byline: MATTHEW KALMAN

Body

ISRAEL was braced for a new wave of suicide bombings last night following the assassination of Hamas leader Abdel-Aziz Rantissi.

The group promised 'one hundred retaliations' after Rantissi, 56, was killed when a helicopter fired two missiles at his car on Saturday night.

He staggered away from the wreckage but died a short time later in hospital.

He was the second Palestinian militant to be assassinated in less than a month.

Hamas founder and spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, a quadriplegic who could barely see, died in a similar attack on March 22.

Yesterday, prime minister Ariel Sharon congratulated the air force for the attack and vowed to continue targeting terrorists ahead of Israel's planned withdrawal from the Gaza Strip next year.

But experts fear Hamas, which has already sent women and children to carry out suicide bombings, will resort to even more brutal measures in revenge.

Its terror wing, Kassem Brigades, said: 'One hundred retaliations are coming, and the blood of Yassin and Rantissi will explode the coming volcanoes.' The latest killing heaped international fury on Israel.

The Arab world reacted with outrage. Britain and the EU condemned the attack.

However, the U.S. did not. It pointed to Israel's right to defend itself from terrorist attack and urged Palestinians to use restraint in responding.

A spokesman added: 'The United States strongly urges Israel to consider carefully the consequences of its actions.' The Foreign Secretary Jack Straw used far tougher language, describing 'assassinations of this kind' as 'unlawful, unjustified and counterproductive'.

Nearly 200,000 people swarmed the streets of Gaza City for Rantissi's funeral yesterday as his body was carried on a stretcher, his face exposed.

Masked gunmen fired automatic rifles in the air and called for revenge over loudspeakers.

Hamas promises 100 retaliations to avenge leader

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat condemned Israel's 'state terrorism'.

Declaring three days of official mourning, he said: 'The Palestinian leadership invites the world community to provide international protection for our Palestinian people and their leaders against the state terrorism practised by the government of Israel.' Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qurei accused George Bush of giving Israel virtual carte blanche to strike.

He said the attack, which came after Mr Bush backed Mr Sharon's plans to hold on to parts of the West Bank, was 'a direct result of American encouragement and the complete bias of the American administration'.

Hamas appeared to be reeling from the onslaught.

One Israeli border policeman was killed yesterday in Gaza, but at least three suicide bombings within Israel have been foiled in the past two weeks.

The group has appointed a new leader, but refused to name him. Media reports identified Mahmoud Zahar, an official who survived a missile attack on his home last year.

As Israel prepared last night to mark the beginning of Holocaust memorial day with a series of solemn ceremonies, hundreds of extra police, soldiers and volunteers patrolled sensitive areas.

The army clamped a 'closure' on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, forbidding Palestinians to enter or leave. The closures were expected to last until after Israeli Independence Day next week.

Comment Page TEN

END

Load-Date: April 20, 2004

Terror group threatens U.S. Palestinians promise to avenge assassination of Hamas leader

Charleston Gazette (West Virginia)

March 23, 2004, Tuesday

Copyright 2004 Charleston Newspapers

Section: News; Pg. P1A

Length: 1262 words

Byline: Lara Sukhtian The Associated Press

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip - Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians chanting "Revenge! Revenge!" flooded Gaza's streets Monday to bury Hamas founder Sheik Ahmed Yassin, who was assassinated by an Israeli missile. As ordinary Palestinians seethed with anger, militants pledged unprecedented retaliation - including threats against the United States.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan and many world leaders condemned Monday's killing of Yassin, the most prominent Palestinian targeted by Israel in 3 1/2 years of fighting. The Bush administration said it was "deeply troubled" by the attack and that it had no advance warning.

"We will get revenge for every drop of blood that spilled," said Salman Bdeiri, a Hamas supporter crying near the mosque where Yassin prayed shortly before being killed by an Israeli airstrike.

Israel sealed off the West Bank and Gaza, banning Palestinians from Israel, and placed its security forces on high alert.

Later Monday, Palestinian militants fired several homemade rockets and mortar shells at Israeli targets in and near Gaza. To the north, Hezbollah guerrillas fired an anti-tank missile at Israeli troops along Israel's border with Lebanon.

Israel quickly responded to both attacks. It struck at Hezbollah with planes and artillery fire. No casualties were reported. Israel sent tanks into northern Gaza near the town of Beit Hanoun. Israeli security officials said the purpose of the operation was to prevent further rocket fire.

The Yassin assassination was part of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's effort to crush Hamas ahead of a possible Israeli withdrawal from Gaza. However, the killing was seen as a major gamble that could galvanize the Palestinians behind Hamas. Rival Palestinian militant groups immediately pledged solidarity with Hamas.

The missile strike dealt what could be the final blow to the stalled U.S.-led "road map" peace plan. It also angered Egypt and Jordan, moderate Arab states whose tacit support Sharon needs for any unilateral withdrawal from Gaza.

Since Yassin founded Hamas in 1987, the group has killed hundreds of Israelis in scores of attacks. Hamas wants to destroy the Jewish state and replace it with an Islamic one.

Terror group threatens U.S. Palestinians promise to avenge assassination of Hamas leader

For the first time Monday, **Hamas** threatened the United States and suggested it might seek outside help in carrying out revenge attacks.

"The Zionists didn't carry out their operation without getting the consent of the terrorist American administration, and it [the United States] must take responsibility for this crime," **Hamas** said in a statement. "All the Muslims of the world will be honored to join in on the retaliation for this crime."

In the past, **Hamas** has refrained from targeting U.S. citizens or interests, instead focusing on fund raising and recruitment within the United States, according to senior U.S. law enforcement officials.

Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge was heeding the **Hamas** terror warning.

"If they are threatening the United States, we have to take it quite seriously," he told reporters in Washington.

While not condemning the assassination, the State Department said it increases tensions and would make it harder to pursue peace in the Middle East. "We are troubled," spokesman Richard Boucher said.

President Bush's national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice, told NBC that "it is very important that everyone step back and try now to be calm in the region."

But Israel said it will press ahead with more targeted attacks and raids.

"The war against terror has not ended and will continue day after day, everywhere," Sharon said. He called Yassin the "mastermind of Palestinian terror" and a "mass murderer who is among Israel's greatest enemies."

More than 200,000 Palestinians, some carrying billowing green **Hamas** flags, poured into the streets of Gaza City for Yassin's funeral procession.

Mourners in Gaza jostled to touch Yassin's flag-draped coffin, and **women** ululated and threw flowers and candy. Two Israeli helicopters flew above, and the sky was blackened from the smoke of burning tires.

At the cemetery, Yassin's body was paraded through an honor guard of 400 militants armed with anti-tank missiles and machine guns.

"Our leader has left us, but we say to him, 'Your lessons will stay within our hearts and minds and our generations,'" Abdel Aziz Rantisi, a **Hamas** leader, said in a eulogy.

In addition to Yassin, who was in his 60s, 12 Palestinians were killed Monday, seven in the airstrike, four in clashes with Israeli troops and one while handling explosives.

The attack came before daybreak, when Israeli helicopters swooped toward a Gaza street and fired three missiles as Yassin, his bodyguards and dozens of others left the mosque.

Blood and flesh splattered on the walls. Nearby windows shattered. Only a charred metal seat and two twisted wheels were left of Yassin's wheelchair, and a blood-soaked brown shoe lay in the street. Lying in tatters nearby was the brown blanket in which Yassin - a quadriplegic - was nearly always wrapped.

"Two or three people were lying next to him on the ground. One was legless," said taxi driver Yousef Haddad.

Among those killed were several of Yassin's bodyguards and his son-in-law. Seventeen people were wounded, including two of Yassin's sons.

After the attack, residents rubbed their hands in pieces of gravel mixed with Yassin's blood, a traditional sign of anger and a preparation for revenge.

The Palestinian Authority declared three days of mourning and closed schools. Flags at Yasser Arafat's headquarters in the West Bank town of Ramallah headquarters were lowered to half-staff.

Terror group threatens U.S. Palestinians promise to avenge assassination of Hamas leader

Palestinian ministers stood as Arafat recited a Muslim prayer for Yassin and then added: "May you join the martyrs and the prophets. To heaven, you martyr."

The missile strike shook Arafat in more ways than one. The massive outpouring of support for Hamas showed how formidable a rival the Islamic group has become to Arafat's weakened Palestinian Authority.

Arafat also fears he may be next on Israel's hit list, said a confidant, Communications Minister Azzam Ahmed.

However, an Israeli security official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Israel's campaign focuses on Hamas, at least for now.

Boucher, the State Department spokesman, urged Israel to keep its promise to not harm Arafat. "We think that's an important pledge, and we would expect them to stand by that."

Israeli Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz said Yassin's killing will eventually weaken Hamas.

"If we have to balance how many more terrorists Yassin would have sent, how many terror attacks he would have approved, if we weigh this on the scales, we acted rightly," Mofaz was quoted as telling a parliamentary committee.

But Sharon's critics in Israel warned that the Yassin killing could be viewed as an attack on Islam.

"This had nothing to do with security, nothing to do with protecting Israeli citizens. It's all about politics and public opinion," said lawmaker Yossi Sarid of the dovish Yahad Party.

Yassin's killing virtually buried hopes of reviving the road map, which envisioned an end to violence and the creation of a Palestinian state by next year.

"Such actions are not only contrary to international law, but they do not do anything to help the search for a peaceful solution," Annan said of the assassination.

European and Arab leaders condemned the killing. Egypt canceled a trip by legislators and other dignitaries to Israel to mark the 25th anniversary of the peace treaty between the two countries.

British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said the assassination "is unacceptable, it is unjustified and it is very unlikely to achieve its objectives."

Load-Date: March 23, 2004

Minister threatens to assassinate terrorists: Move in response to Hamas' vow to kidnap soldiers

Ottawa Citizen

February 2, 2004 Monday Final Edition

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Section: News; Pg. A9; News

Length: 389 words

Byline: Josef Federman

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

JERUSALEM - The leaders of violent Islamic groups are targets for assassination, Israel's defence minister said yesterday, raising the possibility of a further escalation in the three years of Israeli-Palestinian bloodshed.

Shaul Mofaz issued the threat in response to a declaration by the spiritual leader of Hamas, Sheik Ahmed Yassin, that the group plans an all-out effort to kidnap Israeli soldiers.

"The statements of Yassin just emphasize the need to strike the heads of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad," Mr. Mofaz told the weekly meeting of the Israeli cabinet, according to an Israeli official who attended the meeting.

The Associated Press

The statements by Mr. Mofaz and Mr. Yassin threaten to inflame an already violent confrontation that has led to the deaths of more than 3,500 people on both sides during three years of fighting.

Last week, Israel killed eight Palestinians in a shootout in Gaza City, while a Palestinian suicide bomber killed 11 people in Jerusalem. Hamas took responsibility for the bombing, a day after a claim from the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, loosely linked to Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement.

Yesterday marked the beginning of the four-day Eid al-Adha holiday, and Hamas officials were not available to react to Mr. Mofaz's comments.

During more than three years of violence, Israel has carried out many pinpoint attacks aimed at leaders of Hamas and Islamic Jihad -- often prompting a violent response. In September, Mr. Yassin narrowly escaped an Israeli air strike in the Gaza Strip.

But Israel has greatly reduced the number of targeted killings in recent months.

Hamas, responsible for dozens of suicide bombings over the last three years, also appeared to have scaled back its activities until a Hamas female suicide bomber killed four Israelis at a Gaza-Israel checkpoint Jan. 14.

Also yesterday, Israeli troops raided the town of Jericho for the first time in months.

The military said troops entered the town to arrest fugitives planning an attack. In the ensuing shootout, one fugitive was killed and another wounded.

Minister threatens to assassinate terrorists: Move in response to Hamas' vow to kidnap soldiers

There were no Israeli casualties.

The dead terrorist was Shadi Jaradat, an Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades member from Jenin who apparently sought refuge in Jericho. Israeli security officials said Mr. Jaradat, 23, was planning a bomb attack inside Israel.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Lefteris Pitarakis, The Associated Press; The Israeli army made a predawn push into Jericho yesterday, killing Palestinian terrorist Shadi Jaradat, who security officers say was planning an attack in Israel, and destroying three houses.

Load-Date: February 2, 2004

End of Document

'*Hamas will not be defeated': New leader's name kept secret as thousands vow revenge*

Ottawa Citizen

April 19, 2004 Monday Final Edition

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Section: News; Pg. A6; News

Length: 683 words

Byline: Molly Moore and John Ward Anderson

Dateline: GAZA CITY, West Bank

Body

GAZA CITY, West Bank - Tens of thousands of Palestinians escorted the corpse of **Hamas** leader Abdel Aziz Rantisi through the streets of Gaza City yesterday amid condemnation of Israel for his assassination and warnings that fracturing the terrorist group could fuel greater extremism.

Hundreds of hands reached out to stroke Dr. Rantisi's shrapnel-scarred face and touch the bloodstained shroud stretched over his body outside the city's main mosque, while thousands of mourners shook their fists at Israeli F-16 fighter jets roaring above the funeral procession.

Dr. Rantisi, 56, and two bodyguards were killed Saturday evening when Israeli AH-64 Apache helicopters fired two missiles at his car near his Gaza City home, a month after he took over as the Gaza head of **Hamas** following Israel's assassination of the group's spiritual leader and founder, Sheik Ahmed Yassin.

Hamas, formally known as the Islamic Resistance Movement, has claimed responsibility for dozens of suicide bombings and other attacks against Israelis.

The Washington post

"They said that they killed Rantisi to weaken **Hamas**," Ismail Haniya, a senior political leader of **Hamas**, told a frenzied mob through loudspeakers outside the Omari Mosque in the heart of Gaza City. "They are dreaming. **Hamas** might have a crisis at hand after losing its leaders, but it will not be defeated."

Across the West Bank, Palestinians demonstrated against the assassination. In Nablus, protesters shot, then burned effigies of U.S. President George W. Bush and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, according to news service reports.

Palestinian Foreign Minister Nabil Shaath cancelled a trip to meet with Bush administration officials in Washington next week, saying that "Israel commits crimes and is rewarded by the American president."

But a spokesman for Mr. Sharon, Raanan Gissin, said that "the U.S. had nothing to do with this."

"We don't ask for a green light and we did not get a green light," Mr. Gissin said. "Rantisi was the No. 1 terrorist operator in Gaza and we had to take him out."

' Hamas will not be defeated': New leader's name kept secret as thousands vow revenge

In a statement posted on its website yesterday, the military wing of Hamas, the Izzedine al-Qassam Brigades, warned: "One hundred responses are on their way and the blood of Yassin and Rantisi will explode in the coming volcanos."

Hamas leaders in Damascus said Saturday that they had selected a replacement for Dr. Rantisi but would not announce who it was in an effort to keep him from being targeted by Israel.

Palestinian analysts warned that with the leadership of Hamas in disarray and its thirst for revenge high, the organization could become more dangerous.

"This is killing any prospects for moderation," said Eyad Sarraj, a psychiatrist and human rights activist in Gaza. "It's encouraging more radicalism and violence."

For many residents of Gaza, Dr. Rantisi, a pediatrician who no longer practised medicine, was a particularly charismatic force.

"He was a good man, he helped everybody, he was a doctor," said Amna Abu Asha, 70, using the ends of her white head scarf to mop tears that spilled down cheeks as wrinkled as a walnut shell. "There is a big pain in my heart."

Dr. Rantisi's funeral procession, part cortege, part military show and part festival, consumed the city.

Members of the military wing of Hamas, faces hidden by black ski masks or home-sewn head covers, shouldered the weapons of a guerrilla army -- polished Kalashnikov rifles and crudely constructed rocket launchers. Some wore the green headbands of Hamas, others sported green baseball caps emblazoned with the Hamas logo.

Ragtag forces from other terrorist organizations appeared in blue jeans and T-shirts and toted Kalashnikovs held together by electricians' tape. Among the tens of thousands of men, a few dozen women marched wearing head-to-toe black chadors that exposed only their eyes through slits or the cuffs of blue jeans.

The funeral procession trampled over the charred remains of Dr. Rantisi's car, scraps of which were scattered across a boulevard a few blocks from the Martyrs' Cemetery where he was buried under a soaring pine tree.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Bassem Tellawi, the Associated Press; About 1,000 Palestinian refugees demonstrated yesterday in al-Yarmouk refugee camp on the outskirts of Damascus, Syria, to protest the killing of Abdel Aziz Rantisi.

Load-Date: April 19, 2004

Hamas vows revenge for killing , Israeli missile strike kills spiritual leader, seven others

Charleston Daily Mail (West Virginia)

March 22, 2004, Monday

Copyright 2004 Charleston Newspapers

Section: News; Pg. P3A

Length: 821 words

Byline: THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Body

CAIRO, Egypt - Anti-Israel demonstrations erupted in the Middle East today after Israel's killing of the spiritual leader of the Islamic militant group Hamas, and hopes for recent Arab moves to reinvigorate the region's peace process were dimmed by shouts for revenge.

Arab rage over the death of Hamas founder Ahmed Yassin, killed by an Israeli helicopter gunship at daybreak as he left a mosque near his Gaza Strip home, reverberated across the Middle East.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, who had been using his influence to press ahead with peace efforts, called it "cowardly."

Asked about its likely impact on the peace process, Mubarak replied: "What peace process, when the situation is on fire?"

Mubarak canceled already controversial plans for a few Egyptian legislators to participate in a celebration Tuesday in the Israeli parliament of the 25th anniversary of the Egypt-Israel peace treaty. The treaty was the first between Israel and an Arab state.

Hamas threatened a harsh response. "Yassin is a man in a nation, and a nation in a man. And the retaliation of this nation will be of the size of this man," said Abdel Aziz Rantisi, a prominent Hamas leader in Gaza who himself escaped an Israeli assassination attempt last June.

For the first time, Hamas also threatened the United States, saying America's backing of Israel made the assassination possible. "All the Muslims of the world will be honored to join in on the retaliation for this crime," Hamas said in a statement.

In the past, Hamas leaders have insisted their struggle is against Israel and that they would not get involved in causes by militant Muslims in other parts of the world. Today's statement suggested that Hamas might seek outside help in carrying out revenge attacks, since its capabilities have been limited by Israeli military strikes.

Rival militant groups also promised revenge.

Yassin was the most prominent Palestinian leader killed by Israel in more than three years of fighting, and his assassination was seen as a major escalation.

Hamas vows revenge for killing , Israeli missile strike kills spiritual leader, seven others

More than 200,000 Palestinians, some carrying billowing green Hamas flags, flooded the streets for the funeral procession, the largest gathering in Gaza City in recent memory. Thousands also took to the streets in the West Bank.

Mourners jostled to touch Yassin's flag-draped coffin, and women ululated and threw flowers and candy. Two Israeli helicopters flew above, and the sky was blackened from the smoke of tires set ablaze in the streets by protesting Palestinians.

At the cemetery, Yassin's body was carried between two rows of 200 militants armed with anti-tank missiles and machine guns.

"Words cannot describe the emotion of anger and hate inside our hearts," said Hamas official Ismail Haniyeh, a close associate of Yassin.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon called Yassin the "mastermind of Palestinian terror" and a "mass murderer who is among Israel's greatest enemies."

Sharon said Israel will press ahead with its war on terror, signaling more targeted attacks and raids. "The war against terror has not ended and will continue day after day, everywhere," he said.

In addition to Yassin, 12 Palestinians were killed today, seven in the airstrike, four in clashes with Israeli troops and one while handling explosives.

Bush administration National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice said Washington had "no advance warning" of the attack. Rice said she knew of no consultations between Sharon and President Bush about any plan to target the sheik.

But Rice, asked about U.S. reaction to the attack during an interview on NBC television, said, "Let's remember that Hamas is a terrorist organization and that Sheik Yassin has himself, personally, we believe, been involved in terrorist planning."

State Department spokesman Lou Fintor said U.S. officials were in touch with Israeli and Palestinian authorities. "The United States urges all sides to remain calm and exercise restraint," he said.

Israeli helicopters fired three missile as Yassin, his bodyguards and dozens of others left a mosque in Gaza City at daybreak today. Yassin, a quadriplegic who uses a wheelchair, and seven others were killed, including several bodyguards. Seventeen people were wounded.

Only a charred metal seat and a twisted wheel were left of his wheelchair and a blood-soaked brown shoe lay in the street. "Two or three people were lying next to him on the ground. One was legless," said taxi driver Yousef Haddad, who had rushed out of a nearby grocery when the missiles shook the Sabra neighborhood.

Fearing reprisal attacks, Israel sealed off the West Bank and Gaza and confined many West Bank Palestinians to their communities.

The Rafah border crossing between Gaza and Egypt was also closed. Troops reinforcements were sent to Gaza, and security forces in Israel were placed on high alert.

Three more Palestinians were killed in Gaza later today in clashes with Israeli troops, and one was killed while handling explosives.

Load-Date: March 23, 2004

Historic voting first step toward Palestinian state: Fatah, Hamas compete at local polling stations

The Calgary Herald (Alberta)

December 24, 2004 Friday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A15

Length: 410 words

Byline: The Associated Press

Dateline: JERICHO, West Bank

Body

Thousands of Palestinians crammed polling stations in scattered West Bank towns to vote in municipal elections Thursday that were a warm-up for next month's presidential ballot and the first time the ruling Fatah movement and the

Islamic militant group **Hamas** competed for voter support.

Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia, who cast his ballot in the Jerusalem suburb of Abu Dis, praised the vote in 26 West Bank municipalities as "the first step toward the establishment of the Palestinian state."

Voting in an additional 600 towns and villages was expected to be held next year.

Long lines formed at polling stations in the West Bank town of Jericho, with some voters complaining they had to wait for more than four hours and still had not been able to cast their ballots.

Still, many said they were eager to vote in their first local election since 1976.

"It doesn't matter, one or two hours. I'm going to vote. I have been waiting for this for a long time," said farmer Nabil Abu Kattan, 48.

Over the past three decades, Palestinian communities in the West Bank and Gaza have been run by appointed mayors, first those chosen by the Israeli military and then by the Palestinian Authority.

The late Yasser Arafat had been reluctant to allow municipal elections, fearing that **Hamas**, the largest opposition group, would make a strong showing. **Hamas** has grown in popularity during the more than four years of Israeli-Palestinian fighting, providing social services with its private schools and clinics.

The date for Thursday's elections was set before Arafat's death in November. The 26 communities chosen for the first round are Fatah strongholds, said Ali Jarbawi, former head of the Central Elections Commission.

Thursday marked the first time Fatah and **Hamas** were competing at the polls. **Hamas**, which is pledged to Israel's destruction, boycotted the 1996 general election because it followed interim peace deals with Israel.

Historic voting first step toward Palestinian state: Fatah, Hamas compete at local polling stations

Hamas is also boycotting the Jan. 9 presidential elections, but plans to field candidates in future parliamentary and local elections.

Some 150,000 Palestinians were eligible to vote in Thursday's elections. About 800 candidates are vying for 360 municipal council positions. Some seats were reserved for **women**.

"Just the crush of people was totally unexpected," said Nasser Awanja, the election official in charge of a Jericho polling station. "Because it has been since 1976 since we have had elections they are really fired up," he said.

Graphic

Photo: Muhammed Muheisen, Associated Press; A Jericho woman searches for her name Thursday on a voter's list.

Load-Date: December 24, 2004

End of Document

Sheikh 'marked for death': Hamas's spiritual leader ignores warning by top Israeli, vows violence will continue

Ottawa Citizen

January 17, 2004 Saturday Final Edition

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Section: News; Pg. A10; News

Length: 493 words

Byline: Ian MacKinnon

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

JERUSALEM -- Israel signalled its intent yesterday to avenge the latest suicide bombing that killed four people in Gaza, by vowing to track down and murder Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the **Hamas** spiritual leader who sanctioned the attack.

Military chiefs were considering a resumption of targeted killings of Islamic leaders in retaliation for the explosion set off by Reem al-Rayashee, 22, a mother of two children. Zeev Boim, Israel's deputy defence minister, said that Sheikh Yassin, the founder of **Hamas**, who approved Mrs. al-Rayashee's mission, headed the list of targets. The Times, London With files from The Associated Press

"Sheikh Yassin is marked for death," Mr. Boim said in an interview. "He should hide himself deep underground where he will not know the difference between day and night. We will find him in the tunnels and we will eliminate him."

Sheikh Yassin, 66, who uses a wheelchair and has survived one attempt to kill him, remained defiant. He denied planning attacks, but said **Hamas** would not bow to pressure.

He was pushed to the mosque in Gaza for Friday prayers flanked by children, worshippers and bodyguards, pausing outside to address journalists. He promised that violence would continue. "There is no room to speak about a truce," he said. "Resistance must continue until the removal of the occupation. We do not fear death threats. We are seekers of martyrdom."

In September, Sheikh Yassin narrowly avoided death when an Israeli jet dropped a 250-kilogram bomb on a building where **Hamas** leaders were meeting. He emerged with only a cut to his hand.

After Wednesday's suicide attack at Erez Crossing, Sheikh Yassin hailed **Hamas**'s first **female** suicide bomber, saying the tactic was because of stringent security checks on men.

In more than three years of fighting, Israel has killed more than 140 suspected terrorists in targeted attacks, but refrained from going after top Palestinian leaders. It has threatened to "remove" Yasser Arafat, suggesting it would either exile or kill him, but has refrained from doing either, in part because of U.S. opposition.

Sheikh 'marked for death': Hamas's spiritual leader ignores warning by top Israeli , vows violence will continue

An Israeli strike against Sheikh Yassin would likely provoke bloody Hamas attacks and boost support for the group, Mr. Arafat's main political rival, said Palestinian legislator Hanan Ashrawi. "If they target Hamas leaders, I don't think anybody can control the (Hamas) military wing," she said.

In Washington, State Department spokesman Richard Boucher reiterated U.S. policy against targeted assassinations and criticized Hamas and other groups for violent acts that make peacemaking more elusive. The European Union also spoke out against any plan to kill Sheikh Yassin as counterproductive to peace efforts.

After a spike in violence in the summer, there was a lull in Israeli missile strikes and Palestinian bombings which some attributed to an unspoken agreement between the two sides to lower tensions. However, Israel said it forced a drop in attacks by arresting as many as 30 potential suicide bombers.

Graphic

Photo: Mohammed Salem, Reuters; Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the Hamas spiritual leader who sanctioned Wednesday's suicide attack, is pushed to Friday prayers by a bodyguard.

Load-Date: January 17, 2004

End of Document

Hamas' 1st suspected female bomb-maker is university grad

Philadelphia Daily News

October 12, 2005 Wednesday 4STAR EDITION

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Section: NATIONAL; Pg. 10

Length: 380 words

Byline: Associated Press

Dateline: TULKAREM, West Bank

Body

Hamas' first **female** bomb-maker is a 22-year-old university graduate who was recruited in Gaza and sent to the West Bank to teach others to assemble explosives, Israeli security officials say, noting a sharp rise in the use of **women** by militant groups in the past two years.

The male-run **Hamas** insisted yesterday that it is not promoting **women** into central roles, while relatives of the suspected bomb-maker, Samar Sabih, said the newlywed rarely left home and had no contact with militants.

Sabih was arrested at her home in the West Bank town of Tulkarem in late August, in a nighttime raid involving more than a dozen jeeps and a helicopter, said her father-in-law, Jaber Sabih. Israel's Shin Bet security service announced the arrest on Monday, after lifting a gag order.

The Shin Bet said Sabih had been recruited by **Hamas** in Gaza's Jebaliya refugee camp, where she grew up, and had been taught to build bombs. Sabih, a graduate of Arab-language studies at Gaza City's Islamic University, was engaged to her 22-year-old cousin, Rasmi, a construction worker in Tulkarem, and obtained a rare permit from Israel to move to the West Bank in order to join him.

Shin Bet officials, speaking on condition of anonymity in line with agency policy on not revealing their identities, said Sabih had confessed to the charges during interrogation. In a photo taken shortly before her arrest, Sabih, her round face framed by a white scarf, posed with her husband, who was arrested by Israeli troops a day after she was taken.

Since the outbreak of Israeli-Palestinian fighting five years ago, 96 Palestinian **women** have been involved in violence against Israel, with more than half the incidents taking place in the past 18 months, according to Israeli government statistics. By comparison, only 15 Palestinian **women** were engaged in violence in 2003.

The change in tactics did not necessarily reflect a shift in ideology, analysts said.

Hamas' 1st suspected female bomb-maker is university grad

Israeli travel restrictions and construction of a West Bank separation barrier have made it increasingly difficult for militants to get around, and Palestinian women are subject to fewer security checks than men.

"A large part of the decision [to use more women] had to do with tactical needs," said Doron Peskin, head of research at InfoProd, an Israeli think-tank.

Load-Date: October 12, 2005

End of Document

Gaza weapons crackdown begins: Hamas agrees to obey ban on guns in public

The Vancouver Sun (British Columbia)

September 30, 2005 Friday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A12

Length: 407 words

Byline: Josef Federman, Associated Press

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

JERUSALEM -- Palestinian authorities Thursday began enforcing a ban on public displays of weapons, arresting three people and confiscating guns of off-duty police officers, in a key step toward imposing order in the chaotic Gaza Strip.

The crackdown came as dozens of Palestinian towns and villages in the West Bank held municipal elections. The powerful **Hamas** movement was expected to make strong gains, despite a continuing Israeli offensive against Islamic militants.

Israeli soldiers killed three Palestinian gunmen during raids in the West Bank. Israel launched the wave of air strikes and arrest raids last weekend in response to Gaza terrorists' rocket attacks on southern Israeli towns.

The offensive raised pressure on Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas to act against terrorist groups and armed gangs, which operate openly in Gaza. Israel says there can be no peace talks until the groups are disarmed.

Hamas said it would honour the ban on public displays of weapons, but ruled out surrendering weapons.

Palestinian police chief Ala Husni said since Israel's recent pullout from Gaza there is no longer a reason for anyone other than security officers to carry weapons. "The role of resistance weapons has ended in the streets. They should go back into storage and they should not show up in the streets," he told a news conference. "Any weapon now in the street is a criminal weapon." He said there were no plans to seize stored weapons.

Interior Ministry spokesman Tawfiq Abu Khousa said authorities arrested three men carrying Kalashnikov assault rifles Thursday and confiscated their weapons. Several security officers also were arrested for carrying guns while off duty, he said.

Abbas said the weapons ban was a first step to imposing law and order but the new Israeli offensive undermined those efforts. "This escalation is putting the entire peace process in real jeopardy. We call on Israel to stop these acts, especially since all our factions have committed themselves to the ceasefire and to ban all military parades and public displays of weapons."

Gaza weapons crackdown begins: Hamas agrees to obey ban on guns in public

The ban went into effect days after an explosion at a **Hamas** parade killed 21 people. **Hamas** blamed Israel, but Palestinian investigators said the blast was set off when militants mishandled explosives.

Israeli officials said they wanted to see if the pledge to honour the ban on displays of weapons and parades would meet with results. Previous campaigns to control gunmen have failed.

Graphic

Photo: Kevin Frayer, Associated Press; A sign bans firearms and mobile phones as **women** line up to vote in municipal elections in the West Bank village of Beit Fagar.

Load-Date: September 30, 2005

End of Document

Palestinians out in force for council elections: Test of popularity for Hamas

National Post (f/k/a The Financial Post) (Canada)

December 24, 2004 Friday

National Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. A15

Length: 546 words

Byline: Imad Abu Sunbul, Agence France-Presse

Dateline: ABU DIS, West Bank

Body

ABU DIS, West Bank - Palestinians in the West Bank turned out in force yesterday to vote in the first council elections in 28 years, serving as a test for next month's presidential ballot and the support of the radical **Hamas** movement.

More than 140,000 voters chose from 886 candidates, including 139 **women**, as they selected local council officials for the town of Jericho and 25 villages in the West Bank. A second set of elections will take place on Jan. 27 in 10 other localities in the Gaza Strip.

The polls had been due to close at 7 p.m., but voting was extended for two hours as a result of the high turnout, election officials said. Local government minister Jamal Shubaki had earlier predicted that as many as 90% of the electorate would vote.

Among those who cast their ballot was Ahmed Qureia, the Palestinian Prime Minister, a resident of the village of Abu Dis on the edge of east Jerusalem.

"This is a first step toward democracy and the establishment of our future state," Mr. Qureia told reporters after voting at the local youth club.

"These elections are being held in difficult conditions. But they are a reflection of the democratic voice that we have chosen to build our Palestinian state."

Armed police could be seen on patrol as polling booths opened in Abu Dis after being granted permission to bear weapons for the day by the Israeli authorities.

Although vote counting was to finish three hours after the polls closed, the final results will not be officially announced until today.

The vote marks the first time the radical anti-Israeli organization **Hamas** has participated in the democratic process, turning the election into a test of its popularity beyond its powerbase in Gaza and in comparison to the mainstream Fatah movement.

Palestinians out in force for council elections: Test of popularity for Hamas

Hamas boycotted the first Palestinian general elections in 1996 and has also excluded itself from the Jan. 9 election to find a successor to the late Yasser Arafat as Palestinian Authority president.

Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestine Liberation Organization chairman, is overwhelming favourite to win next month's ballot having been nominated as Fatah's candidate.

Mr. Abbas emphasized the importance he attached to the democratic process, urging voters to "rise to the challenge" and turn out in force for yesterday's vote.

"You are determining your future in these elections and you are deciding on the running of your own municipal affairs in a democratic manner without outside interference and under the shadow of the problems created by the Israeli occupation," he said in a statement.

Mr. Qureia said he was pleased that **Hamas** was taking part in the election.

"We view their participation in the municipal elections favourably. "

"They say they want to take part in decision-making process," he said.

"They are welcome whether that comes about through the ballot box or through agreement" with the Palestinian Authority.

Shakher Amara, a local **Hamas** leader in Jericho, would not predict how the organization would fare but said that the real indicator of its support level would come when elections are held in cities such as Nablus, Hebron and Gaza City.

"What is happening today will not give a clear picture of our support," he said.

"But today is the first time we are looking for a share of Palestinian power and to work with others."

Load-Date: December 24, 2004

Israel hints it will strike against Syria for bombings: Anyone who harbours Hamas terrorists a target for retaliation, Sharon warns

Ottawa Citizen

September 2, 2004 Thursday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A12

Length: 335 words

Byline: Mark Lavie, The Associated Press

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

JERUSALEM - Israeli leaders warned Syria yesterday that it bears the blame for a double suicide bombing by **Hamas** terrorists because it harbours the group's leadership, and they hinted at possible retaliation.

In a first response to Tuesday's attack that killed 16 people in a southern Israeli city, Israeli troops blew up the home of one of the bombers and isolated the West Bank city of Hebron, where the attackers lived. However, Israel was looking farther afield to assign the blame.

"The fact that **Hamas** is operating from Syria will not grant it immunity," Raanan Gissin, an adviser to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, told the Associated Press.

The overall leader of **Hamas**, Khaled Mashaal, and his deputies are based in Syria. Earlier this year, Israel assassinated **Hamas** founder and his successor in Gaza, throwing the Islamic group into temporary disarray. But major decisions are made by Mr. Mashaal, not by **Hamas** leaders in Gaza.

The Israeli army chief, Lt.-Gen. Moshe Yaalon, said yesterday that those who support terrorism "cannot sleep quietly at night," mentioning Palestinian leaders, Lebanese Hezbollah guerrillas, Syria and Iran.

Mr. Sharon added his own implied threat: "Israel's struggle against terrorism will continue unabated. We will apparently need to decide on additional steps to stop terrorism." He did not elaborate.

Last Oct. 5, Israeli planes attacked the training camp of another terrorist group, Islamic Jihad, outside Damascus, the Syrian capital, a day after a **female** suicide bomber blew up a restaurant in the Israeli port city of Haifa, killing 21 people.

Security officials said Israel would go after **Hamas** leaders in the West Bank and step up military patrols in the sparsely populated southern part of the territory. The target of Tuesday's bombings was Beersheba, south of the West Bank.

Mr. Sharon also pledged to finish the West Bank security barrier, which is aimed at keeping Palestinian suicide bombers from getting into Israel. The plan has drawn international criticism.

Israel hints it will strike against Syria for bombings: Anyone who harbours Hamas terrorists a target for retaliation, Sharon warns

Load-Date: September 2, 2004

End of Document

Female bomber a first for Hamas

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

January 15, 2004 Thursday

Late Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; International News; Pg. 10

Length: 563 words

Byline: Ed O'Loughlin, Herald Correspondent, in Erez Crossing, Gaza and agencies

Body

The use of a **female** suicide bomber by the Palestinian militant group **Hamas** in the Gaza Strip yesterday marks a new departure for a deeply conservative Islamic organisation that has traditionally regarded conflict as men's business.

Reem Raiyshi, a 21-year-old mother of two from Gaza City, killed four Israeli guards and wounded seven other people, reportedly including Palestinian civilians, when she detonated herself at a checkpoint in the Erez industrial area.

Built between Israel and the Gaza Strip, the high-security industrial estate employs cheap Palestinian labour for Israeli businesses.

"For the first time [**Hamas**] used a **female** fighter and not a male fighter and that was a new development in resistance against the enemy," **Hamas**'s founder, Sheik Ahmed Yassin, later told the Reuters news agency in Gaza.

Other Palestinian groups have used **female** suicide bombers on a small number of occasions.

The Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade claimed joint responsibility for yesterday's attack, the first Palestinian suicide bombing to claim Israeli lives this year.

After the attack Israeli troops rounded up hundreds of Palestinian civilians who were already at work and ordered them to assemble in a rainswept car park, from where they would eventually be sent back to Gaza.

An Israeli military commander told journalists at the scene that the attack showed the militant groups did not care about their own people.

"An incident like this will not help us to help the Palestinians," he said. "The Palestinians lose because they can't work here."

The Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, meanwhile, faces intensifying corruption allegations following the publication of a clandestine tape recording and reports that prosecutors will next week indict a former associate on charges of bribing him.

Female bomber a first for Hamas

With new revelations expected shortly in the so-called "Cyril Kern" and "Greek island" scandals the Israeli media are speculating that further damage to Mr Sharon's credibility could force him to resign, or spark a leadership battle within his Likud party.

The linked scandals involve payments of millions of dollars by overseas donors to companies and charities under the control of Mr Sharon or his sons Gilad and Omri, and allegedly used in part to fund his campaign to win control of the right-wing Likud party in 1999.

In the "Greek Island" affair, a Likud member and Sharon associate, David Appel, paid nearly \$US500,000 to Gilad Sharon, ostensibly in return for consultancy work on the tourist potential of a casino Mr Appel was hoping to build on a Greek island.

Prosecutors allege Mr Appel was trying to enlist Mr Sharon's support in gaining permission for the project from the Greek authorities.

Israeli media reports say Mr Appel is likely to be charged with bribery as early as next week, and even if Gilad and his father escape related charges, revelations from the case could severely embarrass them.

On Monday, another former Sharon adviser and associate, David Spector, a private investigator, showed a September 2000 tape on Israeli television in which Mr Sharon presses him for detailed information on overseas payments to a political front organisation. Tom Hurndall, 22, a British activist who had been in a coma in a London hospital since being shot in the head by Israeli troops on April 11, while acting as a so-called human shield, died on Tuesday night, his family said yesterday.

Graphic

ILLUS: A wounded woman is carried into the Barzilai hospital, south of the Israeli town of Ashqelon.Photo: AP

Load-Date: July 17, 2007

4 ISRAELIS DIE AS HAMAS USES WOMAN AS BOMB;
Mother of two tricks guards at crossing

Dayton Daily News (Ohio)

January 15, 2004 Thursday CITY EDITION

Copyright 2004 Dayton Newspapers, Inc.

Section: NEWS; Pg. A8

Length: 231 words

Byline: Margaret Coker Cox News Service

Body

EREZ CROSSING, Israel - After expressing a final wish to turn her body into "deadly shrapnel," a Palestinian mother blew herself up Wednesday at the heavily fortified border between Israel and the Gaza Strip, killing four Israelis and wounding seven Israelis and Palestinians.

The suicide bomber, identified as 22-year-old Reem al-Raiyshi, was the first **female** bomber to have been married with children.

She left behind a 3-year-old son and 18-month-old daughter. The militant group **Hamas** said it was a new tactic in its war against Israel.

Hamas and al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, the two largest Palestinian militant groups, claimed responsibility for the attack.

Hamas had never used **women** in its numerous attacks against Israeli targets, although smaller militant groups have.

Witnesses said al-Raiyshi faked a limp as she entered Erez, where thousands of poor Palestinian workers maneuver through security in hopes of getting into Israel for work each day.

When she set off a metal detector she told a guard it was because of a metal surgical implant in her leg, according to Israeli Brig. Gen. Gad Shamni. The male guard, who is prohibited by custom from searching a Muslim woman, summoned a **female** soldier.

"While she was waiting for the arrival of the woman soldier, (the bomber) apparently succeeded in penetrating a meter or two into the inspection hall, and blew herself up," said Shamni.

Graphic

PHOTO, LEFTERIS PITARAKIS/ASSOCIATED PRESS/ ,AN ISRAELI ARMY officer lifts his rifle while he orders Palestinian workers to move back as they wait at the Erez Crossing, the major crossing point between Israel and

4 ISRAELIS DIE AS HAMAS USES WOMAN AS BOMB; Mother of two tricks guards at crossing

the Gaza Strip, on Wednesday./ **HAMAS**/ASSOCIATED PRESS/ ,REEM AL-RAIYSHI , a mother of two from Gaza, in an image taken from video. Raiyshi was named as the woman who blew herself up Wednesday at Erez Crossing, killing four Israelis.

Load-Date: January 16, 2004

End of Document

Hamas and Big Bird feature at Iranian book fair

The Irish Times

May 13, 2005

Copyright 2005 The Irish Times

Section: World; Other World Stories; Pg. 12

Length: 679 words

Body

Letter from Tehran Ramita Navai The traffic around north Tehran is worse than usual. Hundreds of battered Hillman Hunters, blacked-out jeeps and souped-up Peugeots are locked bumper to bumper, pointlessly hooting their horns. But for once, this strange tangle of cars is crawling towards the same destination - Tehran's annual international book fair is the hottest event in town.

Foreign books in the Islamic Republic are expensive and rare. Iranians travel from towns and villages across the country to buy, or just browse through books from around the world, on offer at government subsidised prices.

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The English-language book hall is one of the most popular. The small stalls are besieged with crowds and there is a scrum to get to the books. But amid this melee, opposite the Oxford University Press stand is an incongruous sight - a computer beams horrific war images to a soundtrack of machine-gun fire and above hangs a poster of Palestine. This is Hamas, the militant Palestinian organisation, and it is the only stall with no customers.

"We are here because all Muslim brothers want to help fight until the last Israeli has been kicked out of Israel," says 23-year old Mohammad, a Hamas volunteer worker.

Unfortunately for Mohammad, the Muslim brothers of north Tehran are more interested in the Design and Architecture stand, where a group of girls have descended in a wave of skin-tight jeans, bubble-gum pink headscarves and lashings of make-up. The book fair is not only about buying books and Tehran's youth are out in full force.

"We have to grab every opportunity we can to meet girls," says 21-year-old Arash, ostensibly flicking through a coffee table book on Le Corbusier.

But it was not always like this - last year the Hamas stand was packed.

"The organisers made a mistake this year - we should actually be in the Arabic hall as most of our books are in Arabic. By the time we found out we'd been put here they told us it was too late to change, there was no more space left," says Mohammad.

Although they have sold fewer books this year, Mohammad says that T-shirts of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, Hamas's late spiritual leader, have been flying off the shelves, as have replica suicide bomber headbands.

"But our bestsellers have been a poster of a woman suicide bomber and a book on women's role in the intifada and one on women suicide bombers - a very popular theme this year," says Mohammad.

Hamas and Big Bird feature at Iranian book fair

Just around the corner, business has also been slow for Islamic Jihad. Their piece de resistance - a CD-Rom called "Martyrdom-Seeking Operators" - has been facing stiff competition from Sesame Street's Big Bird next door.

But there is more action at the impressive camouflage-decked stand of the Lebanese Shia organisation, Hizbullah, with its minimalist banners and shining glass cabinets packed with grenades and rusty machine guns.

A Hizbullah representative is on hand to guide visitors through the mock war zone, past the gigantic posters of rocket launchers - "the Israelis are scared to bits of those babies" - towards its gleaming white bookshelves, with books on agricultural projects. "This is part of an image change. We want to let people know that Hizbullah isn't all about war, you know. We build hospitals and help communities."

As part of its rebranding, Hizbullah has expanded into the world of multimedia. Website addresses are emblazoned on flags and they even have computer games to lure the children: "Resistance Boy: The Boy from Quds (Jerusalem)", where the object is to shoot down Israeli missiles and planes.

Hizbullah says that interest has been high, even from the middle class kids who head straight to the English-language hall in search of Western culture.

"The name Hizbullah can put people off a bit, but when they see the booth, they want to come and have a look and find out more."

But Arash and his friends are not impressed.

"I've got my own problems to deal with. I didn't come here for politics," he says.

"I came for books." And with that he winks, tucks an Albert Camus under his arm and is off, trailing a new pack of girls.

Load-Date: May 13, 2005

The failed promise of Arafat's death: Ineffective Abbas has difficulty slowing Hamas

National Post (f/k/a The Financial Post) (Canada)

November 12, 2005 Saturday

Vancouver Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. A13; Peter Goodspeed

Length: 705 words

Byline: Peter Goodspeed, National Post; with files from news services

Body

Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas vowed yesterday to continue Yasser Arafat's fight to create a Palestinian state with its capital in Jerusalem.

As thousands of Palestinians marked the first anniversary of Mr. Arafat's death, Mr. Abbas stood at the foot of his tomb, next to the wrecked headquarters of the Palestinian presidential office or Muqata in Ramallah, and pledged to follow his lead.

The spot where Mr. Arafat spent the final years of his life, isolated and encircled by the Israeli Army, now contains a temporary mausoleum, which is decorated with a Koranic verse that reads: "God will give victory to believers."

"We must continue the march together, in keeping with the principles for which Abu Ammar [Mr. Arafat] became a martyr," Mr. Abbas said.

"We will continue in the path of the late president until we fulfill all his dreams. We will continue until our people hoist the Palestinian flag on the walls, minarets and churches of the Old City of Jerusalem."

But a year after Mr. Arafat died at the age of 75 of a mysterious illness in a Paris hospital, the Middle East is still reeling with turmoil and uncertainty.

Israel and the Palestinians barely seem closer to settling their differences and few people speak of a "road map" to peace.

The United States, which used to claim Mr. Arafat was the chief obstacle to a peace settlement, is distracted from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by its own struggle to control war-torn Iraq.

Mr. Abbas, who has earned a reputation as a moderate, has won international support by unequivocally denouncing terrorist attacks against Israel. But Israel still complains bitterly he has done nothing but pay lip service to the concept.

On Wednesday, Israeli troops shot and killed a Palestinian terrorist who was trying to lay explosives at the Karni border crossing between Israel and the Gaza Strip.

The failed promise of Arafat's death: Ineffective Abbas has difficulty slowing Hamas

On Oct. 26, six Israelis were killed and 55 wounded in a suicide bombing in an outdoor market in the town of Hadera.

Earlier in October Israel broke off all contact with the Palestinian Authority after the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, the armed wing of Mr. Abbas' Fatah faction, claimed responsibility for the drive-by murders of two Israeli women and a 15-year-old boy, gunned down as they waited for a bus just south of Jerusalem.

When he came to power after Mr. Arafat's death, Mr. Abbas was immediately pressured by the United States and Israel to overhaul the Palestinian Authority and to rein in and reform the Palestinian security services.

Elected President on Jan. 9, he wasted little time holding a summit with the Israelis at the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheik and declaring a ceasefire with Israel in February.

But he has had less success convincing such terrorist groups as Hamas and Islamic Jihad to go along with his plans. The armed wings of the Palestinian factions agreed only to "maintain calm" until the end of the year and flatly refused to disarm.

Anxious not to derail Israel's promised withdrawal from the Gaza Strip after 38 years of military occupation, the Palestinians have maintained a shaky ceasefire for most of the year.

Still, 29 Israelis have been killed in 10 terrorist attacks since Mr. Abbas came to power.

For the most part, the various Palestinian factions focused on jockeying for power as politics was transformed by Mr. Arafat's death.

The chief struggle has been between Fatah, the secular nationalist movement Mr. Abbas inherited from Mr. Arafat, and Hamas, a radical Islamic group that calls for Israel's destruction and the creation of a new Islamic state.

In the past, Hamas boycotted Palestinian elections. But after Mr. Arafat died it moved to establish a local base and won power in 23 municipalities.

Having turned its street power into institutionalized political power, Hamas is poised to challenge Mr. Abbas and Fatah in parliamentary elections scheduled for Jan. 25.

The vote will coincide with the end of the Palestinian groups' self-imposed "ceasefire."

If Mr. Abbas can cement his own hold on power, he may be able to claim greater legitimacy and establish a base for future reforms.

But if Hamas and Islamic Jihad do well in the elections, Israel could find itself facing a far more hardline Palestinian government than it did under Mr. Arafat.

Graphic

Black & White

Photo: Said Khatib, AFP, Getty Images; A Palestinian boy marks the anniversary of Yasser Arafat's death.; Black & White

Photo: Mahmoud Abbas.

Load-Date: November 12, 2005

The failed promise of Arafat's death: Ineffective Abbas has difficulty slowing Hamas

End of Document

Justice served in assassination of Hamas leader

University Wire

April 1, 2004 Thursday

Copyright 2004 The Lariat via U-Wire

Section: COLUMN

Length: 609 words

Byline: By Jonathan Ludwig, The Lariat; **SOURCE:** Baylor U.

Dateline: WACO, Texas

Body

I believe it was Voltaire who once correctly wrote that "prejudices are what fools use for reason." Americans love ideals that emphasize liberty in the face of bigotry -- be it religious, ethnic or sexual bigotry, and our parents taught us that intolerance and prejudices against others are wrong. But these ideals are rarely emphasized when we think of other peoples who need, at the very least, liberty of thought -- in this case those who are part of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Last week, the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) killed Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the leader of Islamic terrorist organization **Hamas** and of Palestinians in their fight against Israelis. Before condemning the assassination or commending it, a history of this figure is in order.

Yassin was born in Ashqelon and became a refugee to Gaza as result of the 1948 war between Arabs and Jews over Palestine. Influenced by the teachings of the Muslim Brotherhood in his earlier years, Yassin joined the organization in 1955 and after receiving teacher's training in Cairo, returned to Gaza in 1957 to serve Palestinians as a teacher, preacher and community volunteer. After returning to Egypt to further his education, he was expelled because of subversive activities and placed back in Gaza where he taught and helped in the revival of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Initially an ally to Israel, the Muslim Brotherhood offered a counterbalance to Palestinian nationalists in the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and controlled much of the charitable health and religious services in Gaza by 1984. However, extremism soon took hold.

In 1983 Yassin was arrested after Israeli forces discovered a weapons cache, but was released in 1985 in a prisoner-exchange agreement. After being returned, Yassin co-founded the **Hamas** organization in 1987 which was received with wide support in response to Yasser Arafat's failed attempts at meeting the basic needs of Palestinians. Later on, Yassin was jailed again for instigating the murders of Israeli soldiers and eventually returned to the Palestinians in another exchange-deal.

Since then, Yassin has been a leading opponent of peace with Israel, authorizing **Hamas** terrorist bombings and declaring, "The so-called peace path is not peace and it is not a substitute for jihad and resistance." Even the Palestinian Authority has jailed him repeatedly for his involvement in terrorist activities.

Justice served in assassination of Hamas leader

The world's response to this targeted killing was outrage. According to The Associated Press, "U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan and many world leaders condemned Monday's killing of Yassin, the most prominent Palestinian targeted by Israel in three and a half years of fighting." Even the Bush administration was "deeply troubled."

Unfortunately, these condemnations do not emanate from the belief Americans hold that equality, justice and freedom of expression are to be the highest of values. Yassin repeatedly has been connected with the murders of hundreds of innocent men, women and children, called for an end to Israel altogether, and exercised religious bigotry to such an extent that the world seems blinded by it.

Justice, whether one believes in the death penalty or life in prison, has been served.

The west prides itself on tolerance; it's a grave catastrophe we don't hold the same standards of conduct when we look upon instigators of immeasurable hatred and violence.

Perhaps Israel should rein in its military strikes and remove its settlements in Palestinian-controlled lands, and perhaps the world should refuse to turn a blind eye to many Palestinians' foolish prejudices that seek the death of the innocent.

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Load-Date: April 1, 2004

Hamas, Decimated

New York Sun (Archive)

January 17, 2005 Monday

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Section: EDITORIAL & OPINION; Pg. 9

Length: 802 words

Byline: Max Boot

Body

Visiting Israel last month, I regularly went out to eat in crowded restaurants and to shop in crowded malls. The tourists may not have gotten the message yet - Jerusalem's Old City was almost empty just a week before Christmas - but it is clear that the four-year-old intifida has faded into insignificance. Life in Israel has returned to normal, or at least as normal as it ever gets in a country that's faced threats to its existence from day one.

Conventional wisdom holds that it is almost impossible for a democracy to defeat a determined insurgency - an impression strengthened by recent events in Iraq. Israel provides a contrary case. Suicide attacks in 2004 were down more than 40% from the year before. And not for lack of trying. It is simply that Palestinian "martyrdom" operations are being stymied by a combination of defensive and offensive measures.

Most of these steps are fairly innocuous, such as the security guards posted in front of every restaurant and shopping center who search purses and operate metal detectors. More controversial is the security barrier, tendentiously characterized by Israel's enemies as "The Wall," that is being completed between Israel and the West Bank.

I drove about 10 miles out of Tel Aviv to see the barrier separating the Israeli town of Kfar Saba from the Palestinian town of Qalqilya. There was a small stretch of wall to protect the highway from snipers, but here as elsewhere most of the barrier is a chain-link fence. On either side of it is a dirt strip that is kept clear to show footprints of infiltrators. A sophisticated system of electronic sensors and cameras provides 24/7 coverage.

At a nearby Israeli army base a roomful of college-age intelligence specialists - all women - sit before banks of video screens and computers monitoring the fence. If the alarm goes off - in the form of a tune from the British rock group Queen - a patrol is sent out to investigate. The erection of this barrier has actually meant a decrease in disruption for the residents of Qalqilya, who no longer have to pass through an Israeli checkpoint when they travel to other parts of the West Bank. A checkpoint still exists to enter Israel, but traffic moves briskly.

Much of the decrease in suicide attacks has been attributed to the success of this barrier in keeping out terrorists from the West Bank. But Israeli commandos also conduct nightly raids in the West Bank to gather intelligence and arrest suspects. In the Gaza Strip, where the Israel Defense Forces have less of a presence, it's harder to nab terrorists, so the IDF kills them with bombs and missiles - a campaign that, despite worldwide condemnation, has managed to decimate Hamas.

The success of these anti-terror initiatives, combined with the fortuitous death of Yasser Arafat, has produced a propitious moment. Most Israelis are willing to make concessions like pulling out of the Gaza Strip. Most

Hammas,Decimated

Palestinians are sick of violence. Optimists are convinced that the election of Mahmoud Abbas will solidify this trend and result in a long-awaited peace deal.

Maybe they're right. But it was hardly encouraging to see Mr. Abbas literally embracing top terrorists and referring to the "Zionist enemy." Nor has he ever renounced Palestinians' "right of return," which is tantamount to not recognizing Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state. And even if Mr. Abbas genuinely believes in peaceful coexistence it is not clear that he has either the willingness or the power to repress militants who want to drive the Jews into the sea.

All of this suggests that it would be a mistake for the West to embrace Mr. Abbas in a bear hug - in fact, the same mistake made in the 1990s. What's needed now is not another Palestinian strongman but a vibrant Palestinian democracy. An election in which Mr. Abbas had no significant competition and won by 40 percentage points hardly qualifies.

Self-styled "realists" argue that only a Sadat-like strongman can make peace, but that's precisely the mindset that led to the failed strategy of supporting Arafat, which only begat more violence. There is no reason to think that most Palestinians want to sacrifice their children as suicide bombers; indeed, **Hammas** boycotted the presidential election partly because it didn't want its weakness exposed. The strongest demands from Palestinians are for more economic growth and less corruption. Until Mr. Abbas shows himself willing to seriously address those needs, the West should lavish the bulk of its largess on independent Palestinian Web sites, human-rights groups, and other NGOs - not on the dysfunctional Palestinian Authority.

The democratization option may ultimately fail, but at least Israel's victory over terrorism has bought time to give it a fair shot. Sunday's election was, at best, only a modest beginning.

Load-Date: January 17, 2005

Arafat shrugs off assassination threat: Hamas takes credit for overnight killing at West Bank settlement

The Gazette (Montreal, Quebec)

April 4, 2004 Sunday Final Edition

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Section: News; Pg. A13

Length: 288 words

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, who has been confined to his West Bank compound for nearly two years, said yesterday that he is not troubled by warnings from Israel that it could assassinate him.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said in interviews published Friday Arafat had "no insurance policy" against Israeli action.

New York Times

In his first response, Arafat said: "I don't care for it. I am caring for my people, for our children, for our women, for our students."

He spoke to journalists outside his badly damaged compound in Ramallah in the West Bank.

Yesterday, the Palestinian group Hamas claimed responsibility for an overnight shooting in which a gunman killed an Israeli man and wounded his 12-year-old daughter at a West Bank settlement. The gunman was then killed by Israeli soldiers.

Hamas said the attack was in retaliation for an Israeli helicopter strike on March 22 that killed the group's founder and leader, Sheik Ahmed Yassin, Reuters reported.

It was the first killing of an Israeli Jew since a suicide bombing on March 14 by Hamas that claimed 10 Israeli lives.

Palestinian factions have threatened to step up attacks in response to that killing, and Israel's security forces have been on high alert during the weeklong holiday of Passover, which began Monday night.

Sharon has promised President Bush that he will not harm Arafat, and Israeli officials say that still stands. However, in a contradictory move, Sharon's cabinet agreed in principle last year that Arafat should be removed. Cabinet ministers have said the options could range from arresting him to sending him into exile or killing him.

The Israeli policy of "targeted killings" has been widely criticized, even by the United States.

Graphic

Arafat shrugs off assassination threat: Hamas takes credit for overnight killing at West Bank settlement

Photo: MOHAMMED BALLAS, AP; Youths peer from behind a poster of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat at a rally yesterday commemorating a battle with Israeli troops two years ago in the West Bank town of Jenin.

Load-Date: April 4, 2004

End of Document

Israel blames Syria for 2 suicide bombing attacks; Israeli leader warns of 'additional steps' for harboring leadership of the Hamas militant group

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

September 2, 2004 Thursday

Copyright 2004 Woodward Communications, Inc.

Section: National/World; Pg. b6

Length: 222 words

Byline: ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Israeli leaders warned Syria on Wednesday that it bears the blame for a double suicide bombing by **Hamas** militants because it harbors the group's leadership, and they hinted at possible retaliation.

In a first response to Tuesday's attack that killed 16 people in a southern Israeli city, Israeli troops blew up the home of one of the bombers and isolated the West Bank city of Hebron, where the attackers lived.

But Israel was looking farther afield to assign blame.

"The fact that **Hamas** is operating from Syria will not grant it immunity," said Raanan Gissin, an adviser to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

The overall leader of **Hamas**, Khaled Mashaal, and his deputies are based in Syria.

The Israeli army chief, Lt. Gen. Moshe Yaalon, said Wednesday that those who support terrorism "cannot sleep quietly at night," mentioning Palestinian leaders, Lebanese Hezbollah guerrillas, Syria and Iran.

Sharon added his own implied threat: "Israel's struggle against terrorism will continue unabated. We will apparently need to decide on additional steps to stop terrorism." He did not elaborate.

Last Oct. 5, Israeli planes attacked the training camp of another militant group, Islamic Jihad, outside Damascus, the Syrian capital, a day after a **female** suicide bomber blew up a restaurant in the Israeli port city of Haifa, killing 21 people.

Load-Date: September 2, 2004

***Hamas chief's killing may unify militants;
It has brought rival groups closer together and hardened their resolve to
wreak havoc in Israel***

The Straits Times (Singapore)

March 26, 2004 Friday

Copyright 2004 Singapore Press Holdings Limited

Section: World

Length: 813 words

Byline: John R. Bradley

Body

THE assassination of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin cut off the head of **Hamas** but may have created a bigger, more dangerous enemy for Israel by uniting Palestinian opponents now bent on waging a campaign of all-out war and terror.

An unprecedented round of anti-Israel violence now seems inevitable; it will take a high toll on Israeli civilians and sow the seeds of chaos in the occupied territories.

'The decision by Ariel Sharon's Cabinet to pursue such targeted killings will not put an end to the ongoing cycle of violence, but in fact exacerbate it,' Palestinian political analyst Massoud Derhally told The Straits Times.

'Various Palestinian militias, while under separate command, now feel they share a similar agenda - one that will bring mayhem to Israeli society.'

The signs of a new unity among the traditionally splintered armed Palestinian factions were already in evidence at Sheikh Yassin's funeral.

Fighters loyal to all of them - Islamic Jihad, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) - put on a joint show of force, marching through the streets alongside the **Hamas** militiamen.

Ties between the groups have always been plagued by rivalry, as each battled for control over the armed Palestinian resistance.

Endemic corruption, big political egos, Israel's frequent assassination of their leaders, and massive infiltration of their ranks by Mossad spies all undermined attempts to create a united front.

They were also split along ideological lines.

While Islamic Jihad and **Hamas** squabbled over the finer points of their differing revolutionary Islamist beliefs, the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade and the PFLP each tried to gain the support of the left-wing, nationalist Palestinian constituency, led in the political mainstream by Mr Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement.

Hamas chief's killing may unify militants; It has brought rival groups closer together and hardened their resolve to wreak havoc in Israel

Hamas enjoys support among Palestinians mostly because of its extensive social welfare activities, such as running clinics and schools.

But the clinics, say critics, are used to treat wounded 'terrorists'.

And the 'schools' inculcate students in 'Jew-hatred' and train aspiring suicide-bombers.

The Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades grew out of Fatah's need to be seen to be putting up some kind of resistance to Israeli raids into land that was meant to be under Palestinian Authority control.

Unlike **Hamas** and Islamic Jihad, it does not want an Islamic state, but uses Islam to inspire the struggle for an independent Palestine.

There have been occasions when differences between all the various groups were put aside.

Islamic Jihad's early attempts at suicide bombings, a joke among Palestinians for their ineffectiveness, were executed with devastating consequences after they got help in 2001 from the master bombmakers, **Hamas**.

And in June last year, gunmen from **Hamas**, Islamic Jihad and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades joined forces to make clear their opposition to the peace process by attacking an Israeli army post, killing four and setting off yet another round of attacks and counter-attacks.

Now a leader of the Al-Aqsa Martyr's Brigades says the killing of Sheikh Yassin has brought rival factions closer than ever.

After his death, local leaders wasted no time in meeting to discuss tactics, the Brigades chief told Newsday.

Dr Gershon Baskin, director of the Israel-Palestine Centre for Research and Information, told The Straits Times: 'There has been a gradual process over the past year of greater coordination between the various Palestinian factions in Gaza.

'The last suicide bombings from both the West Bank and Gaza have been declared as joint operations of **Hamas**...(and) the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades.

'The assassination of Sheikh Yassin will certainly strengthen the coordination and cooperation between the organisations in the coming months.'

FOUR TERRORS

Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade

FOUNDED: 2000

IDEOLOGY: Nationalist

MAIN GOALS: To cause as many casualties among the Israelis as possible while claiming not to directly target **women** and children. To give Yasser Arafat credibility among the Palestinians through vicarious association with armed resistance.

Hamas

FOUNDED: 1987

IDEOLOGY: Revolutionary Islam (inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood)

MAIN GOALS: To overthrow Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority, which is seen as a sell-out for proposing a two-state solution. To destroy Israel. To raise the flag of Allah over every part of historic Palestine.

Hamas chief's killing may unify militants; It has brought rival groups closer together and hardened their resolve to wreak havoc in Israel

Islamic Jihad

FOUNDED: 1979

IDEOLOGY: Revolutionary Islam (inspired by 1979 Iran Revolution, and Lebanese militant group Hizbollah)

MAIN GOALS: To carry out a relentless campaign of anti-Israel terrorism. To target US interests if the United States moves its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

Popular Front For The Liberation Of Palestine

FOUNDED: 1967

IDEOLOGY: Socialist

MAIN GOALS: To destroy Israel using all forms of armed resistance at its disposal. To establish a secular Palestinian state with a radical pan-Arab agenda.

Load-Date: March 25, 2004

End of Document

DEFIANT HAMAS SHOWS WORLD SUICIDE MUM WITH CHILDREN. Gaza Strip female suicide bomber Reem Raiyshi, with her son Obida, aged three, who is holding a mortar shell

Birmingham Post

January 27, 2004, Tuesday

Copyright 2004 Midland Independent Newspapers plc

Section: ROP; Pg. 10

Length: 301 words

Body

Hamas has posted photos on its internet site of its first **female** suicide bomber posing with her two young children.

The move was in defiance of Palestinian critics who say the Islamic militant group was wrong to send 22-year-old Reem Raiyshi on a mission that left her toddlers without a mother.

The pictures show Raiyshi in camouflage dress holding an assault rifle in one hand while cradling her three-year-old son, Obedia, in the other arm.

The boy is clutching what appears to be a mortar shell, and both mother and child wear **Hamas** headbands. Another picture shows her in a bedroom, gazing at Obedia and her 18-month-old daughter, Doha.

Two weeks ago, Raiyshi left Obedia and Doha with her husband, and blew herself up at a border crossing between the Gaza Strip and Israel, killing four Israelis.

Over the past 39 months of Middle East violence, more than 400 Israelis have been killed in 108 Palestinian suicide attacks.

But the January 14 attacker was the first time **Hamas** had used a **female** suicide bomber. Although Islamic Jihad and the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades have used **women**, none of them was married or a mother.

The attack prompted a rare debate in Palestinian society, not over the idea of bombing, but over the choice of bomber.

Commentators expressed fear that pregnant **women** and children might be used in future attacks. The latest photos added new fuel to that debate.

Senior Israelis claim she had been forced into the suicide attack after being unmasked as an adulteress.

Hamas, meanwhile, defended the photos.

'This picture shows the outrage the Palestinians have reached,' said Sheik Saed Seyam, a **Hamas** leader in Gaza.

'This scene should urge people all over the world to ask themselves what motivates **women**, who are known for their attachment to their children, to leave them forever.

DEFIANT HAMAS SHOWS WORLD SUICIDE MUM WITH CHILDREN. Gaza Strip female suicide bomber Reem Raiyshi, with her son Obida, aged three, who is holding a mortar shel....

Load-Date: January 27, 2004

End of Document

Israel bus bombings kill 16, injure 100: Hamas claims responsibility for suicide attacks

National Post (f/k/a The Financial Post) (Canada)

September 1, 2004 Wednesday

National Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A12

Length: 656 words

Byline: Patrick Bishop, The Daily Telegraph, with files from Reuters

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

JERUSALEM - A lull in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was shattered yesterday when two suicide bombers blew themselves up on buses in the southern Israeli town of Beersheba.

The blasts, which came within seconds of each other, killed at least 16 people and injured nearly 100. They also brought panic, fear and anger to a place that has largely been spared the violence of the past four years.

The bombers boarded buses at the same stop near the central bus station and detonated hidden explosive belts when the vehicles were just a few dozen metres apart, gutting the vehicles and scattering bloody remains.

The attacks, for which the extremist Hamas organization claimed responsibility, were condemned by the Palestinian Authority. But there was little doubt Ariel Sharon, the Israeli Prime Minister, who vowed yesterday to continue the fight against terrorism "with full strength," would be swift to respond.

The bombings were the first suicide attacks inside Israel for five months. The explosions happened just before 3 p.m., a busy time of the day.

The first bomb went off in a single-decker bus as it neared a main intersection in the town centre. The driver of a following bus saw the explosion and immediately stopped, opened the doors and ordered his passengers off. Soon afterward the vehicle was rocked by a bomb blast. Passengers said the driver's actions saved many lives.

Dr. Julian Zelingher of the nearby Soroka Medical Centre, where the victims were taken, said men, women and children were among the dead and wounded. Of the injured, 10 were said to be in critical condition.

The normally placid city centre was plunged into chaos. Television pictures showed plumes of smoke and flame pouring from a hole in the roof of one of the buses as rescue services scrambled to retrieve the wounded.

The assumption that Palestinian suicide bombers were to blame appeared to be confirmed when Hamas issued a statement on leaflets circulated in the West Bank town of Hebron, 50 kilometres northeast of Beersheba.

It said the killings were in response to the assassination by helicopter strikes of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the Hamas leader, in March, and his successor, Abdel Aziz Rantisi, the following month.

Israel bus bombings kill 16, injure 100: Hamas claims responsibility for suicide attacks

The leaflet warned Israelis: "Our religion orders us to respond in kind to aggression against us. You are the ones who choose your leaders and choose to be their shields. Therefore your shields will suffer more blows."

The last major attack by Palestinian terrorists inside Israel came on March 14, when suicide bombers from the Gaza Strip killed 11 in the port city of Ashdod.

Israeli authorities had attributed the decline in violence to the security barrier that it is being hastily erected to separate Israelis from Palestinians. The barrier -- part wall and part fence --has yet to be completed and has not yet reached Beersheba.

Gideon Meir, a senior Foreign Ministry official, said if the barrier had been finished, the attack would not have been possible.

The lull is also attributable to the success of an unceasing Israeli campaign to kill or capture terrorist leaders. The army attributed yesterday's killings to the military wing of Hamas in Hebron.

Soon after the attack, troops raided the home in the centre of the city of Ahmed al Kawasma, who is suspected of having planned the bombings.

Good intelligence is also playing a big role. Israeli officials claim that on some days up to 30 threats are detected. Earlier yesterday soldiers caught a young Palestinian carrying a belt packed with explosives as he tried to cross into Israel from the Gaza Strip.

The attacks came soon after Mr. Sharon met deputies from his Likud party to press the case for his plan to pull Israeli settlers and soldiers out of the Gaza Strip and outline a timetable for how it will be achieved.

He faces strong opposition from right-wingers as well as Likud members. Aides said the resumption of violence would have no effect on the evacuation plan.

Graphic

Black & White Photo: Uriel Sinai, Getty Images; Workers recover the remains of the dead following twin bus bombings in the Israeli town of Beersheba.

Load-Date: September 1, 2004

*Israel on threshold of the 'gates of hell';
The opportunistic killing of Hamas's Sheikh Yassin has left Israel braced for
total carnage*

Sunday Tribune

March 28, 2004

Copyright 2004 The Sunday Tribune plc

Section: Pg. 17

Length: 1276 words

Byline: Paul Kearns Jerusalem

Body

A WEEK after the assassination of the spiritual leader of Hamas, many observers are beginning to question the motivation and timing behind the killing of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin.

The assassination may well have been a simple act of revenge for the double suicide bombing in the Israeli port city of Ashdod two weeks ago. It's unlikely however that such the decision was taken in response to a single terror attack.

The Israeli government and military establishment may of course believe their own rhetoric that Yassin's death will deter future suicide attacks, decapitate the Hamas leadership and put the organisation on the defensive. Few in Israel or Gaza would agree; most concur with the Israeli interior minister, the lone government critic of the assassination, who said: "I fear that we have opened up a cycle here and that many will pay with their lives." It's possible that the timing of the assassination may have had more to do with luck than strategy. The opportunity arose to kill Yassin, and the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) acted on it. In September, Yassin escaped an assassination attempt with minor damage to his hand. The killing cannot however be divorced from Israeli domestic politics.

Sharon, by flexing his hawkish credentials, will have deflected growing criticism from his right-wing backbenchers opposed to his proposal for a unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza strip.

The authority and reputation of the IDF was also on the line. In recent weeks it has been keen to put down its own marker in advance of any military withdrawal from Gaza.

The army does not plan to allow the political leadership in Jerusalem to present withdrawal as a military failure.

Brig Gen Gadi Shamni, outgoing commander of the IDF in Gaza, said "military pressure is an important element in our dealing with terror. This is not a question of the final effort before we leave; the pressure has to continue all the time." The government may also have wished to capitalise on the international revulsion to the Madrid terror atrocity. If there was ever a fortuitous time to assassinate the leader of Hamas, there was none better than the very day that EU foreign ministers were gathered to discuss actions against international - and in particular Islamic - terrorism.

Israel on threshold of the 'gates of hell'; The opportunistic killing of Hamas's Sheikh Yassin has left Israel braced for total carnage

The Israeli government has repeatedly tried to present itself as the foremost victim of militant Islam, and has recently spoken of the threat of "global pan-Islamic terror".

Immediately after the assassination, the Israeli foreign ministry launched a campaign to draw attention to the connections between Hamas and al-Qaeda. "The terror being waged in the name of religious fanaticism is the same throughout the world, an attempt to present Yassin as a moderate spiritual leader is the same as an attempt to present bin Laden as such." Whatever its motivation, it is inconceivable that the Israeli government could be unaware that the decision to assassinate the 'spiritual' leader of Hamas represented a deliberate religious provocation to Palestinians and that his killing would escalate not just political tension but could ignite the flame of a wider religious war.

What was an already difficult - but potentially resolvable - territorial dispute between two peoples is now in danger of descending into an irreconcilable clash of opposing religious ideologies. The consequences for Israelis and Palestinians are shocking.

Invoking the name of bin Laden is a deliberate strategic decision on the part of Israel to try to broaden and Islamise the conflict. The advantages for Sharon of such a religious conflagration, in the short term at least, are threefold.

It provides a convenient, and opportunist cover to attempt to transform the traditional language of the conflict from one that has always been unfavourable to Israel - that of a powerful Israeli state occupying an oppressed Palestinian people - to that of a conflict between a vulnerable Jewish minority in the midst of the viscerally hostile Islamic fundamentalist Middle East.

Secondly, by attempting to globalise the conflict, the government seeks to negate not only local Palestinian national identity and its grievances but to thwart Palestinian political aspirations.

Finally, by painting the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a war between a little plucky democracy and pan-Islamic global terror, the government greatly reduces the pressure domestically to engage in rational dialogue with Palestinians.

The danger for all sides is that Sharon may well succeed in his attempt to infuse and inflame the religious dimension of the conflict. He has, after all, a willing ally in Hamas, an organisation which openly speaks about liberating all of "Muslim land".

Israelis need little reminder that Hamas has claimed direct responsibility for dozens of suicide terror attacks which have killed hundreds of Israelis in the past three years. Yassin's title, 'Spiritual leader', also rankles with many Israelis. An elderly, half-blind paraplegic he may have been, but in an opinion poll some 60% supported the assassination.

Hamas's popularity across Gaza and the West Bank is likely to have soared in the last week. The nominally secular Palestinian Authority can only look on aghast. The assassination of Yassin is likely to hasten the demise of an already demoralised and ineffectual PA; secular Palestinian clout may not be far behind.

Hamas vowed this week "to open the gates of hell and cut off the head of Sharon". The opportunity to assassinate the Israeli leadership, despite the Hamas rhetoric, is likely to remain slim. The country however, remains on high alert.

ministers need little reminder of the assassination of tourism minister Rechavam Ze'evi two years ago by the Popular Front of the Liberation of Palestine, the first - and to date only - assassination of an Israeli minister by Palestinian militants.

PALESTINIAN CHILD ASSASSINS FOILED

Israel on threshold of the 'gates of hell'; The opportunistic killing of Hamas's Sheikh Yassin has left Israel braced for total carnage

ISRAEL this weekend is on high security alert, as Israelis nervously await what many believe is the inevitable onslaught following the assassination of the **Hamas** spiritual leader in Gaza.

The Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) have already claimed to have intercepted three suicide attacks, but none can be more disturbing than the arrest of a 16-year-old Palestinian schoolboy on Wednesday, his body strapped with explosives, ready to blow himself up at a checkpoint in Nablus. The whole scene was captured live on camera and was repeatedly shown on Israeli television.

The youth - who initially claimed he was 14 - was reported to have said he was offered a payment of "100 shekels (E20) for his mother" to blow himself apart. The boy's mother bitterly condemned those who "exploited and manipulated" her son.

The boy's family told the Israeli Ha'aretz newspaper that he was mentally slow; his brother was quoted as saying, "he doesn't know anything, he has the brain of a 12-year old". The incident has provoked a furious reaction from Palestinian human rights organisations across the West Bank. Last week, the IDF apprehended another boy, this time a 12-year old with explosives in a bag in a cart he was pushing across a checkpoint. The boy claimed no knowledge of the explosives.

The Israeli public, a public that has grown long hardened to the horror of suicide terror attacks, is equally in a state of shock that school children are being sent to the streets of Israel to blow themselves up.

Last year, Islamic Jihad started to use **female** suicide bombers for the first time; **Hamas** quickly followed suit.

Despite the deaths of 700 Israelis and 2,500 Palestinians in a three-year intifada, few on either side would have predicted the conflict would plummet to such depths.

Graphic

Maher Walweel carries his seven-year-old son Khaled shortly after the boy was shot dead during clashes between Palestinians and Israeli troops in Nablus yesterday. According to the family, the boy had been standing at the window of his home and just turned his back when he was shot and killed. According to the Israeli army, Khaled was killed by random Palestinian fire aimed at an Israeli army jeep AP/MAJDI MOHAMMED Would-be 16-year-old suicide bomber Hussam Abdo

Load-Date: April 8, 2004

Hezbollah, Hamas illustrate power at ballot box; Voters reward groups with strong Islamic ties

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

June 7, 2005 Tuesday

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Section: Other; Pg. a5

Length: 722 words

Byline: ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: CAIRO, Egypt

Body

To much of the West, Hezbollah is an Islamic militant group known for its weapons and attacks on Israel. But for many voters in southern Lebanon, it's the group that provides the schools, the health clinics and a healthy dose of national pride.

Hezbollah's success Monday in the first Lebanese vote free of Syrian domination and the growing strength of **Hamas** in Palestinian elections signal that as democracy spreads in the Middle East, those with strong Islamic ties are likely to do well.

The question is, how much should that worry the West?

Is the prominence of Islamic parties - not just in the Lebanese south and in Palestinian towns, but also across Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Egypt - a sign of support for ideas like denying **women** rights and a turn toward militancy?

Or does it simply show the natural evolution of groups that, because of their longtime opposition to autocratic regimes and their strong social service networks, are now the natural heirs to political power?

Getting the radicals to run - that is, drawing them into a normal political process - might be the best way to get them to turn away from militancy, said Saad Eddin Ibrahim, an Egyptian-American scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington.

He points to the example of Turkey, where an Islamic-rooted party proved relatively moderate once in power. The worst thing the West can do is keep religious groups out, making them "martyrs" who gain support without proving their governing skills, he says.

Reza Aslan, a scholar at the University of California-Santa Barbara say it's inevitable that Islamic groups will do well in societies that are deeply traditional and where majorities are Muslim.

In Iraq, the Shiite-based party now in power has said it wants to make Islam the foundation of the new constitution, but has shown no signs it will try to create an Iranian-style theocracy, Aslan said.

As part of its push for democracy in the Middle East, the Bush administration has indicated it supports the idea of Islamic parties' participation in Egyptian elections.

Hezbollah, Hamas illustrate power at ballot box; Voters reward groups with strong Islamic ties

Nevertheless, there are still strong fears about the idea of Islamists hostile to the West and Israel taking power.

"If Hezbollah was only a political party, we in Israel wouldn't be as concerned as we are," said Israel's Foreign Ministry spokesman, Mark Regev, noting that the group remains heavily armed.

There is no doubt that many Arabs support Islamist parties simply because they are perceived as anti-American, said Diaa Rashwan, a Cairo-based expert on Islamic groups. Their popularity "has increased because America makes them look like its enemies," he said.

Yet, there also are autocratic governments willing to make that argument simply to retain power.

Egypt's ruling Mubarak regime insists the country's most powerful opposition group - the religious Muslim Brotherhood - can never become a political party. The country's prime minister told U.S. officials recently that the group may pretend to support democracy and be moderate in public sessions, but reverts to calling for strict Islamic adherence before true believers.

Critics say Mubarak's regime makes that argument simply because it would lose to the Muslim Brotherhood in open elections.

In a similar vein, Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas called off upcoming parliamentary elections earlier this month, a move widely seen as giving his Fatah party time to fend off a challenge from Hamas. Hamas already had won a number of key local elections.

Hezbollah's situation is not as strong, yet there is no denying its support in at least southern parts of Lebanon.

Going into Lebanon's staggered elections, it had nine seats in the outgoing 128-seat legislature. Overall, after the victories in the south, the group is expected to win 11 seats, and also have one allied legislator in the south and two in the east.

Hezbollah itself has toyed with toning down its radicalism - insisting on keeping its arms as a buffer against Israel, but also seeking international support as a player in the country's politics.

Nsecretary Scott McClellan said Monday the United States regards Hezbollah as a terror group that should be disarmed.

No one, says Ibrahim, should expect Hezbollah or Hamas "to turn into Western-style democratic parties overnight."

Sally Buzbee is the Chief of Middle East news for The Associated Press, based in Cairo.

Load-Date: June 8, 2005

Israel says bomb maker is female college grad: Hamas denies charge;
Agency sees sharp rise in militants' use of women

The Gazette (Montreal)

October 12, 2005 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A20

Length: 410 words

Byline: ALI DARAGHMEH, AP

Dateline: TULKARM, West Bank

Body

Hamas's first **female** bomb maker is a 22-year-old university graduate who was recruited in Gaza and sent to the West Bank to teach others to assemble explosives, Israeli security officials say, noting a sharp rise in the use of **women** by militant groups in the past two years.

The male-run **Hamas** insisted yesterday it is not promoting **women** into central roles, while relatives of the suspected bomb maker, Samar Sabih, said the newlywed rarely left home and had no contact with militants.

Sabih was arrested at her home in the West Bank town of Tulkarm in late August, in a nighttime raid involving more than a dozen jeeps and a helicopter, said her father-in-law, Jaber Sabih. Israel's Shin Bet security service announced the arrest Monday, after lifting a gag order.

The Shin Bet said Sabih was recruited by **Hamas** in Gaza's Jebaliya refugee camp, where she grew up, and was taught to build bombs. Sabih, a graduate of Arab language studies at Gaza City's Islamic University, was engaged to her cousin, Rasmi, 22, a construction worker in Tulkarm, and obtained a rare permit from Israel to move to the West Bank to join him.

Shin Bet officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Sabih confessed to the charges during interrogation. In a photo taken shortly before her arrest, Sabih, her round face framed by a white scarf, posed with her husband, who was arrested by Israeli troops one day after she was taken.

Since the outbreak of Israeli-Palestinian fighting five years ago, 96 Palestinian **women** have been involved in violence against Israel, with more than half the incidents taking place in the past 18 months, according to Israeli government statistics. By comparison, only 15 Palestinian **women** were engaged in violence in 2003.

The change in tactics did not necessarily reflect a shift in ideology, analysts said. Israeli travel restrictions and the construction of a West Bank separation barrier have made it increasingly difficult for militants to get around, and Palestinian **women** are subject to fewer security checks than men.

Israel says bomb maker is female college grad: Hamas denies charge; Agency sees sharp rise in militants' use of women

In the past five years, 67 Palestinian women were recruited as suicide bombers, including eight who carried out their mission and 59 who were intercepted and arrested. In all, about seven per cent of actual suicide bombings were carried out by women.

The rate of women bombers is higher in other places, such as Chechnya, where 40 per cent of suicide bombers have been female, and Sri Lanka, where more than one-third were women.

Load-Date: October 12, 2005

End of Document

Hamas uses mother of two as suicide bomber: Four Israeli security people killed

The Gazette (Montreal, Quebec)

January 15, 2004 Thursday Final Edition

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Section: News; Pg. A16

Length: 687 words

Byline: GREG MYRE

Dateline: EREZ, Gaza Strip

Body

A young Palestinian mother, feigning a limp and requesting medical help, blew herself up yesterday at the entrance to a security inspection centre for Palestinian workers, killing four Israeli security personnel and wounding seven people.

The bomber, Reem al-Reyashi, 22, said in a video released after the attack, "It was always my wish to turn my body into deadly shrapnel against the Zionists and to knock on the doors of heaven with the skulls of Zionists." Reyashi left behind a 3-year-old son and a one-year-old daughter.

Her attack in an industrial zone at the northern edge of the Gaza Strip was the first Palestinian suicide bombing to kill Israelis since a Dec. 25 blast at a bus stop outside Tel Aviv, which also left four dead. Middle East violence has declined recently, but the blast increased tensions and dealt another blow to peace efforts that have been stalled for months.

New York Times

The suicide bombing marked two firsts: the first time the Islamic group ***Hamas*** sent a ***female*** bomber and the first time a mother was a suicide bomber.

Israel responded by immediately shutting down the industrial zone and sending home the roughly 4,000 Palestinian workers employed in its factories.

"Palestinian terrorists are not only committed to striking Israelis at every opportunity, they are also bent on destroying their own economy," said David Baker, an official in the office of Israel's prime minister, Ariel Sharon.

Palestinians have carried out more than 100 suicide bombings in the past three years of violence. But such attacks have been extremely rare in the fenced-in Gaza Strip, where Palestinian contact with Israelis is largely limited to security checks at such places as Erez.

Reyashi was able to carry out her bombing by momentarily deceiving the soldiers with her claim that she needed medical treatment inside Israel.

She joined the line where the Palestinians go through a security check each morning as they enter the industrial zone.

Hamas uses mother of two as suicide bomber: Four israeli security people killed

As she approached the building's entrance, which has a metal detector at the doorway, she was limping, the Israeli military and Palestinian witnesses said. She told soldiers she had a recent leg operation, and a metal pin had been implanted that the detector would register.

She was allowed to pass, and when the alarm sounded, the soldiers told her to wait while they called a **female** soldier to search her, the military said.

Seconds later, Reyashi detonated her bomb, estimated at about 10 pounds and packed with ball bearings and screws to make it more lethal, the military said.

The blast tore apart the simple structure, sending part of the roof skyward and leaving behind dangling strips of metal. The floor was sticky with blood and littered with body parts, and blood stains speckled the walls.

Two soldiers, a border police officer and a civilian security guard were killed, and seven people were injured, including both Israeli security personnel and Palestinians heading to work.

Reyashi, who came from a middle-class family in Gaza City, appeared in her video wearing combat fatigues, with an automatic rifle in her hands and a rocket-propelled grenade launcher on the desk in front of her.

"God gave me the ability to be a mother of two children who I love so," she said. "But my wish to meet God in paradise is greater, so I decided to be a martyr for the sake of my people. I am convinced God will help and take care of my children."

After the bombing, her husband was seen crying outside the family home, and a relative said he had no knowledge of his wife's plans, the Reuters news agency reported.

Hamas, the Islamic movement, and the Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades, a faction loyal to the Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat, claimed joint responsibility for the attack, saying it was revenge for Israel's killing of Palestinians.

"This was a distinguished operation," the **Hamas** spiritual leader, Sheik Ahmed Yassin, told reporters at his home in Gaza City. He said it was the first time **Hamas** had dispatched a **female** bomber - though other groups have used them - and he also praised the co-operation with the Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades.

Graphic

Color Photo: TSAFRIR ABAYOV, REUTERS; An Israeli soldier stands in front of Palestinian workers yesterday as they wait to leave the industrial area where they work at the Erez crossing.

Load-Date: January 15, 2004

Palestinians release Hamas member

St. Petersburg Times (Florida)

May 4, 2005 Wednesday 0 South Pinellas Edition

Copyright 2005 Times Publishing Company

Section: NATIONAL; Pg. 11A; Newspaper

Length: 583 words

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip; TEL AVIV, Israel; WELLINGTON, New Zealand; KATMANDU, Nepal

Body

Palestinian police released a member of a **Hamas** rocket squad on Tuesday, a day after he was detained, despite a pledge by Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas to get tough with those violating a truce with Israel.

The suspect shot at Palestinian officers shortly before his arrest Monday night, and a rocket launcher was found in his car. Even so, Egypt joined the militant group in pressuring Palestinian officials to free him.

Compiled from Times Wires

Abbas threatened to strike truce breakers with an "iron fist" last week. But the short-lived arrest illustrated how difficult the mission is when militants have the support of large segments of the population and his strongest allies fail to give him backing.

Egypt was a key mediator in talks with various Palestinian factions to solidify a truce with Israel. A new threat to the truce emerged Tuesday when militants from the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades in the West Bank city of Nablus threatened to resume attacks against Israel in a week unless Israel stops chasing them. Al Aqsa is linked to Abbas' Fatah movement.

Israel often has declared that a true end to more than four years of violence is impossible unless Abbas disarms the militants, preferably before Palestinian parliamentary elections this summer.

Palestinian officials said Tuesday the election is set for July 17.

Holocaust survivors pressure Israeli bank

TEL AVIV, Israel - Holocaust survivors demonstrated outside the headquarters of an Israeli bank on Tuesday, urging it to turn over unclaimed assets of Holocaust victims to destitute survivors.

The demonstration came two days before Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is to travel to Poland for a Holocaust memorial.

An Israeli parliamentary report early this year concluded the government and several banks, including Bank Leumi, Israel's oldest commercial bank, hold more than \$200-million in assets belonging to Holocaust victims. The bank says it no longer holds any such funds.

Palestinians release Hamas member

"Sixty years after the Holocaust, there are still records that are closed. There are still accounts that are unaccounted for. There are still names of people that are unknown," said Bobby Brown, an official with the World Jewish Congress who joined about 20 others in Tuesday's demonstration.

Charges dropped against Prince Charles protesters

WELLINGTON, New Zealand - Charges were dropped Tuesday against two women who staged a bare-breasted protest in front of Prince Charles during his visit to New Zealand in March. No reason was given for the dropped charges.

Hana Plant, 22, and Holly Summer Fenwick, 25, pleaded innocent to charges of disorderly behavior.

The women said they exposed themselves to protest the removal of a breast-cancer screening truck from a square in Wellington to make room for the prince's visit.

American dies in fall

from Mount Everest

KATMANDU, Nepal - An American climber was killed on Mount Everest after he slipped and fell into a crevice, Nepalese mountaineering officials said Tuesday.

Seattle climber Michael O'Brien, 39, fell to his death on Sunday as he and his brother Chris, 32, were returning to their base camp and were crossing the Khumbu Icefall, a section that has claimed the lives of many climbers. Last week, Canadian Sean Egan died after an apparent heart attack.

"We're all numb and shocked," said O'Brien's sister, Kathryn Caltabiano.

Since New Zealander Sir Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing Norgay conquered 29,035-foot-high Everest in 1953, more than 1,400 climbers have scaled the mountain. About 180 have died.

Load-Date: May 4, 2005

Authorities probe Kosovo shooter's ties to Hamas: Third American corrections officer dies of wounds

Ottawa Citizen

April 25, 2004 Sunday Final Edition

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Section: News; Pg. A6; News

Length: 341 words

Byline: Anica Kirka

Dateline: PRISTINA, Serbia-Montenegro

Body

PRISTINA, Serbia-Montenegro - Authorities are investigating whether a Jordanian UN policeman who killed three American corrections officers in a gunbattle at a Kosovo prison had links to the Palestinian terrorist group **Hamas**, a senior NATO official said.

Eleven officers were wounded before the officers shot and killed Sgt. Maj. Ahmed Mustafa Ibrahim Ali, a Palestinian from Jordan.

No one is certain what prompted him to open fire, but a survivor said Mr. Ali was smiling while he was shooting, a UN source familiar with the investigation said.

The Associated press

The attack came three days after U.S. President George W. Bush endorsed a plan by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and back the permanence of some Jewish settlements in the West Bank. The plan rules out resettling Palestinian refugees in Israel.

A senior NATO official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that besides the investigation into any links with **Hamas**, authorities were examining a trip Mr. Ali took to Saudi Arabia only a month before he joined the mission in March to see if it might be connected to the attack.

Jordan's government said Mr. Ali, 30, was a distinguished member of his homeland's special police unit and had been decorated for helping to ward off an attack on the Israeli Embassy in the Jordanian capital, Amman.

The United Nations has refused to discuss details of the investigation. The world body moved into Kosovo after a 78-day NATO air war launched to stop former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic's crackdown on independence-minded ethnic Albanians.

Like Mr. Ali, the corrections officers who were killed were new to Kosovo. They arrived just 10 days before the attack and were part of an effort to bring professional corrections expertise into the prisons. The attack began at the end of the officers' first day at work.

Two **women** died in the gunfight. Gary Weston was put on life support after he was shot in the head and sent back to the United States. The UN mission announced his death yesterday.

Authorities probe Kosovo shooter's ties to Hamas: Third American corrections officer dies of wounds

Load-Date: April 25, 2004

End of Document

18 die as suicide bombs rock Israel; Death toll may rise, Hamas takes blame as buses blow up 15 seconds apart

The Record (Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario)

September 1, 2004 Wednesday Final Edition

Copyright 2004 Metroland Media Group Ltd

Section: FRONT; Pg. A9; NEWS

Length: 665 words

Dateline: BEERSHEBA, ISRAEL

Body

Palestinian suicide bombers blew up two buses almost simultaneously in this southern city yesterday, killing at least 16 passengers and wounding more than 80 in the first major attack inside Israel in nearly six months.

The explosions, for which the **Hamas** militant group claimed responsibility, ended a period of relative calm.

Israel has attributed the lull to its crackdown on Palestinian militants and continued construction of a separation barrier in the West Bank. Palestinian militants have acknowledged they have faced increasing difficulties carrying out attacks.

Associated Press

The two buses blew up 15 seconds apart, about 100 metres from a busy intersection in the centre of Beersheba.

"People were screaming and yelling. Everybody was running," said witness Tzika Schreter, 50.

Rescue workers scoured the scene, cleaning up body parts and scattered pieces of the wreckage as dozens of onlookers gathered nearby. A hand with a ring lay on a charred bus seat, and blood was splattered on the mangled walls.

The blasts came hours after Prime Minister Ariel Sharon presented his Likud party with the most detailed timetable yet for Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, and warned party rebels the plan "will be implemented, period." After the attacks, he met with security officials to plan a response. Israel has historically struck hard at militants after suicide bombings.

ISRAEL VOWS TO FIGHT TERROR

"Israel will continue fighting terror with all its might," Sharon said, adding that he would push forward with the Gaza pullout. "This has no connection to disengagement," he said.

Police said the devastation at the scene was complicating the recovery of bodies and warned the death toll could rise. They said the 16 dead did not include the bombers.

Israel's Magen David Adom rescue service said 30 of the wounded were in serious or moderate condition.

18 die as suicide bombs rock Israel ; Death toll may rise, Hamas takes blame as buses blow up 15 seconds apart

Authorities stepped up security throughout Beersheba after the attacks, placing checkpoints on major roads and snarling traffic.

In Gaza, Muslim leaders praised the "heroic operation" over mosque loudspeakers. The attack was the deadliest since a female suicide bomber killed 21 people nearly a year ago in the northern city of Haifa.

Militants hadn't carried out a suicide bombing in Israel since March 14, when 11 people were killed in the port of Ashdod.

That attack prompted Israel to assassinate Sheik Ahmed Yassin, the spiritual leader of Hamas, and his successor, Abdel Aziz Rantisi. Hamas has repeatedly pledged to avenge their deaths, but had been unable to carry out a major attack inside Israel, despite many attempts.

In the West Bank, the Israeli army surrounded the homes of the two suspected bombers, Ahmed Qawasmeh and Nasim Mohammed Ali Jaabari, and questioned their relatives. Both men were from Hebron.

Hamas distributed a leaflet in Hebron claiming responsibility for the attack, but did not name the bombers.

"If you thought that the martyrdom of our leaders would weaken our missions and discourage us from Jihad, then you are dreaming," it read.

Hamas and other Palestinian militant groups have carried out more than 100 suicide bombings over the past four years, but the pace of attacks has slowed considerably this year.

Israel has attributed the slowdown to its success in fighting militants and the West Bank barrier, not a lack of effort by armed Palestinian groups.

Israel has arrested or killed dozens of militants in recent months. The country also maintains dozens of roadblocks in the West Bank and has placed security guards near busy bus stops in Israeli cities.

But yesterday, Israeli officials repeatedly cited the barrier, which has drawn international condemnation, as the No. 1 reason for the slowdown in attacks. The barrier, which is about one-quarter complete, has not yet reached the Hebron area. Gaza is fenced off from Israel, and militants have had trouble reaching Israel from there.

Palestinian leaders condemned the attack and called for an immediate ceasefire and resumption of peace talks.

Graphic

Photo: REUTERS; An injured man is carried away after bomb blasts in the southern Israeli city of Beersheba yesterday. Explosions tore through two commuter buses, killing at least 18 people and injuring dozens. The bombings broke a five-month lull in such violence.

Load-Date: September 1, 2004

Three generals and a martyr;
OPINION: URI AVNERY looks beyond the simplistic portrayal of Hamas and compares it to zionist terror groups in 1940s Palestine.

Morning Star
April 07, 2004

Copyright 2004 People's Press Printing Society Ltd

Section: Pg. 8

Length: 1511 words

Byline: URI AVNERY

Body

FIVE hundred black and - white - bearded Hamas members were sitting opposite me. Venerable sheikhs and young people. At the side, some rows were occupied by women.

I was standing on the stage, talking in Hebrew, with the crossed flags of Israel and Palestine on my lapel.

As I have recounted already several times, it happened like this. At the end of 1992, the new Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin expelled 415 Islamic activists - mostly Hamas members - to the Lebanese border area.

In protest, we put up tents opposite the Prime Minister's office in Jerusalem. There, we spent 45 days and nights - Israeli peace activists, who were later to found Gush Shalom, and Arab citizens of Israel, mostly members of the Islamic movement.

Most of the time, it was very cold and, some days, our tents were covered with snow.

There was a lot of debate in the tents, the Jews learning something about Islam and the Muslims something about Judaism.

The expelled militants themselves vegetated for a year in the hilly landscape between the Israeli and Lebanese armies.

The whole world followed their suffering. After a year, they were allowed back and the Hamas leaders in Gaza organised a homecoming reception for them in the biggest hall in town.

They invited those Israelis who had protested against the expulsion. I was asked to make a speech. I spoke about peace and, in the intermission, we were invited to have lunch with the hosts. I was impressed by the friendly attitude of the hundreds of people who were there.

Undoubtedly, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and the spokesman of the expellees, Dr Abd-al-Aziz al-Rantissi - who became Sheikh Yassin's successor last week - would have been present too if they had not been kept in prison.

I recount this experience in order to point out that the picture of Hamas as an inveterate enemy of all peace and compromise is not accurate.

Three generals and a martyr; OPINION: URI AVNERY looks beyond the simplistic portrayal of Hamas and compares it to Zionist terror groups in 1940s Palestine .

Of course, 10 years of bloodshed, suicide bombings and targeted assassinations have passed since then. But, even now, the picture is much more complex than meets the eye.

There are different tendencies in Hamas. The ideological hard core does indeed refuse any peace or compromise with Israel.

They consider it a foreign implantation in Palestine which, in Islamic doctrine, is a Muslim "wakf" (religious grant).

But many Hamas sympathisers do not treat the organisation as an ideological centre but rather as an instrument for fighting Israel in pursuit of realistic objectives.

Sheikh Yassin himself announced some months ago in a German paper that the fight would be discontinued after the establishment of a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders. Recently, he offered a "hudna" (truce) for 30 years - which strongly reminds one of Ariel Sharon's suggestion that Israel would give up the Gaza Strip and retain large parts of the West Bank for an interim phase to last for 20 years.

Therefore, the murder of the sheikh did not serve any positive aim. It was an act of folly.

The three generals who actually direct the affairs of Israel - Prime Minister Sharon, Minister of Defence Shaul Mofaz and Chief of Staff Mosh Ya'alon - maintain that, "in the short term, " the assassination would indeed increase the attacks on Israeli citizens, but, "in the long run, " it would help to "root terrorism."

They are very careful not to spell out when the "short term" ends and the "long run" begins. Our generals do not believe in timetables.

I take the liberty to tell these three illustrious strategists nonsense in tomato juice, as you say in Hebrew slang. Or rather, nonsense in blood.

In the short term, this action endangers our personal security. In the long run, it represents an even greater danger to our national security.

In the short term, it has increased the motivation for Hamas to carry out deadly attacks. Every Israeli understands this and is taking extra precautions these days. But the less obvious results are much more threatening.

In the hearts of hundreds of thousands of children in the Palestinian territories and the Arab countries, this murder has raised a storm of rage and thirst for revenge, together with feelings of frustration and humiliation in view of the impotence of the Arab world.

This will produce not only thousands of new potential suicide bombers inside the country but also tens of thousands of volunteers for the radical Islamic organisations throughout the Arab world. I know because, at the age of 15, I joined the armed underground in similar circumstances.

There is no stronger weapon for a fighting organisation than a martyr.

Suffice it to mention Avraham Stern, alias Ya'ir, who was killed by the British police in Tel-Aviv in 1942.

His blood gave an impulse to the emergence of the Lehi underground - nicknamed "the Stern gang" - which, only four years later, was playing a major role in the expulsion of the British from Palestine.

But Ya'ir's standing was nothing compared to the standing of Sheikh Yassin. The man was practically born to fulfil the role of a sainted martyr - a religious personality, a paraplegic in a wheelchair, broken in body but not in spirit, a militant who spent years in prison, a leader who continued his fight after miraculously surviving an earlier assassination attempt, a hero cowardly murdered from the air while leaving the mosque after prayer.

Even a writer of genius could not have invented a figure more suited to the adoration of a billion Muslims in this and coming generations.

Three generals and a martyr; OPINION: URI AVNERY looks beyond the simplistic portrayal of Hamas and compares it to Zionist terror groups in 1940s Palestine .

The murder of Yassin will encourage co-operation among the Palestinian fighting organisations. Here, too, a parallel with the Hebrew underground presents itself.

In a certain phase of the fight against the British, there was much unrest among the members of the Hagana, the semi-official underground army of the Zionist leadership, comparable to Fatah today.

The Hagana, which included the elite Palmakh formation, was seen to be inactive, while the Irgun and Lehi appeared as heroes who carried out incredibly audacious actions.

The ferment inside the Hagana caused the emergence of a group called Fighting Nation which advocated close co-operation between the various organisations. A number of Hagana members simply went over to Lehi.

Now, it is happening among the Palestinians. The lines between the various groups are becoming more and more blurred.

Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade members co-operate with Hamas and Jihad, contrary to the orders of their political leadership, saying: "Since we are killed together, let us fight together."

This phenomenon is bound to grow and make the attacks more effective.

Hamas popularity among the population is rising sky-high, together with its capability to carry out attacks. This does not mean that the Palestinian public accepts the aim of an Islamic state or that it has given up the idea of a Palestinian state alongside Israel.

Even among Hamas members, many embrace this idea. But the admiration of the masses for the attackers and their actions reflects the conviction that the Israelis understand only the language of force and that experience proves that, without extreme violence, the Palestinians will not achieve anything at all.

Unfortunately, there is no real evidence for the opposite. The truth is that the Palestinians have never achieved anything without resorting to violence.

Therefore, the petitions being signed these days by well-meaning Palestinian personalities calling for an end to the armed struggle will have no effect.

They cannot point to any other method that will sound convincing to their public. And our government always, without exception, presents such moves as a sign of weakness.

In the even longer run, the assassination of Yassin poses an existential danger. For five generations, the Israel-Palestinian conflict was essentially a national conflict - a clash between two great national movements, each of which claimed the country for itself.

A national conflict is basically rational. It can be solved by compromise. This may be difficult, but it is possible. Our nightmare has always been that the national struggle would turn into a religious one.

Since every religion claims to represent absolute truth, religious struggles do not allow for compromise.

The martyrdom of Sheikh Yassin pushes even further away the chance of Israel ever attaining peace and tranquility, normal relations with its neighbours, with a flourishing economy .

It increases the danger that future generations of Arabs and Muslims will view it as a foreign implantation, installed in this region by force, with every decent Muslim from Morocco to Indonesia duty-bound to strive for its uprooting.

Such insights are far from the capability of our three generals to absorb.

Sharon, Mofaz, Ya'alon and their ilk understand only brute force in the service of a narrow nationalism.

Three generals and a martyr; OPINION: URI AVNERY looks beyond the simplistic portrayal of Hamas and compares it to zionist terror groups in 1940s Palestine .

Peace does not inspire them. For them, compromise is a dirty word. It is quite clear that they will feel much more comfortable if the Palestinian people is led by fanatical religious fighters than by a man prepared to compromise like Yasser Arafat.

ON THE INTERNET

www.avnery-news.co.il

Graphic

FALLOUT: A youngster wearing a **Hamas** headband. TARGET: **Hamas** founder Sheikh Ahmed Yassin.

Load-Date: April 13, 2004

End of Document

Hamas's Canadian cheerleader

National Post (f/k/a The Financial Post) (Canada)

October 22, 2004 Friday

National Edition

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Section: EDITORIALS; Pg. A19

Length: 546 words

Byline: National Post

Body

According to its Web site, the Canadian Islamic Congress (CIC) is "committed to promote, advance, co-ordinate, facilitate, demonstrate and implement the teachings and practices of Islam."

Question: Are terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians consistent with "the teachings and practices of Islam"? **Hamas**, al-Qaeda and Islamic Jihad all say the answer is "yes." And apparently, so too does CIC national president Mohamed Elmasry.

On Oct. 19, Mr. Elmasry appeared on Michael Coren Live, a Toronto-area television talk show. As we have noted many times before, Mr. Elmasry takes a rather dim view of Israel and its Jewish inhabitants. So it was hardly surprising to hear him tell host Michael Coren that the Palestinian intifada should be seen as the modern day equivalent of the French resistance -- with Israel, of course, being cast in the Nazi role.

But then Mr. Elmasry went a step further. Not only were attacks against Israeli military targets acceptable, he said, but also those against civilians. The CIC president justified this on the basis that Israel has a military system that requires many young adults to periodically report for training or reserve duty. Speaking of the Jewish adults who are regularly blown to bits while they sit in buses and cafes, he declared: "They are not innocent [because] the total population of Israel is part of the army ... From 18 on, they are part of the soldiers, even if they have civilian clothes."

"What about women?" Mr. Coren asked.

"The same," said Mr. Elmasry.

"So everyone in Israel ... irrespective of gender, over the age of 18, is a valid target?" asked Mr. Coren.

"Yes," replied Mr. Elmasry.

We have noted the irony of Mr. Elmasry's extremism before. But in light of such odious pronouncements, it is worth pointing it out again. Here is a man who obsessively lectures Canadians about their preconceptions of Islam. He then walks into a television studio and whitewashes the terroristic slaughter of Jews -- single-handedly reinforcing for viewers the poisonous stereotype that would have all Muslims cast as apologists for terror.

Hamas's Canadian cheerleader

And then, of course, there is the sheer absurdity of Mr. Elmasry's logic. As he says, Israel does have an extensive military reserve system. The reason for this is obvious: Since the time of the Jewish state's creation, its Arab neighbours have plotted to exterminate it. The only way Israel has been able to survive through numerous wars has been to mobilize a large reserve army in times of crisis. That Mr. Elmasry should then cite this fact to excuse Arab-on-Jew slaughter is perverse.

Certainly, Mr. Elmasry is entitled to his views on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. But we wonder: Are there Canadian Muslims out there who are outraged that an extremist of Mr. Elmasry's ilk is purporting to speak on their behalf under the banner of an organization grandly named the "Canadian Islamic Congress"?

On the broader subject of Middle Eastern affairs, this editorial board harbours no illusions: We realize not all Canadians, let alone all Canadian Muslims, agree with our strong support for Israel. But even among Muslims who otherwise disagree, we hope and expect there are those who are embarrassed by Mr. Elmasry's views. And we would like to hear from them -- at letters@nationalpost.com.

Graphic

Black & White Photo: Mohamed Elmasry.

Load-Date: October 22, 2004

End of Document

Israel warns of retaliation against Syria up rhetoric over attack: Threatens to attack: Hamas leader is being harboured by Damascus

National Post (f/k/a The Financial Post) (Canada)

September 3, 2004 Friday

National Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. A14

Length: 733 words

Byline: Jean-Luc Renaudie, Agence France-Presse, with files from Reuters

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

JERUSALEM - Israel threatened to launch a military attack on Syria yesterday, accusing Damascus of being directly implicated in a double suicide attack by **Hamas** that killed 16 people.

As Israel's top diplomats pressed their case that Damascus should pay the price for sheltering **Hamas** leaders, Zeev Boim, the deputy defence minister, dropped strong hints a strike by Israel on Syrian targets could be imminent.

Syria dismissed the threat as lacking in credibility and denied any involvement in the bombings.

Mr. Boim told public radio, "The rule that, 'Anyone who deals in terror against Israel is a target' is a rule that must be stated and one that we must stand behind."

But Israel would take care not to cause a "conflagration" on its northern border. "It is possible to launch operations, provided that the targets are well chosen and that the moment is right, in order to make the Syrians understand that there are red lines that cannot be crossed."

Sixteen people and the two bombers were killed Tuesday in a double suicide attack in the southern Israeli city of Beersheba.

The terrorist Islamist movement **Hamas** whose senior leader, Khaled Meshaal, is based in Damascus, claimed responsibility.

Raanan Gissin, the official spokesman for Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, said the order for the terrorist attacks "comes directly from Khaled Meshaal's bureau based in Damascus."

But Faruq al-Shara, the Syrian Foreign Minister, denied any link to the Beersheba attacks.

"The Israeli threats against Syria are not based on any evidence and are completely lacking in credibility," he said in comments carried by the official SANA news agency.

"[Such threats] raise tensions in the region."

Israel warns of retaliation against Syria up rhetoric over attack: Threatens to attack: Hamas leader is being harboured by Damascus

The attacks in Beersheba were the deadliest since a suicide bombing in the port city of Haifa last October that left 21 people and the female bomber dead, and they followed a period of relative calm.

Israel responded to that attack, carried out by the smaller Islamic Jihad organization, with an air strike on an alleged Palestinian terrorist training camp deep inside Syria.

Mr. Meshaal was the target of an failed assassination bid by Israeli agents in Jordan in 1997. He emerged as undisputed leader earlier this year after Hamas co-founder Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and his successor, Abdelaziz Rantissi, were both killed in Israeli air strikes.

In addition to threatening military action, Israeli diplomats are stepping up their efforts to convince other governments of Damascus' ties to Hamas.

Danny Ayalon, Israel's ambassador to the United States, is to present Bush administration officials with intelligence information on the links.

Silvan Shalom, the Israeli Foreign Minister, is also expected to press the same message at talks with his Dutch counterpart, Bernard Bot, whose country holds the rotating European Union presidency.

In the Gaza Strip, Israeli forces shot dead four Palestinians, including a 14-year-old, and wounded dozens more in a major raid into the area.

Israeli soldiers also blew up two apartment blocs in Gaza, leaving scores of Palestinians homeless.

The incursion into the Deir el-Balah refugee camp triggered the worst violence in Gaza in weeks.

Israeli helicopters fired warning shots and soldiers shot at Palestinians firing anti-tank rockets and hurling Molotov cocktails.

The clashes erupted after troops unearthed a tunnel near a Jewish settlement, a military source said.

Palestinian medics said four Palestinians were killed, including a 14-year-old, his 19-year-old brother and two other 19-year-olds. They said 41 people were wounded. The Israeli source said three Palestinians were shot, but did not give their condition.

In an overnight raid in nearby Khan Younis refugee camp, soldiers blew up twin five-storey buildings, which Israel said Palestinian militants were using to attack soldiers and Jewish settlers.

Six Palestinians and two Israeli soldiers were wounded in the raid.

The operation followed Israeli threats to step up strikes on militants after the Beersheba bombings.

Israeli troops surrounded 10 apartment buildings overlooking the Jewish settlement of Neve Dekalim and ordered all 150 families to evacuate. Many sought refuge at a local hospital carrying the few belongings they had time to grab.

Saeb Erekat, Palestinian cabinet minister, said the renewed violence in Gaza would escalate the bloodshed.

"We strongly condemn the Israeli aggression," he said.

****START-IO-STORY****

Load-Date: September 3, 2004

Israel warns of retaliation against Syria up rhetoric over attack: Threatens to attack: Hamas leader is being
harboured by Damascus

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SECRET BID TO END BOMBING; FOCUS MI6 IN UNDERCOVER TALKS WITH HAMAS AS BLAIR WOOS PALESTINIAN MILITANTS

Sunday Express

November 14, 2004

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Section: U.K. 1st Edition; NEWS; Pg. , 11

Length: 829 words

Byline: Additional reporting by Gordon Thomas

Body

OFFICERS from MI6 are trying to strike a deal with the Hamas terrorist group to prevent a new wave of Middle East violence in the aftermath of Yasser Arafat's death.

A secret "back channel" will be opened with the extremists, responsible for dozens of suicide bombings that have killed Israeli women and children, to sound them out about the future of the Palestinian leadership.

Security sources in London, Washington and Tel Aviv all confirm that President Bush and Tony Blair are using their intelligence agencies to buy enough time for a new Palestinian figurehead to emerge with whom the Israelis can do business.

The Secret Intelligence Service approach is to dust off a 40-page plan devised earlier this year, which would have involved Hamas in the security of the Gaza Strip.

That plan, originally blocked by the Americans, spelled out how in return for preventing suicide bombers passing into Israel, the Palestinian groups in Gaza would get a guarantee that their heavy weapons would not be confiscated.

After the White House summit, Mr Bush has made clear that he will get involved in a new peace drive only if there is a tangible chance of success.

He snubbed Mr Blair's requests to sanction an early peace summit or appoint a Middle East envoy.

But the President is keen to bring European states into the process, including France which has close links with the PLO, as a way of kickstarting the peace movement and improving relations with European leaders who opposed the Iraq war.

A Washington-based security source with close links to the Israelis told the Sunday Express: "Bush would like to build a bridge to Europe. This is also a good way for him to put pressure on Ariel Sharon and to tell his US audience that he is not alone." Meanwhile, US plans will focus on crushing the threat from the Iranian-backed Hezbollah group, based in Lebanon, which last week used unmanned aerial reconnaissance aircraft in what intelligence chiefs fear is a prelude to a new wave of rocket attacks on northern Israel.

SECRET BID TO END BOMBING; FOCUS MI6 IN UNDERCOVER TALKS WITH HAMAS AS BLAIR WOOS
PALESTINIAN MILITANTS

The security source said: "The Europeans and particularly the British will be given carte blanche to get in there and see what they can achieve before Bush touches it with a bargepole. MI6 and the CIA will try to keep a lid on the violence and get everybody in the tent.

"They will be making contact with some very tricky people to try to thrash out some sort of security guarantees. The fear is that Hamas will fill the political vacuum left by Arafat. For a peace plan to succeed we need time to get elections up and running. The Americans are very wary of talking to Hamas. Their priority will be to go after Hezbollah, which also has the benefit of firing a shot across Iranian bows."

Both British and US intelligence favour the emergence of Palestinian security chief Mohammad Dahlan, who spent part of last year in Cambridge improving his English - a cover for meetings with Western intelligence officers.

But the favourite to replace Arafat is Abu Mazen, the new head of the PLO. Marwan Barghouti, a popular leader from Arafat's Fatah guerrilla group, now in an Israeli jail on terror charges, yesterday announced that he too will run. Details of the secret dealings come amid a climate of intrigue, black propaganda and claims that Arafat was poisoned.

Blood samples have been taken from his body before he was interred in Ramallah on the West Bank. The samples, according to a Palestinian spokesman, have been sent to private forensic laboratories in the United States and Germany.

Mossad had tried 13 times to assassinate Arafat, including three poisoning attempts, according to sources in Tel Aviv.

Suspensions were stoked yesterday when Hamas leader Khaled Mashal claimed that Arafat was "poisoned with the same nerve agent Mossad used on me". A three-man Mossad team had tried to inject Mashal in a street in Amman, Jordan.

He was rushed to hospital. When doctors found they could not treat him, the late King Hussein called Israel's then prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who arranged for an antidote to be flown from Israel to Jordan.

ATTENTION is also focused on more than £2billion of missing funds, which Arafat had hidden in foreign bank accounts. Israeli sources say his widow, Suha, will receive £12million a year out of the Palestinian Authority budget, much of which came from Brussels, funded by EU taxpayers.

The money is allegedly to fund the expenses of her lavish life in Paris.

She reached an agreement about the money during a meeting with Mazen, the PLO's newly elected chairman, while she waited by her husband's deathbed in a French military hospital. She insisted on a written deal before allowing Arafat's successors to visit his bedside.

But all is not rosy for Suha. She may be facing a huge inheritance tax liability in France. In January it was reported in an Israeli newspaper that Jean-Claude Gaudin, mayor of Marseilles, disclosed that he had granted her French citizenship when he served as immigration minister.

Load-Date: November 15, 2004

1.2 "50% UNEMPLOYMENT RESULTED IN APPEARANCE OF A NEW HAMAS"[]

What the Papers Say. Part A (Russia)

October 18, 2005, Tuesday

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Section: OPERATORS' NEWS

Length: 600 words

Byline: Yana Serova

Body

Question: You made a gloomy prediction once that unless the situation in southern Russia ameliorated, several years from now we may see a new **Hamas** appear and consolidate all of the Caucasus. Moreover, you even said that all conditions for it were ripe already. What are these conditions?

Novaya Gazeta, No 77 (1102), October 17 - 19, 2005,

Shamil Beno: First and foremost, distrust in the corrupt authorities. It leads the population to the conviction that it has to organize itself to solve its problems. Young men form groups that meet in mosques and in the streets. Travel to the Caucasus and you will see groups of young men on every street corner, conversing for hours on end. And nobody seems to care exactly what they are discussing.

There are lots of problems worth discussion. Inadequate social and political management is one of the worst flaws of the regime. There are several matters that concern everyone every day of his or her life. Salary, taxes, land laws, property rights, system of education, availability of mechanisms that enable a person to count on a happier future... If we want a tranquil and tolerant society in the Caucasus, then the authorities should take care of all of that. Either we are citizens of this country, or we are not.

Consider the situation in the Caucasus. The lowest living standards in the country, unemployment in all republics without exception in excess of 50%. As things stand, the figures are as follows: 15-20% men earn their living by serving as self-appointed cabmen, 30-40% **women** are vendors who are not regarded as the employed and therefore do not pay taxes. But bribes demanded and paid in the Caucasus are colossal - to tax structures, local power structures, etc. Judging by the documents of the Ministry of Economic Development, it does not even have any figures for any middle-term future of Chechnya and Ingushetia. It means that the authorities do not even know what may happen there in 2010.

Question: In other words, gangs of extremists suggest at least some alternative to the local authorities that cannot guarantee decent living standards?

Shamil Beno: Right. That's why young men are uniting nowadays - because neither official mufties nor the authorities bother with specific problems that worry everyone. Moreover, young men of different ethnic origins are banding together. I did not see a single mono-ethnic group in Kabardino-Balkaria.

Question: And the religious factor? How serious is it?

1.2 "50% UNEMPLOYMENT RESULTED IN APPEARANCE OF A NEW HAMAS"[]

Shamil Beno: It is instrumental. There is another reason for the future appearance of **Hamas**. The Communist Party and Islam are the only historic experience of the Caucasus as a region, nothing more. It is not their fault, it is their problem. I'm convinced that had democratic forces in Russia been truly effective, the Caucasus would have become a great electorate for them. As things stand, however, the people distrust the authorities and therefore turn to the only other experience they have... and this experience boils down to jihad and to Imam Shamil.

Youth is very religious these days. According to the Youth Committee of the Chechen Republic (data for 2003), over 30% of young men trust religious literature and religious leaders more than their own parents. Barely a decade ago it would have been unthinkable!

Question: Security structures were the prime targets of the raiders on Nalchik, just like in Nazran a year ago. Are Russian policemen the "common enemy"?

Shamil Beno: Local policemen. With the crisis in Chechnya unfolding, the regional authorities have given local law enforcement agencies a carte blanche...

Translated by A. Ignatkin

Load-Date: October 18, 2005

End of Document

Israel shaken by return of the suicide bombers: After months of failed attempts, Hamas penetrates security to kill 16 and injure 100 in attack on buses

The Guardian (London) - Final Edition

September 1, 2004

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Section: Guardian Home Pages, Pg. 1

Length: 706 words

Byline: Conal Urquhart in Beersheba

Body

At least 16 people were killed and almost 100 injured after Israel's five-month period of relative peace was shattered yesterday with a double suicide bombing on two buses in the southern town of Beersheba.

The bombings, which came 15 seconds apart and killed a three-year-old boy, 10 **women** and five men, were claimed by **Hamas** as a revenge attack for Israel's assassination of its leaders Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and Abdel-Aziz al-Rantissi earlier this year.

Israel killed both men following the last suicide attack in Israel in March when two men escaped from Gaza and blew themselves up at the port of Ashdod, killing 11.

Ariel Sharon, the Israeli prime minister, held a meeting of his security cabinet last night immediately after the explosions. He said the attacks would not stand in the way of his plan to withdraw from Gaza settlements but did not rule out reprisals. "Israel will continue fighting terror with all its might. This has no connection to disengagement," he said.

Israeli troops moved into Hebron, the closest Palestinian city to Beersheba yesterday afternoon. They surrounded the homes of Ahmed Qawasmeh and Nasim Mohammed Ali Jaabari, the suspected bombers, and questioned their relatives.

Hamas issued a statement in Hebron claiming responsibility and warning of further attacks. "This is but one of a series of responses in which the Iz a Din al-Kassam Brigades (the **Hamas** military wing) have vowed to carry out in response to the martyrdom of the leaders of our movement, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and Abdel-Aziz Rantissi," it said. "If you thought that the martyrdom of our leaders would weaken our missions and discourage us from jihad, then you are dreaming."

Hamas has been severely weakened by arrests and assassinations in the West Bank and Gaza but commentators have warned that the group would need to avenge its leaders to appease its supporters. Yesterday messages praising the "heroic operation" were broadcast from mosque loudspeakers in Gaza and thousands of **Hamas** supporters celebrated in the streets.

Israel shaken by return of the suicide bombers: After months of failed attempts, Hamas penetrates security to kill 16 and injure 100 in attack on buses

Beersheba is about 10 miles south of Hebron, in a part of the West Bank where the Israeli army has yet to construct its security barrier. The bombings immediately led to Israeli demands to accelerate the building programme, despite a ruling by the International Court of Justice in the Hague.

Beersheba's residents were stunned by yesterday's double attack. Rivka Edri, 77, said she owed her life to a whimsical decision to sit at the back of the bus. "I had just been shopping. I normally always sit around the middle close to the door. After about 100 metres, there was the explosion," she said after being released from hospital. "I am just relieved that I decided to leave my two daughters behind."

The Palestinian Authority condemned the attack and called for an immediate ceasefire and resumption of peace talks. "The Palestinian interest requires a stop to harming all civilians so as not to give Israel a pretext to continue its aggression against our people," Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat said in a statement.

The Palestinian prime minister, Ahmed Qureia, who was in Egypt, said: "Killing civilians, whether from the Palestinian side or the Israeli side, will achieve nothing except hatred and more enmity and therefore we condemn that strongly."

Israeli politicians called for renewed efforts to build the security barrier, which has been cited as the major reason for the slowdown of militant attacks within Israel, although it remains only one-quarter complete.

The US State Department brushed aside statements by Palestinian leaders condemning the bombings. Spokesman Richard Boucher said: "We see Hamas as a terrorist organisation. Terrorist organisations need to be put out of business."

The bombings were condemned by the foreign secretary, Jack Straw. "We have urged the Palestinian Authority to make greater efforts to take action against those planning such despicable attacks and fulfil their road map commitments on security," he said.

Earlier yesterday, Israeli soldiers at a Gaza checkpoint said they had detained a potential suicide bomber with explosives hidden in his underwear.

Israel bombings, page 4

Comment, page 20

Audio report from Conal Urquhart guardian.co.uk/israel

Load-Date: September 1, 2004

Five-month lull ends with Israeli bus bombings: Hamas claims responsibility for 16 deaths in Beersheba

National Post (f/k/a The Financial Post) (Canada)

September 1, 2004 Wednesday

All but Toronto Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A10

Length: 655 words

Byline: Patrick Bishop, The Daily Telegraph, with files from Reuters

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

JERUSALEM - A lull in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was shattered yesterday when two suicide bombers blew themselves up on buses in the southern Israeli town of Beersheba.

The blasts, which came within seconds of each other, killed at least 16 people and injured nearly 100. They also brought panic, fear and anger to a place that has largely been spared the violence of the past four years.

The bombers boarded buses at the same stop near the central bus station and detonated hidden explosive belts when the vehicles were just a few dozen metres apart, gutting the vehicles and scattering bloody remains.

The attacks, for which the extremist **Hamas** organization claimed responsibility, were condemned by the Palestinian Authority. But there was little doubt that Ariel Sharon, the Israeli Prime Minister, who vowed yesterday to continue the fight against terrorism "with full strength," would be swift to respond.

The bombings were the first suicide attacks inside Israel for five months. The explosions happened just before 3 p.m., a busy time of the day.

The first bomb went off in a single-decker bus as it neared a main intersection in the town centre. The driver of a following bus saw the explosion and immediately stopped, opened the doors and ordered his passengers off. Soon afterward the vehicle was rocked by a bomb blast. Passengers said the driver's actions saved many lives.

Dr. Julian Zelingher of the nearby Soroka Medical Centre, where the victims were taken, said men, **women** and children were among the dead and wounded. Of the injured, 10 were said to be in critical condition.

The normally placid city centre was plunged into chaos. Television pictures showed plumes of smoke and flame pouring from a hole in the roof of one of the buses as rescue services scrambled to retrieve the wounded.

The assumption that Palestinian suicide bombers were to blame appeared to be confirmed when **Hamas** issued a statement on leaflets circulating in the West Bank town of Hebron, 50 kilometres northeast of Beersheba.

It said the killings were in response to the assassination by helicopter strikes of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the **Hamas** leader, in March and his successor, Abdel Aziz Rantisi, the following month.

Five-month lull ends with Israeli bus bombings: Hamas claims responsibility for 16 deaths in Beersheba

The leaflet warned Israelis: "Our religion orders us to respond in kind to aggression against us. You are the ones who choose your leaders and choose to be their shields. Therefore your shields will suffer more blows."

The last major attack by Palestinian terrorists inside Israel came on March 14 when suicide bombers from the Gaza Strip killed 11 in the port city of Ashdod.

The Israeli authorities have attributed the fall in violence to the security barrier that it is hastily erecting to separate Israelis from Palestinians. The barrier, part wall and part fence, has yet to be completed and has not yet reached Beersheba.

Gideon Meir, a senior Foreign Ministry official, said if the barrier had been finished the attack would not have been possible.

The lull is also attributable to the success of an unceasing Israeli campaign to kill or capture terrorist leaders. The army attributed yesterday's killings to the military wing of Hamas in Hebron.

Soon after the attack, troops raided the home in the centre of the city of Ahmed al Kawasma, who is suspected of having planned the bombings.

Good intelligence is also playing a big role. Israeli officials claim that on some days up to 30 threats are detected. Earlier yesterday soldiers caught a young Palestinian carrying a belt packed with explosives as he tried to cross into Israel from the Gaza Strip.

The attacks came soon after Mr. Sharon met deputies from his Likud party to press the case for his plan to pull Israeli settlers and soldiers out of the Gaza Strip and outline a timetable for how it will be achieved.

He faces strong opposition from right-wingers as well as Likud members. Aides said the resumption of violence would have no effect on the evacuation plan.

Graphic

Black & White Photo: Uriel Sinai, Getty Images; Israeli rescuers work at the scene of a Palestinian attack on two buses that killed 16 and injured nearly 100.

Load-Date: September 1, 2004

Hundreds Gather To Denounce Assassination of Hamas Leader

New York Sun (Archive)

March 24, 2004 Wednesday

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Section: NEW YORK; Pg. 3

Length: 354 words

Byline: By YAEL KOHEN, Staff Reporter of the Sun

Body

Hailing Sheik Ahmed Yassin as a hero of the Palestinians, Arab New Yorkers gathered in Brooklyn last night to denounce Israel's assassination of the Hamas leader.

More than 400 men, women, and children, some visibly emotional, packed into an auditorium in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, decrying the death of Yassin, who Israel killed in a missile strike early Monday.

The Israeli government says Yassin was a ruthless terrorist at the head of a radical organization that has carried out suicide bombings on the streets of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. But Palestinian Arabs, and those who showed up at the rally yesterday, spoke of him as a "spiritual leader."

The group that organized the rally, the Arab Muslim-American Federation, also staged a protest earlier in the day in front of the Israeli consulate on 42nd Street.

Arabs at the rally last night described Israelis as murderers. One woman sitting in the back of the room wailed as the ceremony began.

Members of Arab groups addressed the audience in Arabic and English, and began the event with a reading from the Koran.

"His brutal killing was uncalled for, and it's been carried out by American made airships, gunships, and American missiles," said Wael Mousfar, general secretary for the Arab-Muslim American Federation and an engineer for the city's Department of Housing.

As they gathered into the room, some people waved Palestinian flags. One woman brought to the ceremony a sign reading, "Nazi Israel Guilty Genocide," which depicted an Israeli flag with red handprints. A teenager wore a T-shirt that said: "It's the Jewish state in Palestine Stupid. That's the conflict."

Also at the rally were three chasidic Jews who oppose the state of Israel. One, David Weiss, a rabbi from a group called Orthodox Jews United Against Zionism, spoke at the rally. "Sheik Yassin clearly drew a distinction between true Judaism and Zionism," he said.

The national director of the Anti-Defamation League, Abraham Foxman, said the rallies against Israel make "it that much more difficult to find a common language with the Arab American and Muslim American community here in the United States."

Hundreds Gather To Denounce Assassination of Hamas Leader

Load-Date: March 24, 2004

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***Hamas attacks;
Israel hits back
An Israeli American died in the shelling of her Gaza
Strip settlement. An Israeli missile killed a Palestinian.***

The Philadelphia Inquirer

SEPTEMBER 25, 2004 Saturday CITY-D EDITION

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The Philadelphia Inquirer

Found on Philly.com

Section: NATIONAL; Pg. A02

Length: 527 words

Byline: Ibrahim Barzak ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

An Israeli missile strike killed one Palestinian and wounded five early today, hours after **Hamas** fighters killed an Israeli American woman in the first deadly shelling of a Jewish settlement in Gaza in four years of fighting.

The settlement attack, which came just before the start of Yom Kippur, the holiest day on the Jewish calendar, was likely to mobilize further opposition to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plan to withdraw from the Gaza Strip next year. **Hamas** claimed responsibility for firing two mortars at the Neve Dekalim settlement in southern Gaza.

The Israelis returned fire, aiming at the nearby Palestinian town of Khan Younis. The Israeli fire wounded two Palestinians, including a 4-year-old boy, witnesses said.

One of the **Hamas** mortars hit a house in Neve Dekalim, wounding two **women** who were taken to a hospital in southern Israel for treatment. One of the **women**, identified as Tiferet Tratner, died of her wounds, and the second was slightly hurt. Eran Sternberg, a settler spokesman in Gaza, said Tratner also held U.S. citizenship.

Tanks and bulldozers

Early today, an Israeli helicopter fired two missiles toward a group of Palestinians on the outskirts of a nearby refugee camp. Hospital officials said the dead and wounded were civilians.

Later, about 70 tanks and army bulldozers drove toward the Khan Younis camp, setting off heavy exchanges of fire, as soldiers called on residents over loudspeakers to leave their homes, witnesses said.

Palestinians detonated a roadside bomb next to one bulldozer, setting the front of the vehicle on fire.

Hamas attacks; Israel hits back An Israeli American died in the shelling of her Gaza Strip settlement. An Israeli missile killed a Palestinian.

The Israeli military said the helicopter opened fire when four Palestinians tried to launch a rocket or a rocket-propelled grenade from that area. The military said at least two of those involved in the launch were hit.

Palestinians have fired hundreds of crude mortars and rockets at Jewish settlements in Gaza and Israeli border towns since 2000, but yesterday's attack marked the first time a resident of a Gaza settlement was killed. In June, two Israelis were killed in a rocket attack on the Israel town of Sderot.

'Directly responsible'

Eli Moses, a resident of Neve Dekalim, said Sharon was to blame because he was going ahead with a plan to withdraw Israeli troops and settlers from Gaza.

"We want to emphasize that the prime minister is directly responsible for the death," Moses told Israel Radio. "Whoever fired the mortar is of course responsible, but there's a person above him, and unfortunately that's the prime minister."

The shelling came a day after Palestinians killed three Israeli soldiers in an attack on an army outpost protecting the nearby Morag settlement in southern Gaza. After a protracted gun battle, the three attackers were killed by the army.

"The Palestinians are doing everything they can to scuttle an Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip," said David Baker, an official in Sharon's office. "We will take any measures necessary to defend our citizens."

Neve Dekalim is one of 21 Gaza settlements, with a total of 8,200 residents, that would be dismantled under Sharon's unilateral-disengagement plan. Sharon has said he believes Israel's presence in Gaza is untenable.

Graphic

PHOTO;

BRENNAN LINSLEY, Associated Press

At the funeral of Tiferet Tratner, who died in an attack on her Gaza Strip Jewish settlement, men embrace at Givat Shaul Cemetery in Jerusalem.

Load-Date: August 31, 2005

**Palestinian police free Hamas guerrilla who shot at officers Move belies
pledge to crack down on militant groups**

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

May 4, 2005 Wednesday

FIVE STAR LATE LIFT EDITION

Copyright 2005 St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Inc.

Section: NEWS; Pg. A10

Length: 446 words

Byline: THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

Palestinian police released a member of a **Hamas** rocket squad on Tuesday, a day after he was detained, despite a pledge by Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas to get tough with those violating a truce with Israel.

The man shot at Palestinian officers shortly before his arrest Monday night, and a rocket launcher was found in his car. Even so, Egypt joined the militant group in pressuring Palestinian officials to free him.

Abbas threatened to strike at anyone violating the truce with an "iron fist" last week. But the short-lived arrest illustrated how difficult the mission is when militants have the support of large segments of the population and Abbas' strongest allies do not give him backing.

Egypt was a key mediator in talks with various Palestinian factions to solidify a truce with Israel, which was declared Feb. 8.

A new threat to the truce emerged Tuesday when militants from the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade in the West Bank city of Nablus threatened to resume attacks against Israel in a week unless Israel stops chasing them. Al Aqsa is linked to Abbas' Fatah movement.

According to the truce, Israel was supposed to stop raids aimed at arresting militants guerrillas, but it resumed such in the West Bank after a suicide bombing on Feb. 25 in Tel Aviv that killed five Israelis.

The Nablus militants demanded an amnesty and jobs in the Palestinian Authority -- deals that have been offered to gunmen in other towns.

Israel often has declared that a true end to the Israeli-Arab violence is impossible unless Abbas disarms the extremist guerrilla organizations, preferably before Palestinian Arab legislative elections this summer.

Palestinian officials said Tuesday that the election is still scheduled for July 17, despite delays in passing an election law.

Palestinian police free Hamas guerrilla who shot at officers Move belies pledge to crack down on militant groups

The truce has held for the most part, but the Israeli military command has noted an upsurge in violence in Gaza over the past month, especially a renewal of mortar and rocket attacks. Most are aimed at Jewish settlements in Gaza, but some rockets have exploded near an Israeli town just outside Gaza.

Israel said the latest incident shows that Abbas has no choice but to get tough. "As long as there are no real steps to arrest perpetrators, disarm terrorists and dismantle the infrastructure that produces these rockets, there will be no peace and quiet," said Raanan Gissin, an aide to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

Echoing the Israeli response, U.S. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said Abbas' Palestinian Authority must take charge. "It needs to be able to exercise responsibility and assert control so that it's not vying for power with other militant and armed groups," he said in Washington.

Graphic

PHOTO

PHOTO BY KHALIL HAMRA / THE ASSOCIATED PRESS - Women supporters of the Hamas guerrilla movement hold AK-47 assault rifles at a rally Tuesday at the Rafah refugee camp, in the southern Gaza Strip.

Load-Date: May 4, 2005

End of Document

**Palestinian mother kills 4 Israelis, self;
Seven people, including four Arabs, were injured at the Gaza checkpoint. It
was called Hamas' first use of a female bomber.**

The Philadelphia Inquirer

JANUARY 15, 2004 Thursday CITY-D EDITION

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The Philadelphia Inquirer

Found on Philly.com

Section: NATIONAL; Pg. A02

Length: 644 words

Byline: Soraya Sarhaddi Nelson INQUIRER FOREIGN STAFF

Dateline: EREZ CROSSING, Gaza Strip

Body

A Palestinian mother of two blew herself up yesterday at the main crossing between Israel and the Gaza Strip, killing four Israelis - three of them soldiers - and wounding seven people, including four Palestinians.

It was believed to be the first time Hamas had sent a female bomber. Reem Raiyshi, 22, left behind children ages 3 years and 18 months.

At a vigil for her in Gaza City, some Palestinian men defended the action and Palestinian women abhorred the idea that a woman would abandon two young children.

The attack occurred at 9:30 a.m. at this hub for thousands of Palestinian laborers, who pass through a network of barbed-wire fences, concrete barricades and security checks every day to go to highly coveted jobs in Israel. Most earn less than \$25 a day, but that is far more than they can make at home, said tailor Ashur Solha, 40, a father of eight.

There were few laborers yesterday in the vicinity of the one-story structure Raiyshi demolished with her TNT and nail-laden bomb belt. Most laborers already had crossed.

Brig. Gen. Gadi Shamni, who heads the Israeli military division in Gaza, said Raiyshi entered the checkpoint with about 20 other Palestinians. She said she had come to seek a permit to enter Israel, and lied to soldiers that she had a titanium implant in her leg that would set off the metal detector, he said.

After the detector sounded, she was ushered to a room for a more thorough security search. The room was a humanitarian gesture to ensure her privacy, Shamni said.

"This incident shows that terrorists will do anything to damage any kind of cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians," Shamni said.

Palestinian mother kills 4 Israelis, self; Seven people, including four Arabs, were injured at the Gaza checkpoint. It was called Hamas' first use of a female b....

Hours after the explosion, Israeli army medics wearing rubber gloves carefully sifted through broken ceiling tiles covering the floor, searching for human remains. Outside, a dozen soldiers guarded thousands of Palestinian workers on a muddy field awaiting bus transport back to Gaza. The men filed past with their shirts lifted to show they were not carrying bombs.

The military wing of **Hamas** and Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, an armed group affiliated with Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat's Fatah political movement, claimed responsibility for the bombing, which they said was to avenge Palestinians killed by the Israeli military. They vowed to escalate their attacks.

"This is of course the first time that the [military wing of **Hamas**] has conducted an action with a **female** and not a male fighter," **Hamas**' spiritual leader, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, said in an interview on Israeli television last night. "Of course we are talking about a new level, a new development, a new way to oppose the Israeli enemy."

Israeli security officials, meanwhile, discussed renewing their recently dormant campaign to assassinate Palestinians responsible for such attacks, Israeli television reported.

"Palestinian terrorists are not only intent on striking Israelis at every opportunity, but they are also bent on destroying the Palestinian economy," said David Baker, an official in Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's office.

"The Erez Crossing is designed for allowing Palestinians to work in Israel and put food on the table of Palestinian homes," he said.

In another development, Israeli President Moshe Katsav went on Arab television and pressed Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to accept Katsav's invitation to visit Israel and launch new peace talks between the longtime enemies.

In the interview with the Al-Jazeera satellite TV channel, Katsav also urged Assad to end support for Palestinian and Lebanese militants to show he was sincere in a recent comment that he was interested in resuming peace talks.

In Damascus, Syrian Prime Minister Mohammed Naji Otari dismissed Katsav's offer as an "advertising invitation."

Contact reporter Soraya Sarhaddi Nelson at snelson@krwashington.com.

This article contains information from the Associated Press.

Load-Date: August 21, 2005

Militants seek gains in Gaza vote

Christian Science Monitor (Boston, MA)

January 28, 2005, Friday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 06

Length: 860 words

Byline: By Joshua Mitnick

Dateline: BEIT HANOUN, GAZA

Highlight: In municipal elections Thursday, voters chose between the moderate Fatah party and the militant **Hamas**.

Body

Less than three weeks after Mahmoud Abbas succeeded Yasser Arafat, residents in this war-scarred farming town and nine other Gaza municipalities returned to the polls Thursday in a second phase of local Palestinian elections.

Even though the balloting represents only a small fraction of Gaza's population, who are selecting local council members, observers say that if **Hamas** wins in Beit Hanoun and elsewhere, the militant group will gain an important foothold. A strong showing could give the militants an upper hand in talks with Mr. Abbas on a cease-fire in attacks against Israel.

"The momentum is what we are afraid of," says Zakaria Alagha, a member of the central committee of Abbas's Fatah party. "Any positive results for **Hamas** in municipal elections will be reflected in further relations between **Hamas** and the Palestine Liberation Organization."

Hamas's decision to boycott the Jan. 9 vote for Palestinian president left Abbas without a formidable challenge, making the municipal contests a crucial indication of grass-roots support for the Islamic militants as well as for the ruling Fatah party.

The local vote comes as the new Palestinian president courts **Hamas** with an agreement on ending more than four years of violence, an accord considered essential if Abbas has any chance of winning concessions from Israel and consolidating his power. But **Hamas** is putting a political price on such a pact by demanding an unprecedented foothold in PLO institutions with veto power over any future peace accord with Israel.

A robust showing for **Hamas** in Gaza - considered stronghold of the Islamic militants - could raise the political price it asks of Abbas. In the first round of local voting in December, **Hamas** said it won control of half the 26 local councils, a claim disputed by Fatah and independent observers who believe the organization captured closer to one-third of the vote. Whatever the results, **Hamas** is expected to do better in Gaza.

"Today **Hamas** claims it represents at least 50 percent of the people in Gaza," said Eyad Saraj, a Gaza political analyst. "**Hamas**'s normal standing is about 12 percent, but it has been inflated because of the violence and the lack of effectiveness of the [Palestinian] Authority."

Militants seek gains in Gaza vote

To be sure, the results of the municipal election will reflect a more complex picture than just the Fatah-Hamas rivalry. The largest two Palestinian political movements will be challenged by several smaller parties as well as a host of independent candidates.

"People vote differently in municipal elections and parliamentary elections, and that's why I don't think the results won't necessarily reflect the political orientation of the people," says Salah Abdel Shafi, a Gaza political analyst. "It's still too early to judge [Abbas'] leadership."

In rural communities like Beit Hanoun, clan loyalty will also play a prominent role. "I am not Hamas, and I am not Fatah," says Ashraf Masri, a taxi driver from Beit Hanoun. "I am for the Masri family."

With a population of 30,000, Beit Hanoun was one of the largest districts to take part in Thursday's balloting. But it is the village's position on the front-line of Palestinian uprising that gives an important platform to whoever controls the city council. Israeli tanks have destroyed orchards in an effort to silence rocket attacks by Palestinian militants, making the reconstruction effort a central campaign theme.

"All of Beit Hanoun was once green. Now it is a desert," said Khalid al-Zaanin, a farmer who said he's seen 30 dunams of his land razed.

Outside the polling center at the Beit Hanoun athletic club, campaign workers intermingled, their political affiliation identified by the yellow, green, and red baseball caps associated with Fatah, Hamas, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, respectively. All were making promises about rebuilding Beit Hanoun. "[Hamas] will build schools, mosques, and a hospital for women," said Nader Saadat, who wore a sash reading, "Islam is the Solution."

Inside the courtyard was a group of men huddled around a bulletin board that listed voters and their polling booths. Poll workers agreed that crowds lingering at the voting center indicated a stronger turnout out than for the presidential election. Polling officials announced late in the afternoon that 70 percent of registered voters had cast ballots, compared to 67 percent on Jan. 9.

"Today, the democracy is clearer and stronger than it was in the presidential election," said Talaat Zanin, an election monitor. "I hope this will succeed. The democracy is for our children."

That large turnout would further boost Hamas, which complained that the January presidential elections to replace Mr. Arafat were flawed because Abbas and Fatah refused to meet their conditions for participation.

"This will be a motivation which will enhance our issues, and our demands of the Palestinian leadership," said Ismail el-Kafrna, a Hamas candidate for the Beit Hanoun Council. In a local election, "the priorities of the people are local services, but of course people know who represent the martyrs and they support them."

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Load-Date: January 27, 2005

**Fighting flares in Gaza Strip;
Israel bombs facilities after rocket attacks**

The International Herald Tribune

September 26, 2005 Monday

Copyright 2005 International Herald Tribune

Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 734 words

Byline: Greg Myre

Dateline: JERUSALEM:

Body

Israel carried out airstrikes in the Gaza Strip early Sunday and gathered ground forces just outside Gaza's borders, while the defense minister threatened a forceful response to an overnight rocket barrage by the Islamic faction **Hamas**.

Less than two weeks after Israel completed its withdrawal from Gaza, Israel and the Palestinians faced a potential showdown after a series of confrontations on Friday and Saturday.

"We have to make it clear to the Palestinians that Israel will not let the recent events pass without a response," Israel's defense minister, Shaul Mofaz, said in a statement after conferring with senior security officials. "The response needs to be crushing."

The New York Times

A Saturday afternoon missile strike killed two **Hamas** members as they traveled in a car through Gaza City, according to the Palestinian Interior Ministry, though medical officials reported earlier that four Palestinians had been killed.

The airstrikes began Saturday morning and continued into the early hours of Sunday. Israel said that before dawn on Sunday it had hit two facilities used to make and store weapons. But Palestinian witnesses and hospital officials said that one of the sites was the Dar el-Arqam elementary school, which is run by **Hamas**, and that about 20 people had been wounded in the area. **Women** and children were among the wounded.

An early morning round of airstrikes hit two workshops that Israel suspected were being used to manufacture weapons.

Israel also carried out a large-scale arrest operation in the West Bank against members of **Hamas** and Islamic Jihad, and 150 suspects were detained overnight, the military said. The military also sealed off the West Bank and the Gaza Strip on Saturday, though the measure was largely symbolic because few Palestinians have permission to enter Israel.

The relative calm of recent weeks was shattered by the turmoil that erupted Friday and included an Israeli raid in the West Bank and the airstrikes in Gaza, as well as the rocket fire from Gaza.

Fighting flares in Gaza Strip; Israel bombs facilities after rocket attacks

The event most responsible for the increased tensions occurred Friday evening during a **Hamas** parade in Gaza, when a truck carrying rockets exploded, killing 15 Palestinians and injuring more than 80. The dead included leaders of **Hamas**'s armed wing and spectators in the Jabaliya refugee camp, just north of Gaza City.

The Palestinian Authority and Israel said the blast had been caused by **Hamas** explosives that went off accidentally, and they dismissed **Hamas**'s allegation that an Israeli airstrike had caused the explosion.

The Palestinian Interior Ministry said **Hamas** should take responsibility for the blast "instead of making accusations against others."

Speaking in the West Bank city of Ramallah, Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian leader, said, "We must stop parading our weapons and stop using guns among the people."

But **Hamas** has continued to insist that Israel was responsible for the Gaza explosions and unleashed a barrage of rocket fire that lasted through the night and into Saturday morning.

Hamas called on its "cells to respond to the crimes of the enemy and hit them in every spot of our occupied land."

The group launched more than 30 of its crude, homemade Qassam rockets, directing most toward the Israeli town of Sederot, just outside Gaza, the Israeli military said.

The rockets are extremely inaccurate, and most crashed harmlessly, but five Israeli civilians were wounded, Israeli officials said.

In addition to the airstrikes on Saturday, Israeli aircraft dropped leaflets in Gaza City that said **Hamas** was firing rockets at Israel "to cover its responsibility in the killing of Palestinians in the procession which it held."

Hamas and other Palestinian factions have fired hundreds of rockets from northern Gaza in recent years, prompting periodic Israeli military incursions. The Israeli troops usually pulled back after a few days, and the rocket fire subsequently resumed.

But Israel has warned for months that if the rocket fire continued after its withdrawal from Gaza, it was prepared to hit back much harder than it had in the past.

"We are demanding that the Palestinian Authority take responsibility for security and that they stop the rocket fire toward Israel," said Major Avital Leibovich, a spokeswoman for the Israeli military.

Abbas and his aides have called for an end to the rocket fire, but the Palestinian security forces have taken only limited steps to prevent such attacks.

Load-Date: September 26, 2005

Mideast erupts Crisis as Palestinian leader killed

Hobart Mercury (Australia)

March 23, 2004 Tuesday

Copyright 2004 Nationwide News Pty Limited

Length: 565 words

Body

PALESTINIAN militants have vowed to unleash their fury on Israel and the US after **Hamas** founder Ahmed Yassin was murdered by the Israelis yesterday.

The wheelchair-bound spiritual leader was blown up in a helicopter missile strike outside a Gaza City mosque.

Yassin, in his 60s, was the most prominent Palestinian leader killed by Israel in more than three years of fighting, and his assassination was seen as a major escalation that drew condemnation from the Arab world.

Mourners

Tens of thousands of Palestinians carrying billowing green **Hamas** flags flooded the streets of Gaza City for the funeral procession.

Mourners jostled to touch Yassin's flag-draped coffin, and **women** ululated and threw flowers.

Israeli helicopters fired three missiles as Yassin, his bodyguards and dozens of others left a neighbourhood mosque in Gaza City.

Yassin and seven others were killed, including several bodyguards. Seventeen people were wounded, among them two of Yassin's sons.

Hamas promised a harsh response.

"Yassin is a man in a nation, and a nation in a man. And the retaliation of this nation will be of the size of this man," said Abdel Aziz Rantisi, a prominent **Hamas** leader in Gaza who himself escaped an Israeli assassination attempt last June.

For the first time, **Hamas** also threatened the US, saying its backing of Israel made the assassination possible.

"All the Muslims of the world will be honoured to join in on the retaliation for this crime," **Hamas** said.

In the past, **Hamas** leaders have insisted their struggle is against Israel and that they would not get involved in causes by militant Muslims in other parts of the world.

The militant groups Islamic Jihad and Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, sometimes at odds with **Hamas**, also promised revenge.

Israeli Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz pledged that "the battle against **Hamas** will continue", suggesting there would be more air strikes and raids aimed at the militant group.

Mideast erupts Crisis as Palestinian leader killed

The US urged both sides to show restraint.

Egypt cancelled a trip by Egyptian legislators and other dignitaries to Israel which had been planned for later this month to mark the 25th anniversary of the signing of a peace treaty between the two countries.

Three more Palestinians were killed in Gaza later yesterday, one while handling explosives and two by Israeli army fire during a protest against the Yassin killing, Palestinian hospital officials said.

Yassin was held responsible for the deaths of hundreds of people.

Fearing reprisal attacks, Israel sealed off the West Bank and Gaza and confined many West Bank Palestinians to their communities.

Flags at Yasser Arafat's headquarters in the West Bank town of Ramallah were lowered to half-staff and the Palestinian Cabinet held an emergency session.

Yassin was Arafat's biggest political rival, but Arafat was always careful not to confront the **Hamas** leader openly.

Cabinet ministers stood as Arafat recited a Muslim prayer for Yassin.

Arafat then added: "May you join the martyrs and the prophets.

"To heaven, you martyr."

Thousands of demonstrators gathered outside Arafat's headquarters, screaming for revenge. Arafat remained inside, apparently fearing he, too, might be targeted by Israel.

Since its founding by Yassin in 1987, **Hamas** has carried out scores of attacks, killing hundreds of Israelis. **Hamas** opposes negotiations with Israel and wants to destroy the Jewish state, replacing it with an Islamic one.

Load-Date: March 22, 2004

A victory against terrorism

The Gazette (Montreal, Quebec)

March 24, 2004 Wednesday Final Edition

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Section: Editorial / Op-ed; Pg. A22; Letter

Length: 214 words

Body

Israel's targeted assassination of Sheik Ahmed Yassin is another great victory against terrorism. While European nations and the United Nations have been quick to condemn Israel's actions, they are overlooking the fact Yassin was a terrorist. The Gazette

Hamas, as well as other Palestinian Islamist groups, have claimed the lives of hundreds of Israelis and have indiscriminately targeted civilians, including **women** and children. As the spiritual leader of **Hamas**, Yassin did much to finance and sanction suicide bombings, and his death to Israel is as Osama bin Laden's would be to the United States.

The persistent double standard applied to Palestinian terrorist actions, and the legitimization of extremist groups (such as Hezbollah, **Hamas** and Islamic Jihad) by Western nations must end. Palestinian extremists such as **Hamas** should not be given any diplomatic recognition or immunity

As Israel plans to disengage from the Gaza Strip, Yassin's assassination was an essential part in the eradication of terrorist infrastructure that will remain after a withdrawal. **Hamas** does not support a two-state solution and vows to continue its jihad.

The time has come for all Western democracies struggling to contain radical Islamism to show solidarity with Israel.

Peter Subissati

LaSalle

Graphic

Photo: Palestinians carry casket of **Hamas** leader Sheik Ahmed Yassin.

Load-Date: March 24, 2004

How to address the goals beyond Gaza GEOFFREY ARONSON

Financial Times (London, England)

August 15, 2005 Monday

London Edition 1

Copyright 2005 The Financial Times Limited

Section: COMMENT & ANALYSIS; Pg. 15

Length: 909 words

Byline: By GEOFFREY ARONSON

Body

The end to Israel's long, bitter and often bloody sojourn in the Gaza Strip is in sight. If Ariel Sharon, the prime minister, remains true to his intentions, all Israeli civilians - some 6,000 settlers, most of them children, and another 2,000 opponents of Gaza's evacuation - will have left Gaza, willingly or in an Israeli Defence Force lorry, within a few days. Israel's military forces will take their leave of Gaza and its 1.5m Palestinians by year's end, perhaps as soon as October.

Once Israel's withdrawal from Gaza is complete, the attention of Palestinians and the international community will turn to the issue of Palestinian legislative elections, due next January - with the role of **Hamas**, the Islamic resistance movement, at its centre.

There should be no illusions about the list of particulars that has long estranged **Hamas** from polite company. **Hamas** is not a boy scout troop. Its use of terror, its anti-Semitism, its brutal intolerance particularly towards **women** and civil society, and its continuing readiness to battle Israel as long as it does not withdraw from lands conquered in June 1967, and perhaps even after, weigh heavily in the scales.

But, largely as a result of the inability of the Oslo process to end Israel's occupation, **Hamas** has established itself as an authentic political movement representing a large segment of Palestinians, and its popularity has been validated in free elections. It views the Israeli evacuation of Gaza as progress and is anxious to contest parliamentary elections. It is prepared to join the cabinet in accordance with its electoral strength. It remains committed to the "calm" and has declared its support for a long-term truce with Israel once the occupation of land lost in 1967 has ended.

These positions leave many unanswered questions about **Hamas**'s intentions but they establish a basis for the US and others to reassess their self-defeating, monochromatic view of the group as nothing more than terrorists bent on Israel's destruction.

The fact that protagonists have difficult demands of each other does not require that those should be resolved solely by force. Indeed, a reliance on force may retard diplomatic progress and undermine the political process it claims to support. As the decision of the Irish Republican Army to forswear violence demonstrates, the transition from conflict to democratic engagement is measured in years if not decades and requires a commitment that challenges the staying power of all but the most stubbornly optimistic.

Hamas has been a factor on the Palestinian scene since the late 1980s. During the first Palestinian rebellion against Israeli rule in 1987, **Hamas** was transformed from a docile creation of Israel, which sought to establish a pliable Islamist alternative to the secular nationalism of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, into a multi-faceted group claiming the allegiance of growing numbers of Palestinians. **Hamas**'s religious extremism, its use of terror to weaken Israel and its refusal to countenance Israel's occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem made it anathema to Israel, the US and others who counted on the Palestinian institutions created by the Oslo agreements to marginalise if not eradicate it.

Notwithstanding these efforts, and due in no small part to Israel's continuing appetite for land to expand settlements and **Hamas**'s use of terror tactics, the last decade has seen the organisation grow in influence and power to a point where it now rivals Fatah, the secular nationalist party at the heart of Palestinian politics and resistance for the past four decades.

Hamas's gains on the Palestinian scene, including its self-declared leading role in forcing the impending Israeli retreat from Gaza, have been measured in victories in local municipal elections in towns throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip and its support earlier this year of an unprecedented three-part agreement with most Palestinian factions. The agreement provides for Palestinians to observe a period of calm vis-a-vis Israel as well as a commitment to hold elections and revise the statutes of the PLO to enable **Hamas** representation.

Hamas has its own concerns about western, particularly US, intentions. Is there an American commitment to respect the results of elections in which Islamists do well, or will the Algerian scenario be replayed and results favourable to Islamists nullified? Is there support for sovereign Palestinian rule in Gaza and a commitment to support Palestinian claims in the West Bank and Jerusalem?

The Sharon government is opening the way to the exercise of Palestinian sovereignty in Gaza, posing not only challenges but opportunities for Palestinian governance. But Israel is not interested in establishing the conditions under which the Palestinians can build on the end of occupation in Gaza to rule effectively in the West Bank, not to mention east Jerusalem. Demonising **Hamas** offers the path of least resistance, and not only for Israel.

But the US must know, as the Palestinians do, that any effort to reduce the competition among broadly-based Palestinian parties to a military contest would only postpone the political reckoning that is taking place and fatally undermine the relative calm to which all remain committed.

The writer is director of the Foundation for Middle East Peace in Washington and a board member of Conflicts Forum, a non-profit organisation working for dialogue with Islamists

Load-Date: August 14, 2005

Bomber buried as hero: Israel closes Gaza Strip to workers. Before violence erupted in 2000, about 100,000 Gazans worked in Israel

The Gazette (Montreal, Quebec)

January 16, 2004 Friday Final Edition

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Section: News; Pg. A16

Length: 646 words

Byline: IBRAHIM BARZAK

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

The first **female Hamas** suicide bomber was given a hero's funeral yesterday, a day after killing four Israeli border guards, and Israel sealed the Gaza Strip to review security at border crossings.

The closure prevented thousands of Palestinian workers from getting to their jobs in Israel and a nearby industrial zone. The workers, among the few with jobs in the impoverished region, worried life would only become more difficult but few were willing to openly blame **Hamas** for their new hardship.

Top Israel army commanders met at the Defence Ministry to consider a response to the latest attack, a security official said. Targeted killings of **Hamas** leaders were expected to resume, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

AP

Wednesday's attack at the Erez border crossing between Israel and Gaza was the first time **Hamas** dispatched a **female** suicide bomber, and the group threatened more violence.

"She is not going to be the last (attacker) because the march of resistance will continue until the Islamic flag is raised, not only over the minarets of Jerusalem, but over the whole universe," **Hamas** leader Mahmoud Zahar said.

The Israeli security official said **Hamas** spiritual leader Sheik Ahmed Yassin issued a religious edict permitting **women** to carry out bombings, something **Hamas** had resisted. He said Yassin personally approved Wednesday's attack.

The Israeli closure shut down the Erez crossing and a nearby industrial park, where 6,000 Palestinians work. The army said only those with humanitarian needs could cross. The closure was to last until Sunday, the security official said.

Some workers, though unwilling to directly criticize **Hamas**, questioned the wisdom of Wednesday's attack. "I think we have the right to fight to end the occupation, but at the same time we have to think 100 times before any act," said Fawaz Radwan, 42, who works in a factory near the Israeli town of Ashkelon.

Even such veiled criticism remains relatively rare, though some Palestinians grumble in private about tighter travel bans or other hardships prompted by terrorist acts. In a society where consensus is valued, criticizing the armed groups openly is seen by many as a betrayal.

Bomber buried as hero: Israel closes Gaza Strip to workers. Before violence erupted in 2000, about 100,000 Gazans worked in Israel

The bombing was carried out by Reem al-Reyashi, 22, a mother with two young children. She had been escorted into a room for a security search when she blew herself up. The attack was jointly claimed by **Hamas** and the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, a group linked to Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement.

Thousands marched through Gaza City during her funeral. Masked gunmen from **Hamas** and Al Aqsa carried her coffin, draped in the **Hamas** green flag.

"It is not enough to call her a hero. Calling her hero does not give the whole truth. This woman abandoned her husband and children to win paradise," Zahar said in the eulogy.

Three of those killed in the attack were border police, and the fourth was a private security guard. The army said four of the seven wounded were Palestinians.

Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia declined to condemn the attack. Palestinian leaders usually denounce attacks on civilians in Israel, but not on soldiers or settlers in the West Bank and Gaza. Palestinians view Israelis in occupied areas as legitimate targets.

Before violence erupted in 2000, about 100,000 Palestinians from Gaza worked in Israel, providing the main source of income for the territory. Now only 15,000 workers and another 4,000 merchants, in addition to the workers at the industrial park, have permits to cross into Israel.

The Palestinian parliament approved a budget of about \$2 billion for the year, more than twice projected revenues, in hopes foreign aid will make up the difference. Donor countries, who have propped up the Palestinian budget during more than three years of Mideast fighting, are demanding financial reform in the Palestinian Authority.

Graphic

Color Photo: MOHAMMED SALEM, REUTERS; Palestinian gunmen from the Fatah movement ride atop a vehicle during the funeral of **Hamas female** suicide bomber Reem al-Reyashi in Gaza City yesterday.

Load-Date: January 16, 2004

AS BOMBER IS BURIED, ISRAEL CLOSES GAZA STRIP

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

January 16, 2004 Friday Five Star Late Lift Edition

Copyright 2004 St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Inc.

Section: NEWS; Pg. A11

Length: 502 words

Byline: Ibrahim Barzak/ The Associated Press

Dateline: GAZA CITY, GAZA STRIP

Body

The first **female Hamas** suicide bomber was given a hero's funeral Thursday, a day after killing four Israeli border guards, and Israel sealed the Gaza Strip to review security at border crossings.

The closure prevented thousands of Palestinian workers from getting to their jobs in Israel and a nearby industrial zone. The workers, among the few with jobs in the impoverished region, worried that life would only become more difficult - but few were willing to openly blame militants for their new hardship.

Top Israeli army commanders met Thursday at the Defense Ministry to consider a response to the latest attack, a security official said. Targeted killings of senior **Hamas** militants were expected to resume, said the official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Wednesday's attack at the Erez border crossing between Israel and Gaza was the first time the Islamic militant group **Hamas** dispatched a **female** suicide bomber, and the group threatened more violence.

"She is not going to be the last (attacker), because the march of resistance will continue until the Islamic flag is raised, not only over the minarets of Jerusalem, but over the whole universe," **Hamas** leader Mahmoud Zahar said.

The Israeli security official said **Hamas** spiritual leader Sheik Ahmed Yassin issued a religious edict permitting **women** to carry out bombings, something **Hamas** had resisted. He said Yassin personally approved Wednesday's attack.

The Israeli closure shut down the Erez crossing and a nearby industrial park, where 6,000 Palestinians work. The army said only those with humanitarian needs could cross. The closure was to last until Sunday, the security official said.

Some workers, though unwilling to directly criticize **Hamas**, questioned the wisdom of Wednesday's attack.

"I think we have the right to fight to end the occupation, but at the same time we have to think 100 times before any act," said Fawaz Radwan, 42, who works in a factory near the Israeli town of Ashkelon.

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Notes

WORLD

Graphic

PHOTO; (1) THE ASSOCIATED PRESS Photo - Militants from the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades attend the funeral of Palestinian suicide bomber Reem Raiyshi on Thursday in Gaza City./ (2) GETTY IMAGES Photo - Comrades of Israeli soldier Zur Or, killed in Wednesday's suicide attack, mourn at his funeral Thursday in Holon, near Tel Aviv.

Load-Date: January 16, 2004

Israel blows up hardline leader

Herald Sun (Melbourne, Australia)

March 23, 2004 Tuesday

Copyright 2004 Nationwide News Pty Limited

Section: NEWS; Pg. 3

Length: 1087 words

Body

Hamas declares all-out war on Israel, US

RADICAL Islamic group **Hamas** yesterday declared all-out war against Israel and the US, after Israel killed its spiritual leader, Sheik Ahmed Yassin.

It was the first time **Hamas** has declared a war of revenge against the US.

Sheik Yassin, 67, a paraplegic cleric, was killed with seven Palestinians when an Israeli helicopter fired three missiles as he left a Gaza City mosque.

Sheik Yassin was the most prominent Palestinian leader killed by Israel in more than three years of fighting, and his assassination drew condemnation from the Arab world.

Tens of thousands of Palestinians carrying green **Hamas** flags flooded the streets of Gaza City for the funeral procession.

Mourners jostled to touch Sheik Yassin's flag-draped coffin and **women** threw flowers.

Two Israeli helicopters flew in a sky blackened by the smoke of burning tyres lit in protest.

Thousands of Palestinians also took to the streets in the West Bank.

"Words cannot describe the emotion of anger and hate inside our hearts," said **Hamas** official Ismail Haniyeh, a close associate of Sheik Yassin.

Israeli Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz pledged "the battle against **Hamas** will continue," suggesting there will be more air strikes and raids aimed at the militant group.

The US urged both sides to show restraint.

Britain last night condemned the killing and said it was unlikely to help fight terrorism.

British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said Israel had a right to defend itself against terrorism, but it could not use means outside international law.

"We therefore condemn it. It's unacceptable, it's unjustified, and it's very unlikely to achieve its objective," Mr Straw said.

Israel blows up hardline leader

At daybreak yesterday, Israeli helicopters fired three missiles as the wheelchair-using Sheik Yassin, his bodyguards and dozens of others left a mosque.

Among the others dead were the sheik's bodyguards. Seventeen people were wounded, including two of his sons.

Three more Palestinians were killed in Gaza later in the day, one while handling explosives and two by Israeli army fire, during a protest against the Sheik Yassin killing, hospital officials said.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was at his farm in southern Israel at the time of the missile strike, and was briefed by phone throughout the operation.

Mr Sharon said last night Israel would go on with its war on terror, flagging there would be more target attacks.

He called Yassin an arch-terrorist who plotted attacks that killed hundreds of Israelis.

"It is the natural right of the Jewish people, like that of all nations that love life, to hunt down those who rise to destroy it," Mr Sharon said.

Fearing reprisal at tacks, Israel sealed off the West Bank and Gaza, and confined many West Bank Palestinians to their communities.

The Sheik Yassin assassination was seen as a huge gamble by Mr Sharon, who is trying to score a victory against **Hamas** ahead of a possible Israeli withdrawal from Gaza.

The Palestinian Authority said in a statement: "Israel has exceeded all red lines with this cheap and dirty crime," and declared a three-day mourning period.

Flags at PA President Yasser Arafat's Ramallah headquarters were lowered to half-mast.

Sheik Yassin was Mr Arafat's biggest political rival, but Mr Arafat was always careful not to confront the **Hamas** leader.

Cabinet ministers stood as Mr Arafat recited a prayer for the sheik.

He then added: "May you join the martyrs and the prophets. To heaven, you martyr."

Earlier, about 2000 demonstrators gathered outside Mr Arafat's headquarters, screaming for revenge and demanding to speak to him, but he stayed inside.

"He is like a man who was hit on the head because they killed Yassin, now they could kill him," an aide to Mr Arafat said.

"He feels his turn is next and is sad and worried."

Tens of thousands of Palestinians took to West Bank streets in protest.

In Nablus, the largest city, about 15,000 people flocked to the centre.

"Dozens of people came to us this morning volunteering to be suicide bombers," a masked militant said. "We will send them in the right time."

Hamas promised a harsh response.

"Yassin is a man in a nation, and a nation in a man. And the retaliation of this nation will be of the size of this man," said Abdel-Aziz al-Rantisi, a prominent **Hamas** leader in Gaza who escaped an Israeli assassination attempt last June.

Hamas also threatened the US, saying its backing of Israel made the assassination possible.

Israel blows up hardline leader

"All the Muslims of the world will be honoured to join in on the retaliation for this crime," Hamas said in a statement.

Hamas leaders had insisted their struggle is against Israel alone.

Militant groups Islamic Jihad and Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, sometimes at odds with Hamas, also promised revenge.

Since its founding by Sheik Yassin in 1987, Hamas has carried out scores of attacks.

Israel tried to kill the sheik in September when a plane dropped a bomb on a building where he and other leaders were met. He escaped with a small wound to his hand.

REACTION

"The battle is open and war between us and them is open. They are the killers of prophets and today they killed an Islamic symbol. It's a war on Islam . . . what happened was beyond the assassination of Sheik Ahmed Yassin, they wanted to assassinate the Palestinian cause."

Senior Hamas political leader Abdel-Aziz al-Rantissi

"This is a crazy and very dangerous act. It opens the door wide to chaos. Yassin was known for his moderation and he was controlling Hamas."

Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qurie

"He had been marked for death for a long time . . . Yassin and the others were behind the terror framework in the Gaza Strip."

Israel's Deputy Defence Minister Zeev Boim

"War, war, war on the sons of Zion. An eye for an eye. There will be a response within hours, God willing."

Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades

"The benefit with this operation is that Israel made clear again that terror has no immunity and that it will strike against its activists, its deputies, its leaders anywhere they are."

Israeli Finance Minister and ex-prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu

"I think that this is very, very dangerous for us. We are talking here about opening a pandora's box. We are now counting backwards to, God forbid, the next terror attack against us, and the question is how many Israelis, how many Jews have to be killed for this irresponsible act."

Yossin Beilin, leading Israeli Opposition dove

Load-Date: March 23, 2004

Israel seals off Gaza Strip

Prince George Citizen (British Columbia)

January 16, 2004 Friday

Final Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 15

Length: 419 words

Byline: Associated Press

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Stri

Body

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Israel seals off Gaza Strip

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Load-Date: February 17, 2006

End of Document

Assassinate militant leaders, Israeli defence minister says

The Record (Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario)

February 2, 2004 Monday Final Edition

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Section: FRONT; Pg. A4; NEWS

Length: 393 words

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

The leaders of violent Islamic groups are targets for assassination, Israel's defence minister said yesterday, raising the possibility of a further escalation in violence in the three years of Israeli-Palestinian bloodshed.

Shaul Mofaz issued the threat in response to a declaration by the spiritual leader of **Hamas**, Sheik Ahmed Yassin, that the group plans an all-out effort to kidnap Israeli soldiers.

"The statements of Yassin just emphasize the need to strike the heads of **Hamas** and the Islamic Jihad," Mofaz told the weekly meeting of the Israeli cabinet, according to an Israeli official who attended the meeting.

Associated Press

The statements by Mofaz and Yassin threaten to inflame an already violent confrontation that has led to the deaths of more than 3,500 people on both sides during three years of fighting.

Last week, Israel killed eight Palestinians in a shootout in Gaza City, while a Palestinian suicide bomber killed 11 people in Jerusalem. **Hamas** took responsibility for the bombing, a day after a claim from the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, loosely linked to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement.

Yesterday marked the beginning of the four-day Eid al-Adha holiday, and **Hamas** officials were not available to react to Mofaz's comments.

MANY PINPOINT ATTACKS

During more than three years of violence, Israel has carried out many pinpoint attacks aimed at leaders of **Hamas** and Islamic Jihad -- often prompting a violent response. In September, Yassin narrowly escaped an Israeli air strike in the Gaza Strip.

But Israel has greatly reduced the number of targeted killings in recent months. Last month, Mofaz's deputy, Zeev Boim, retracted comments calling for Yassin's assassination, saying later that no decision had been made.

Hamas, responsible for dozens of suicide bombings over the last three years, also appeared to have scaled back its activities until a **Hamas female** suicide bomber killed four Israelis at a Gaza-Israel checkpoint Jan. 14.

Yassin encouraged kidnapping Israeli soldiers a day after Israel released 400 Palestinian prisoners as part of an exchange with the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah for a businessman and the bodies of three soldiers.

Assassinate militant leaders, Israeli defence minister says

Yassin said it has become extremely difficult to capture soldiers, apparently trying to explain why **Hamas** has failed to free the 7,000 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails.

Graphic

Photo: ASSOCIATED PRESS; Palestinians sit atop the rubble of their houses, demolished by the Israeli forces during an operation to arrest militants, in the West Bank town of Jericho.

Load-Date: February 2, 2004

End of Document

Israel waging its own war on terrorism

University Wire

March 25, 2004 Thursday

Copyright 2004 Daily Texan via U-Wire

Section: COLUMN

Length: 699 words

Byline: By James Burnham, Daily Texan; **SOURCE:** U. Texas-Austin

Dateline: AUSTIN, Texas

Body

This week an Israeli missile ended the life of one of the world's most well known terrorists, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin. In 1987 Yassin helped found **Hamas**, a terrorist organization with the explicit purpose of waging "war" against Israel until the entire country capitulates and is driven into the ocean.

Hamas sympathizers in Europe and America take pains to distinguish between the organization's political wing, which coordinates activities in Palestine and administers basic civil services, and the organization's terrorist wing, which murders Israeli **women** and children in buses and coffee shops. However, the charter of the organization is very explicit about their goal stating, "Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it." It is foolhardy to ask the government of Israel to stand idly by as the minions of Yassin and his violent ideology murder its children with no thoughts of peace.

Israel's detractors also cite the long and tumultuous history that exists between the people of Israel and the people of Palestine. Yes, there have surely been grave injustices perpetrated by both sides in this conflict. However, the moral relevance of today lies in current intent. **Hamas** terrorists do not attack armed Israeli soldiers in any sort of military operation with an explicit purpose -- they seek only to murder and maim innocent Israelis through residential bombing. Israel's army, however, restricts its operations to target only those members of **Hamas** or their ideological kid brother, Islamic Jihad, in an effort to rid the region of the violence and murder that these organizations spread. Their operations target only those who wish to destroy Israel and are, thus, morally sound actions, as they are the direct result of continued violence by Palestinian terror organizations.

Israel has the military capability to destroy every man, woman and child living in the Palestinian territory. Its government could wipe out **Hamas** in one day if it was willing to accept countless innocent deaths. It is this restraint, despite the danger to its own people, that evidences the moral superiority of Israel in this conflict. By showing a restraint entirely foreign to **Hamas**, Israel demonstrates its humanity and desire to someday obtain a lasting peace. Only the most naive would argue that, were it presented with the opportunity, **Hamas** would not destroy all of Tel Aviv or murder all of Israel.

Most troubling in recent years are the organizations that are dedicated to exporting America's young and foolish to Palestine, where, in all their youthful fervor and ignorance, they are used as human shields to protect terrorist hideouts and strategic locations. The most recent example of one of Lenin's "useful idiots" was Rachel Corrie, a person who has become something of a hero to America's disaffected, anti-Israel suburban youth. This woman is a terrorist supporter at worst and an extremely confused person at best. She was killed because she was standing in

Israel waging its own war on terrorism

front of an Israeli bulldozer (not exactly the fastest moving vehicle) to protect a tunnel that Hamas uses to smuggle in weapons from Egypt! While her intentions may have somehow been pure, how can we revere this person who gave her life for what? For Hamas to have fresh dynamite?

Israel is confronted with a situation more severe than anything our nation has had to face. We have had one major terrorist attack on our soil in a few years and consider ourselves stricken, Israel has had scores and considers life normal. Our war against the progenitors of hatred and radicalism is no different from the war being waged by Israel. al Qaeda seeks our destruction; Hamas seeks Israel's. Whether the strike that killed Yassin hurts Hamas or simply inflames its recruits, it was Israel's right and duty to demonstrate to all those who seek to murder its women and children that they will not go unpunished. Appeasement is a deceased doctrine; there can be no peace with terrorists by showing weakness. Just as America must show resolve and determination in the face of al Qaeda, Israel will only be able to obtain peace through strength.

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Load-Date: March 25, 2004

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ISRAEL SEALS GAZA AFTER KILLINGS

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

January 16, 2004 Friday

SOONER EDITION

Copyright 2004 P.G. Publishing Co.

Section: WORLD,

Length: 596 words

Byline: IBRAHIM BARZAK, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

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Wednesday's attack at the Erez border crossing between Israel and Gaza was the first time that the Islamic militant group **Hamas** dispatched a **female** suicide bomber, and the group threatened more violence.

"She is not going to be the last [attacker] because the march of resistance will continue until the Islamic flag is raised not only over the minarets of Jerusalem, but over the whole universe," **Hamas** leader Mahmoud Zahar said.

State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said in Washington that the United States has condemned the bombing and has "called once again on the Palestinians to take steps to end the violence."

The Israeli security official said **Hamas** spiritual leader Sheik Ahmed Yassin issued a religious edict permitting **women** to carry out bombings, something **Hamas** had resisted. He said Yassin personally approved Wednesday's attack.

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Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qurei declined to condemn the attack. Palestinian leaders usually denounce attacks on civilians in Israel, but not on soldiers or settlers in the West Bank and Gaza. Palestinians view Israelis in occupied areas as legitimate targets.

Before violence erupted in 2000, about 100,000 Palestinians from Gaza worked in Israel, providing the main source of income for the territory. Now, only 15,000 workers and another 4,000 merchants -- in addition to the workers at the industrial park -- have permits to cross into Israel.

Load-Date: January 16, 2004

End of Document

West Bank Palestinians vote in municipal elections

The Star Phoenix (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan)

December 24, 2004 Friday

Final Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. C15

Length: 378 words

Byline: Associated Press

Dateline: JERICHO, West Bank

Body

JERICHO, West Bank (AP) -- Thousands of Palestinians crammed polling stations in scattered West Bank towns to vote in municipal elections Thursday that were a warmup for next month's presidential ballot and the first time the ruling Fatah movement and the Islamic militant group **Hamas** competed for voter support.

Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia, who cast his ballot in the Jerusalem suburb of Abu Dis, praised the vote in 26 West Bank municipalities as "the first step toward the establishment of the Palestinian state."

Voting in an additional 600 towns and villages was expected to be held next year.

Long lines formed at polling stations in the West Bank town of Jericho, with some voters complaining they had to wait for more than four hours and still had not been able to cast their ballots. Still, many said they were eager to vote in their first local election since 1976.

"It doesn't matter, one or two hours. I'm going to vote. I have been waiting for this for a long time," said farmer Nabil Abu Kattan, 48.

Over the past three decades, Palestinian communities in the West Bank and Gaza have been run by appointed mayors, first those chosen by the Israeli military and then by the Palestinian Authority.

The late Yasser Arafat had been reluctant to allow municipal elections, fearing that **Hamas**, the largest opposition group, would make a strong showing. **Hamas** has grown in popularity during the more than four years of Israeli-Palestinian fighting, providing social services with its private schools and clinics.

The date for Thursday's elections was set before Arafat's death in November. The 26 communities chosen for the first round are Fatah strongholds, said Ali Jarbawi, former head of the Central Elections Commission.

Thursday marked the first time Fatah and **Hamas** were competing at the polls. **Hamas**, which is pledged to Israel's destruction, boycotted the 1996 general election because it was a byproduct of interim peace deals with Israel.

Hamas is also boycotting the Jan. 9 presidential elections, but plans to field candidates in future parliamentary and local elections.

West Bank Palestinians vote in municipal elections

Some 150,000 Palestinians were eligible to vote in Thursday's elections. About 800 candidates are vying for 360 municipal council positions. Some seats were reserved for women.

Load-Date: December 24, 2004

End of Document

Islamic Jihad sees little to gain from moves for peace

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

July 16, 2005 Saturday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; International News; Pg. 20

Length: 838 words

Byline: Ed O'Loughlin Herald Correspondent in Jerusalem

Body

Extremist group flouts consensus to flex its muscle.

Islamic Jihad may be the smallest and least mainstream of the three main Palestinian militant groupings but its few hundred gunmen and bomb makers could yet destroy hopes for a return to Middle East peacemaking.

On Tuesday this week the tiny extremist group staged its second successful suicide bomb attack in five months, killing a soldier, two women and two 16-year-old girls in the coastal city of Netanya.

The first attack killed five people in Tel Aviv in February, only two weeks after the group had joined the much larger Hamas and Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade in agreeing to a de facto ceasefire.

Israeli security forces say they have prevented a number of other attacks, including several involving young teenagers - a hallmark of Islamic Jihad in recent years.

This week, as on previous occasions, the Damascus-based group sought to justify its breach of the agreed "period of calm" as retaliation for Israeli operations that have killed about 40 Palestinian civilians and militants since the truce was signed.

Yet Hamas and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade have also lost members to Israeli actions since February without - yet - responding with suicide bombers.

Most observers believe Islamic Jihad's belligerence stems from the fact that - unlike its bigger rivals - it has little to gain from a drop in violence. Its position is starkly different to that of its fellow fundamentalist movement Hamas, which now dwarfs Islamic Jihad despite having been born as an offshoot of it.

Founded in Gaza in the 1970s, Islamic Jihad was eclipsed there by the rise of Hamas in the 1980s and is now strongest in the West Bank city of Jenin. Its cells around the nearby town of Tulkarm have been responsible for most of the big attacks and attempted attacks since the present ceasefire began.

Both movements share the same stark Islamic faith and reject the existence of the Jewish state of Israel, but Hamas has also built a large public following through its network of social, economic, health and religious charities, particularly in Gaza.

Islamic Jihad sees little to gain from moves for peace

With a more conservative and educated leadership, **Hamas** has in recent months signalled its intention to move towards the mainstream of Palestinian politics to fill the partial vacuum left by the death of the veteran Fatah leader Yasser Arafat last year.

This year **Hamas** contested municipal elections for the first time, and its strong haul of seats suggests it could challenge the corrupt and inefficient ruling Fatah party when legislative elections are held.

While it still officially rejects the existence of Israel, **Hamas**'s new role as administrator of several Gaza municipalities is obliging it to come to a quiet modus vivendi with the Israeli occupation authorities and international donor governments.

Like the ruling Fatah movement, to which the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade has a clan-like allegiance, **Hamas** has no interest in escalating violence at a time when the Israeli Government is preparing to withdraw troops and settlers from Gaza, and when polls show that most Palestinians strongly favour peace.

Islamic Jihad, on the other hand, has only a skeletal political apparatus and none of the powers of patronage enjoyed by **Hamas** and Fatah. Even if it contested future elections, which it says it will not, it could expect little gain.

Moreover, Israel says that Islamic Jihad is acting largely as an agent of its foreign financial backers in Syria and Iran.

According to this line, Syria sees Islamic Jihad as a weapon in its increasingly forlorn effort to force Israel to return the seized Golan Heights. And rival elements within the Iranian hardline leadership have long sought to use enmity towards Israel as a currency for their own internal power plays.

However, the player under most pressure from Islamic Jihad's truce-busting attacks is not the Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, but his counterpart, the Palestinian Authority chairman and Fatah leader, Mahmoud Abbas.

After this week's atrocity he faces renewed calls from Israel, the US and now Europe too for a crackdown on militants who continue to flout the "calm" agreed five months ago. Mr Abbas's stated policy of conciliation rather than confrontation is wearing thin in light of increasing lawlessness in the occupied territories.

"No one on the Israeli side is willing to give up on Mr Abbas but we are frustrated with his lack of action so far," said the Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman, Mark Regev.

"We hope that the tragedy in Netanya will convince him that his policy so far has not been effective and that he has to act against these groups. Otherwise they will always be able to torpedo any progress. What if they had killed 30 people this week and not five?"

With **Hamas** and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade ramping down their own violence, only Islamic Jihad is openly flouting the Palestinian consensus. Even foreign governments supportive of Mr Abbas are likely to lose patience with him if he continues to allow a tiny fringe group to threaten lingering chances for peace.

Graphic

PHOTO: Unsettled ... **women** gather during a mass prayer in Jerusalem against the plan to close Jewish settlements in Gaza. Photo: AP/Kevin Frayer

Load-Date: July 17, 2007

Islamic Jihad sees little to gain from moves for peace

End of Document