

Date and Time: Friday, May 3, 2024 4:01:00PM EEST

Job Number: 223444860

Documents (100)

1. Israel arrests Hamas leaders

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

2. Hamas close to controlling Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

3. Israelis abduct Hamas chief

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

4. One Gaza, under Hamas

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

5. Hamas vanguishes Fatah in Gaza Strip

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas



Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

6. Hamas bids for total control

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

7. Uncertainty for Hamas in West Bank

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

8. Some Hamas women want more say

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

9. 20 wounded in clashes following Hamas sweep

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

10. Hamas, Fatah use TV in power struggle

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

11. Hamas set to renew bombings

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

12. HAMAS' MOUSE SQUEAKS ITS LAST

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

13. Hamas takes over border crossing

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

14. Hamas pounds home attack on fatah

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

15. Israel hits at Hamas with more airstrikes

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

16. Hamas threatens more bombings in Israel

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

17. Hamas PM returns to Gaza minus cash

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

18. Hamas takes upper hand in Gaza struggle

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

19. Many Gazans frightened by Hamas victory

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

20. Israel Hits Hamas Posts in Gaza With Airstrikes

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

21. For Hamas, a victory overcomes old pains



Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

22. Hamas May Find It Needs Its Enemy

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

23. Abbas swears in new government, excludes Hamas

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

24. Wary Gazans adjusting to Hamas rule in subtle ways

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

25. Israel must negotiate with Hamas

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

26. Hamas PM blocked from bringing aid; Hamas gunmen seize control of Gaza border from Fatah-allied guards

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

27. Hamas fighters gaining control of Gaza Strip

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

28. No Fast Gain For Hamas After Release Of Journalist

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

29. Fatah defiant on West Bank as Hamas takes Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

30._US spending\$42m to support opponents of Hamas

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

31. Hamas gunmen seize Gaza border crossing

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

32. Hamas is ordered to curb Militant Mouse

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

33. Hamas, Fatah strike deal for ceasefire after 17 killed

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

34. Israel arrests 33 Hamas leaders in wake of rocket barrages

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

35. Gaza infighting kills 16, Hamas fires on Israel

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

36. Hamas tramples Fatah security strongholds, appears close to controlling Gaza Strip

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

37. Hamas says it will oppose emergency government

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

38. Hamas attacks Fatah's security headquarters in northern Gaza; cease-fire calls ignored

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

39. Israel bars Hamas PM from entering Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

40. West Bank scholars push for spiritual reply to Hamas extremism

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

41. Hamas accuses Fatah as Gaza slides closer to civil war

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

42. Hamas gunmen seize control of Gaza border crossing



Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

43. Israel warns Hamas as six die in Gaza attacks

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

44. Jordan offers to host Fatah-Hamas talks

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

45. Hamas PM held at border with\$35m stash

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

46. Fighting in Gaza kills 7 Hamas militants, young girl

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

47. Hamas is using its media properties to back terrorists and incite violence

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

48. Hamas uses harsh rules to bolster its power in Gaza Strip

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

49. Hamas threatens to break ceasefire after Israeli air strikes

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

50. Hamas seizes upper hand as 15 are left dead in Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

51. Gazans gingerly adapt to Hamas Many residents are being careful to appear as pious Muslims.

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

52. Iranians found 'helping Hamas': Gaza ceasefire after day of bloody battles

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

53. Hamas Reports Progress On Freeing Israeli Soldier

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

54. Hamas close to controlling Gaza Strip, moves in on political and security nerve center

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

55. Fierce battles in Gaza; Hamas seizes control of main road; 50 killed this week in clashes

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

56. Rabbi defends Hamas war

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

57. Hamas seizes Fatah base as bloody battles push Gaza towards civil war

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

58. Hamas threatens new suicide bombings; Israeli air strikes in Gaza kill four, wound dozens

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

59. Hamas promotes 'Gaza Riviera'; Territory won't become a Taliban-style police state, Islamist leader says

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

60. Hamas faces burden of victory; GAZA SEIZURE COMPLETE; Way now clear for extreme Islamist state

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

61. Terror as Hamas opens fire at Israelis, fugitives

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

62. Hamas won the propaganda war this week

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

63. Hamas might find it needs Fatah; Lifeline of Western support may depend on unity



Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

64. Gunbattle involving Hamas militants leads to closing of Egypt -Gaza border crossing

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

65. Islamic Resistance Movement 'murderous terrorists,' Abbas says; Hamas seeking 'Kingdom of Gaza,'

Palestinian president claims

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

66. Gaza edges closer to civil war as battles rage on Fatah and Hamas break third ceasefire, while Israel

responds to Hamas rockets

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

67. More than 20 hurt in Gaza arrests; Hamas sweep takes four senior Fatah rivals into custody for 'public

security' violations

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

68. After Hamas victory, the priority in Gaza is 'food and peace'

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

69. Gunbattle breaks out at Gaza Strip crossing Hamas gunmen fight with Fatah-allied border guards

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

70. <u>Terrorist group Hamas takes control in Gaza; Palestinian media report Fatah fighters surrendering near</u> Gaza City waterfront

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

71. Hamas and Fatah reported close to deal on unity rule

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

72. Hamas wins its own six-day war Pyrrhic victory in Gaza redraws Middle East's political map

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

73. Fatah in tatters after Gaza clashes MIDDLE EAST - 24 die as Hamas captures rival faction's base



Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

74. Hamas gunmen wound four protesters, as tensions rise after deaths of children

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

75. Fatah in tatters after Gaza clashes 24 die as Hamas captures rival faction's base - MIDDLE EAST

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

76. Hamas, Fatah call new ceasefire after infighting kills 17 in Gaza Strip: Iranian bombmaking experts

reportedly arrested
Client/Matter: -NoneSearch Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

77. Hamas in Israeli 'crosshairs'; 'We'll bring attacks to an end'

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

78. We should start talking to Hamas, but will we ever understand them?

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

79. <u>Hamas lays siege to Fatah forces; Bloody Gaza Offensive; Palestinian security services holed up in fortified</u> bunkers

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

80. Gaza civilians fleeing Hamas trapped at crossing into Israel

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

81. Women form shield to save Hamas gunmen

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

82. Israel threatens Hamas leaders; Retaliation missile strike kills Islamic Jihad men after rocket attacks from

Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

83. Israeli warplanes strike Hamas in Gaza; New wave of revenge suicide bombings threatened against Jewish

state

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

84. FATAH PULLS OUT OF UNITY GOVERNMENT; FACTIONAL FIGHTING; Hamas 'taking Palestinians into

an ugly civil war'
Client/Matter: -NoneSearch Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

85. Hamas leaders fear for safety Take precautions as Israel hints they could be targets in Gaza offensive

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

86. <u>HAMAS' NEW ORDER TAKES TOLL ON GAZANS STREETS MORE SECURE, BUT ECONOMY IN</u> TATTERS

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

87. Dangerous new ferocity in Fatah-Hamas violence

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

88. BRITISH ENVOY MEETS WITH A HAMAS LEADER

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

89. 2 Men Cleared of Charges Of Aiding Hamas Violence

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

90. 400 trapped in Gaza tunnel Residents flee Hamas; Israel shuts West Bank access

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

91. 'Betrayed by Fatah'; Anti-Hamas fighters felt abandoned in Gaza and that they were part of a political game

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

92. Israeli shelling kills 18 Palestinians in Gaza A leader of Hamas calls for retaliation

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

93. <u>Gaza: Order without law: Hamas flexes its muscles to assert political authority: Palestinians welcome safer</u> streets but Fatah rivalry is a volatile undercurrent

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

94. Hamas seeks prisoner exchange with Israel

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

95. Gun battles rage across Gaza; Truce breaks between Hamas and Fatah leaving at least six people dead in

its wake

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

96. Fatah vows to wipe rival Hamas from the West Bank Hunt for militants raises fears of a fresh wave of

Palestinian suicide attacks against Israel

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

97. Israel criticized for Hamas roundup; Palestinian cabinet minister, legislators, mayors among officials

detained in move to curb rockets

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

98. Defying Hamas, Abbas swears in new cabinet; Move opens up new paths for peace, Israeli leader says

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

99. Hamas Fires Mortars After Palestinian Is Killed

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007

100. Mecca talks 'last chance for peace': Palestinians tired of feud between Hamas, Fatah

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2006 to

Sep 30, 2007



Israel arrests Hamas leaders

The Bismarck Tribune May 25, 2007 Friday

Copyright 2007 The Bismarck Tribune, a division of Lee Enterprises All Rights Reserved

Section: WIRE; Pg. 2A

Length: 290 words

Body

NABLUS, West Bank (AP)- Israel rounded up a Palestinian Cabinet minister and 32 other <u>Hamas</u> leaders in the West Bank before dawn Thursday, trying a new tactic in its campaign to pressure the Islamic militant group into halting rocket barrages from the Gaza Strip.

The Palestinian president condemned the arrests, saying they would hinder his efforts to restore a truce with Israel, and Washington expressed concern about the detentions. <u>Hamas</u> threatened to retaliate with attacks inside the Jewish state.

The arrests reflected an Israeli decision to target the <u>Hamas</u> political leadership - but not necessarily with the lethal airstrikes it has staged over the past week on targets linked to the <u>Hamas</u> military arm.

Israeli aircraft staged attacks during the day and into the night, mainly on <u>Hamas</u> training bases and command posts. A huge plume of black smoke rose over Gaza City after an afternoon attack, but there were no serious injuries, Palestinian medics said.

During the night, a series of air raids injured nine Palestinians, including three children and two <u>women</u>, hospital officials said.

Just before midnight, an Israeli missile targeted a shack in the Shati refugee camp where Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh of <u>Hamas</u> lives, but no one was hurt, Palestinian security said. Haniyeh went to inspect the site, but guards pulled him away because aircraft were still in the sky, officials said. Israel's military said the structure was being used by <u>Hamas</u>.

Israeli airstrikes also hit a money changer's shop in Gaza City and a <u>Hamas</u> post in northern Gaza, Palestinian security said.

Earlier, at sundown, two mortar shells fired from Gaza exploded at Erez, the main crossing for people between the Palestinian territory and Israel. No was hurt.

Load-Date: May 25, 2007



Hamas close to controlling Gaza

Deseret Morning News (Salt Lake City)

June 14, 2007 Thursday

Copyright 2007 The Deseret News Publishing Co.

Length: 1243 words

Byline: Sarah El Deeb Associated Press

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip -- <u>Hamas</u> fighters launched a fierce offensive on Gaza City Wednesday, firing mortars and rockets at Fatah's main security bases and the president's compound as the Islamic group appeared close to taking control of the entire Gaza Strip.

Fatah's forces were crumbling fast, with some fighters seen fleeing their security posts and hundreds of others surrendering, hands raised, to masked *Hamas* gunmen.

A <u>Hamas</u> military victory in Gaza could split Palestinians into a <u>Hamas</u>-controlled Gaza and a Fatah-run West Bank, and push the prospect of statehood even further away. It could also set the stage for a bloody confrontation with Israel, which might intervene to prevent attacks from Gaza.

In the southern town of Khan Younis, <u>Hamas</u> militants surrounded a security headquarters and warned everyone inside to leave or they would blow it up, witnesses said. The building was then destroyed by a bomb planted in a tunnel underneath it, said Ali Qaisi, a presidential guard spokesman.

An Associated Press reporter saw defeated Fatah fighters streaming out of the building after turning over their weapons to <u>Hamas</u> militants. <u>Hamas</u> took weapons, clothes and vehicles and flew a green Islamic flag over the building, then celebrated by firing in the air and passing out candy.

Security forces later said they had lost control of the town.

"Khan Younis is finished," said Ziad Sarafandi, a senior security official.

At least 20 people were killed in fighting Wednesday, bringing the total in the four days of infighting to over 60. Among those killed Wednesday was a man shot when <u>Hamas</u> gunmen fired on a peaceful protest against the violence, witnesses said.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah called the fighting "madness" and pleaded with the exiled leader of <u>Hamas</u> to halt the violence.

Abbas and Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh of <u>Hamas</u> issued a joint statement after nightfall, calling on all sides "to halt fighting, and to return to language of dialogue and respect of agreements," according to a statement from Abbas' office. The call was broadcast on Palestinian TV.

<u>Hamas</u> radio denied the two had agreed to a truce, and clashes intensified in the hour after their statement was broadcast.

Hamas close to controlling Gaza

<u>Hamas</u> and Fatah nominally share power in a coalition government, while Fatah runs most of Gaza's security forces. But no one was listening to the elected leaders' pleas for calm as the focus of power passed to street militias.

<u>Hamas</u> gunmen neutralized the main strongholds of the Fatah-linked security forces, ruling the streets and taking control of large parts of Gaza in the process.

Abbas' forces -- desperately trying to cling to their besieged bases in Gaza -- lashed out at the president, saying he left them with no directions and no support in the fight.

<u>Hamas</u> and Fatah have waged a sporadic power struggle since <u>Hamas</u> won parliament elections last year, ending four decades of Fatah dominance of Palestinian affairs. But the battle is now verging on civil war, as <u>Hamas</u> wages a systematic assault on security forces.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said he discussed the possible deployment of a multinational force in Gaza with the Security Council on Wednesday after the Israeli and Palestinian leaders raised the idea.

With fighting raging on rooftops and streets in nearly all corners of Gaza, residents huddled in fear in their homes.

<u>Hamas</u>, already in control of much of northern Gaza, seized Khan Younis on Wednesday and began a coordinated assault on the southern town of Rafah, security officials said.

<u>Hamas</u> militants blew up a security building near Rafah after a long gunbattle, said Col. Nasser Khaldi, a senior police official.

"What can I say? This is a fall, a collapse," he said.

Fayez Abu Taha, 45, a businessman in Rafah, said he was trapped in his apartment building with his family after <u>Hamas</u> fighters took over a nearby rooftop and Fatah responded by taking over the roof of his building.

"I don't know what they are battling for now," he said. "I can see the bullets flying from my windows. Coming and going."

The rout of the security forces was so bad that 40 Palestinian security officers broke through the border fence in Rafah and fled into Egypt seeking safety, Egyptian police said.

In the afternoon, <u>Hamas</u> forces attacked the three main compounds of the Fatah-allied forces in Gaza City -- the headquarters of the Preventive Security, the Intelligence Service and the National Forces -- in what could usher in the final phase of the battle.

<u>Hamas</u> fighters, firing rockets and mortar shells, took over the rooftops in nearby houses and cut off the roads to prevent reinforcements from arriving. They called on the beleaquered Fatah forces to surrender.

<u>Hamas</u> gunmen in high-rise buildings also fired at Abbas' Gaza office and house and his guard force returned fire. Abbas was in the West Bank at the time of the fighting.

During the battle at the Preventive Security Service base, both sides fired wildly from high-rise rooftops.

Dr. Wael Abdel Jawad, a physician trapped in his apartment, said he heard Fatah fighters shouting at colleagues on an adjacent roof to send them more ammunition.

"All of us are terrified here. Shooting came through the windows of our apartment, children are screaming. We are hearing from a nearby mosque the call by *Hamas* to surrender," he said.

"Those fighters on rooftops are like Don Quixote, tilting at windmills. They don't know where to shoot," he said.

Hamas close to controlling Gaza

In another dramatic battle in Gaza City, hundreds of members of the Fatah-allied Bakr clan, which had fought fiercely for two days, surrendered to masked <u>Hamas</u> gunmen and were led, arms raised, to a nearby mosque. Footage broadcast on <u>Hamas</u>' Al Aqsa TV showed some of the Bakr <u>women</u> trying to enter the mosque. <u>Hamas</u> gunmen later drove off with some of the Bakr fighters, witnesses said.

Two <u>women</u> from the clan tried to leave the area to take a sick girl to a hospital and were shot and killed by jittery <u>Hamas</u> gunmen, a clan member said.

After nightfall, *Hamas* militants blew up the house of one of the Bakr clan's leaders, witnesses said.

Early Thursday, Fatah officials said their forces withdrew from some bases in central Gaza and destroyed them, rather than allow them to fall into *Hamas* hands.

In Washington, U.S. officials condemned the fighting.

"Violence certainly does not serve the interest of the Palestinian people, and it's not going to bring the peace and prosperity that they deserve," White House spokesman Tony Snow said.

"They are shooting at anyone and everyone who is Fatah," said Youssef Abu Siyam, a Preventive Security officer in Rafah.

The fighting spilled into the Fatah-dominated West Bank. <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah gunmen exchanged fire in the city of Nablus and a nearby refugee camp after Fatah gunmen tried to storm a pro-<u>Hamas</u> TV production company. <u>Hamas</u> said 12 of its fighters were wounded.

On Wednesday, Abbas spoke by phone with the Damascus-based <u>Hamas</u> leader Khaled Mashaal to try to stop the crisis, said Abbas aide Nimr Hamad.

"This is madness, the madness that is going on in Gaza now," Abbas told reporters.

The U.N. Relief and Works Agency, which provides aid to Palestinian refugees, said it would curtail its operations after two of its Palestinian workers were killed by crossfire.

<u>Hamas</u> spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri, said the clashes could have been avoided if Abbas had given the <u>Hamas</u>-led Cabinet control over the security forces, which he blamed for a wave of kidnappings, torture and violence in Gaza.

Load-Date: June 14, 2007

End of Document



Israelis abduct Hamas chief

The Sunday Times (London) September 30, 2007

Copyright 2007 Times Newspapers Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: OVERSEAS NEWS; News; Pg. 26

Length: 445 words

Byline: Marie Colvin and Uzi Mahnaimi Tel Aviv

Body

THE SECRET Israeli raid into the heart of *Hamas*-controlled Gaza could hardly have been more audacious.

It was still light when Mahawash al-Qadi, a senior officer in <u>Hamas</u>'s militia, drove home from Friday prayers three weeks ago at about 7pm. A broken-down lorry blocked his route so he turned into another track.

Neighbours said he would have had no inkling of what was to come: his wife and mother were with him, and his own men control security along Gaza's eastern border with Israel.

Al-Qadi's path was blocked again after a sack of potatoes was spilt into the path of his Subaru. Suddenly four men dressed in the black T-shirts, blue camouflage trousers and black boots of the Executive Force, the <u>Hamas</u> police, leapt into the road ahead of him.

But they were no allies: they were Israeli special forces in disguise. They bundled the <u>women</u> out of the car and drove away at speed. The <u>women</u> said later they heard a helicopter taking off within moments. Al-Qadi has not been heard of since, but is assumed to be in Israeli custody.

His capture nearly caused another rupture between <u>Hamas</u> -which seized control of Gaza in June after five days of bloodshed that left 110 dead -and Fatah, the secular organisation it ousted. <u>Hamas</u> mistakenly believed Fatah had reopened the conflict by kidnapping al-Qadi and orders were given to retaliate.

Al-Qadi had been a senior operative in <u>Hamas</u> since the first Palestinian intifada, or uprising, in the late 1980s. He led night-time patrols on the Israeli border, supervised <u>Hamas</u>'s explosives and rocket manufacture and had taken over as the local militia chief.

To the Israelis, however, the most interesting thing about him was that he ran the zone where Palestinians had forced Gilad Shalit, 21, an Israeli soldier, through a tunnel under the border in June 2006. <u>Hamas</u> wants its prisoners in Israel released in return for Shalit's freedom.

The Gaza operation signalled a robust new approach by the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) under Ehud Barak, the recently appointed defence minister. The raid was a success but its goal -the release of Shalit -failed. When <u>Hamas</u> realised they had been tricked, they raced to Shalit's hiding place in southern Gaza, according to Gaza sources.

Al-Qadi knew Shalit's location so the captive was moved before a rescue mission could be mounted.

Israelis abduct Hamas chief

The new approach has its roots in Barak's own unconventional career. In 1973 he disguised himself as a buxom blonde and led a commando unit into Beirut to kill Palestinian officials in their beds.

He shows no sign of backing down in his hunt for Shalit. "The moment of a large, complicated and prolonged operation in Gaza is approaching," he warned last week.

Load-Date: September 30, 2007

End of Document



One Gaza, under Hamas

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

June 15, 2007 Friday

National Edition

Copyright 2007 National Post All Rights Reserved

Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. A12

Length: 719 words **Byline:** National Post

Body

There are three pieces of good news to come out of <u>Hamas'</u> victory in Gaza's quasi-civil war. First, now that one side has prevailed, perhaps the bloodshed will stop, and residents of the densely populated Palestinian territory can return to some kind of regular civic life. The violence in recent days has reached sickening proportions -- with men being thrown off buildings and machine-gunned in front of their loved ones. Even by Palestinian standards, this is appalling stuff. (If the Israelis were even half as brutal in their counter-terrorist operations in the West Bank and Gaza, one can only imagine how the world would react.)

Second, this week's events serve to clarify a formerly muddled strategic situation. With <u>Hamas</u> now definitively in charge there will be nothing to prevent Israel from striking back vigorously against unprovoked rocket and terrorist attacks launched from Gaza. In recent months, the military value of such attacks had to be weighed against the possibility of tipping the scales of public opinion toward <u>Hamas</u> and away from Fatah. Now, the dynamic is simple: If <u>Hamas</u> continues to attack Israel, its fighters will be targeted and killed by commandos and armed drones.

By seizing complete power in Gaza, <u>Hamas</u> has simultaneously made itself more powerful and more vulnerable: Having your own state means having a return address for incoming fire.

Third, the total domination of Gaza by an Islamist terrorist group that endorses terror, refuses to recognize Israel and embraces all of those charmingly medieval Taliban-like views on <u>women</u> and homosexuals will put an end to calls from Europe -- and perhaps even from the Arab world -- for Israel to immediately remove its troops from the larger and more strategically important West Bank. The examples of Gaza, Iraq and Hezbollah-controlled southern Lebanon show what the West Bank would look like without the Israeli Defense Forces keeping a lid on violence. A terrorist-run WestBankistan would be a threat to not only Israel, but also Jordan and perhaps even Syria as well.

And now the bad news: <u>Hamas</u> is formally dedicated to the destruction of Israel. Its leaders are mostly hotheads who lack the cynical (but useful) realism of embattled Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas (a Fatah leader). <u>Hamas</u> has smuggled heavy weapons into Gaza through Egypt, and is hoping to draw the Jewish state into the sort of bloody, inconclusive warfare that broke out in 2006 between Israel and Hezbollah. Till now, <u>Hamas</u>' fighters have been kept busy fighting Fatah. Now, they will have no one to fight but the Israelis.

There's another option, of course: <u>Hamas</u> could put down its weapons, negotiate a peace with Israel and start building a prosperous state in Gaza. This is an option that would be obvious to any Western-minded observer: Israel withdrew from Gaza long ago -- what's the point in continued warfare? Unfortunately, since 1948, Arab

One Gaza, under Hamas

extremists have time and again showed that they would rather die trying to destroy Israel than live with Jews in their midst.

If there is hope for Gaza and the region, it is the same hope that has existed for decades: that ordinary Palestinians, beaten down by war and international isolation, will pressure their leaders into embracing peace and realism instead of endless war.

As things stand, <u>Hamas</u> is an expanding movement that includes both (1) (relative) pragmatists who are primarily interested in ridding Palestinian society of Yasser Arafat's corrupt Fatah legacy, and (2) bloodthirsty jihadists, such as Damascus-based "political leader" Khaled Mash'al, whose methods aren't much different from those of al-Qaeda. The West can maximize the tensions between those two camps --and perhaps even put hardliners on the defencive -- by continuing to withhold aid and diplomatic engagement from a <u>Hamas</u> dominated government. The worst thing we could do now is give <u>Hamas</u> a double victory by turning the aid spigot back on: This would only send the message that **Hamas** can make war on Israel and take Western cash simultaneously.

No one can force the Palestinians to choose peace and prosperity over jihad and self-destruction. All we can do is present them with the choice and hope that, for once, they choose wisely.

BLOG:FULLCOMMENT.COM

Whither Gaza? Have your say on our open thread at fullcomment.com

Load-Date: June 15, 2007

End of Document



Hamas vanquishes Fatah in Gaza Strip

The Telegraph-Journal (New Brunswick)

June 15, 2007 Friday

Copyright 2007 CanWest Interactive, a division of CanWest MediaWorks Publications Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: TJFRONT; TJACTUALITIES; Pg. A4

Length: 312 words

Byline: Associated Press

Body

<u>Hamas</u> fighters took over two security command centres and vanquished the rival Fatah's movement in the Gaza Strip on Thursday, prompting beleaguered Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to dissolve the <u>Hamas</u>-Fatah unity government.

<u>Hamas</u> also seized control of Rafah in the south, Gaza's third-largest city, according to witnesses and security officials. It was the second main Gaza city to fall to the militants, who captured nearby Khan Younis on Wednesday, and gave <u>Hamas</u> control of the porous border with Egypt, which has been the source of arms smuggling.

Abbas of Fatah declared a state of emergency, fired Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh of <u>Hamas</u>, dissolved the <u>Hamas</u>-Fatah coalition and said he would form a new government.

Abbas, who is considering early elections, considers the <u>Hamas</u> fighters who have seized control of most of the Fatah-allied security headquarters in Gaza to be an "outlaw militia," said his aide, Tayeb Abdel Rahim.

Other aides had said Abbas was also planning to call for the deployment of a multinational force. However, Abdel Rahim made no mention of that in the news conference.

<u>Hamas</u> captured the Preventive Security headquarters and the intelligence services building in Gaza City, major advances in the Islamic group's attempts to take over Gaza.

In all, 14 fighters and civilians were killed and 80 wounded in the battle for the Preventive Security complex, bringing the day's death toll to 26, hospital and security officials said. About 90 people, mostly fighters but also **women** and children, have been killed since a spike in violence Sunday sent Gaza into civil war.

The two factions have warred sporadically since <u>Hamas</u> took power from Fatah last year, but never with such intensity. <u>Hamas</u> brought Fatah into the coalition in March to quell earlier violence, but the partnership began crumbling last month over control of the security forces.

Load-Date: June 15, 2007



Hamas bids for total control

The Daily Telegraph (LONDON)

June 13, 2007 Wednesday

Copyright 2007 Telegraph Group Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 727 words

Byline: Charles Levinson in Gaza City

Body

AHMED al Afifi, the Palestinian intelligence chief, nervously fingered a .45 pistol in his Gaza City home hours after it was hit with two *Hamas* mortars.

The first round blew a crater in his driveway. The second, a dud, stuck in his flower bed like a garden ornament.

"Hamas is trying to take control of everything," Mr Afifi said after the fighting had raged all night.

<u>Hamas</u> has been locked in a bloody power struggle with the rival Fatah party ever since it won a landslide parliamentary election in January last year. After months of on/off violence, the stalemate between the militant Islamists and the ousted Fatah moderates seemed destined to keep the Palestinian government paralysed.

Now, <u>Hamas</u> is pressing a fierce offensive in the Gaza Strip, systematically laying siege to the Fatah-dominated security services and looking at last for the decisive victory that could give it complete control of the Palestinian government.

The Fatah security services ruled the streets here for 15 years but are now holed up in fortified bunkers and a handful of neighbourhoods awaiting a threatened fully-fledged assault by *Hamas*.

The unprecedented surge of violence threatens to topple the Palestinian unity government less than three months after it was formed.

The president of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah, has accused <u>Hamas</u> of staging a coup attempt and called for a truce.

But the <u>Hamas</u> mortars continued to whistle overhead throughout the day, pounding into Mr Abbas's presidential compound in Gaza City. While he was safe in the West Bank city of Ramallah, his Fatah loyalists fought back.

They fired a rocket propelled grenade at the home of Ismail Haniyeh, the prime minister and <u>Hamas</u> leader, just north of Gaza City and used armoured personnel carriers with high calibre cannon for the first time in this power struggle. <u>Hamas</u> has staked out claims to large swaths of the Gaza Strip, declaring northern and central Gaza to be "closed military zones", evoking a measure the Israeli army uses to cordon off areas during operations against militants.

"Stay at home and you will be safe," *Hamas* warned Fatah fighters in an announcement over a radio station.

Hamas bids for total control

As reports poured in of <u>Hamas</u> victories across the war-torn territory, Fatah insisted that the tide would quickly turn once the order was given to launch a counter attack.

Fatah's leaders said they were showing restraint in the hopes of avoiding a fully-fledged civil war.

"We are just waiting for the orders from our leaders and then we will vanquish <u>Hamas</u> and they will learn a lesson they will never forget," said a masked Fatah gunman who gave his name as Abu Abbas.

The orders finally came last night in a statement from the Fatah-controlled National Security Forces.

"Advance the forces. Confront the seekers of the coup. The patience of the security forces is over and we will react with all our strength," the statement said.

But those Fatah-supporting soldiers holding on to their remaining neighbourhoods in Gaza City seemed nervous and edgy.

As Egyptian mediators desperately attempted to avert civil war, bursts of machinegun fire, exploding rocket propelled grenades and cannon booms echoed around the city for the fourth day.

Fatah's central committee last night threatened to remove its ministers from the unity government unless a ceasefire was agreed.

In the past 48 hours 27 Palestinians have been killed, tossed from rooftops, executed at point-blank range, and shot in hospital wards. That number seems certain to rise. More than 80 Palestinians have now been killed since mid-May.

Among yesterday's dead was a 14-year-old boy and three <u>women</u>, all killed in a <u>Hamas</u> attack on a Fatah security officer's home.

"They're firing at us, firing RPGs, firing mortars. We're not Jews," the brother of Jamal Abu Jediyan, a Fatah commander, pleaded during a live telephone conversation with a Palestinian radio station.

Minutes later both men were dragged into the streets and riddled with bullets.

The fighting has spread to the West Bank where Fatah militants from the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades kidnapped a deputy minister from *Hamas* and seized control of a *Hamas*-run television station.

Terje Roed-Larsen, the UN envoy to the Middle East, said: "The picture which emerges is very dark, and apparently getting darker. There are reasons for real concerns in the international community."

Load-Date: June 13, 2007

End of Document



Uncertainty for Hamas in West Bank

Christian Science Monitor June 25, 2007, Monday

Copyright 2007 The Christian Science Publishing Society All Rights Reserved

Section: WORLD; Pg. 7

Length: 894 words

Byline: Ilene R. Prusher Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

Dateline: Nablus, West Bank

Body

Khouloud el-Masri insists her al-Juthur cultural center was nothing more than a place for teaching women.

But gunmen loyal to Fatah dismissed it as a cover for <u>Hamas</u> indoctrination. They set it on fire at the height of the fighting in Gaza two weeks ago between the Palestinian factions. The center was destroyed and the blaze nearly sent the building where Mrs. Masri lives with her husband and five children up in smoke.

Now, Masri, an elected councilmember and one of the most prominent <u>female</u> faces of <u>Hamas</u>'s political wing in the West Bank, is living on the run. She sleeps in a different house every night, taking a few of the kids with her, while her husband takes the remainder elsewhere.

Of Nablus's 15 city council members, 13 are members of <u>Hamas</u>, or, as the group called itself at the polls, the Change and Reform Party. Both the mayor and deputy mayor, also from <u>Hamas</u>, were arrested by Israel about a month ago. And now, nearly everyone who was elected in a 2004 municipal vote to run this city is persona non grata not just to Israel but to the Fatah-run Palestinian emergency government set up by Mahmoud Abbas.

But how Mr. Abbas decides to deal with <u>Hamas</u> elements in the West Bank will be key to future stability and governance in this Palestinian territory. And from the remnants in Masri's center to the hide-outs of the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, a militant offshoot of Fatah, there is a pervasive sense that the <u>Hamas</u> coup in Gaza was not the end to a violent chapter of internecine Palestinian warfare.

Locked out of city council

After the guns in Gaza fell quiet, Masri tried to go back to work at the city council. At the entrance to the municipal building, she was met by gunmen, she says. "Khouloud el-Masri, from now on you're not allowed here. Don't come back again," she recalls.

As she walks through the remains of the center, she admits she fears the worst, and checks them off quickly. "Being killed, being kidnapped. Being taken to jail," she says.

She feels that Abbas has been encouraging this behavior of the Fatah militants: first, by not condemning it, and then by making a long-awaited speech last week in which he called *Hamas* "murderers" and "coupmakers."

Uncertainty for Hamas in West Bank

"The overwhelming affect of this speech is provocation and confrontation," she says. "The speech of the president was legitimizing the acts of these Fatah groups. I think there should be an open dialogue between <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah."

But according to Abbas, the time for dialogue has passed. Last week, his new emergency cabinet officially cut off all contacts with *Hamas*. Doing so has helped open the doors to direct international aid to the PA, which has been embargoed for the last year and-a-half. Israel is about to release customs tax funds worth somewhere between \$300 and \$400 million withheld, Israel said, because it did not want the money going to *Hamas*.

Nasser Juma, a Fatah member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, says he doesn't condone everything that the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades has done because it amounts to vigilante violence. All such groups, he says, are going to have to be integrated into the PA security forces. But what's happened to <u>Hamas</u> people and institutions in Nablus is child's play, he suggests, when compared with Gaza.

"<u>Hamas</u> is killing everybody, killing children, and they've destroyed the Palestinian dream. <u>Hamas</u> in the West Bank has to be eliminated," says Mr. Juma in an interview in his office in the commercial center of Nablus. "I agree with what the council members were told: they should not come to work. I want to suggest to Khouloud el-Masri that she go live in Gaza for even one week. I don't want them bringing the situation of Gaza to the West Bank."

The two wings of **Hamas**

To West Bank Fatah leaders worried about the strength of <u>Hamas</u> militias, there's little interest now in hearing arguments why there's any reason to differentiate between the group's military and political wings.

"We've been given orders that any <u>Hamas</u> member in the West Bank [should] be rounded up and put in jail," Juma says. On Friday, Abbas ordered all nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to obtain new operating licenses, a move that may make many <u>Hamas</u>-affiliated NGOs illegal. The crackdown is becoming palpable enough that <u>Hamas</u> leaders in Gaza have taken notice. Mahmoud Az-Zahar, a <u>Hamas</u> hardliner in Gaza, said in a weekend interview with the German magazine Der Spiegel that <u>Hamas</u> members might start carrying out attacks on Fatah in the West Bank because of the sweep.

In the meantime, Nablus is on edge.

"Whatever was done is nothing compared to what was done to us in Gaza," says Sari Hussein, an Al Aqsa leader who acknowledges that some of his men burned Masri's offices. On his cellphone, he shows the footage of a Fatah leader in Gaza being dragged through the street and killed. For him, it's a reminder of what they're up against.

"The leadership is in hiding now, and it's the second- and third-level people who are coming to us and saying, please, please, we don't want trouble," he says. "But why didn't even one of them put their hands up and say, 'We have nothing to do with what's happening in Gaza? No one here in <u>Hamas</u> stood up to condemn what was happening in Gaza. And now the people here are saying, 'Why did we vote for <u>Hamas</u>?' This is the beginning of this war, not the end."

(c) Copyright 2007. The Christian Science Monitor

Load-Date: June 24, 2007



Some Hamas women want more say

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

November 25, 2006 Saturday

THIRD EDITION

Copyright 2006 St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A25

Length: 343 words

Byline: By Diaa Hadid THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

A grandmother-turned-suicide bomber, a small army of <u>women</u> marching into a battlefield, thousands of veiled volunteers hitting the streets in an election campaign - the Islamic militant group <u>Hamas</u> is increasingly mobilizing its network of *female* activists.

Yet the <u>Hamas women</u>, known as the Sisterhood, say such high-profile missions have not changed how the group is run: The men make decisions, and the **women** have a supporting role, at best.

But even in the rigidly conservative movement, whose manifesto defines <u>women</u> as "manufacturers of men," some <u>female</u> activists are demanding a say in politics and in <u>Hamas</u>' military wing, which has carried out scores of deadly attacks against Israelis in recent years.

A suicide bombing on Thursday by a 64-year-old grandmother who blew herself up near Israeli soldiers in Gaza was an exception, not the rule, said Abu Obeida, spokesman for <u>Hamas'</u> military wing. He suggested she was chosen because it would have been more difficult for a man to approach the target.

Still <u>women</u> have started to demand a bigger role in <u>Hamas</u>, which leads the Palestinian government. A <u>Hamas</u> legislator said she resented attempts by male colleagues to keep her on the back benches. A Gaza housewife who has smuggled food and weapons to fugitives said she wants more assignments. Activists debate how to best influence the all-male <u>Hamas</u> leadership based in Syria.

But for now, the men are resisting. <u>Hamas</u> officials say <u>women</u> should deal with culture, education and charity and leave decision-making and fighting Israel to the men.

Sociologist Islah Jad said the debate in *Hamas* reflects the traditionalism of Palestinian society.

One of the areas largely off-limits to <u>women</u> is the military wing of <u>Hamas</u>. <u>Women</u> will be called on only if needed, Abu Obeida said.

Such a day came earlier this month, when <u>Hamas</u> gunmen were encircled by Israeli troops in northern Gaza. Hundreds of <u>women</u> marched into the battlefield. Dodging Israeli fire, they provided a human shield that enabled some of the trapped gunmen to get away. Two **women** were killed.

	V	O	t	Ą	S
п		•	.,	_	

World

Load-Date: November 25, 2006

End of Document



20 wounded in clashes following Hamas sweep

Ottawa Citizen

August 11, 2007 Saturday

Final Edition

Copyright 2007 Ottawa Citizen, a division of CanWest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A9

Length: 304 words

Byline: Nidal Al-Mughrabi, Reuters

Dateline: GAZA

Body

GAZA - More than 20 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip were wounded yesterday as violence sparked after <u>Hamas</u> forces arrested about 20 members and supporters of rival Fatah in one of <u>Hamas</u>'s largest sweeps since it took over the territory.

Fatah and <u>Hamas</u> spokesmen said at least four senior Fatah members were taken into custody in the northern town of Beit Hanoun.

"Four Fatah leaders were arrested not because of who they are, but for violating public security," said Saber Khalifa, a spokesman for *Hamas*'s Executive Force.

Beit Hanoun residents said <u>Hamas</u> forces fired into the air to disperse relatives of the detainees, mainly <u>women</u>, who protested the arrests. Television also showed <u>Hamas</u> men later raiding several weddings near the area. Residents threw stones while the forces fired back and in the air.

A Fatah source said <u>Hamas</u> forces also detained at least 15 supporters of the group in Khan Younis, located in south Gaza. There was no immediate **Hamas** comment on those arrests.

<u>Hamas</u> took over the Gaza Strip in June following weeks of battles against Fatah militants. <u>Hamas</u>, which is considered a terrorist group by many western countries, including Canada, won a parliamentary vote last year and was part of a unity government with Fatah before talks broke down.

Meanwhile, an Israeli newspaper yesterday reported that Israel's defence minister says a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians will not be reached for at least three to five years.

The Israeli daily Yedioth Ahronoth said that in private conversations, Defence Minister Ehud Barak described the idea of reaching a peace deal with the Palestinians anytime soon as a "fantasy."

He also said that Israel would not withdraw from the occupied West Bank before finding a solution to Palestinian rocket attacks, "which will take between three to five years."

Load-Date: August 11, 2007



Hamas, Fatah use TV in power struggle

Charleston Gazette (West Virginia)

August 12, 2007, Sunday

Copyright 2007 Charleston Newspapers

Section: NEWS; Pg. P3A

Length: 874 words

Byline: Karin Laub, The Associated Press

Body

RAMALLAH, West Bank - First, <u>Hamas</u> militiamen were filmed beating guests at a bachelor party. Then, the deposed <u>Hamas</u> prime minister claimed Fatah forces had tortured a <u>Hamas</u> activist to death, only to have the prisoner, very much alive, presented in a TV broadcast.

The power struggle between the Palestinian rivals over image and credibility is increasingly playing out on TV screens. The two clips, broadcast repeatedly on Fatah-affiliated Palestine TV, were the talk of the Palestinian territories Saturday.

In the case of the erroneous death claim, <u>Hamas</u> might have been set up by the Fatah-allied intelligence service - a measure of how desperate both sides are to discredit each other and how deep the animosity runs between them after <u>Hamas</u> seized Gaza by force in June.

Even though polls indicate Palestinians are becoming more and more disillusioned with their two main parties after months of infighting, public opinion still has its weight.

"It brought *Hamas* to power and it can bring Fatah back," said Palestinian analyst Ghassan Khatib.

The latest round of claims and counterclaims began Friday with a bachelor party for a Fatah supporter in the northern Gaza town of Beit Hanoun.

The groom had set up a small outdoor stage and rows of plastic chairs alongside a road in town. Fatah songs in praise of its leader, President Mahmoud Abbas, and his predecessor, the late Yasser Arafat, blared from loudspeakers, and young men danced on stage.

A camera set up on a roof on the opposite side of the road was trained on the stage, occasionally moving to the right for a wider view. The celebration appeared to be almost over and guests had begun leaving when four jeeps carrying members of the *Hamas* police, or Executive Force, drove toward the stage at high speed.

The armed men jumped off, assault rifles raised. Some fired in the air, others wielded clubs as they walked toward the guests. Several <u>Hamas</u> policemen were seen clubbing guests or hurling chairs. As the police left, one man lay unconscious on stage and bystanders tried to move him.

Later, about 150 <u>women</u> and youngsters from Beit Hanoun marched to the nearby <u>Hamas</u> police station, and scuffling and shouting matches ensued, witnesses said.

Hamas, Fatah use TV in power struggle

Medics said 10 people suffered beating injuries in both clashes. Fatah said a total of 15 people were arrested, while *Hamas* put the number at four.

The video was repeatedly broadcast on Palestine TV and the cameraman, from the local Ramattan news agency, was detained and questioned by *Hamas* for several hours.

<u>Hamas</u> later said the police station about 100 yards away had come under fire from the area of the party, and that guests had also illegally fired in the air.

"We emphasize that we didn't arrest anyone for his political affiliation," said a statement by the Executive Force. "The four were arrested for committing crimes."

It was not clear to what extent the footage was edited. But as broadcast, it made the <u>Hamas</u> militiamen look heavy-handed at best, undermining their efforts to portray themselves as champions of law and order.

The other tug-of-war was over Muayad Bani Odeh, 25, a <u>Hamas</u> supporter from the West Bank who was arrested by Abbas' intelligence service last month and was being held in the city of Nablus.

After *Hamas* seized Gaza, Fatah formed a moderate government that rules the West Bank.

Bani Odeh's family and independent legislator Khaleda Jarrar said they were told by intelligence officials on Thursday that the prisoner was in serious condition in an Israeli hospital. Jarrar said she checked again later with the intelligence chief, Tawfiq Tirawi, and was told Bani Odeh was clinically dead.

The information reached Ismail Haniyeh of <u>Hamas</u>, deposed as prime minister by Abbas after the Gaza takeover. In a speech after Muslim prayers Friday, Haniyeh accused Fatah-allied forces in the West Bank of persecuting and torturing <u>Hamas</u> supporters.

"The latest of these is Muayad Bani Odeh, a holy warrior, a son of Islam in the West Bank, who was tortured to death," Haniyeh said. Later, thousands of <u>Hamas</u> supporters in Gaza staged marches to protest the purported death.

On Saturday, Palestine TV broadcast footage from what appears to be an interrogation of Bani Odeh, in which he confessed to collaborating with Israel.

Sitting on a bed, he said he provided information that led to the killing of five fugitives, including three from <u>Hamas</u>, by Israeli troops in his home village of Tamoun in 2003. The TV also showed him being checked by doctors and shaking their hands.

Later Saturday, Bani Odeh was presented to reporters at his Nablus lockup, repeating the statements he had made on TV. He said he had ties to <u>Hamas</u>, but was never considered a serious operative. The prisoner said he was not mistreated, though it was not clear whether he spoke under threat from his jailers.

Bani Odeh's family said he had been coerced into making a false confession.

In Gaza, <u>Hamas</u> spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri was asked why <u>Hamas</u> did not check more thoroughly before announcing Bani Odeh's death. Abu Zuhri said <u>Hamas</u> had relied on Jarrar, a legislator from a small PLO faction and prisoners' rights activist.

AP reporters Ibrahim Barzak, Dalia Nammari and Ali Daraghmeh contributed to this report from Gaza City, Ramallah and Nablus.

Load-Date: August 13, 2007



Hamas set to renew bombings

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

May 18, 2007 Friday

National Edition

Copyright 2007 National Post All Rights Reserved

Section: WORLD; Pg. A13

Length: 785 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, CanWest News Service

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

JERUSALEM - Fighting between <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah eased slightly in Gaza yesterday, but <u>Hamas</u> threatened a new wave of suicide bombings inside Israel to avenge multiple air raids over the Palestinian territory by Israeli warplanes, including the latest strike that killed four <u>Hamas</u> fighters.

Three other Palestinians died in factional violence. Two of them were shot as they attended funerals in southern Gaza for some of the more than 40 Palestinians who have been killed since <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah resumed their bloody conflict over the weekend after a three-month lull.

The punishing Israeli air strikes -- which began with several that killed five Palestinians -- did not stop <u>Hamas</u> from launching 17 more Qassam rockets into Israel during a 24-hour period. One missile crashed through the roof of a high school and into a classroom while students took exams in the next room.

Under intense pressure from terrified and angry residents of southern Israeli communities within range of the rockets, Ehud Olmert, the Israeli Prime Minister, also ordered several tanks and infantry to cross into northern Gaza for the first time in six months to better observe areas often used to launch rockets.

The Israel Defence Forces positioned artillery units just outside the Palestinian enclave so as to be able to immediately counter-fire after any rocket launches.

Israel also electronically took control of radio stations in Gaza to warn residents to flee places used to launch rockets, an Israeli television station reported.

"We have had enough," Miri Eisin, Mr. Olmert's spokeswoman said.

Officials in Jerusalem emphasized these were "defensive operations" and Israel has no intention of undertaking a major ground offensive in the territory.

The government and a Russian Israeli businessman attempted to evacuate people from Sderot, southern Israel, but the operation had to be halted because not enough beds could be found for all those wanting to flee. Many residents are living in bomb shelters.

Hamas set to renew bombings

The Israeli air strikes seriously damaged a multi-storey <u>Hamas</u> compound, a trailer used as a barracks and two vehicles with men inside. Palestinian hospitals reported dozens of wounded, including <u>women</u> and children who were injured in the bombing of the compound.

Khaled Meshal, <u>Hamas</u>'s top leader, who lives in Syria, claimed on his group's al-Aqsa television station that Israel's actions presented Palestinians with a "historic opportunity" to bring <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah together to fight their common enemy.

But there was little sign of that in Gaza. The fourth ceasefire in as many days held slightly better than the others, but gunmen still controlled all the major roads and there were several shootouts.

For the first time since fighting erupted again, some residents left their homes briefly to buy food, but most remained inside, mindful of how ambushes and mortar, rocket and sniper attacks could happen at any time.

The security situation remained so unstable that Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian President and Fatah leader, postponed a visit to Gaza. He was due to meet Ismail Haniyeh, the Prime Minister and the highest ranking <u>Hamas</u> leader not living in exile.

An alleged <u>Hamas</u> plot to assassinate Mr. Abbas was disclosed yesterday, Agence France-Presse reported.

"Abu Mazen's [Abbas's] visit to Gaza was cancelled after the discovery of a tunnel under Salaheddine Road full of explosives placed by the Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades to blow up [his] convoy," said a senior security official, referring to <u>Hamas</u>'s military wing.

"The explosives were found on the route that Abu Mazen takes to travel to Gaza."

<u>Hamas</u>' latest threats to resume what it called "martyrdom operations" complicate the already unpredictable and troubling situation in Gaza.

The Qassam attacks on Israel, and what many Israelis regard as their government's slow response to them, have once again called into question Mr. Olmert's leadership abilities.

The situation reminds Israelis of their military's failure to prevent Hezbollah from launching thousands of rockets from Lebanon last summer.

Benjamin Netanyahu, the former prime minister who is leading opinion polls to succeed Mr. Olmert, demanded that Israel cut off power and other public services to Gaza.

At a press conference in Ramallah in the West Bank, Mustafa Barghouti, the Palestinian Information Minister, warned the Palestinian government might collapse if the factional fighting did not stop, leading to a total separation between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

He called on <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah "to pull their gunmen off the streets of Gaza" and appealed for new security mechanisms that involved both factions. Toward this end, Mr. Barghouti said that a joint command centre was being established.

Graphic

Black & White

Photo: Suhaib Salem, Reuters; Palestinians evacuate a wounded woman from her destroyed house after an Israeli air strike in Gaza yesterday. The Israeli military said it carried out an air strike in Gaza City yesterday and local residents said the target was a building housing *Hamas*' Executive Force.;

Load-Date: May 18, 2007



HAMAS' MOUSE SQUEAKS ITS LAST

Daily News (New York)

May 10, 2007 Thursday

SPORTS FINAL EDITION

Copyright 2007 Daily News, L.P.



Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 391 words

Byline: BY MATTHEW KALMAN in Jerusalem and BILL HUTCHINSON in New York DAILY NEWS WRITERS

Body

MARTYR MOUSE has been exterminated.

<u>Hamas</u> pulled the plug on its perverted version of Mickey Mouse yesterday, bowing to widespread criticism it was blatantly using Walt Disney's lovable rodent to preach hate to kids.

Calling it "a mistaken approach," Palestinian information czar Mustafa Barghouti demanded <u>Hamas</u> stop airing the kiddie show "Tomorrow's Pioneers" on its Al-Agsa TV station.

"They listened to our advice that they should revise it and that children's shows should not include political messages," Barghouti told the Daily News. "The law says that education should be neutral and that you shouldn't subject children to political propaganda."

<u>Hamas'</u> stunning reversal came after the show sparked worldwide outrage. It featured a Mickey Mouse clone named Farfur who encouraged Palestinian children to arm themselves with AK-47s to fight Israel and the United States.

The News featured the "Terror Mouse" on page one, prompting Walt Disney's only surviving child, Diane Disney Miller, 73, to blast *Hamas* as "pure evil."

A <u>Hamas</u> official said the show was being removed for "review" and that Al-Aqsa TV programers were considering a change to the show's format.

Palestinian Media Watch was first to criticize the show. But while the group was pleased by the ban, its director said *Hamas* has far to go in eradicating its airwaves of Islamic radicalism.

"If they replace the mouse with more viewings of a 4-year-old saying she wants to be a suicide terrorist, then we have not made any progress," said Palestinian Media Watch's Itamar Marcus, referring to a music video featuring the daughter of a *female* suicide bomber singing and playing with dynamite.

HAMAS' MOUSE SQUEAKS ITS LAST

"I think it's tragic that they can only create a children's program with a hate message and the alternative is to take it off the air," Marcus added. "I would have preferred to hear that they are changing the message of the program and instead of indoctrinating kids with hatred, they are promoting peace."

Barghouti said he will look into other *Hamas* programs, including the music video of the suicide bomber's little girl.

But Barghouti berated American media for failing "to show the other side of the story."

"We have released film clips of the Israeli Army unleashing dogs on [Palestinian] <u>women</u>, but the Western press prefers to report on this mouse," Barghouti said.

whutchinson@nydailynews.com

Graphic

It's M.I.C. - see you later, you sick *Hamas* rat.

Load-Date: May 10, 2007



Hamas takes over border crossing

The Daily Gleaner (New Brunswick)

December 15, 2006 Friday

Copyright 2006 CanWest Interactive, a division of CanWest MediaWorks Publications Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A11

Length: 498 words

Byline: The Associated Press

Body

<u>Hamas</u> gunmen seized control of the Gaza Strip's border crossing with Egypt on Thursday in a ferocious gunbattle with Fatah-allied border guards after Israel blocked the <u>Hamas</u> prime minister from crossing with tens of millions of dollars in aid.

A bodyguard died in what <u>Hamas</u> called an attempt to kill Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh as he left the border crossing for Gaza City.

More than two dozen people were wounded in the fighting, deepening factional violence that has pushed the rivals closer to civil war. One of the injured was Haniyeh's 27-year-old son, Abed.

<u>Hamas</u> officials said the 24-year-old guard was shot in the head during intense gunfire from Fatah forces.

"The bodyguard to Ismail Haniyeh was killed during an assassination attempt, " said <u>Hamas</u> spokesman Fawzi Barhoum.

Haniyeh cut short a trip abroad and was trying to return to Gaza in a bid to quell infighting between <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah. Israeli officials said from the beginning Haniyeh could cross into Gaza without the money. Egyptian mediators helped resolve the standoff and Haniyeh finally was allowed to cross into Gaza late Thursday. But Maria Telleria, spokeswoman for European monitors at the crossing, said Haniyeh left the funds, estimated at \$35US million, in Egypt.

After he crossed, there was a new burst of gunfire and Haniyeh's convoy was forced to speed away. Officials said Haniyeh was unharmed but his son was shot and slightly injured in the exchange.

Arriving home around midnight, Haniyeh was furious about the gunfire at his convoy.

He blamed Israel for the delay but added: "We know the party that shot directly at our cars, injuring some of the people with me...and we also know how to deal with this."

About 50 gunmen greeted Haniyeh at his home in a refugee camp next to Gaza City, firing in the air and throwing candies.

Earlier Thursday, pro-Fatah Palestinian officers arrested a <u>Hamas</u>-linked militant in the killing of the three young sons of a Fatah security chief. The militant's allies retaliated by kidnapping a security officer.

Hamas takes over border crossing

Thursday's gunbattle at the border erupted after <u>Hamas</u> militants, angry that Israel was preventing Haniyeh from returning, stormed the Rafah terminal.

The pro-Fatah Presidential Guard, responsible for securing the area, opened fire, setting off a gunfight. Terrified travellers ran for cover, some carrying their luggage. Crying <u>women</u> and children hid behind walls and taxis, while the European monitors who police the crossing fled. Two <u>Hamas</u> militants were among those wounded.

The <u>Hamas</u> militants, chanting "God is Great, let's liberate this place" took over the arrival hall and border guards escorted the European monitors to safety. Two loud explosions rocked the area and security officials said militants had blown a hole in the border fence about a kilometre from the terminal.

The rampage destroyed furniture and computer equipment inside the terminal and plunged the area into darkness. Hospital officials said at least 27 people were wounded, two seriously.

Load-Date: January 8, 2007



Hamas pounds home attack on fatah

Aberdeen Press and Journal June 14, 2007 Thursday

Copyright 2007 DC Thomson Co Ltd All Rights Reserved

Section: Pg. 18

Length: 245 words

Body

<u>Hamas</u> pounded Gaza City's three main security compounds and President Mahmoud Abbas's headquarters with mortars, grenades and assault rifles yesterday, calling on beleaguered Fatah forces to surrender, in an apparent attempt to take control of the entire Gaza Strip.

In one dramatic victory, hundreds of members of a Fatah-allied clan that had fought fiercely surrendered to masked *Hamas* gunmen and were led, arms raised in the air, to a nearby mosque.

Fatah fighters desperately tried to cling to their positions, but appeared outgunned by <u>Hamas</u>. One of the battles raged around the beachside headquarters of the Fatah-allied Preventive Security.

Dr Wael Abdel Jawad, a physician trapped in his apartment in the line of fire, said he heard Fatah fighters shouting at colleagues on an adjacent roof to send them more ammunition. "All of us are terrified here," he said. Fatah's leader, Mr Abbas, who is in the West Bank, called the fighting "madness," but his appeals for a ceasefire rang increasingly hollow as *Hamas* gunmen took over or destroyed one base or another of his security forces. Later, his office and residential compound in Gaza came under attack, with *Hamas* fighters firing at Fatah fighters guarding an access road.

<u>Hamas</u> has ignored calls for a ceasefire and its hard-liners said the offensive would continue. At least 15 people were killed in fighting yesterday, bringing the total in the four-day campaign to more than 50.

Among those killed were two women.

Load-Date: June 15, 2007



Israel hits at Hamas with more airstrikes

The International Herald Tribune
May 26, 2007 Saturday

Copyright 2007 International Herald Tribune All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 850 words

Byline: Isabel Kershner - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Taghreed El-Khodary contributed reporting from Gaza City.

*

The Israeli Army continued its air campaign against the <u>Hamas</u> infrastructure in the Gaza Strip late Thursday and Friday, striking at least eight locations, an army spokesman said.

One attack struck a guard post near the home of Ismail Haniya, the Palestinian prime minister and a member of *Hamas*, in the Shati refugee camp in Gaza City, Palestinian officials said.

The army spokesman, speaking on the condition of anonymity under army rules, said Haniya had "definitely not" been the target of the nighttime attack on Shati. Instead, the army had aimed at, and hit, "a building used by *Hamas*" in the camp, he said.

The guard post, described by local residents as little more than a container or a tin shack, was empty at the time of the attack. Haniya was photographed soon afterward inspecting the damage.

[In another strike, two <u>Hamas</u> militants were killed and five people were wounded after an Israeli missile hit their car, security officials said, according to The Associated Press in Gaza City. The army confirmed that it had targeted militants of a <u>Hamas</u> rocket production team on their way to attack Israel.]

The Israeli military campaign began May 17, soon after <u>Hamas</u> said it would resume its rocket attacks on Israel from Gaza, ending a fragile six-month cease-fire. Smaller Palestinian factions had consistently violated the cease-fire, firing a trickle of rockets throughout. But the number of rocket launchings rose sharply in mid-May, and about 220 rockets have been fired toward Israel since then, according to the Israeli Army.

On Friday afternoon, a rocket hit the yard of a house in the Israeli border town of Sderot, slightly wounding three civilians, army officials said. The Qassam Brigades, the military wing of *Hamas*, claimed responsibility for that attack and for firing six rockets at Israel on Friday morning.

Other Israeli airstrikes on Friday targeted buildings that the army said belonged to <u>Hamas</u>. There were strikes in Khan Yunis and Jabaliya. A structure that the army described as an Islamic Jihad weapons-manufacturing facility

Israel hits at Hamas with more airstrikes

was hit in the southern town of Rafah. Palestinian officials described it as a metal workshop. In Gaza City, missiles hit a money-changing business that the army said was "involved in transferring funds to terror organizations."

At least 21 Palestinians were wounded Friday, said Dr. Moawiya Hassanain, a spokesman for the Palestinian Ministry of Health. He said 2 of the wounded were members of the <u>Hamas</u> police militia known as the Executive Force, while 19 were civilians, including 3 <u>women</u> and 7 children.

Ahmad Youssef, an adviser of Haniya, said the attack on the guard post was meant to send "a message of threats." He added, "These are all messages and signals that aim to undermine and hamper the movement of the prime minister."

Israeli officials have recently suggested that leaders of the political wing of <u>Hamas</u> should not consider themselves immune. On Thursday, the Israeli Army arrested 33 prominent Palestinians associated with <u>Hamas</u> in the West Bank, including a cabinet minister and several legislators and mayors. The army described those arrested as "senior members of the <u>Hamas</u> terror organization."

The United States voiced mild criticism over the arrests. "The detention of elected members of the Palestinian government and legislature does raise particular concerns for us," said Tom Casey, a State Department spokesman.

Israel, the United States and many Western countries define <u>Hamas</u> as a terrorist organization. The United States refuses to deal with the <u>Hamas</u> ministers in the Palestinian unity government.

The Israeli military has focused its attacks on rocket-launching cells, <u>Hamas</u> military positions and weapons storage facilities. One Israeli woman has been killed and two civilians have been seriously wounded by the recent barrages of rockets fired from Gaza.

Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president and a member of Fatah, has been trying to persuade the various Palestinian factions, including *Hamas*, to cease the rocket fire, in the hope of restoring the cease-fire.

[The factions met at Abbas's offices in Gaza, but Abbas did not attend, The Associated Press reported. Participants said it ended without agreement.]

[Egypt will act as host to talks in the coming days with Palestinian politicians, Palestinian and Egyptian officials said Friday, Reuters reported from the West Bank city of Ramallah. The Palestinian deputy prime minister, Azzam al-Ahmad, a close aide to Abbas, said he and another Fatah leader, Rawhi Fattouh, would travel to Cairo on Saturday to meet Egyptian officials.]

Though Fatah sits in the unity government with <u>Hamas</u>, they remain bitter rivals. About 50 Palestinians were killed in a recent bout of fighting between the two factions.

At a rally in the Jabaliya refugee camp in northern Gaza on Friday, a <u>Hamas</u> leader, Nizar Rayyan, criticized Abbas for trying to end the rocket fire. "We will not listen to him," Rayyan said of the president, according to Reuters. "Abbas hates rockets just like we hate the Jews."

Load-Date: June 3, 2007



Hamas threatens more bombings in Israel

The Leader-Post (Regina, Saskatchewan)

May 18, 2007 Friday

Final Edition

Copyright 2007 The Leader-Post, a division of Canwest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A5

Length: 759 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, CanWest News Service

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

JERUSALEM -- Fighting between <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah has eased slightly in Gaza, but <u>Hamas</u> threatened a new wave of suicide bombings inside Israel to avenge multiple air raids over the Palestinian territory by Israeli warplanes on Thursday that killed four <u>Hamas</u> fighters, including one described as a senior commander.

Three other Palestinians died in factional violence. Two of them were shot as they attended funerals in southern Gaza for some of the more than 40 other Palestinians who have been killed since <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah resumed their bloody conflict over the weekend after a three-month lull.

The punishing Israeli air strikes, that began with several that killed five Palestinians on Wednesday, did not stop <u>Hamas</u> from launching 17 more Qassam rockets into the Jewish state during the past 24 hours, including one missile that crashed through the roof of a high school and into a classroom while students took exams in the next room.

Under intense pressure from terrified and angry residents of communities in southern Israel that lie within range of <u>Hamas</u>'s Qassams, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert also ordered several tanks and a small number of infantry to cross into northern Gaza for the first time in six months, to better observe areas often used to launch rockets. The Israeli Defence Forces positioned artillery units just outside the Palestinian enclave so as to be able to immediately counter-fire after any rocket launches.

Israel also electronically took control of radio stations in Gaza to warn residents there to flee places used to launch rockets, an Israeli television station reported.

"We have had enough," Olmert's spokeswoman Miri Eisin told Reuters shortly before the various military operations began. But Israeli officials emphasized these were "defensive operations" and that Israel has no intention of undertaking a major ground offensive in the territory.

Several thousand mostly Russian and Ethiopian Jews from the town of Sderot, which lies in the western Negev desert within what Israelis called 'the Gaza belt,' were evacuated by the government and by a Russian-Israeli businessman Thursday before the operation was stopped because not enough beds could be found for all those wanting to flee the area. Many residents have taken to living in bomb shelters.

Hamas threatens more bombings in Israel

The Israeli air strikes seriously damaged a multi-storey <u>Hamas</u> compound, a trailer used as a barracks and two vehicles with men inside. Palestinian hospitals reported dozens of wounded, including <u>women</u> and children who were injured in the bombing of the compound.

Khaled Meshal, <u>Hamas</u>'s top leader, who lives in Syria, claimed on his group's Al-Aqsa television station Thursday that Israel's actions presented Palestinians with a "historic opportunity" to bring <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah together to fight their common enemy.

But there was little sign of that in Gaza. The fourth ceasefire in as many days held slightly better than the others, but gunmen still controlled all the major roads and there were several shootouts.

For the first time since fighting erupted again, some Gazans briefly surfaced to purchase food, but most remained in their homes, mindful of how ambushes and mortar, rocket and sniper attacks could happen at any time.

The security situation remained so unstable that Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas postponed a visit to Gaza on Thursday. Abbas, who leads Fatah, was to have met with Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, the highest ranking <u>Hamas</u> leader not living in exile.

<u>Hamas</u>' latest threats to resume what it called 'martyrdom operations' against Israel's response to <u>Hamas</u> rocket attacks have complicated an already unpredictable, deeply troubling situation within Gaza. The Qassam attacks on Israel, and what many Israelis have regarded as their government's slow response to them, have once again called into question Olmert's leadership abilities. The current situation reminded Israelis of their military's failure to prevent Hezbollah from launching thousands of rockets from Lebanon last summer.

Former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is leading opinion polls to succeed Olmert, demanded that Israel cut off power and other public services to Gaza.

At a press conference in Ramallah in the West Bank, Mustafa Barghouti, the Palestinian information minister, warned the government might collapse if the factional fighting did not stop, leading to a total separation between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. He called on *Hamas* and Fatah "to pull their gunmen off the streets of Gaza" and appealed for new security mechanisms that involved both factions.

Load-Date: May 18, 2007



Hamas PM returns to Gaza minus cash

The Toronto Star

December 15, 2006 Friday

Copyright 2006 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: NEWS; Pg. A19

Length: 428 words

Byline: Nidal al-Mughrabi, REUTERS, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dateline: GAZA

Body

Israel blocked Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh from carrying \$35 million (U.S.) into Gaza yesterday, allowing the *Hamas* leader to return from fundraising in Muslim countries only after he left the cash behind.

The test of wills along the Egyptian frontier ratcheted up tensions in the Gaza Strip, where a political showdown between <u>Hamas</u> and the rival Fatah faction of moderate President Mahmoud Abbas has boiled over in recent days into a series of killings.

At least 19 people were wounded in clashes that erupted at the Rafah border crossing between gunmen from <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah after Haniyeh was forced to cool his heels for hours in Egypt, hospital officials said. Among the wounded was Haniyeh's grown son.

Terrified travellers ran for cover, some carrying their luggage. Crying <u>women</u> and children hid behind walls and taxis, while the European monitors who police the crossing fled.

Palestinian officials said Haniyeh had planned to enter the impoverished Gaza Strip with \$35 million in suitcases. In the past two weeks, he visited countries including Iran, Qatar and Sudan to raise money for his government, which has struggled to function despite Western sanctions imposed after <u>Hamas</u>, an Islamist group dedicated to Israel's destruction, won election in January.

An Israeli security source said it was the money, not Haniyeh, that Israel wanted to keep out of Gaza.

Nearly seven hours later and as <u>Hamas</u>-Fatah clashes continued at Rafah, Haniyeh crossed into the terminal. Leaving the area, bodyguards piled around him in a pickup truck to protect him from flying bullets.

<u>Hamas</u> sources said the money stayed in Egypt with two delegation officials who would sort out what to do with it.

Celebratory gunfire rang out along the route Haniyeh's convoy took from Rafah, in southern Gaza, to Gaza City.

Israel, the United States and the European Union regard <u>Hamas</u> as a terror organization and cut off direct aid to the Palestinian government after <u>Hamas</u> rejected demands that it recognize the Jewish state, renounce violence and accept existing peace accords.

Over the past two weeks, Haniyeh has received pledges of up to \$350 million.

Hamas PM returns to Gaza minus cash

<u>Hamas</u> says it uses financial support from sympathetic states to pay government salaries and keep essential public services running. Israel says it believes the money goes to <u>Hamas</u> militants.

Earlier yesterday, pro-Fatah

Palestinian officers arrested a *Hamas*-linked militant in the killing of the three young sons of a Fatah security chief. The militant's allies retaliated by kidnapping a security officer.

REUTERS, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Load-Date: December 15, 2006



Hamas takes upper hand in Gaza struggle

Guardian.com June 13, 2007

Copyright 2007 Guardian Unlimited (© Guardian Newspapers Limited) All rights reserved

theguardian

Length: 837 words

Highlight: <u>Hamas</u> fighters launched another wave of fierce attacks today plunging the Gaza strip closer towards civil war in what appeared to be a carefully coordinated effort to seize control on the streets.

Body

<u>Hamas</u> fighters launched another wave of fierce attacks today plunging the Gaza strip closer towards civil war in what appeared to be a carefully coordinated effort to seize control on the streets.

Gunmen from <u>Hamas</u> and its rival faction, Fatah, fought heavy battles in the north and south of the strip, with the Islamist movement repeatedly winning the upper hand.

In a day of bloodshed, <u>Hamas</u> fighters seized security posts that provide control of two major roads running north to south through Gaza and took control of Khan Yunis, a town in the south. Then last night then began attacking several security posts in Gaza City.

At least 17 Palestinians were killed, including several civilians, among them two workers for the UN refugee agency UNRWA. Dozens more were injured, including two other UN staff.

In the past four days of fighting, at least 65 people have died and there appears to be little sign of any end to the conflict. "This is madness, the madness that is going on in Gaza now," said Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president and Fatah leader, who remains in the West Bank.

Mr Abbas spoke by telephone to Khaled Meshal, the head of the <u>Hamas</u> political bureau in Damascus, but they failed to agree a ceasefire.

In a broadcast on a <u>Hamas</u> radio station, the movement said it was preparing an offensive to seize control of Mr Abbas's presidential compound in Gaza City and the nearby National Security headquarters.

<u>Hamas</u> warned Fatah forces in northern Gaza to give up their weapons before Friday evening, while Fatah commanders told their forces to stay and fight.

At one stage today, several hundred people gathered for a protest in Gaza City against the violence, shouting through loudspeakers "Don't shoot" and "National Unity".

<u>Hamas</u> gunmen tried to scatter the crowd by firing into the air and elsewhere in the city, snipers took up positions on several tower blocks.

Hamas takes upper hand in Gaza struggle

This week's fighting is the latest episode in a worsening power struggle between <u>Hamas</u>, which won elections last year, and its defeated rival, Fatah. For more than six months the two have fought on the streets of Gaza, violating dozens of ceasefires and effectively tearing up a major political agreement in February that produced a coalition government.

There are growing calls for the deployment of an international peacekeeping force to the small, overcrowded and fraught Gaza Strip.

Javier Solana, the European Union foreign policy chief, said the EU would consider sending troops if an international force was established. The Italian foreign minister, Massimo D'Alema, said he supported the idea, and Ehud Olmert, the Israeli prime minister, has already raised the issue.

On the ground in Gaza today, the fighting appeared to be driving the national unity government towards collapse.

<u>Hamas</u> fighters took the town of Khan Younis, in the south of Gaza, after a bomb destroyed a tunnel running underneath a Fatah security headquarters. At least one man was killed and eight injured in the blast.

Fatah forces retreated further south to the border town of Rafah and at least 40 Fatah gunmen were reported to have fled into Egypt to seek sanctuary.

"Khan Younis is finished, but we are still holding on in Rafah," said Ziad Sarafandi, a senior Fatah security official.

Near Gaza City several hundred men, <u>women</u> and children from the Bakr clan, which is allied to Fatah, surrendered and walked with their hands raised into a nearby mosque. The clan, like many others in Gaza, has its own armed force of around 200 men.

The UN refugee agency scaled back its operations and warned that food deliveries and medical care was at risk.

"We are extremely concerned for the plight of the 1 million refugees who depend on UNRWA's food assistance and medical services, however we cannot deliver food and medical services in the crossfire" said John Ging, director of the agency's Gaza operation.

For the second day, fighting spilled over from the <u>Hamas</u> heartland of Gaza into the West Bank. Fatah gunmen in Nablus surrounded a pro-<u>Hamas</u> television company and began to attack its offices.

Alvaro de Soto, the just-retired UN coordinator for the Middle East, has awarned/a that international hostility to *Hamas* could have grave consequences by persuading millions of Muslims that democratic methods do not work.

In a confidential report published in the Guardian today, Mr de Soto criticised the international boycott imposed after *Hamas* won elections, which he argues contributed to the current crisis.

"The steps taken by the international community with the presumed purpose of bringing about a Palestinian entity that will live in peace with its neighbour, Israel have had precisely the opposite effect," he wrote.

The US and Israel had both erred in seeing <u>Hamas</u> as a passing phenomenon, the envoy argued. "Erroneous treatment of <u>Hamas</u> could have repercussions far beyond the Palestinian territories because of its links to the Muslim Brotherhood, whose millions of supporters... might conclude that peaceful and democratic means are not the way to go," he wrote.

Load-Date: June 13, 2007



Many Gazans frightened by Hamas victory

Yukon News (Yukon)
June 22, 2007 Friday
Final Edition

Copyright 2007 Yukon News All Rights Reserved

Section: INTERNATIONAL; Pg. 12

Length: 1100 words

Byline: Steven Erlanger, New York Times Service

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip - Muhammad al-Borniah, 23, shook a little on Tuesday as he showed off the tiny cell, No. 13, where he spent five days in January as a prisoner of the Palestinian Preventive Security, the elite Fatah force that dealt with subversion.

"I felt then that I was dead, that I would never come out of there," Borniah said, his voice wavering. Then he threw back his shoulders.

"Now," he said, dressed in his uniform of the <u>Hamas</u> military wing, the Qassam Brigades, with two automatic rifles over his shoulders, "now I feel victory."

Borniah had been arrested at his mosque by Fatah gunmen, in a series of tit-for-tat kidnappings between the two Palestinian factions, part of the cycle of vengeance that culminated last week in the routing of Fatah and the military takeover of this impoverished coastal strip by *Hamas*.

Outside of the Preventive Security compound, the Qassam Brigades, Gaza's new security force, patrolled what once was Fatah's centre of power, feared by every *Hamas* member.

They showed off in their new Japanese trucks and Jeep Grand Cherokees, seized from Fatah.

It was here that many *Hamas* leaders were beaten and tortured.

Now, in the fifth day of post-revolutionary Gaza, the place is trashed and looted, toilets and tiles ripped away, offices emptied of computers, furniture, light fixtures, doors and electric wiring.

Bits of plastic plumbing dot the courtyard, mixed with broken glass, burned files, the charred manual to a computer and the melted paper tray of a photocopier.

A green <u>Hamas</u> flag flies over the building, a tourist site for <u>Hamas</u> members and their families. Um Omran came to see where her son had been tortured. She said he was killed in 2003 by Fatah.

Many Gazans frightened by Hamas victory

Her husband's brother had also been held there. He was Adnan al-Ghul, the man credited with inventing the first Qassam rocket in 2001, a weapon that <u>Hamas</u> has used to terrorize Israeli cities like Sderot. He was killed by the Israelis in 2004.

"We're all Qassam in our family, the <u>women</u> and the men," Omran said. "I wanted to see this place where my son was tortured."

Asked if she was ashamed by the bloodletting among Palestinians, she said: "Fatah pushed us toward this."

But *Hamas*' victory has left many Gazans feeling vulnerable and afraid.

Ghada, 50, a Palestinian Christian, is afraid to go outside. When she does, "You have all these men suddenly in the street with these long beards, and they look at you in surprise, from up to down, and their look is, like, why are you like this?"

Several times, young men have told her she should be killed for not wearing a head covering.

Ghada, who asked that her last name not be used, and who works for an Arab consulate here, now will only take a taxi to her office

On Sunday, the Latin Church and Rosary Sisters School were ransacked and looted, with crosses and Bibles destroyed. <u>Hamas</u> leaders condemned the attack and denied responsibility, but the small Christian community here is anxious.

"Many of us are thinking about leaving Gaza for the West Bank once the crossings are open," Ghada said. Then she said angrily, "I can't leave my home -- why should I leave it?"

A moment later, she said, "But I may leave for a time until the situation is more clear."

The Palestinian infighting has shamed everyone, she said.

"Look at how *Hamas* and Fatah fought each other, and they're both Palestinian and both Muslim," she said.

"If they do this to each other, what can they do to others? Now it's to the advantage of <u>Hamas</u> to make it calm, but afterward we don't know what they're up to."

In another recent attack also condemned by the <u>Hamas</u> leadership, a statue of the Unknown Soldier, a symbol of Palestine, was removed from a Gaza square and smashed.

Some Muslims believe that statuary, like portraiture, is forbidden.

There are other fears. A member of the Preventive Security Force, who asked not to be named, is in hiding, not trusting *Hamas*' assertions that no harm will come to him.

Tahani Skaik, a well-known painter here who also works for the Ministry of Agriculture, is afraid she will be fired from her job.

"There's so much we don't know," she said, shopping with her husband to stock up on staples like rice, flour, cooking oil and noodles, which are all running short due to the closing of the crossings in and out of Israel. "Everything is very vague," she said. "In a way, the day is darker than the night. There is no feeling of safety."

She went to her office on Tuesday, she said, adding, "I took home all my personal stuff."

Skaik, 50, wears a head scarf, but her family has been affiliated with Fatah. Their lives have bounced around the region -- they fled to Kuwait when Israel conquered Gaza in 1967, then fled Kuwait when Saddam Hussein invaded to come back to Gaza.

Many Gazans frightened by Hamas victory

"And now Palestinians are fighting a war among themselves -- this hurts us the most," she said.

She paints nationalist pictures of Palestine. Asked if a Palestinian state seemed any closer now, her face collapsed. "I feel now it's far away," she said. "As a Palestinian I feel very empty."

A shopkeeper, Hazen Hassouni, 36, said he was running very short on supplies of rice and potatoes, sugar, milk, yogurt and cheese.

He is not happy with the <u>Hamas</u> victory, but agrees with their edict not to raise prices due to shortages. Cigarettes, however, have gone up 30 per cent to more than three US dollars a pack, a large sum for Gaza.

He listens to the radio for news, but Fatah journalists at its two radio stations have fled, leaving only <u>Hamas</u> radio and television and the satellite channels.

Palestinian television, run by Fatah, has no office here now, but broadcasts from Ramallah, in the West Bank.

While few Gazans used to watch it, more do now, people say, just to hear Fatah's view of the news.

Asked if the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah, can restore his authority here, Hassouni laughed. "Abu Mazen?" he asked incredulously, using a common name for Abbas. "How? He's gone."

Inside Abbas' presidential compound here, near the beach, a mural of Yasser Arafat and Abbas is scarred, with chips of painted brick shot away by rifle rounds.

At the gate of the compound, to show some respect, is one of the only Palestinian flags to be seen today in Gaza City.

But there are two green *Hamas* flags on the gate, too, and one of them is placed higher than the Palestinian one.

Just outside, a convoy of armoured, white UN jeeps waited. Suddenly two Jeep Cherokees with police lights, now manned by the Qassam Brigades, arrived to escort them.

Sirens wailing, tires screeching, the new rulers of Gaza pulled out into the street to make sure that their foreign guests felt secure.

Graphic

Photo: Tyler Hicks, The New York Times; ON GUARD...:: Gunmen loyal to <u>Hamas</u> stand in front of a banner honouring the late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.;

Load-Date: June 23, 2007



Israel Hits Hamas Posts in Gaza With Airstrikes

The New York Times
May 26, 2007 Saturday
Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2007 The New York Times Company

Section: Section A; Column 3; Foreign Desk; Pg. 4

Length: 606 words

Byline: By ISABEL KERSHNER; Taghreed El-Khodary contributed reporting from Gaza City.

Dateline: JERUSALEM, May 25

Body

The Israeli Army continued its airstrikes against the <u>Hamas</u> infrastructure in the Gaza Strip late on Thursday and Friday, hitting at least eight different locations and taking aim at a rocket-launching cell, an army spokesman said.

One of the attacks struck a guard post close to the home of the Palestinian prime minister, Ismail Haniya of *Hamas*, in the Shati refugee camp in Gaza City, according to Palestinian officials.

The Israeli Army spokesman, speaking on condition of anonymity under army rules, said that Mr. Haniya was "definitely not" the target of the nighttime attack on Shati. Instead, the army had aimed at and hit "a building used by <u>Hamas</u>" in the camp, he said. The guard post, described by local residents as little more than a container or a tin shack, was empty at the time of the attack. Mr. Haniya was photographed soon after inspecting the damage.

Three <u>Hamas</u> militants were killed Friday night in an airstrike on their vehicle in Gaza City. The three, members of the <u>Hamas</u> military wing, had launched rockets at Israel, the Aqsa TV channel of <u>Hamas</u> and the Israeli Army said.

The Israeli military campaign began May 17, soon after <u>Hamas</u> announced that it would resume its rocket attacks on Israel from Gaza, ending a six-month cease-fire. Smaller Palestinian factions had consistently violated the cease-fire, firing a trickle of rockets. But the number of rocket launches rose sharply in mid-May, with about 220 rockets being fired toward Israel since then, according to the Israeli Army.

On Friday afternoon, a rocket landed in the yard of a house in the Israeli border town of Sderot, slightly wounding three civilians, army officials said, while another hit a factory shed. The military wing of <u>Hamas</u>, known as the Qassam Brigades, claimed responsibility for those attacks, and for firing six rockets at Israel on Friday morning.

Other Israeli airstrikes on Friday singled out buildings that the army said belonged to <u>Hamas</u>. There were strikes in Khan Yunis, to the south of Gaza City, and in Jabaliya, to the north. A structure the army described as an Islamic Jihad weapons manufacturing facility was hit in the town of Rafah. Palestinian officials described it as a metal workshop.

In Gaza City, Israeli missiles hit a money-changing business that the army said was "involved in transferring funds to terror organizations." No deaths were reported in those strikes, but at least 21 Palestinians were wounded, said Dr. Moawiya Hassanain, a spokesman for the Palestinian Ministry of Health. He said that two of the wounded were

Israel Hits Hamas Posts in Gaza With Airstrikes

members of the <u>Hamas</u> police militia known as the Executive Force, while 19 were civilians, including three <u>women</u> and seven children.

Ahmad Youssef, an adviser to Mr. Haniya, said the attack on the guard post in the Shati camp had been meant to send "a message of threats." Israeli officials have recently suggested that leaders of the political wing of <u>Hamas</u> should not consider themselves immune.

At least 38 Palestinians have been killed in nine days of Israeli airstrikes, according to Dr. Hassanain. The Israeli military says it has focused its attacks on rocket-launching cells, <u>Hamas</u> military positions and weapons-storage facilities. One Israeli has been killed and two have been seriously wounded by the rockets fired recently from Gaza.

The Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah, has been trying to persuade the various Palestinian factions, including *Hamas*, to stop the rocket fire. Although Fatah is in the unity government with *Hamas*, the two remain rivals. About 50 Palestinians were killed in recent fighting between the two factions.

http://www.nytimes.com

Load-Date: May 26, 2007



For Hamas, a victory overcomes old pains

The International Herald Tribune
June 21, 2007 Thursday

Copyright 2007 International Herald Tribune All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 5

Length: 954 words

Byline: Steven Erlanger - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: GAZA

Body

Muhammad al-Borniah, 23, shook a little as he showed off the tiny cell, No. 13, where he spent five days last January as a guest of Preventive Security, the Fatah force that dealt with subversion.

"I felt then that I was dead, that I would never come out of there," Borniah said, his voice wavering a little. Then he threw back his shoulders.

"Now," he said, dressed in his uniform of the <u>Hamas</u> military wing, the Qassam Brigades, with two automatic rifles over his shoulders, "now I feel victory."

Borniah had been arrested at his local mosque by Fatah gunmen, in a series of tit-for-tat kidnappings between Fatah and <u>Hamas</u>, part of the cycle of vengeance and struggle that ended last week with the routing of Fatah in Gaza.

He was thrown into a tiny cell in the lowest floor of the Preventive Security headquarters and tied to a chair, he said. Then he was beaten. The second day, he was given a mattress and a blanket, then brought upstairs.

"There was the real pain," he said. He spent two days tied to a chair, blindfolded, beaten, and his fingertips and toes shocked with electrical wires. He was then freed in a prisoner exchange.

He joined *Hamas* at 18, he said, and stayed underground with the military wing. Why join *Hamas*?

"It's the cleanest," he said, stroking his short dark beard. "If you talk about resistance, the best choice for me is <u>Hamas</u>. They come from the mosque."

Outside, the Qassam Brigades patrolled what once was Fatah's real center of power, feared by <u>Hamas</u> members, and showed off Japanese trucks and Jeep Grand Cherokees seized from Fatah. It was here that most <u>Hamas</u> leaders were brought after their arrests in 1996, when Yasser Arafat had to show that he was opposed to terrorism, and here that many say they were beaten and tortured.

Now the place is trashed and looted, toilets and tiles ripped away, offices emptied of computers, furniture, light fixtures, doors and wiring. Bits of plastic plumbing dot the courtyard, mixed with broken glass, burned files, the charred manual to a Dell computer and the melted paper tray of a photocopier.

For Hamas, a victory overcomes old pains

A green <u>Hamas</u> flag flies over the building, and it has become a sort of tourist site for <u>Hamas</u> members and their families.

Um Omran came to see the place where her husband's brother had been held. He was Adnan al-Ghul, the man credited for inventing the first Qassam rocket, in 2001. <u>Hamas</u> has used the rockets to terrorize the Israeli city of Sderot. He was killed by the Israelis in 2004. Omran said that her son was killed in 2003 by Fatah.

"We're all Qassam in our family, the <u>women</u> and the men," she said. "I wanted to see this place where my son was tortured."

Asked if she was ashamed by the bloodletting among Palestinians, she said, "Fatah pushed us toward this."

But for all the bravado of *Hamas*, its victory has left many Gazans feeling vulnerable. Ghada, 50, is a Christian. She asked that her last name not be used. She is afraid to go outside, she said.

When she does, "You have all these men suddenly in the street with these long beards, and they look at you in surprise, from up to down, and their look is, like, Why are you like this?"

Several times, young men have told her she should be killed for not wearing a head covering. She works for an Arab consulate here, but now will only take a taxi to her office.

On Sunday, the Latin Church and Rosary Sisters School were ransacked and looted, with crosses and Bibles destroyed. <u>Hamas</u> leaders condemned the attack and denied responsibility, but the small Christian community is anxious.

"Many of us are thinking about leaving Gaza for the West Bank once the crossings are open," Ghada said. Then she added angrily: "I can't leave my home. Why should I leave it?"

A moment later she said: "But I may leave for a time until the situation is more clear."

<u>Hamas</u> has a problem with its young and passionate members, who let their religious beliefs trump the political interests of the faction. In another attack condemned by <u>Hamas</u>, a statue of the Unknown Soldier, a symbol of Palestine, was removed from a Gaza square and smashed. Some Muslims believe that statuary, like portraiture, is forbidden.

A shopkeeper, Hazen Hassouni, 36, said that he was running very short on supplies of basic starches, sugar, milk, yogurt and cheese. He was not happy with the <u>Hamas</u> victory, but agreed with its edict not to raise prices because of shortages. Cigarettes, however, have gone up 30 percent, to more than \$3 a pack, a large sum for Gaza.

Hassouni listens to the radio for news, but Fatah journalists at its two radio stations have fled, leaving only *Hamas* radio and television and the satellite channels. Palestinian television, run by Fatah, has no office here any longer, but broadcasts from Ramallah in the West Bank. While few Gazans used to watch it, more do now, people said, just to hear Fatah's spin on the news.

Asked if the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah, can restore his authority here, Hassouni laughs. "Abu Mazen?" he asked incredulously, using Abbas's more common name. "How? He's gone."

Inside Abbas's presidential compound here, near the beach, a mural of Arafat and Abbas is scarred, chips of painted brick shot away by rifle rounds. At the gate of the compound, to show some respect, is one of the only Palestinian flags to be seen in Gaza City.

But there are two green *Hamas* flags on the gate, too, and one of them is placed higher than the Palestinian one.

Just outside, a convoy of armored, white, United Nations jeeps waited. Suddenly two Jeep Cherokees with police lights, now manned by the Qassam Brigades, arrived to escort them. Sirens wailing, tires screeching, the new rulers of Gaza pulled out to make sure that their foreign guests felt secure.

Load-Date: June 21, 2007



Hamas May Find It Needs Its Enemy

The New York Times

June 17, 2007 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2007 The New York Times Company

Section: Section 4; Column 4; Week in Review Desk; Pg. 1; THE WORLD

Length: 1306 words

Byline: By CRAIG S. SMITH and GREG MYRE

Body

ISLAMIST fighters of <u>Hamas</u> seized control of Gaza last week. For the first time in the history of the Palestinians' fight for nationhood, there seemed a real possibility that two Palestines rather than one might emerge -- one in Gaza, dominated by **Hamas**, the other in the West Bank, led by Fatah.

But Palestinian society is not so simple. There are many historical, economic and tribal loyalties that bind it together, and many of those cross, rather than coincide with, the frontiers of the two territories.

In addition, there are compelling reasons why the two communities need unity.

A look at the history of these territories, how they developed differently over time, and what their populations still share, shows why they are at odds now but also why it might be too early to write off the possibility that this breach can be bridged.

They have always had distinct traits, culturally and geographically -- the West Bank supporting a landlocked urban and agricultural society, Gaza facing the sea.

Those differences increased after the creation of Israel in 1948, when Gaza fell under the administration of Egypt and the West Bank was annexed by Jordan.

Egypt treated Gaza as a Palestinian enclave and encouraged a strong sense of Palestinian identity. Many Gazans who studied in Egypt during those years were influenced, in turn, by the Muslim Brotherhood, whose goal is to establish Islamic theocracies across the Arab world.

Back in Gaza, some of those men founded *Hamas* in 1987.

Jordan, on the other hand, suppressed Palestinian nationalism in favor of Jordanian identity and Palestinians in the West Bank were more influenced by the secular societies of Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, where many went to study. Others traveled even further abroad, bringing back a liberal view of the world.

By the time the two territories came under Israeli occupation together after the 1967 war, they were very different places. Their separate legal and educational systems weren't consolidated until after the Palestinian Authority was established in the mid-1990s.

Hamas May Find It Needs Its Enemy

There were high hopes back then that the two territories could be tied together into a Palestinian state. In signing the 1993 Oslo accords, Israel pledged to treat the West Bank and Gaza as "a single territorial unit" and guaranteed "safe passage" for Palestinians traveling between them.

A road specifically for Palestinians was established between the West Bank and Gaza, a distance of about 40 miles. It functioned, but sporadically, until the second Palestinian uprising began in September 2000.

When it was open, the traffic was largely one way, carrying unemployed Gazans to the West Bank in search of work in the better economy there.

But since Israel withdrew from Gaza in September 2005, effectively severing the remaining links between the two territories, the West Bank and Gaza have grown even further apart.

Gaza, which has suffered the most economically in the past few years, has become increasingly conservative and increasingly religious, largely due to the growing influence of *Hamas*.

<u>Women</u> in Gaza are more likely to be wear full Islamic dress and much less likely to work outside the home than their counterparts in the West Bank. Even in Gaza's large garment factories, the vast majority of the workers sitting behind the sewing machines are men.

Gaza's cultural life tends to center on the local mosque, and its small anemic economy consists almost entirely of small-scale businesses and jobs provided by the Palestinian Authority.

The West Bank, meanwhile, has a far richer economic life that includes industry, farming and a service sector. Its cities even have a few cinemas, art exhibitions, decent restaurants and a few night clubs.

In some ways, the current conflict is a local dispute specific to Gaza.

When Yasir Arafat returned from exile and established the Palestinian Authority in 1994, he divided his time between the West Bank and Gaza in an attempt to develop unity between the two territories.

But within two years, his security forces in Gaza, led by Muhammad Dahlan, were cracking down on <u>Hamas</u> leaders. Many <u>Hamas</u> leaders were jailed and their beards shaved to humiliate them. Some claim they were tortured.

<u>Hamas</u> has never forgiven Mr. Dahlan and other Fatah leaders for the harsh treatment, and those resentments have fueled tension in Gaza ever since.

When <u>Hamas</u> won national elections last year and formed a government, no one expected Mr. Dahlan's security forces to submit to <u>Hamas</u> control. To counter Mr. Dahlan's power, <u>Hamas</u> organized a security force of its own under the Ministry of the Interior.

It seemed only a matter of time before the two forces would clash in Gaza's narrow confines. The current crisis began when the Palestinian Authority president and Fatah leader, Mahmoud Abbas, appointed Mr. Dahlan as his national security adviser to oversee all security forces in the Palestinian territories.

While <u>Hamas</u> is now in control of Gaza and Fatah of the West Bank, neither has achieved total political support in either place, and each organization needs a political presence in both places to remain viable in the long term.

For now, <u>Hamas</u> appears to be winning, but its latest gains are primarily military, not political. While the movement is popular politically among the urban poor and the young in both the West Bank and Gaza, Fatah remains the stronger movement in the West Bank -- where people are relatively better off and where it has built an extensive system of patronage. It still has support among many moderate Gazans, too.

<u>Hamas</u>'s military victory last week obscures the fact that Fatah has been gaining political support in Gaza over the past year, according to Mouin Rabbani, an analyst at the International Crisis Group in Jordan. He says this may be

Hamas May Find It Needs Its Enemy

because a larger percentage of Gazans depend on Fatah finances to make a living. <u>Hamas</u>, meanwhile, has been gaining support in the West Bank because Palestinians there are discouraged by Fatah's corruption and policy failures, Mr. Rabbani says.

<u>Hamas</u> could face a backlash if Palestinians generally blame it for undermining unity. It could also be blamed for giving Israel, the United States and others further reason to isolate <u>Hamas</u> and work with Fatah in the West Bank at the expense of <u>Hamas</u> in Gaza.

The <u>Hamas</u>-Fatah divide also cuts across clan lines at a time when clan loyalty has been growing stronger, in Gaza in particular. If political factions only bring more chaos and insecurity, clan loyalties could take over.

Many ordinary Palestinians are upset with both factions for allowing the feud to spiral out of control and for their inability to work toward the larger goal of Palestinian statehood and the prospects of a secure economic future.

Unity would be an advantage economically on the most basic levels: Gaza could be an outlet to the world for West Bank products; the West Bank could expand the prospects for jobs and living space for poverty-stricken, overcrowded Gazans.

After the fighting last week, some people feared that <u>Hamas</u> might try to repeat in the West Bank the military victory that it won over Fatah in Gaza. But it is unlikely that that would sit well with the moderate Arab states that have backed <u>Hamas</u> and recently worked so hard to forge the unity government with Fatah that has now collapsed.

<u>Hamas</u> could even find itself shut off from Egypt, which is wary of encouraging a movement on its border that is inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood, which Egypt fights at home.

Palestinians in both the West Bank and Gaza, meanwhile, recognize that Fatah alone holds the lifeline of Western financial support.

So if military dominance gives <u>Hamas</u> bargaining power, the economic imperative of a unified Palestinian body politic argues, in the end, for some accommodation with Fatah.

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photos: Divided -- <u>Hamas</u> fighters after seizing the Gaza offices of President Mahmoud Abbas. (Photo by Suhaib Salem/Reuters)(pg. 4)

Wary -- Gaza during the fighting. (Photo by Mohammed Saber/European Pressphoto Agency)(pg. 1) Chart/Map: "Comparing the Two Territories" GAZA POPULATION (MILLIONS): 1.5 PER SQ. MILE: approx. 10,800 WEST BANK POPULATION (MILLIONS): 2.5 PER SQ. MILE: 1,150 PERCENT OF POPULATION AGE 14 AND UNDER GAZA: 48 WEST BANK: 42 FERTILITY RATE GAZA CHILDREN BORN PER WOMAN: 5.6 WEST BANK CHILDREN BORN PER WOMAN: 4.2 WORK AND JOBLESSNESS -- Unemployment for the combined territories is 20.3 percent. (Figures are not available for the individual territories.) OCCUPATIONS GAZA SERVICES: 70 INDUSTRY: 18 AGRICULTURE: 12 WEST BANK SERVICES: 55 INDUSTRY: 29 AGRICULTURE: 16 PERCENT OF PEOPLE BELOW POVERTY LINE GAZA: 63 WEST BANK: 46 Map of Gaza Strip and West Bank: At 139 square miles, the Gaza Strip is a little more than twice the size of the District of Columbia. The West Bank is 2,263 square miles, a little smaller than Delaware. (Source by C.I.A. World Factbook)(pg. 4)

Load-Date: June 17, 2007



Abbas swears in new government, excludes Hamas

Deseret Morning News (Salt Lake City)

June 18, 2007 Monday

Copyright 2007 The Deseret News Publishing Co.

Length: 1235 words

Byline: Karin Laub Associated Press

Body

RAMALLAH, West Bank -- Ignoring <u>Hamas'</u> vehement protests, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on Sunday swore in a new government without his political rivals, outlawed <u>Hamas</u> militias and said he'll push hard for a restoration of foreign aid to the Palestinians after a punishing 15-month boycott.

The blockade of <u>Hamas</u>-ruled Gaza intensified, meanwhile, as Israel halted fuel shipments. A run on fuel, bread and other basic supplies intensified, driving the price of a box of Marlboro cigarettes -- a reliable gauge of shortages -- up by a third.

<u>Hamas</u> seized control of Gaza last week after five days of intense fighting against forces loyal to Abbas' Fatah. The takeover prompted Abbas to dissolve a Fatah-<u>Hamas</u> coalition government and appoint a new Cabinet excluding the Islamic group.

The hurried swearing-in ceremony of the new Cabinet left the Palestinians effectively with two governments -- the <u>Hamas</u> leadership headed by deposed Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh in Gaza and the new Cabinet led by the Western-backed economist Salam Fayyad in the West Bank.

"The first priority of our government is security and the security situation," Fayyad told reporters. "The mission will be difficult and hard, but not impossible."

Fayyad, an independent, will retain his post as finance minister and serve as foreign minister in the emergency government. The small Cabinet is dominated by independents, including human-rights activists and business people.

In his speech, Fayyad stressed that the government represented Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. The Palestinians claim both areas for a state, but the internal strife has endangered that goal.

Addressing the Palestinians in Gaza, he said: "You are in our hearts, and the top of our agenda. The dark images, the shameful things that are alien to our traditions ... are not going to stop us." It is "time to work together for Palestine," he said.

Abbas cleared the way for the Cabinet to take power by issuing a decree that annulled a law requiring the government to be approved by parliament, which is dominated by <u>Hamas</u>. He also issued a decree outlawing <u>Hamas</u>' militias "due to their military coup against the Palestinian legitimacy and its institutions."

Abbas swears in new government, excludes Hamas

However, Abbas' attempts to assert control only deepened the Palestinian divisions. In Gaza, Haniyeh called the new government illegal and insisted he remains in power. "The national unity government asserts here that we are fulfilling our duty according to our law," he said.

In the showdown, much of the international community, including the U.S., the European Union and moderate Arab states, is backing Abbas. Declarations of support were likely to be followed soon by a resumption of foreign aid to the Palestinian Authority, which was cut when <u>Hamas</u> took office last year. The sanctions have caused widespread suffering in the Palestinian areas.

"The first goal we are working to achieve is to end the siege and have a unique relationship with all the nations," Abbas said after swearing in the new Cabinet.

Both Israel and the United States already have said they will work to bolster Abbas, while isolating *Hamas*. The U.S., EU and Israel consider *Hamas*, which has killed hundreds of Israelis in suicide bombings, a terrorist group.

In New York, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said the new Palestinian government would have a "genuine partner" in Israel.

"I think that despite what has happened in the last two days there is ... a genuine opportunity that the moderate forces headed by President Abbas will be able to form a solid government administered by the Palestinians," Olmert said in a speech to a Jewish conference.

He indicated that Israel could ease travel restrictions on the West Bank and release Palestinian tax receipts frozen after the *Hamas*-led government took power last year.

The situation in Gaza is expected to dominate Olmert's meeting at the White House on Tuesday.

In an interview Sunday, the top U.S. diplomat in Jerusalem said that Washington will fully support Abbas' new government and resume aid.

U.S. Consul General Jacob Walles said Abbas' government represents both Gaza and the West Bank, even though "it's true now that (it) does not have a great ability to influence events in Gaza."

"We're not going to lose sight of the need to begin a process between Israel and the Palestinians to resolve the fundamental problems, but before we can do that I think we need to get the (Palestinian) house in order first," he told the Associated Press.

The isolation of Gaza has raised fears of a humanitarian crisis, because its borders have been closed by Israel and Egypt.

In Gaza, panicked residents stocked up, fearing growing shortages of food, fuel and other staples.

With cigarette prices soaring, sandwich seller Mohammed Sheik said he bought half a pack of the cheap locally made "Jamal" brand. He tried to pace himself because it might be his last.

The Israeli fuel company Dor Alon said Sunday it was cutting of fuel supplies immediately to Gaza's gas stations. The company is the sole provider of gasoline to Gaza.

Dor Alon will continue to ship fuel to Gaza's electricity power plant, the company said, but about 30 percent of Gazans have been cut off from the electric grid because of infrastructure damage caused by the fighting, and they rely upon generators for power.

Shipments into the territory dried up during last week's fighting, and workers at Gaza's only fuel warehouse said reserves had already run out. Palestinian health officials warned the fuel shortage could immobilize ambulances and prevent food and medicine deliveries.

Abbas swears in new government, excludes Hamas

"The results will be Gaza in full darkness, with no cars," said Asef Hamdi, a worker at a Gaza gas station. Palestinian official Saeb Erekat appealed to Israel and the international community not to cut off supplies to Gaza. "Residents must not be punished for the bloody coup staged by *Hamas*," he said.

Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Mark Regev said Israel was aware of the humanitarian dangers facing the Gaza Strip. "No one, including Israel, wants to accentuate hardship that already exists in Gaza as a result of the internal conflict," he said. But he said Israel has not yet figured out a way to deal with the *Hamas* rulers of Gaza.

Meanwhile, about 300 Gazans remained trapped at the Erez border crossing with Israel, hoping to escape <u>Hamas</u> rule, Israeli officials said. Nervous pro-Fatah security officials at the border ordered cameramen not to film their faces, as children slept on their mother's laps and on the floor.

Israel said it was only letting the staff of international organizations, people with special permission and humanitarian cases to cross. The restrictions have created a chaotic scene at the terminal.

"We aren't allowed to let them in," said military spokesman Shlomo Dror.

Israeli Channel 2 TV showed scenes of <u>women</u> and children stranded at the terminal. "We want to enter Israel. If they don't, <u>Hamas</u> will slaughter us," an old woman screamed hysterically.

In southern Gaza, meanwhile, 15 members of <u>Hamas'</u> militia guarded the empty Rafah border crossing into Egypt. Officials said about 100 people remained stranded on the Egyptian side of the border, waiting to return to Gaza. Most of the people are Fatah men who fled during the infighting, and Egypt has refused to grant them refuge.

More than 50 people have returned to Gaza in the past two days after receiving promises of amnesty from *Hamas*.

Load-Date: June 18, 2007



Wary Gazans adjusting to Hamas rule in subtle ways

Deseret Morning News (Salt Lake City)

July 1, 2007 Sunday

Copyright 2007 The Deseret News Publishing Co.

Length: 913 words

Byline: Sarah el Deeb Associated Press

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip -- Men are growing beards to show devotion to Islam, <u>women</u> are lowering hemlines, coffee shop debates on politics have fallen silent -- Gazans are adjusting to <u>Hamas</u> rule.

The changes are largely pre-emptive since <u>Hamas</u> has avoided a heavy-handed religious crackdown and assured Gazans the movement is not setting up a harsh Islamic regime, akin to Taliban rule in Afghanistan.

Still, many people are apprehensive, their fears stoked by <u>Hamas</u> hard-liners like Mahmoud Zahar, who said this week that he envisions a time when "with God's help, Islam will be in every home."

Not making enemies is a preferred survival tactic two weeks after <u>Hamas</u> militiamen defeated Fatah fighters loyal to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

"It's not safe to say anything," said Samir Filfel, 42, a school guard who spent Friday with his wife and 10 children at Gaza City's beach. Reflecting his caution, he erected a tent made of *Hamas*, Fatah and PLO flags as a sunshade.

"I don't know which group to support," he said, pointing to what he called his "national unity tent."

Emad, captain of a small pleasure boat, said he stopped talking politics with his customers. "When we go home, we can talk about <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah," said the skipper, who would give only his first name in fear of angering <u>Hamas</u> militants.

At the Miami Studio barbershop, the most popular shave allows the wearer to mingle with any crowd. Known as "the sword," it's a thin beard running from the sideburns along the jaw. It's trendy, and while not strictly in line with the bushy beard favored by Islamic hard-liners, it covers enough chin to be accepted by *Hamas* supporters, barber Nael Abu Bakr said.

At Gaza City's PLO flag shop, owner Tarek Abu Dayya is also avoiding commitment.

He ordered mugs with a picture of Ismail Haniyeh, the politician that <u>Hamas</u> insists is still the Palestinian prime minister even though he was fired by Abbas after the Gaza takeover. For now, the mugs will have only Haniyeh's picture, not his title.

"Maybe in a month, we will have elections, and he (Haniyeh) would be president," Abu Dayya said.

Large posters of Haniyeh and the late PLO leader Yasser Arafat, a perennial favorite at the shop, take up the main wall. Abbas posters have been relegated to a corner, and the folded-up yellow flags of Fatah are tucked away on backroom shelves.

Wary Gazans adjusting to Hamas rule in subtle ways

In a week, Abu Dayya has sold almost 1,000 green <u>Hamas</u> flags and has run out of <u>Hamas</u> T-shirts and car banners. <u>Hamas'</u> militia, the Executive Force, which flies black-on-white flags, has put in an order for 100 banners for its new posts, some of them seized from Fatah during the fighting.

The fierce-looking militiamen in black uniforms have turned from menace to helper for some Gazans.

By dialing 109, <u>women</u> can quickly summon help if they feel harassed on the streets. Shoppers have been known to fight price-gouging by threatening to call the Executive Force, which advertises the emergency number on car stickers. During Fatah rule, police rarely showed up to settle disputes.

For many Gazans, a sense of personal safety after a year of factional fighting is the upside of <u>Hamas</u> rule. There is no more fear of stumbling into the middle of a street battle or getting hit by a stray bullet.

Under the motto of security, <u>Hamas</u> has also banned a beloved custom -- firing in the air at weddings. Halima, a 35-year-old guest at a recent wedding, said the bridegroom was taken away by <u>Hamas</u> men until his family handed over the weapons they had been shooting during the celebration.

There are no signs yet of *Hamas* trying to impose strict Islamic rule.

Even before the takeover, Gaza had become increasingly conservative, a response to poverty, isolation and fighting with Israel. The vast majority of <u>women</u> wear head scarves and a growing number even put on face veils, which were unheard of in the Palestinian territories a generation ago.

Ibrahim Ibrach, a political analyst, said <u>Hamas</u> wants to cement its rule, not alienate Gazans with draconian measures. This could change, he said, if Gaza's isolation continues for a long time.

Mosque preacher Khalil Yassin said distrust of *Hamas* is undeserved, saying the movement would never use force to spread its beliefs.

"The problem is people don't understand <u>Hamas</u> well," he said while sitting in the shade at the beach next to his wife, who was covered from head to toe.

Nearby, 30 young men from his mosque splashed in the water, some floating with a huge <u>Hamas</u> flag. "We have total conviction that God is on our side," Yassin said.

Yet in a time of uncertainty, many don't want to take chances.

Tailors say some customers have asked them to lower hemlines, and they no longer get requests for making pants tighter.

Dina al-Ankar, a 23-year-old social worker, said she recently got a modesty lecture from a taxi driver because she wore a tight top. The next day, her mother made her wear a long shirt over her jeans. "My mom was afraid. She told me not to cause trouble," al-Ankar said.

Mohammed Tawil, 24, who sells **women**'s clothing, said he grew a beard during Gaza's civil war when he was too depressed to shave.

Now he is thinking of keeping the facial hair because it gives him a sense of belonging. When he recently visited a *Hamas* relative, he said, he felt he was one of the guys. "They talked freely and gossiped, as if I was one of them."

But Tawil is staunchly secular and feels he is betraying his convictions. "I am not sure if it is evil or good. I am still testing," he said of his beard.

Load-Date: July 1, 2007



Israel must negotiate with Hamas

The Independent (London)

June 18, 2007 Monday

First Edition

Copyright 2007 Independent Print Ltd All Rights Reserved



Length: 1126 words **Byline:** JOHANN HARI

Body

The enemies of the Palestinian people have been presenting the political chaos of the past week as evidence that they are premodern savages, capable only of building a Mogadishu on the Mediterranean. But on Wednesday afternoon, the real voice of the Palestinian people echoed out, for a fleeting moment.

Thousands of protesters - mostly <u>women</u> - took to the streets. They called not for sharia law or Qassam rockets against Israeli cities, but for peace. Amal Hellis, a 35-year-old mother-of-two, said: "I am not afraid. I will die to save my family and to save Palestine." Her eldest son Med-hat is a member of Fatah; her youngest son Refaat belongs to <u>Hamas</u>. When the marchers reached the Al Ghifary tower near the beachfront, they were fired on by gunmen - but they did not run away. The old <u>women</u> and their granddaughters stood in the crossfire, waving Palestinian flags and singing "Give Peace A Chance".

<u>Hamas</u> gunmen fired from above; Fatah fighters threatened them on the ground. The <u>women</u> surrounded the Fatah man, forcing him with nothing but plain moral pressure to lower his rifle. Only when one of the protesters was caught in the chest by a sniper did they finally disperse.

These protesters speak for a majority of Palestinians. In the most recent poll of them conducted by the Palestinian Centre for Policy and Survey Research, 63 per cent supported full recognition of Israel in return for a proper Palestinian state. These supporters of a negotiated peace include, crucially, a majority of *Hamas* supporters.

This means there is actually a bigger pro-peace constituency in Palestine than in Israel, where Hebrew newspaper Yediot Aharanot polling just found that 58 per cent of Israelis now reject the idea of trading land for peace, because they think the Palestinians are irrevocably committed to destroying them.

The current crackle of civil war is not evidence that the Palestinians are incapable of self-government. It is evidence of what happens to human beings when they are rammed into a pressure cooker and the temperature is slowly ramped up.

When I was last in Gaza a few months ago, the borders of Pales-tine had been hermetically sealed by the world for months as punishment for choosing <u>Hamas</u> in a free election. One-and-a-half million people were locked into a tiny space no bigger than the Isle of Wight. Nothing went in; nothing went out. The hospitals were on the brink of

Israel must negotiate with Hamas

collapse because if a piece of equipment broke they could not get new parts. Almost everyone was out of work because they couldn't sell to the world a few miles away.

In this situation, any people, anywhere, would begin to turn on each other. As the Palestinian foreign minister Ziad Abu Amr puts it: "If you have two brothers put into a cage and deprive them of the basic essential needs for life, they will fight."

On top of this, the outside world has actually discouraged and humiliated the Palestinians moderates. When he took charge in 2005, the Fatah President Mahmoud Abbas made it plain he would offer huge compromises to Israel in return for a state. Ariel Sharon offered him a few lifted roadblocks in return. The message to the Palestinians was clear: electing pragmatists will get you nothing. So the next year, in desperation they elected *Hamas*, an Islamic fundamentalist organi-sation whose constitution includes statements from the anti-Semitic forgery, the Protocols of the Elders of Zion.

Regular readers will know that I loathe <u>Hamas</u>, but I have to acknowledge that, upon election, their leaders undeniably behaved in a pragmatic way. They did not start introducing the savagery of sharia law, or oppressing <u>women</u>. Instead, they observed the unilateral truce with Israel. They offered a hudna (ceasefire) that would last a generation. They gave up staging suicide-murders against Israeli civilians. They even said they would respect all previous agreements signed by the Palestinian Authority - a de facto concession that they would recog-nise Israel.

And in return? They received nothing but abuse and a determined attempt to dislodge them from power, by boycott and, more slowly, by bullet. The US and Israel began arming an especially authoritarian wing of Fatah, headed by Mohammed Dahlan, with the plain intention of him toppling <u>Hamas</u> sooner or later. The Washington-based architect of this policy is Deputy National Security Advisor Elliot Abrahms, a man who in the 1980s secretly armed the openly fascist Contra militias in an attempt to topple the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. By denying <u>Hamas</u> power through a legitimate election, and arming their enemies for a future liquidation, the US and Israel virtually guaranteed **Hamas** would seize power.

Why is the Israeli government doing this? There are a range of possible explanations. One, associated with former Prime Minister Bibi Netanyahu and current Deputy Prime Minister Avigdor Lieberman, is the belief that the Palestinians will only compromise once they have been totally defeated by overwhelming force. They reckon that if the Palestinians are throttled for long enough, sooner or later they will cower, beg for mercy, and accept Israeli terms.

The next, and more disturbing, explanation is that the Israeli government may be deliberately thwarting potential peace partners. Uri Avnery, a former member of the Israeli Knesset and disillusioned Irgun fighter, explains why: "There has always been a tendency in Israel to prefer expansion and settlement to compromise and peace. Our government has worked for years to destroy Fatah, in order to avoid the need to negotiate an agreement that would inevitably lead to the withdrawal of the settlements from Palestinian land. Now, when it seems this aim has been achieved, they have no idea what to do about the *Hamas* victory."

There is still a way out of this. Israel must negotiate with <u>Hamas</u>. They are offering a long, long ceasefire. The Arab states are even - in a startling offer from Saudi Arabia - offering full recognition and normalisation of Israel in the region, if only Israel returns to its legal borders. Perhaps they are lying. Perhaps it is a trick. But it is the only gameplan in town that offers even the chance of a happy ending.

But Israel seems determined not to take this chance. Ehud Barak, the ex-PM back as Defence Minister, is briefing that he will bomb Gaza yet again, and within weeks. He is proposing to actually intensify the blockade of the Gaza Strip for a few weeks, to "pressure" *Hamas*.

The Israeli government is clinging to the belief that the harder you beat the Palestinians, the softer their leaders will become. This mentality created the current collapse. It will only drag the Middle East further and further away from the sane voices of **women** such as Amal Hellis, singing songs of peace.

Load-Date: June 18, 2007



Hamas PM blocked from bringing aid; Hamas gunmen seize control of Gaza border from Fatah-allied guards

The Times & Transcript (New Brunswick)

December 15, 2006 Friday

Copyright 2006 The Times & Transcript. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. C4

Length: 553 words

Body

RAFAH, Gaza Strip (AP) - <u>Hamas</u> gunmen seized control of the Gaza Strip's border crossing with Egypt yesterday in a ferocious gunbattle with Fatah-allied border guards after Israel blocked the <u>Hamas</u> prime minister from crossing with tens of millions of dollars in aid. More than two dozen people were wounded in the fighting, deepening factional violence that has pushed the rivals closer to civil war. One of the injured was an adult son of Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh.

Haniyeh cut short a trip abroad and was trying to return to Gaza in a bid to quell the infighting between *Hamas* and Fatah. He finally was allowed to cross into Gaza late Thursday, but it was unclear whether he brought money for the cash-strapped Palestinian government. After he crossed, there was a new burst of gunfire and Haniyeh's convoy was forced to speed away. Officials said Haniyeh was unharmed but his son was shot and slightly injured in the clashes. Earlier yesterday, pro-Fatah Palestinian officers arrested a Hamas-linked militant in the killing of the three young sons of a Fatah security chief. The militant's allies retaliated by kidnapping a security officer. Yesterday's gun battle at the border erupted after *Hamas* militants, angry that Israel was preventing Haniyeh from returning, stormed the Rafah terminal. The pro-Fatah Presidential Guard, responsible for securing the area, opened fire, setting off a gunfight. Terrified travellers ran for cover, some carrying their luggage. Crying **women** and children hid behind walls and taxis, while the European monitors who police the crossing fled. Two *Hamas* militants were among those wounded. The *Hamas* militants, chanting "God is Great, let's liberate this place" took over the arrival hall, and border guards escorted the European monitors to safety. Two loud explosions rocked the area, and security officials said militants had blown a hole in the border fence about a kilometre from the terminal. The rampage destroyed furniture and computer equipment inside the terminal and plunged the area into darkness. Hospital officials said at least 27 people were wounded, two seriously. With the terminal closed, Haniyeh was stranded on the Egyptian side of the border for several hours. Late yesterday, the Presidential Guard regained control of the terminal and the European monitors moved back in. Yesterday's unrest was likely to strain the U.S.brokered deal that turned over control of the crossing to the Palestinians last year after four decades of Israeli control. The border can only operate in the presence of European monitors. Israeli Defence Minister Amir Peretz, working with the EU monitors, had ordered the border closed to prevent Haniyeh from bringing in tens of millions of dollars he raised during a tour of Muslim countries, security officials said. A senior Israeli security official said they were not trying to block Haniyeh's entry, only to keep out the money. The official said Israel had information the money would be used to strengthen *Hamas* or fund terror attacks, but he declined to provide further details. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the matter with the press. A Palestinian official said Haniyeh was carrying \$35US million he raised during his trip, which included stops in Syria and Iran.

Hamas PM blocked from bringing aid; Hamas gunmen seize control of Gaza border from Fatah-allied guards

Load-Date: January 8, 2007



Hamas fighters gaining control of Gaza Strip

The Irish Times

June 14, 2007 Thursday

Copyright 2007 The Irish Times All Rights Reserved

Section: WORLD; Pg. 13

Length: 644 words

Byline: Rory McCarthy in Jerusalem and Ian Black

Body

MIDDLE EAST: <u>Harnas</u> fighters launched another wave of fierce attacks on their Fatah rivals yesterday, plunging the Gaza Strip closer to civil war in what appeared to be a carefully-co-ordinated attempt to seize control of the streets.

Gunmen from <u>Hamas</u> and their Fatah rivals fought battles in the north and south of the strip, with the Islamist movement repeatedly gaining the upper hand.

<u>Hamas</u> fighters seized security posts which provide control of two major roads running north to south through Gaza. They also took control of Khan Younis, a town in the south.

Last night, they began attacking a number of security posts in Gaza City. At least 17 Palestinians were killed, including a number of civilians. Among the dead were two workers for the UN Relief and Works Agency. Dozens more were injured, including two other UN staff.

In the past four days of fighting at least 65 people have died and there appears to be little sign of an end to the conflict.

"This is madness, the madness that is going on in Gaza now," said Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president and Fatah leader, who remains in the West Bank.

Mr Abbas spoke by telephone to Khaled Meshal, the head of <u>Hamas</u>'s political bureau in Damascus, but they failed to agree a ceasefire.

In a broadcast on a <u>Hamas</u> radio station, the Islamist movement said that it was preparing an offensive to seize Mr Abbas's presidential compound in Gaza City and the nearby national security headquarters.

<u>Hamas</u> warned Fatah forces in northern Gaza to give up their weapons before Friday evening, while Fatah commanders told their forces to stay and fight.

At one stage yesterday several hundred people gathered in Gaza City to protest against the violence. <u>Hamas</u> gunmen tried to scatter the crowd by firing into the air, while elsewhere in the city snipers took up positions on several tower blocks.

Hamas fighters gaining control of Gaza Strip

This week's fighting is the latest episode in a worsening power struggle between <u>Hamas</u>, which won elections last year, and Fatah. For more than six months the two factions have fought on the streets of Gaza, violating dozens of ceasefires and effectively tearing up a political deal in February which produced a coalition government.

There are growing calls for the deployment of an international peacekeeping force to the small, overcrowded and fraught Gaza Strip. Javier Solana, the EU foreign policy chief, said that the EU would consider sending troops if an international force was established.

The Italian foreign minister, Massimo D'Alema, said that he supported the idea, and Ehud Olmert, the Israeli prime minister, is understood to be considering the possibility of such a force being deployed.

On the ground in Gaza yesterday the fighting appeared to be driving the national unity government towards collapse. <u>Hamas</u> fighters took the town of Khan Younis after a bomb destroyed a tunnel underneath a Fatah security headquarters. At least one man was killed and eight were injured in the blast.

Fatah forces retreated further south to the border town of Rafah and at least 40 Fatah gunmen were reported to have fled into Egypt. "Khan Younis is finished, but we are still holding on in Rafah," said Ziad Sarafandi, a senior Fatah security official.

Near Gaza City, several hundred men, <u>women</u> and children from the Bakr clan, allied to Fatah, surrendered and walked with raised arms into a nearby mosque. The clan, like many others in Gaza, has its own armed force of about 200 men.

The UN warned that food deliveries and medical care were at risk. "We are extremely concerned for the plight of the one million refugees who depend on UNRWA's services," said John Ging, director of the agency's Gaza operation. "However, we cannot deliver food and medical services in the crossfire."

In the West Bank, Fatah gunmen in Nablus surrounded a pro-<u>Hamas</u> television company and attacked its offices. - (Guardian Service)

Load-Date: June 14, 2007



No Fast Gain For Hamas After Release Of Journalist

The New York Times
July 5, 2007 Thursday
Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2007 The New York Times Company

Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 7

Length: 1014 words

Byline: By ISABEL KERSHNER and TAGHREED EL-KHODARY

Isabel Kershner reported from Jerusalem, and Taghreed El-Khodary from Gaza City.

Dateline: JERUSALEM, July 4

Body

The role of <u>Hamas</u> in securing the release of Alan Johnston, the kidnapped BBC correspondent, is not enough to warrant any immediate change in policy toward it, Western and Israeli officials said Wednesday.

While <u>Hamas</u> presented the release as proof of its ability to restore order in the Gaza Strip now that it is solely in charge there, Western and Israeli officials said Mr. Johnston's freedom would not translate into international recognition and support for the group, which the United States, Israel and the European Union still classify as a terrorist organization and formally boycott.

"It would be premature to expect an immediate impact on relations between the European Union and <u>Hamas</u>," said Cristina Gallach, the spokeswoman for the Union's foreign policy chief, Javier Solana.

David Baker, an Israeli government spokesman, said the release of Mr. Johnston, who spent 114 days in the hands of a shadowy group called the Army of Islam, was "something the Israelis had been hoping and praying for." But he said <u>Hamas</u> was "the same terrorist organization that orchestrated and perpetrated" the seizure of an Israeli soldier, Cpl. Gilad Shalit, just over a year ago.

Nevertheless, *Hamas* has undoubtedly given its image a boost and gained in respectability.

In London the new British foreign secretary, David Miliband, acknowledged what he called "the crucial role" of the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah, and of Ismail Haniya of <u>Hamas</u>, whom Mr. Abbas dismissed as prime minister after the <u>Hamas</u> takeover of Gaza.

Ms. Gallach said the efforts to secure Mr. Johnston's release "by the international community, local Palestinian leaders and *Hamas* won't go unmentioned or unrecognized."

Moreover, many Palestinians in Gaza, including some Fatah loyalists, said they felt much safer since <u>Hamas</u> seized control of the strip in mid-June, routing the Fatah and Palestinian Authority forces there.

No Fast Gain For Hamas After Release Of Journalist

"I feel extremely secure," said Mona Bseiso, 43, a lawyer who works for the Palestinian Authority in Gaza City. "We are Fatah," she said, but since <u>Hamas</u> took over, she added, "There is no theft, no crime, and there are no bullets."

On Wednesday, Mr. Abbas's Western-backed emergency government, which rules from Ramallah in the West Bank, paid full salaries to most of the Authority's employees for the first time in more than a year. Even so, Fatah security force members in Gaza expressed anger at Fatah leaders and commanders, who they say abandoned them during the violent battle for the strip.

"We want to see new faces around Abu Mazen," said Shihta Azazma, 27, a policeman who supports a family of 10, referring to Mr. Abbas by his popular name.

Mr. Azazma was leaving the Palestine Bank, where he had received his monthly salary of about \$500. Last month, he said, he received only \$46 as a partial payment from the Palestinian Authority.

Public workers in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip received only partial salary payments from the Authority since <u>Hamas</u> came to power through elections in early 2006. Its victory led to an international embargo on direct financing of the Palestinian government.

European aid sent directly to non-security employees of the Authority, bypassing the government, helped ease some of the hardship, and aid in 2006 actually exceeded that of 2005.

But Israel and some Western countries resumed the cash flow to the Authority after Mr. Abbas fired the <u>Hamas</u>-led government of Mr. Haniya and installed an emergency cabinet headed by Salam Fayyad, a politically independent economist.

Mr. Fayyad said Wednesday that of the Authority's 150,000 employees, 31,000, most of them hired by <u>Hamas</u> since its election victory, would not receive salaries. Those not paid were 23,000 security force members and 8,000 civil servants considered loyal to <u>Hamas</u>.

The announcement drew criticism, even from some prominent members of Fatah.

Mr. Haniya, who does not recognize the legitimacy of the Fayyad government, has put himself back in the international limelight, at least for now. <u>Hamas</u> brought about Mr. Johnston's release with a combination of pressure and negotiation; the members of the Army of Islam were once allies of <u>Hamas</u>, but the relationship soured in recent months.

Mr. Johnston, who turned 45 in captivity, was delivered at dawn on Wednesday to Mr. Haniya's house and was taken to the British Consulate in Jerusalem about 10:20 a.m.

At 5 p.m., Mr. Johnston gave a news conference, sounding remarkably relaxed, focused and good-humored after his ordeal. He appeared with a freshly shaved head, his usual style before he was kidnapped. Mr. Johnston said it was "unimaginably good to be free" and to do the ordinary things like "getting a haircut and speaking to the people you love."

He had access to a radio during most of his time in captivity, and said he had gotten an "extraordinary psychological boost" from hearing about the international campaign for his release. Mr. Johnston said he was aware that *Hamas* was problematic in many ways, but he credited the organization with gaining his release.

Before <u>Hamas</u> took over Gaza, he said, his kidnappers had been "cruising along, with no worries." After the takeover, "the guards were suddenly worried," he said, and the whole atmosphere changed. Mr. Johnston said he was sure that "if <u>Hamas</u> had not turned the heat on in a big way, I'd still be in that room."

In Israel, Parliament approved a cabinet shuffle involving ministers from Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's Kadima Party. Haim Ramon will serve as vice premier in place of Shimon Peres, who was elected to the largely ceremonial post of president, and the former interior minister, Ronnie Bar-On, will serve as finance minister, replacing Abraham

No Fast Gain For Hamas After Release Of Journalist

Hirchson, who resigned because he was under investigation for allegations that he had been involved in embezzlement in a previous position.

Mr. Ramon previously resigned as justice minister and recently performed 120 hours of community service after he was convicted of forcibly kissing a *female* soldier.

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photo: Alan Johnston, left, the BBC reporter who was abducted by the Army of Islam, with Ismail Haniya of *Hamas*, which brought about his release. (Photograph by Hatem Moussa/Associated Press)

Load-Date: July 20, 2007



Fatah defiant on West Bank as Hamas takes Gaza

Guardian.com

June 15, 2007

Copyright 2007 Guardian Unlimited (© Guardian Newspapers Limited) All rights reserved

theguardian

Length: 824 words

Highlight: Jubilant <u>Hamas</u> militants cemented their domination over Gaza today but appeared to make conciliatory overtures to their Fatah opponents after a week of intense fighting that has effectively broken the Palestinian terrritories in two.

Body

Jubilant <u>Hamas</u> militants cemented their domination over Gaza today but appeared to make conciliatory overtures to their Fatah opponents after a week of intense fighting that has effectively broken the Palestinian terrritories in two.

Ismail Haniyeh, the <u>Hamas</u> leader in Gaza, called for a new round of negotiations with the Fatah leader and Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, and urged calm from his own loyalist gunmen after they had routed Fatah rivals and embarked on a wave of looting in Fatah offices and homes in the Gaza strip.

<u>Hamas</u> also released 10 senior Fatah officials captured during five days of clashes that killed more than 100 people.

Mr Haniyeh also demanded the release of Alan Johnston, the BBC correspondent kidnapped in Gaza more than three months ago. Today there were reports that his captors had promised an imminent release, but these could not be independently confirmed.

Mr Haniyeh, formally sacked as government chief last night, as the <u>Hamas</u> revolt in Gaza climaxed, insisted he was still the legitimate prime minister on the basis of elections last year that <u>Hamas</u> dominated.

"No internal formula in the Palestinian territories will hold without national agreement and without respecting the legitimacy of the election," he said.

Fifty miles away in his West Bank seat of power, Mr Abbas presented a defiant front to the movement that has demolished his authority in Gaza, ignoring Mr Haniyeh's claim to office and naming a replacement prime minister, Salam Fayyad, a moderate technocrat respected in the West.

<u>Hamas</u> denounced the move as a "political coup". But the movement has yet to indicate how it will exercise its newly consolidated power. It is not even clear how much of this week's violence was supported by Mr Haniyeh, or whether hardline elements in the movement precipitated the clash. All the crossings out of Gaza into Israel and Egypt remain closed and the Egyptian diplomatic mission in Gaza pulled out today.

Fatah defiant on West Bank as Hamas takes Gaza

Thousands of Palestinians gathered at a rally in Gaza City in support of the <u>Hamas</u> takeover. Most approved of the defeat of Fatah, but many were also concerned about the future. "I think the future is dangerous," said Mohammad Samour, 28, a computing teacher.

"Gaza needs money and aid. Our economic future is dark. But I'm just happy because I can move freely in the street without seeing any fighting."

"The past situation was impossible to live through. It had to be stopped," said Akram Radwan, 34, a mathematics lecturer at the Islamic University. "We don't know what <u>Hamas</u> is going to do about rebuilding the security forces. But at the same time it's good to see **Hamas** took over and ended the era of corruption."

Away from the rally, other Gazans spoke of their concern at a future under complete <u>Hamas</u> rule. "I worry about the economy and the freedoms under <u>Hamas</u> control," said Mohammad Thaher, 29, who owns a pizza restaurant. "I'm worried they might impose Islamic restrictions on *women*'s dress, close coffee shops and so on."

Western powers, including the US and the EU, pledged their support for Mr Abbas, speaking of him as a moderate leader. Some officials hinted that Israel might unfreeze tax revenues worth hundreds of millions of dollars that it has withheld from the Palestinians.

"The fact that president Abbas has fired the <u>Hamas</u> government is a very positive move in our opinion, and makes it easier to deal with and help the moderates," said Miri Eisin, a spokeswoman for Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.

But events in Gaza mean Mr Abbas, also known as Abu Mazen, now has no way of imposing his authority on the ground there. Images showing gunmen rifling through his personal offices at a ransacked compound in Gaza amply demonstrated his political emasculation.

One gunman picked up his telephone and joked that he was calling Condoleezza Rice, the US secretary of state, the Associated Press reported. "Hello, Rice?" the gunman said. "Here we are in Abu Mazen's office. Say hello to Abu Mazen for me."

His supporters in Ramallah put on a show of force today to demonstrate that Fatah and the Palestinian Authority still controlled the West Bank.

The men, members of Palestinian Authority security forces, stood on the back of 14 pickup trucks holding their rifles across their chests and drove slowly through the quiet streets. Last night, all over the West Bank, <u>Hamas</u> members were arrested and their offices looted and set alight.

Ziad Abu Ein, a Fatah leader in Ramallah and a close ally of the jailed Fatah figure, Marwan Barghouti, predicted that anti-*Hamas* forces in Gaza would regroup.

"What we have witnessed is a fascist, military coup. <u>Hamas</u> cannot control the Palestinian people with their machine guns. They may have taken a few government buildings but Fatah and the Palestine Liberation Organisation still has the people in Gaza," he said.

"In a few days there will be a new uprising in Gaza when people discover the truth of <u>Hamas</u>. There will be a big fight."

Load-Date: June 15, 2007



US spending\$42m to support opponents of Hamas

The Irish Times

October 14, 2006 Saturday

Copyright 2006 The Irish Times All Rights Reserved

Section: WORLD; Other World Stories; Pg. 12

Length: 682 words

Byline: Adam Entous in Jerusalem

Body

MIDDLE EAST: The US has quietly started a campaign projected to cost up to \$42 million to bolster *Hamas*'s political opponents ahead of possible early Palestinian elections, say officials linked to the programme.

The plan to promote alternatives to <u>Hamas</u> includes funding to help restructure president Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah group and provide training and strategic advice to politicians and secular parties opposed to <u>Hamas</u> Islamists.

"This project supports [the] objective to create democratic alternatives to authoritarian or radical Islamist political options," one official US document obtained by Reuters said.

The US campaign coincides with signs that Mr Abbas is considering sacking the government led by <u>Hamas</u>, which defeated Fatah in January elections, in a process that could lead to a new parliamentary vote.

US officials and consultants say the effort is being conducted without fanfare in order to protect the Palestinians who are receiving US help - some already branded by *Hamas* leaders as collaborators with Washington and Israel.

"We don't operate with firecrackers and neon signs to attract attention to ourselves," said one of the contractors working with Fatah on behalf of the US State Department.

US funds will also be used to encourage "watchdog" groups and local journalists to investigate the activities of the *Hamas*-led government and parliament.

Up to \$5 million would support private Palestinian schools offering an alternative to the <u>Hamas</u>-controlled public education system.

In a response, US consul general Jacob Walles said: "There is nothing new here. The US has operated programmes in the West Bank and Gaza for many years to promote the development of political parties and civil society organisations." The documents obtained by Reuters repeatedly calls these new programmes that began in recent weeks.

"We are not promoting any particular party. In fact, we will work with any party as long as it is not affiliated with a terrorist organisation," Mr Walles said. There would be no direct funding of parties, he stressed.

Some <u>Hamas</u> leaders have accused Abbas and Fatah of serving the interests of Israel's ally, the United States, which has led a western aid embargo to force <u>Hamas</u> to recognise Israel, renounce violence and accept past accords with the Jewish state.

US spending\$42m to support opponents of Hamas

Washington is also helping Mr Abbas expand his presidential guard as a possible counterweight to *Hamas*.

Senior <u>Hamas</u> political leader and lawmaker Fathi Hammad called the US money part of a plot to bring down the <u>Hamas</u>-led government. "It is a challenge that we are aware of and we will confront it."

In US budget terms, \$42 million is a small amount. But in the cash-strapped Gaza Strip and occupied West Bank, it could go a long way - over three times the total spent by the main parties and candidates in the January election.

The US-based National Democratic Institute (NDI) said it recently began talks with the leaders of Fatah and other parties about how they could improve their performance in any election.

Michael Murphy, who runs NDI operations in the West Bank and Gaza, said the focus for now was on internal party reform, but that the programme, in close co-ordination with the State Department, would also look for ways to help Fatah and others get their message across to voters.

The International Republican Institute, which has also worked in the West Bank and Gaza for years, recently received funds for a new programme to give training and strategic advice to several Palestinian independent parties, though it said politicians would not get direct financial help.

"We're hammering into them they need to start organising now," said Scott Mastic, deputy director of the institute's Middle East and North Africa division.

"There could be another election. It should be an incentive to them to get moving and get their act together."

US contractors and Palestinian political analysts say Fatah can learn from <u>Hamas</u>'s electoral strategy by running fewer candidates per district and also by fielding <u>women</u> to campaign door-to-door, since they can enter more conservative households.

- (Reuters)

Load-Date: October 14, 2006



Hamas gunmen seize Gaza border crossing

Prince George Citizen (British Columbia)

December 15, 2006 Friday

Final Edition

Copyright 2006 Prince George Citizen All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 14

Length: 724 words

Byline: Associated Press

Dateline: RAFAH, Gaza Strip

Body

RAFAH, Gaza Strip (AP) -- <u>Hamas</u> gunmen seized control of the Gaza Strip's border crossing with Egypt on Thursday in a ferocious gunbattle with Fatah-allied border guards after Israel blocked the <u>Hamas</u> prime minister from crossing with tens of millions of dollars in aid.

A bodyguard died in what <u>Hamas</u> called an attempt to kill Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh as he left the border crossing for Gaza City.

More than two dozen people were wounded in the fighting, deepening factional violence that has pushed the rivals closer to civil war. One of the injured was Haniyeh's 27-year-old son, Abed.

Hamas officials said the 24-year-old guard was shot in the head during intense gunfire from Fatah forces.

"The bodyguard to Ismail Haniyeh was killed during an assassination attempt," said <u>Hamas</u> spokesman Fawzi Barhoum.

Haniyeh cut short a trip abroad and was trying to return to Gaza in a bid to quell infighting between <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah. Israeli officials said from the beginning Haniyeh could cross into Gaza without the money. Egyptian mediators helped resolve the standoff and Haniyeh finally was allowed to cross into Gaza late Thursday. But Maria Telleria, spokeswoman for European monitors at the crossing, said Haniyeh left the funds, estimated at \$35US million, in Egypt.

After he crossed, there was a new burst of gunfire and Haniyeh's convoy was forced to speed away. Officials said Haniyeh was unharmed but his son was shot and slightly injured in the exchange.

Arriving home around midnight, Haniyeh was furious about the gunfire at his convoy.

He blamed Israel for the delay but added: "We know the party that shot directly at our cars, injuring some of the people with me...and we also know how to deal with this."

About 50 gunmen greeted Haniyeh at his home in a refugee camp next to Gaza City, firing in the air and throwing candies.

Hamas gunmen seize Gaza border crossing

Earlier Thursday, pro-Fatah Palestinian officers arrested a <u>Hamas</u>-linked militant in the killing of the three young sons of a Fatah security chief. The militant's allies retaliated by kidnapping a security officer.

Thursday's gunbattle at the border erupted after <u>Hamas</u> militants, angry that Israel was preventing Haniyeh from returning, stormed the Rafah terminal.

The pro-Fatah Presidential Guard, responsible for securing the area, opened fire, setting off a gunfight. Terrified travellers ran for cover, some carrying their luggage. Crying <u>women</u> and children hid behind walls and taxis, while the European monitors who police the crossing fled. Two <u>Hamas</u> militants were among those wounded.

The <u>Hamas</u> militants, chanting "God is Great, let's liberate this place" took over the arrival hall and border guards escorted the European monitors to safety. Two loud explosions rocked the area and security officials said militants had blown a hole in the border fence about a kilometre from the terminal.

The rampage destroyed furniture and computer equipment inside the terminal and plunged the area into darkness. Hospital officials said at least 27 people were wounded, two seriously.

With the terminal closed, Haniyeh was stranded on the Egyptian side of the border for several hours. Late Thursday, the Presidential Guard regained control of the terminal and the European monitors moved back in.

Thursday's unrest was expected to strain the U.S.-brokered deal that turned over control of the crossing to the Palestinians last year after four decades of Israeli control. The border can only operate in the presence of European monitors.

Israeli Defence Minister Amir Peretz, working with the EU monitors, had ordered the border closed to prevent Haniyeh from bringing in tens of millions of dollars he raised during a tour of Muslim countries, security officials said.

A senior Israeli security official said they were not trying to block Haniyeh's entry, only to keep out the money. The official said Israel had information the money would be used to strengthen <u>Hamas</u> or fund terror attacks but he declined to provide further details. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the matter with the press.

A Palestinian official said Haniyeh was carrying \$35 million he raised during his trip, which included stops in Syria and Iran.

Haniyeh left Gaza on Nov. 28 for what was supposed to be a monthlong trip to the Muslim world, with the goal of raising money for his government.

Graphic

Photo: Associated Press; A wounded Palestinian is evacuated from the area of the Rafah border crossing between the Gaza Stripand Egypt after a gunbattle erupted at the terminal Thursday. Hamasgunmen seized control of the Gaza Strip's only border crossing in aferocious gunbattle with Fatah-allied border guards that raged into the night.

Load-Date: December 15, 2006



Hamas is ordered to curb Militant Mouse

The Times (London)
May 10, 2007, Thursday

Copyright 2007 Times Newspapers Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: OVERSEAS NEWS; Pg. 47

Length: 284 words

Body

The Palestinian Government last night shelved a controversial children's show aired by a <u>Hamas</u> television station in which a Mickey Mouse lookalike calls for Israel to be vanquished and Islam to "lead the world".

Tomorrow's Pioneers, which attracted complaints from Israeli groups, is hosted by Farfur, a character dressed in a full bodysuit resembling Walt Disney's famous cartoon hero.

He and a young <u>female</u> co-host instruct their young viewers on <u>Hamas</u>'s militant brand of Muslim piety. "We will restore to this nation its glory, and we will liberate Al-Aqsa (Jerusalem's Arab name), with Allah's will, and we will liberate Iraq, with Allah's will, and we will liberate the Muslim countries invaded by murderers," Farfur said in one show.

After complaints by Israeli watchdog groups and amid growing furore in the US, the Palestinian Information Minister, Mustafa Barghouti, an independent member of the <u>Hamas</u>-led Government, said that he had ordered broadcasts of Tomorrow's Pioneers to be suspended while its content was being reviewed.

"I demanded that <u>Hamas</u> suspend the programme and they have withdrawn it, because it was wrong to use a programme directed at children to convey political messages," Mr Barghouti said. "Any media outlet that breaks Palestinian broadcasting law will be penalised by the Information Ministry."

A <u>Hamas</u> official announced that the organisation's Al-Aqsa Television station was considering a possible change to the show's format. The next episode is scheduled for broadcast tomorrow.

Disney declined to comment, but Diane Disney Miller, a daughter of the company's founder, told the New York Daily News: "What we're dealing with here is pure evil and you can't ignore that."

Load-Date: May 10, 2007



Hamas, Fatah strike deal for ceasefire after 17 killed

The Star Phoenix (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan)
February 3, 2007 Saturday
Final Edition

Copyright 2007 The Star Phoenix, a division of Canwest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: WORLD; Pg. B8

Length: 468 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, CanWest News Service

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

JERUSALEM -- After 17 more Palestinians died and nearly 200 were wounded in fighting between <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah in the Gaza Strip Friday, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who leads Fatah, and <u>Hamas</u>' exiled leader, Khaled Meshal, agreed by telephone on an immediate ceasefire.

What may be the most intense fighting since the conflict broke out two months ago escalated sharply with Fatah claiming on Friday to have arrested several Iranians, including a general whom it is alleged had been teaching *Hamas* how to make bombs.

That charge comes a day after <u>Hamas</u> used machines guns and rocket-propelled grenades to ambush a Fatah convoy.

Despite wild gunfights, which took place all over the tiny enclave throughout the night and into Friday morning prayers, Egyptian diplomats said there was an agreement in principal from the two warring parties to observe yet another ceasefire, similar to the one that lasted less than 48 hours earlier this week.

It was also announced that Abbas and the Syrian-based Meshal would meet on Tuesday in the holy city of Mecca to try to agree on a Saudi-brokered national unity government -- something that has eluded <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah since <u>Hamas</u> won a stunning parliamentary majority in elections nine months ago.

A similar meeting between Abbas and Meshal in Syria last month failed.

And there was little evidence of much goodwill on the ground Friday in Gaza, where huge plumes of smoke wafted above the Islamic University -- a *Hamas* stronghold.

<u>Hamas</u> accused Fatah of trying to burn the university down, but Fatah countered it was apprehending the Iranians, who were described as weapons experts.

Seven Iranians were arrested and 1,400 small arms and rockets seized, said Fatah -- which also reported the arrest of more than a dozen Palestinian **women** it said were working with the Iranians.

Hamas called the Fatah claims "ridiculous."

Hamas, Fatah strike deal for ceasefire after 17 killed

Israel has long asserted that Iran had operatives in Gaza and the West Bank who were helping to finance, arm and train <u>Hamas</u> and other organizations such as Islamic Jihad, which most western countries including Canada consider to be a terrorist group.

Among the dead Friday was Fatah's head of intelligence for the northern half of the Gaza strip.

Meanwhile, most Gazans stayed home as gangs of masked and heavily armed men roamed the streets.

But even remaining inside did not always afford much protection.

A Palestinian woman was killed when a bullet pierced her home, Israel Radio reported.

Four children were among those killed when they were caught in the crossfire, according to Associated Press.

There were also tit-for-tat bomb attacks on the Fatah and *Hamas* radio stations in Gaza.

Much of the fighting, which involved heavier weapons for the first time such as anti-tank missiles, took place near the presidential residence in the centre of Gaza City.

Load-Date: February 3, 2007



Israel arrests 33 Hamas leaders in wake of rocket barrages

Deseret Morning News (Salt Lake City)

May 25, 2007 Friday

Copyright 2007 The Deseret News Publishing Co.

Length: 995 words

Byline: Ali Daraghmeh Associated Press

Body

NABLUS, West Bank -- Israel rounded up a Palestinian Cabinet minister and 32 other <u>Hamas</u> leaders in the West Bank before dawn Thursday, trying a new tactic in its campaign to pressure the Islamic militant group into halting rocket barrages from the Gaza Strip.

The Palestinian president condemned the arrests, saying they would hinder his efforts to restore a truce with Israel, and Washington expressed concern about the detentions. <u>Hamas</u> threatened to retaliate with attacks inside the Jewish state.

The arrests reflected an Israeli decision to target the <u>Hamas</u> political leadership -- but not necessarily with the lethal airstrikes it has staged over the past week on targets linked to the <u>Hamas</u> military arm.

Israeli aircraft staged attacks during the day and into the night, mainly on <u>Hamas</u> training bases and command posts. A huge plume of black smoke rose over Gaza City after an afternoon attack, but there were no serious injuries, Palestinian medics said.

During the night, a series of air raids injured nine Palestinians, including three children and two <u>women</u>, hospital officials said.

Just before midnight, an Israeli missile targeted a shack in the Shati refugee camp where Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh of <u>Hamas</u> lives, but no one was hurt, Palestinian security said. Haniyeh went to inspect the site, but guards pulled him away because aircraft were still in the sky, officials said. Israel's military said the structure was being used by <u>Hamas</u> and Haniyeh was not the target.

Israeli airstrikes also hit a money changer's shop in Gaza City and a <u>Hamas</u> post in northern Gaza, Palestinian security said.

Earlier, at sundown, two mortar shells fired from Gaza exploded at Erez, the main crossing for people between the Palestinian territory and Israel. No was hurt, but there was considerable damage to two of the processing lanes, and Israel closed the crossing, the military said.

More than 40 Palestinians died in Israeli air raids over the past 10 days, and a rocket killed an Israeli woman Monday. The rocket barrages have severely disrupted life in the southern Israel area near Gaza, and thousands of frightened residents have fled.

Israeli Defense Minister Amir Peretz said the arrests in the West Bank were part of Israel's attempt to neutralize *Hamas* and lessen the bloodshed.

Israel arrests 33 Hamas leaders in wake of rocket barrages

"Arrests are better than shooting," he told Israeli Army Radio. "The arrest of these <u>Hamas</u> leaders sends a message to the military organizations that we demand that this (rocket) firing stop."

But <u>Hamas</u> remained defiant: "We will chase the occupation soldiers and the settlers in every inch of our occupied land, and we announce that we give free hand to our cells to strike against the enemy in every place in Palestine" -- a term the Islamic group uses to include Israel.

In Washington, State Department spokesman Tom Casey had mild criticism for Israel over the arrests.

"We have previously noted, when this kind of issue has come up before, that the detention of elected members of the Palestinian government and legislature does raise particular concerns for us," Casey told reporters.

The office of the Palestinian prime minister, Haniyeh, demanded the immediate release of the detainees and urged the United Nations and European Union to impose sanctions on Israel.

The EU's foreign policy chief, Javier Solana, met with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and called for both sides to halt the violence. "The rockets and the Israeli response have to stop," he told reporters after the meeting.

Abbas, a moderate in the Fatah movement, said that the arrests by Israel hurt peace efforts and that airstrikes weren't stopping the rocket salvos.

But he also condemned what he called the "absurd" rocket fire by Palestinian extremists and said he was trying to persuade militant groups to halt. "They must stop so we can reach a truce with Israel," Abbas said.

Just after the meeting, Israeli aircraft carried out two more attacks, hitting an empty <u>Hamas</u> base in Gaza City and a base in central Gaza, Palestinian security officials said. The Israeli military said only that it struck <u>Hamas</u> emplacements.

Four civilians suffered slight injuries from flying glass and debris in the Gaza City attack, medics said. No one was hurt in the second strike.

The most prominent <u>Hamas</u> leader arrested overnight was Education Minister Nasser Shaer, considered a pragmatist. His wife, Huda, said soldiers knocked on the door of their home in Nablus and took him away, along with his computer. Israel also detained Shaer for a month last year, before a judge ordered his release.

Israel already held 40 Palestinian lawmakers from <u>Hamas</u>, including parliament speaker Abdel Aziz Duaik. They were detained after <u>Hamas</u>-linked gunmen abducted an Israeli soldier last June. The idea was to trade the lawmakers for the soldier, but no deal took place.

Also among those rounded up Thursday were former Cabinet minister Abdel Rahman Zeidan, legislators Hamed Bitawi and Daoud Abu Ser, the mayors of the towns of Nablus, Qalqiliya and Beita, and the head of the main Islamic charity in Nablus.

Israel has failed to quell rocket fire over the years, despite large-scale ground offensives that caused multiple casualties and widespread damage in areas used by militants.

Abbas' security forces have made few visible efforts to halt rocket salvos.

Instead, the rocket attacks diminish when Palestinian militants decide to lower the flame. Intentionally or not, the latest flare-up with Israel stopped a month of bloody internal clashes between <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah security forces in Gaza.

Israel's military said <u>Hamas</u> fired six rockets into Israel on Thursday, though <u>Hamas</u> claimed firing 14, still less than previous days.

Israel arrests 33 Hamas leaders in wake of rocket barrages

Alone Ben-David, military analyst for Israel's Channel 10 TV, said the decrease in rocket fire was a hint that <u>Hamas</u> might have achieved its goals and was ready to wind down the crisis. Ben-David added, however, that firing would likely escalate if Israel killed a top <u>Hamas</u> commander in an airstrike.

Load-Date: May 25, 2007



Gaza infighting kills 16, Hamas fires on Israel

The Irish Times

May 17, 2007 Thursday

Copyright 2007 The Irish Times All Rights Reserved

Section: WORLD; Pg. 14

Length: 585 words

Byline: Peter Hirschberg in Jerusalem

Body

Middle East: Israel renewed its aerial attacks on <u>Hamas</u> in the Gaza Strip yesterday, as fighting between the Islamic group and the Fatah party of President Mahmoud Abbas claimed at least 16 lives.

A barrage of rocket fire into Israel sent hundreds of residents fleeing their homes in the southern town of Sderot.

In one of the bloodiest attacks, six Fatah guards were killed after <u>Hamas</u> gunmen stormed the home of Mr Abbas's top security chief in Gaza.

Yesterday's deaths brought to 37 the number of Palestinians killed since the internecine warfare erupted over the weekend.

Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert, meanwhile, last night approved a "severe and harsh" response to the rocket fire, raising speculation that Israel might launch a ground raid inside Gaza.

In the deadliest incident yesterday, <u>Hamas</u> militants ambushed a vehicle belonging to one of the arms of the Palestinian Authority security services allied to Mr Abbas.

Gunmen riddled the vehicle with bullets, killing all seven people inside.

It soon emerged, however, that five of the passengers were <u>Hamas</u> militants who had been detained and were being taken to lock-up. The other two men killed belonged to the Abbas-allied security service.

In the attack on the home of Rashid Abu Shbak, Mr Abbas's top security chief in Gaza, *Hamas* gunmen killed six bodyguards and burned down the house. Mr Abu Shbak and his family were not home at the time of the attack.

Mortar shells were also fired by *Hamas* militants at the Gaza compound containing the offices of Mr Abbas.

In another incident, eight people were injured when gunmen fired at about 200 protesters who had gathered in Gaza City to demonstrate against the factional violence.

The streets of Gaza were largely deserted yesterday as masked men armed with semi-automatic rifles patrolled intersections and residents cowered in their homes, trying to shelter from the street battles.

The <u>Hamas</u>/Fatah clashes this week are the worst since more than 100 Palestinians were killed in factional struggles earlier this year.

Gaza infighting kills 16, Hamas fires on Israel

That round of bloodletting ended after <u>Hamas</u>, which won an election in January 2006, agreed to share power with Fatah.

But the unity government deal, brokered by the Saudis, left the issue of who would control the security forces unresolved, sowing the seeds for the latest round of violence.

"What is happening in Gaza endangers not only the unity government but the Palestinian social fabric, the Palestinian cause and the Palestinian strategy as a whole," said Saeb Erekat, a close associate of Mr Abbas.

<u>Hamas</u> seemed to be trying to draw Israel into the conflict yesterday as militants fired almost 20 rockets into Israel, with at least eight landing in Sderot. Two **women** were injured when a rocket hit their home.

After a hiatus of several months, Israeli aircraft renewed attacks in Gaza yesterday, targeting a command post belonging to <u>Hamas</u> in the southern town of Rafah. Four militants were killed in the strike and another 20 were injured.

While Mr Olmert, under growing public pressure to respond to the rocket attacks, threatened a harsh response, deputy defence minister Ephraim Sneh conceded that the situation in Gaza was "complicated" and that there was "no magical solution" to the rocket fire.

Tzahi Hanegbi, a close associate of the prime minister and chairman of the foreign affairs and defence committee in parliament, played down the idea of a wide-ranging ground operation in the strip.

Israel, he said, "mustn't rush back into Gaza", but should carry out pinpoint attacks.

Load-Date: May 17, 2007



Hamas tramples Fatah security strongholds, appears close to controlling Gaza Strip

The Bismarck Tribune
June 14, 2007 Thursday

Copyright 2007 The Bismarck Tribune, a division of Lee Enterprises All Rights Reserved

Section: WIRE; Pg. 2A

Length: 1117 words

Byline: SARAH EL DEEB, Associated Press Writer

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip - <u>Hamas</u> fighters launched a fierce offensive on Gaza City Wednesday, firing mortars and rockets at Fatah's main security bases and the president's compound as the Islamic group appeared close to taking control of the entire Gaza Strip.

With fighting raging on rooftops and streets in nearly all corners of Gaza, residents huddled in fear in their homes.

Fayez Abu Taha, 45, a businessman in the southern town of Rafah, said he was trapped in his apartment building with his family after *Hamas* fighters took over a nearby rooftop and Fatah responded by taking over the roof of his building.

"I don't know what they are battling for now," he said. "I can see the bullets flying from my windows. Coming and going."

At least 15 people were killed in fighting Wednesday, bringing the total in four days of infighting to nearly 60. Among those killed Wednesday was a man shot when <u>Hamas</u> gunmen fired on a peaceful protest against the violence, witnesses said.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah called the fighting "madness" and pleaded with the exiled leader of *Hamas* to halt the violence.

Abbas and Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh of <u>Hamas</u> issued a joint statement after nightfall, calling on all sides "to halt fighting, and to return to language of dialogue and respect of agreements," according to a statement from Abbas' office. The call was broadcast on Palestinian TV.

The two have made numerous calls for an end to the fighting in the past, to no avail.

<u>Hamas</u> and Fatah nominally share power in a coalition government, while Fatah runs most of Gaza's security forces. But no one was listening to the elected leaders' pleas for calm as the focus of power passed to street militias.

<u>Hamas</u> gunmen neutralized the main strongholds of the Fatah-linked security forces, ruling the streets and taking control of large parts of Gaza in the process.

Hamas tramples Fatah security strongholds, appears close to controlling Gaza Strip

Abbas' forces - desperately trying to cling to their besieged bases in Gaza - lashed out at the president, saying he left them with no directions and no support in the fight.

The fighting cast doubt on the future of the joint *Hamas*-Fatah government, set up in March to stop the bloodshed.

<u>Hamas</u>, already in control of much of northern Gaza, seized the southern town of Khan Younis and began a coordinated assault on the town of Rafah, also in the south, security officials said.

The rout of the security forces was so bad that 40 Palestinian security officers broke through the border fence in Rafah and fled into Egypt seeking safety, Egyptian police said.

"What can I say? This is a fall, a collapse," said Col. Nasser Khaldi, a senior police official in Rafah.

In the afternoon, <u>Hamas</u> forces attacked the three main compounds of the Fatah-allied forces in Gaza City - the headquarters of the Preventive Security, the Intelligence Service and the National Forces - in what could usher in the final phase of the battle.

<u>Hamas</u> fighters, firing rockets and mortar shells, took over the rooftops in nearby houses and cut off the roads to prevent reinforcements from arriving. They called on the beleaguered Fatah forces to surrender.

<u>Hamas</u> gunmen in high-rise buildings also fired at Abbas' Gaza office and house and his guard force returned fire. Abbas was in the West Bank at the time of the fighting.

During the battle at the Preventive Security Service base, both sides fired wildly from high-rise rooftops.

Dr. Wael Abdel Jawad, a physician trapped in his apartment, said he heard Fatah fighters shouting at colleagues on an adjacent roof to send them more ammunition.

"All of us are terrified here. Shooting came through the windows of our apartment, children are screaming. We are hearing from a nearby mosque the call by *Hamas* to surrender," he said.

"Those fighters on rooftops are like Don Quixote, tilting at windmills. They don't know where to shoot," he said.

In another dramatic battle in Gaza City, hundreds of members of the Fatah-allied Bakr clan, which had fought fiercely for two days, surrendered to masked <u>Hamas</u> gunmen and were led, arms raised, to a nearby mosque. Footage broadcast on <u>Hamas</u>' Al Aqsa TV showed some of the Bakr <u>women</u> trying to enter the mosque. <u>Hamas</u> gunmen later drove off with some of the Bakr fighters, witnesses said.

Two <u>women</u> from the clan tried to leave the area to take a sick girl to a hospital and were shot and killed by jittery **Hamas** gunmen, a clan member said.

After nightfall, *Hamas* militants blew up the house of one of the Bakr clan's leaders, witnesses said.

In Washington, U.S. officials condemned the fighting.

"Violence certainly does not serve the interest of the Palestinian people, and it's not going to bring the peace and prosperity that they deserve," White House spokesman Tony Snow said.

Earlier Wednesday, <u>Hamas</u> militants surrounded a security headquarters in Khan Younis and called on everyone inside to leave or they would blow it up, witnesses said. The building was then destroyed by a bomb planted in a tunnel underneath it, said Ali Qaisi, a presidential guard spokesman.

Security forces later said they lost control of the town.

"Khan Younis is finished, but we are still holding on in Rafah," said Ziad Sarafandi, a senior security official. Soon after, <u>Hamas</u> militants blew up a second security building near Rafah after a long gunbattle and other battles raged in the town, said Khaldi, the senior police official.

Hamas tramples Fatah security strongholds, appears close to controlling Gaza Strip

"They are shooting at anyone and everyone who is Fatah," said Youssef Abu Siyam, a Preventive Security officer in Rafah.

<u>Hamas</u> and Fatah have waged a sporadic power struggle since <u>Hamas</u> won parliament elections last year, ending four decades of Fatah dominance of Palestinian affairs. But the battles have worsened in recent days as <u>Hamas</u> began a systematic assault on security forces to take over Gaza.

The fighting spilled into the Fatah-dominated West Bank. <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah gunmen exchanged fire in the city of Nablus and a nearby refugee camp after Fatah gunmen tried to storm a pro-<u>Hamas</u> TV production company. <u>Hamas</u> said 12 of its fighters were wounded.

On Wednesday, Abbas spoke by phone with the Damascus-based <u>Hamas</u> leader Khaled Mashaal to try to stop the crisis, said Abbas aide Nimr Hamad.

"This is madness, the madness that is going on in Gaza now," Abbas told reporters.

The U.N. Relief and Works Agency, which provides aid to Palestinian refugees, said it would curtail its operations after two of its Palestinian workers were killed by crossfire.

"We are scaling back, we are not pulling back," said the agency's Gaza director, John Ging.

<u>Hamas</u> spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri, said the clashes could have been avoided if Abbas had given the <u>Hamas</u>-led Cabinet control over the security forces, which he blamed for a wave of kidnappings, torture and violence in Gaza.

Load-Date: June 15, 2007



Hamas says it will oppose emergency government

The Independent (London)

June 18, 2007 Monday

Fourth Edition

Copyright 2007 Independent Print Ltd All Rights Reserved



Length: 657 words

Byline: Eric Silver in Jerusalem

Body

The deadly poker game of Palestinian politics entered a new phase yesterday when President Mahmoud Abbas, the Fatah leader, swore in an emergency government in the West Bank town of Ramallah, while Ismail Haniyeh, the <u>Hamas</u> Prime Minister for the past 18 months, denied its legitimacy and consolidated his hold on the Gaza Strip.

Salam Fayyad, a 55-yearold former World Bank economist, was installed at the head of a cabinet of 13 technocrats, which includes two <u>women</u>, two Christians and a Muslim cleric. The only member of Fatah is Abdur-Razzaq al-Yahya, in the post of Interior Minister. Mr Fayyad, who enjoys the trust of the US, Europe and Israel, will serve as his own Foreign Minister and retain his previous portfolio as Finance Minister.

Once the new team shows it can function, the international community is expected to ease the crippling economic siege it imposed after <u>Hamas</u> won last year's parliamentary election and refused to recognise Israel or renounce violence. Jacob Walles, the US consul-general, predicted after meeting Mr Abbas that the embargo would soon be lifted.

Israel is still struggling to come to terms with the bloody *Hamas* takeover of Gaza, which cost up to 120 lives. Ehud Olmert, the Prime Minister, said the split between the West Bank and Gaza could be seen as a setback, but might also prove a new opportunity to revive peace negotiations. "A situation that hasn't existed for a long time has been created in the changing landscape of the Palestinian Authority," he told reporters on a flight to Washington. "We intend to work hard to use this opportunity."

As a first step, Mr Olmert is being urged to release millions of dollars in tax revenues Israel collected on behalf of the PA, but declined to transfer to a <u>Hamas</u>-led government. He promised that Israel would not allow the Gaza Strip, home to nearly 1.5 million Palestinians, to slide into a humanitarian crisis.

After taking office yesterday, Mr Fayyad vowed to deal with the West Bank and Gaza Strip as an "organic unity in all legal, administrative and political aspects". He called on his ministers to "roll our sleeves up and start working." Addressing the people of Gaza, he said: "You are in our hearts. You are our priority, despite the deeds of the forces of darkness, in the land of Gaza, the land of revolution and steadfastness." After declaring a state of emergency, Mr Abbas outlawed <u>Hamas</u> militias. But after his own security services surrendered without a fight in Gaza, it seemed an empty gesture.

Hamas says it will oppose emergency government

Sami Abu Zahra, a <u>Hamas</u> spokesman, insisted that Mr Haniyeh's government would continue to rule. He denounced the Fayyad government as illegitimate. "It has broken the national consensus and all the previous agreements," he said. "It serves the interests of Israel and the United States." Calm returned to the strip after a week of bloodletting, but shoppers and motorists were hedging their bets. In Gaza City's Firas market, Imad Salim, a 42-year-old father of five, said: "We are stocking up on flour, rice and vegetables because nobody knows what tomorrow will bring. I borrowed money to fill my car because no more petrol is coming into Gaza."

The blue-uniformed policemen, who have hardly been paid since <u>Hamas</u> first came to power, have vanished from the streets. Young men in green <u>Hamas</u> singlets were directing traffic yesterday. A police captain said: "We received orders from Ramallah not to report for duty. They promised to pay our wages. We hope that when the international embargo is lifted, we'll start getting our money again."

Vandals damaged a Roman Catholic church in Gaza City, destroying artefacts and prayer books. Father Immanuel, the local priest, declined to blame <u>Hamas</u>, but said fanatics were taking advantage of the Islamist takeover to target Christians.

Suspected Palestinian militants in Lebanon hit a northern Israeli town with two Katyusha rockets on Sunday, Lebanese and Israeli officials said. No one was hurt.

Load-Date: June 18, 2007



Hamas attacks Fatah's security headquarters in northern Gaza; cease-fire calls ignored

Deseret Morning News (Salt Lake City)

June 12, 2007 Tuesday

Copyright 2007 The Deseret News Publishing Co.

Length: 745 words

Byline: Associated Press

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip -- <u>Hamas</u> gunmen attacked the headquarters of Fatah-allied forces in northern Gaza with mortars and grenades Tuesday and captured several smaller positions in what Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah alleged was a coup attempt by the Islamic militants.

More than 80 people have been killed since mid-May, most of them militants, including two on Tuesday.

Security commanders loyal to Abbas complained they were not given clear orders to fight back at a time when <u>Hamas</u> appeared to be moving forward according to a plan.

Abbas' Fatah movement was to meet later in the day to decide whether to pull out of his shaky coalition with *Hamas*. Calls by Abbas and exasperated Egyptian mediators for a cease-fire went unheeded.

Instead, <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah militants threatened to kill each other's leaders. In Gaza, a rocket-propelled grenade damaged the home of Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh of <u>Hamas</u> but caused no injuries in what <u>Hamas</u> said was an attempted assassination. In the West Bank, Fatah gunmen kidnapped a deputy Cabinet minister from <u>Hamas</u>.

Heavy gunbattles erupted in several locations in Gaza.

Some 200 <u>Hamas</u> fighters surrounded the headquarters of Fatah-allied forces in northern Gaza, a key prize for <u>Hamas</u>. The attackers fired mortar shells and RPGs at the compound, where some 500 security officers were holed up.

"They are attacking from all sides," said one of the officers, Khaled Awad.

<u>Hamas</u> gunmen also exchanged fire with Fatah forces at the southern security headquarters in the southern town of Khan Younis, but had not yet launched a major assault. The town's streets were empty as people huddled indoors.

Col. Nasser Khaldi, a Fatah commander in southern Gaza, confirmed his men were on the defensive. Khaldi said Abbas, the leader of Fatah, must give orders now to fight back.

"There is a weakness of our leaders," he said. "Hamas is just taking over our positions. There are no orders."

<u>Hamas</u> and Fatah have been locked in a violent power struggle since <u>Hamas</u> defeated Fatah in January 2006 legislative elections, ending four decades of Fatah rule.

Hamas attacks Fatah's security headquarters in northern Gaza; cease-fire calls ignored

The sides agreed to share power in an uneasy coalition three months ago, but put off key disputes, including control of the security forces. Most are dominated by Fatah loyalists, while <u>Hamas</u> has formed its own militia, in addition to the thousands of gunmen at its command.

Two days of fighting has left 18 Palestinians dead, including two Tuesday, in violence that has grown increasingly brutal. Some people were shot execution-style or hit in shootouts that turned hospitals into battle grounds, while others were thrown from rooftops. Residents huddled indoors, and university exams were canceled.

The head of the Egyptian mediation team, Lt. Col. Burhan Hamad, said neither side responded to his call to hold truce talks. "It seems they don't want to come. We must make them ashamed of themselves. They have killed all hope. They have killed the future," said Hamad, who brokered several previous short-lived cease-fires.

Hamad said both sides were about equal in firepower. "Neither can have a decisive victory," he said. "To be decisive, they need weapons that neither side has."

A gunbattle erupted at the European Hospital in Khan Younis when <u>Hamas</u> militants controlling the rooftop traded fire with Fatah-allied security forces. Fifteen children attending a kindergarten in the line of fire were rushed into the hospital.

The RPG that hit Haniyeh's home in the Shati refugee camp on the outskirts of Gaza City struck the side of the house while the family was inside, said his son, Abdel Salam. A <u>Hamas</u> Web site described the incident as an assassination attempt by Fatah. "They crossed all the red lines," said **Hamas** spokesman Fawzi Barhoum.

Elsewhere, a member of the <u>Hamas</u> military wing was kidnapped and killed by Fatah gunmen. He was identified as a cousin of Abdel Aziz Rantisi, a <u>Hamas</u> leader who was assassinated by Israel in 2004.

Separately, <u>Hamas</u> gunmen attacked the home of a senior Fatah security official with mortars and grenades, killing his 14-year-old son and three <u>women</u> inside, security officials said. Other Fatah gunmen stormed the house of a **Hamas** lawmaker and burned it down.

The fighting also spilled into the West Bank, with Palestinian security forces seizing two employees of the <u>Hamas</u>-linked Al Aqsa TV station in Ramallah. Fatah gunmen said <u>Hamas</u> leaders in the West Bank, a Fatah stronghold, would be targeted if <u>Hamas</u> doesn't halt its attacks in Gaza.

Load-Date: June 12, 2007



Israel bars Hamas PM from entering Gaza

The Independent (London)

December 15, 2006 Friday

First Edition

Copyright 2006 Independent Print Ltd All Rights Reserved



Section: WORLD; Pg. 38

Length: 672 words

Byline: Donald Macintyre in Jerusalem

Body

Israel yesterday stopped the Palestinian prime minister Ismail Haniyeh from crossing into Gaza carrying a reported\$35m (£18m) stashed in suitcases.

The move triggered an outbreak of violence as hundreds of <u>Hamas</u> militants stormed the Egypt-Gaza crossing at Rafah. Witnesses said members of Mahmoud Abbas's presidential guard, responsible for Palestinian security at the terminal, had opened fire.

Last night Mr Haniyeh, who announced on Monday in Tehran that he had been promised\$250m for the Palestinian Authority by Iran, left for the border from the Egyptian town of El Arish after an agreement with Israel brokered by Egypt that he could pass through the terminal provided he left the cash behind. An Israeli official confirmed last night that the government had no objection to Mr Haniyeh returning to Gaza without the cash and witnesses at Rafah reported seeing three Palestinian cars driving though the terminal to collect the prime minister.

The negotiated deal meant that the money would be handed to the Arab League's account for the Palestinians, which should ensure that it would be used to meet social and economic need rather than for military purposes by the faction, Israeli officials said.

Mr Haniyeh was last night apparently awaiting the return of EU monitors, entrusted with supervising the crossing under an international agreement.

An Associated Press reporter at the scene said that earlier, travellers hoping to cross the border had run for cover with their luggage, with <u>women</u> and children hiding behind walls and taxis, as the presidential guard fired on militants seeking to overrun the area. Two loud explosions were heard later as militants reportedly blew a hole in the border wall about half a kilometre from the crossing.

The <u>Hamas</u> militants had chanted "God is great, let's liberate this place", and taken over the arrival hall as border guards escorted the European monitors to safety. Witnesses also said that computers and other equipment in the terminal had been destroyed by militants.

Israel bars Hamas PM from entering Gaza

The EU monitors were told in discussions with the Presidential Guard that there had been injuries in the fracas. AP also reported that gunfire erupted again several hours later.

Witnesses said that <u>Hamas</u> gunmen had fired at the Egyptian side of the border, drawing return fire both from Egyptian security forces and presidential guards dominated by Fatah. Interfactional Palestinian tension has sharply increased after the killing of the three sons of an intelligence officer loyal to Mr Abbas on Monday. The decision to bar Mr Haniyeh by closing the border for several hours - made by the Israeli defence minister Amir Peretz - was far from automatic since other <u>Hamas</u> officials have been allowed through Rafah with money in suitcases, most notably the Palestinian foreign minister Mahmoud Zahar who brought\$20m into Gaza by the same route in June.

<u>Hamas</u> officials insist that having to resort to bringing donated cash through the crossing was a direct consequence of the Israeli and international boycott of the Palestinian Authority, mounted in response to <u>Hamas</u>'s election in January. Ghazi Hamad, the <u>Hamas</u> Cabinet spokesman, who had been with Mr Haniyeh, said in El Arish said that **Hamas** had a duty to ensure that Palestinians did not "starve" because of the "siege".

He added: "We cannot accept what is going on without doing anything. It is a Palestinian crossing not an Israeli crossing and we should be able to take the money through without a problem."

Mark Regev, the Israeli foreign ministry spokesman, said last night: "It has never been about preventing Mr Haniyeh from entering Gaza. The issue is the money - tens of millions of dollars which can be used to help the terrorist wing of <u>Hamas</u>, including to fire Qassam rockets."

On the fact that <u>Hamas</u> officials had previously been allowed in with suitcases full of cash, Mr Regev said: "It has been going on too long and we wanted to put a stop to it."

The Israeli Supreme Court last night largely upheld the policy of targeted assassinations of militants.

Load-Date: December 15, 2006



West Bank scholars push for spiritual reply to Hamas extremism

Christian Science Monitor July 31, 2007, Tuesday

Copyright 2007 The Christian Science Publishing Society All Rights Reserved

Section: WORLD; Pg. 4

Length: 989 words

Byline: Joshua Mitnick Correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor

Dateline: Nalbus, West Bank

Body

Standing before his class on Islam and Society at Al Rawda College, Sheikh Sad Sharaf cites the Koran to land a not-so-subtle jab at *Hamas*'s recent takeover of the Gaza Strip.

When Muhammad died, explains Sheikh Sharaf, who is a member of the rival Fatah Party, burial was delayed until a successor could be agreed upon in order to avoid a power struggle over the Islamic caliphate. "This proves that infighting is illegal in Islamic terms," he concludes.

As Fatah struggles to contain the spread of <u>Hamas</u> in the West Bank, Palestinians like Sharaf are pushing for an Islamic critique to compete with the militant brand of religion practiced by the new rulers of Gaza.

Some advocate a liberal brand of Islamic politics that would support territorial compromise, while those with a strict interpretation of the Koran are attacking <u>Hamas</u> for straying too far by mixing religion and politics. But most agree that any challenge to **Hamas** must include a new spiritual formula.

The recent dominance of Islamic politics in Palestinian life is part of a pan-Arab trend in which religious parties have become the main opposition to regimes perceived as corrupt and undemocratic, says Hanna Siniora, codirector of the Israel-Palestine Center for Research and Information in Jerusalem.

"Thirty or 40 years ago, it was fashionable to be leftist and socialist. Now it is becoming fashionable in the Arab world to be an Islamist," he said.

<u>Hamas</u>'s rise has coincided with growing disillusionment with the secular ideologies that dominated the Palestinian national movement starting in the 1950s.

Whoever comes out against <u>Hamas</u> will have to make up for lost time. For more than two decades, <u>Hamas</u>, originally a local branch of Egypt's Islamist Muslim Brotherhood, has entrenched itself in the fabric of Palestinian life through bold attacks on Israeli civilians and a broad web of charity institutions that filled a social and religious void left by a corrupt secular establishment.

Sharaf is trying to convince Fatah to establish a council of religious scholars that will be able to counter the rhetoric coming from *Hamas*.

West Bank scholars push for spiritual reply to Hamas extremism

He criticizes <u>Hamas</u>'s advocacy of violence against Israeli civilians as well as its violent takeover of Gaza last month, which most Palestinians opposed.

"The Prophet Muhammad says, 'Don't kill those who don't use weapons against you. Don't kill a woman. Don't kill a baby,' " says Sharaf, who says he's a Sufi Muslim, a branch of Islam known for its theological mysticism and moderation.

A preacher in one of Nablus's central mosques and the host of an Islamic radio and television program, Sharaf says a growing number of Palestinians have sought him out for advice since the *Hamas* takeover of Gaza.

Although Sharaf says he believes in the religious idea of the creation of one Islamic kingdom as laid out in the Koran, the modern experience with states dominated by Islamic dogmatists have been negative, he says.

"Look at Sudan, Somalia, and the Taliban," he says. "Palestine should not be isolated from the international situation. The Islamic rule needs a long time before it can be effective."

The Sheikh complains that Fatah politicians have so far ignored his advice to enlist religious scholars for help. Palestinians inside and outside Fatah say installing a religious council within the party is the wrong strategy.

"Of course it is important to underline [that] the practices of <u>Hamas</u> are not consistent [with] what we believe are religious values," says Jamal Nazzal, a Fatah spokesman in the West Bank.

"But we cannot criticize <u>Hamas</u> from a religious point of view. We criticize <u>Hamas</u> from a democratic, secular point of view," Mr. Nazzal says.

The influence of religion in public life is becoming ubiquitous in the Palestinian territories, whether it's the head scarves worn by many <u>women</u> or the posters celebrating those killed as martyrs in the second Intifada which began in 2000.

Recognizing the Palestinian society's traditionalist leanings, Mohammed Dajani, a political science professor at Al Quds University, argues that the only way to challenge <u>Hamas</u> is by setting up a separate religious party that will push interpretations of Islam that back non-violence and tolerance.

Mr. Dajani named his party Wasatia - a term used in the Koran that means moderation. His party is reaching out to schoolteachers and Muslim clerics in a bid to counter *Hamas*.

"What we want to do is change the culture of the people," he says. "Our goal is to teach youth that suicide bombing is not Islam."

To be sure, <u>Hamas</u>'s Islamist critics also include figures from more fundamentalist sects of the Muslim world. Palestinian Salafis assail <u>Hamas</u>'s Sheikh Mouad Sawalhe, who is part of the Palestinian Salafi community, a group of Islamist fundamentalists who believe the political involvement of <u>Hamas</u> violates what they understand as a Koranic ban on Muslim political parties.

"Religion should be for worship and not for political goals," says Sheikh Sawalhe, sitting in the office of a Nablus cemetery where he helps prepare the dead before burial. "Does the pope interfere in the foreign policy of Rome?"

Funded by Saudi Arabian donors, Salafi leaders claim their community numbers 5,000 and is growing. They also plan to open a religious academy in Nablus.

In the Salafi view, a secularist like Abbas who sins because he doesn't observe Islamic dictates is preferable to a group like <u>Hamas</u> which sins in the name of Islam. At the same time, Salafis believe the place of believers should be unconditional support for the regime.

"But what about the situation where there are two prime ministers, one in Gaza and one in the West Bank," asks one student back in the college class on Islam and government, referring to the Palestinians current dilemma.

West Bank scholars push for spiritual reply to Hamas extremism

It is a question that Sharaf prefers to avoid. "The truth is that we are living in an exception," the lecturer says. "Let's return to the caliphate."

(c) Copyright 2007. The Christian Science Monitor

Load-Date: July 30, 2007



Hamas accuses Fatah as Gaza slides closer to civil war

The Daily Telegraph (LONDON)

December 16, 2006 Saturday

Copyright 2006 Telegraph Group Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; INTERNATIONAL; Pg. 17

Length: 769 words

Byline: Tim Butcher in Gaza City

Body

<u>HAMAS</u> supporters demanded death for their Fatah rivals yesterday at a rally where they gave the Palestinian prime minister Ismail Haniyeh a rousing welcome hours after he survived an assassination attempt.

As gunmen from both factions fought gun battles in the occupied territories, Mr Haniyeh, who heads the Islamist *Hamas* government, was cheered wildly as he mocked those who suggested he was afraid of dying.

<u>Hamas</u> officials blamed the rival Fatah movement for the assassination attempt on Thursday. Mr Haniyeh said: "We tell all those who believe in the logic of assassination that this does not scare even little children in <u>Hamas</u>. We joined this movement to become martyrs, not ministers."

Earlier, the crowd of 20,000 listened as Khalil al-Hayya, the head of the <u>Hamas</u> parliamentary bloc, accused the Fatah leader Mahmoud Abbas of being willing to spark civil conflict. "What a war, Mahmoud Abbas, you are launching, first against God, and then against **Hamas**," he said.

Mr Abbas, the Palestinian president. said that he "regretted" that Mr Haniyeh's entourage had come under attack, and the exiled <u>Hamas</u> leader Khaled Mashaal called for restraint "to protect Palestinian blood". But the events of the last 24 hours amounted to a dramatic worsening of the security situation in the West Bank and Gaza which many now fear could slide into civil war.

In the most serious of yesterday's skirmishes, Fatah gunmen attacked a mosque in Ramallah, the de facto capital of the West Bank, where <u>Hamas</u> gunmen were praying. At least 32 people were injured in the fighting. Last night the streets of Gaza City cleared as people cowered at home fearing further clashes.

The day began with <u>Hamas</u> accusing Fatah of orchestrating an attempt on the life of Mr Haniyeh shortly after he returned to Gaza from a foreign fund-raising trip. Gunmen shot at Mr Haniyeh's convoy and while he escaped unscathed one of his bodyguards was killed and 27 others injured, including Mr Haniyeh's son, Abed.

The incident overshadowed what was meant to be a day of celebration for <u>Hamas</u>, which was marking the 19th anniversary since it was founded. A massive anniversary rally in the Yamouk stadium in Gaza City was turned into a protest demonstration against Fatah and, in particular, one of its local leaders, Mohammed Dahlan, accused by <u>Hamas</u> of orchestrating the attack.

Speaker after speaker denounced Mr Dahlan, prompting the crowd to chant "collaborator, collaborator". In the lexicon of Palestinian politics there is no term more damning. Collaborators accused of working on behalf of Israel are summarily executed.

Hamas accuses Fatah as Gaza slides closer to civil war

Mr Dahlan was not in Gaza yesterday having travelled to the West Bank to attend a speech by Mr Abbas today. Mr Dahlan's return to Gaza will be a massive test of the stability of the current security climate.

The rally was an extravaganza of struggle iconography attended by all the senior figures of the <u>Hamas</u> movement as well as thousands of foot soldiers. <u>Women</u> and girls were allowed to attend but they were restricted to a special <u>female</u> section. Speakers mounted a stage where a massive poster showed seven <u>Hamas</u> luminaries who had all been killed, or "martyred", by Israel. One of the seven was the wheelchair-bound spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, assassinated in early 2004.

Under a forest of green <u>Hamas</u> flags, the crowd listened to hours of martial, Muslim music and watched as gunmen from the military wing of <u>Hamas</u>, the Izzedine Al-Qassam Brigades, displayed their prowess.

Two of the gunmen wearing masks and webbing abseiled down the wall of a block of flats, unfolding as they descended a massive picture of a <u>female Hamas</u> suicide bomber. Fatma al Najar blew herself up last month in an unsuccessful attempt to kill Israeli troops occupying the north Gazan town of Beit Hanoun. Aged 70, she earned the status of the oldest Palestinian <u>female</u> suicide bomber.

While the rally might normally have been expected to focus on Israel, it was the crisis with Fatah that dominated proceedings.

The rally erupted when Mr Haniyeh arrived. His Mercedes, with bodyguards standing on the roof, crawled through the teeming crowd. To a crescendo of celebratory gunfire, Mr Haniyeh began a portentous speech in which he mentioned Israel only briefly.

He spent more time attacking the policies of Mr Abbas and trying to pre-empt suggestions that the president of the Palestinian national authority might be about to announce a referendum.

The referendum would be on whether elections should be held to try to break the current deadlock in Palestinian politics which sees *Hamas* controlling the parliament and Fatah the presidency.

Load-Date: December 16, 2006



Hamas gunmen seize control of Gaza border crossing

The Guardian (Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island)

December 15, 2006 Friday

Copyright 2006 The Guardian, a division of Transcontinental Media Group Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: WORLD; Pg. B7

Length: 625 words

Byline: AP

Body

Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh returned to the Gaza Strip late Thursday after a fierce gunbattle between his <u>Hamas</u> militant group and the rival Fatah movement paralyzed the area's only border crossing for several hours, deepening divisions that have pushed the Palestinians closer toward civil war.

More than two dozen people were wounded in the fighting, and Haniyeh's convoy was forced to speed away after he entered Gaza when a new round of gunfire erupted. Officials said Haniyeh was unharmed.

Haniyeh had rushed back to Gaza, cutting short a trip abroad, in a bid to quell the infighting. But the violence showed no signs of slowing Thursday, as pro-Fatah Palestinian officers arrested a <u>Hamas</u>-linked militant in the killing of three small children of a Fatah security chief. The militant's allies retaliated by kidnapping a security officer.

Thursday's gunbattle erupted after <u>Hamas</u> militants, angry that Israel was preventing Haniyeh from returning to Gaza with millions of dollars for his cash-strapped government, stormed the border terminal.

The pro-Fatah Presidential Guard, responsible for securing the area, opened fire, setting off a gunfight. Terrified travellers ran for cover, some carrying their luggage. Crying <u>women</u> and children hid behind walls and nearby taxis outside, while the European monitors who police the crossing fled. Two <u>Hamas</u> militants were wounded in the gunfight.

The <u>Hamas</u> militants, chanting "God is Great, let's liberate this place" took over the arrival hall, and the border guards escorted the European monitors to safety. In the chaos of the attack, two loud explosions rocked the border area, and security officials said militants had blown a hole in the border fence about one kilometre from the terminal.

Late Thursday, hundreds of <u>Hamas</u> forces were patrolling the border area as Presidential Guards nervously looked on. But as Egyptian officials negotiated with the Europeans to reopen the border, impatient <u>Hamas</u> gunmen angry over the delays re-entered the area and began firing across the border. Egyptian officials said troops fired in the air to keep Palestinians from crossing.

The rampage destroyed furniture and computer equipment inside the terminal and plunged the area into darkness. Hospital officials said at least 27 people were wounded, two seriously.

With the terminal closed, Haniyeh remained stranded on the Egyptian side of the border for several hours, waiting for the situation to calm. Late Thursday, the Presidential Guard regained control of the terminal and the Europeans moved back in.

Hamas gunmen seize control of Gaza border crossing

Thursday's unrest was likely to strain a the U.S.-brokered deal that turned over control of the crossing to the Palestinians last year after four decades of Israeli control. The border can only operate in the presence of European monitors.

Israeli Defence Minister Amir Peretz, working with the EU monitors, had ordered the border closed to prevent Haniyeh from bringing in tens of millions of dollars he raised during a tour of Muslim countries, security officials said.

Haniyeh left Gaza Nov. 28 for what was supposed to be a monthlong trip in the Muslim world, with a goal to raise money for his government.

The Palestinian Authority has been crippled by international economic sanctions that have left it unable to pay full salaries to its 165,000 workers. Israel and Western donor countries cut off hundreds of millions of dollars for the government after <u>Hamas</u> won legislative elections early this year, demanding the militant group renounce violence and recognize Israel.

<u>Hamas</u> has rejected the demands and instead turned to Iran and other Muslim countries for help. <u>Hamas</u> officials have physically delivered more than \$50US million to Gaza this year - far short of the government's needs.

Graphic

Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh fromHamas, centre, is surrounded by bodyguards as he arrives at hishouse in Gaza City, late Thursday. The Palestinian prime ministerreturned to the Gaza Strip late Thursday after a fierce gunbattlebetween his <u>Hamas</u> militant group and the rival Fatah movementparalyzed the area's only border crossing for several hours, deepening divisions that have pushed the Palestinians closer towardcivil war. Associated Press photo

Load-Date: December 15, 2006



Israel warns Hamas as six die in Gaza attacks

The Australian (Australia) May 23, 2007 Wednesday All-round Country Edition

Copyright 2007 Nationwide News Pty Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: WORLD; Pg. 11

Length: 416 words

Body

Reuters

GAZA: At least five Palestinians and an Israeli woman died yesterday in fresh attacks by both sides, as Israel warned that all *Hamas* leaders involved in cross-border rocket fire could be targeted.

The woman's death in the southern Israeli town of Sderot marked the first Israeli fatality in a Palestinian rocket attack since November and is likely to stoke further anger at what Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni called an "intolerable" situation.

Israeli-Palestinian violence has surged in recent days, while Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah faction and the militant <u>Hamas</u> group have struggled to maintain calm between their own fighters after weeks of internal fighting.

Islamic Jihad, the Popular Resistance Committees and *Hamas* all claimed responsibility for the attack on Sderot.

Mr Abbas said Israel's attacks would have "grave consequences for the entire region" and that militants should stop their rocket fire "so as not to give the Israelis the excuse they use to justify their attacks that have killed innocent victims".

Israel's security cabinet agreed yesterday to escalate military action in response to about 150 rockets fired from Gaza since last week. "It is our obligation to harm the rocket launchers and our obligation is to continue to harm *Hamas*," Ms Livni told a news conference in Sderot.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert visited Sderot hours later, where several people booed him, shouting "disgrace". Dozens of Israelis burned tyres on a street.

Palestinians fear Israel may soon raid Gaza should the violence continue.

In Gaza, Palestinian <u>women</u> dressed in black -- wearing masks with the words "al-Aqsa Brigades", which is part of Fatah -- and clutching rifles said they were ready to commit suicide bombings against any Israeli troops who entered Gaza.

An Israeli airstrike killed at least four members of Islamic Jihad on their way to launch rockets at the Jewish state.

Israel warns Hamas as six die in Gaza attacks

Thousands of <u>Hamas</u> supporters took to the streets of Gaza City and gunmen fired into the air, vowing revenge, a day after an Israeli airstrike on the home of <u>Hamas</u> politician Khalil al-Haya.

"We will keep to the same path until we win one of two goals: victory or martyrdom," said Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniya, a *Hamas* leader.

One man was killed in an earlier Israeli airstrike on what the Jewish state called a rocket-manufacturing facility.

Palestinians said it was a stonemason's shop.

Mr Abbas was due in Gaza last night to speak to leaders about maintaining law and order.

Load-Date: May 22, 2007



Jordan offers to host Fatah-Hamas talks

Guardian.com

December 19, 2006

Copyright 2006 Guardian Unlimited (© Guardian Newspapers Limited) All rights reserved

theguardian

Length: 689 words

Highlight: Jordan today offered to host talks between warring Palestinian factions after a resumption of major violence around Gaza City killed four people and injured almost 20 others, including a group of schoolchildren caught in crossfire.

Body

Jordan today offered to host talks between warring Palestinian factions after a resumption of major violence around Gaza City killed four people and injured almost 20 others, including a group of schoolchildren caught in crossfire.

The fresh battles between forces loyal to the Fatah and <u>Hamas</u> groups came a day after Tony Blair held discussions in the West Bank town of Ramallah with the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas.

Meanwhile, Jordan's King Abdullah II has said he is prepared to host discussions between leaders of Fatah and <u>Hamas</u>. His offer came after the Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert made a surprise visit to the monarch for talks on reviving the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

"Jordan is willing to do all it can to help the Palestinians overcome their differences and to bolster Palestinian unity," a statement from the royal palace said. It added that "all options are open", including a meeting in Amman between the Fatah leader, Mr Abbas, and the Palestinian prime minister, Ismail Haniyeh, of *Hamas*.

The worst factional fighting between Palestinian groups in a decade, which killed three people at the weekend, eased slightly during Mr Blair's visit after Fatah and *Hamas* leaders agreed a ceasefire.

However, a gun fight began early today when <u>Hamas</u> militiamen guarding a Gaza hospital blocked the entry of two armed Fatah members accompanying an injured colleague.

The fighting escalated, killing four people and injuring 18 more, including five schoolchildren hit by stray gunfire. Masked <u>Hamas</u> gunmen set up makeshift checkpoints on main roads while a Fatah security installation was attacked with mortar fire.

The groups have been locked in a power struggle since the more radical <u>Hamas</u> won legislative elections in January. Fatah, which seeks peace with Israel, controls the presidency, while the radical <u>Hamas</u>, which is committed to Israel's destruction, controls parliament and the cabinet.

Tensions have escalated since efforts to form a moderate unity government collapsed in late November.

Jordan offers to host Fatah-Hamas talks

At the weekend, Mr Abbas announced plans for early elections as a way to end the deadlock, something <u>Hamas</u> condemned as an effective coup.

Mr Blair yesterday proposed a plan to bolster the beleaguered Palestinian president by funnelling millions of pounds in aid directly to security forces under the Palestinian leader's control.

Mr Blair laid out his plan following the meeting with Mr Abbas, where he promised he "would not rest for a single moment" until a two-state solution was secured.

Mr Blair's office said the funding plan would require some new mechanism to ensure that the money, predominantly EU aid, was spent on agreed programmes and did not fund Fatah party militias or corruption.

The EU blocked aid to the Palestinian Authority following the election of *Hamas*, which it considers a terrorist group.

Mr Blair, who also held talks yesterday with Mr Olmert, arrived in Abu Dhabi today for the final leg of a week-long Middle East tour.

The current tour has been billed as Mr Blair's final push for Middle East peace before his likely departure from Downing Street next year. However, his official spokesman said today the prime minister did not rule out a return visit.

"This is very much part of an ongoing process which he will build on in the new year," said the spokesman.

"Nobody underestimates the difficulties, but there is an effort going on to understand the position of the other side which is qualitatively different from before."

During his first ever visit to the United Arab Emirates, Mr Blair is set to meet the state's president, Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed, as well as the prime minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid, the ruler of Dubai and a member of the wealthy Maktoum family who are bidding to buy Liverpool football club.

Addressing students at a <u>women</u>-only university in Abu Dhabi today, Mr Blair said the most important challenge for the modern world was to create a "global culture" based on universal values of openness, tolerance and justice.

Despite their different religions and different cultures people of moderation around the world "share the same god and the same values", he said.

Load-Date: December 19, 2006



Hamas PM held at border with\$35m stash

The Independent (London)

December 15, 2006 Friday

Fourth Edition

Copyright 2006 Independent Print Ltd All Rights Reserved



Section: WORLD; Pg. 38

Length: 687 words

Byline: Donald Macintyre in Jerusalem

Body

Israel yesterday stopped the Palestinian prime minister Ismail Haniyeh from crossing into Gaza carrying a reported\$35m (£18m) stashed in suitcases.

The standoff of several hours, which only ended last night when Mr Haniyeh crossed into Gaza without the money, triggered an outbreak of violence as hundreds of <u>Hamas</u> militants stormed the Egypt-Gaza border point at Rafah. Witnesses said members of Mahmoud Abbas's Fatahdominated presidential guard, responsible for Palestinian security at the terminal, had opened fire at the outset of a series of gun battles at the border between the two factions which left 19 people wounded including Mr Haniyeh's son.

Last night Mr Haniyeh, who announced on Monday in Tehran that he had been promised\$250m for the Palestinian Authority by Iran, finally crossed from the Egyptian town of El Arish after an agreement with Israel brokered by Egypt that he could pass through the terminal provided he left the cash behind. More gunfire broke out after Mr Haniyeh's convoy crossed into Gaza, witnesses said. The deal meant that the money would be handed to the Arab League's account for the Palestinians, which should ensure that it would be used to meet social and economic need rather than for military purposes by the faction, Israeli officials said.

An Associated Press reporter at the scene said that earlier, travellers hoping to cross the border had run for cover, with <u>women</u> and children hiding behind walls and taxis, as the presidential guard fired on militants seeking to overrun the area. Two loud explosions were heard later as militants reportedly blew a hole in the border wall about half a kilometre from the crossing.

The <u>Hamas</u> militants had chanted "God is great, let's liberate this place", and taken over the arrival hall as border guards escorted the European monitors entrusted with supervising the crossing to safety. Witnesses also said that computers and other equipment in the terminal had been destroyed by militants. The EU monitors were told in discussions with the Presidential Guard that there had been injuries in the fracas. AP also reported that gunfire erupted again several hours later.

Witnesses said that <u>Hamas</u> gunmen had fired at the Egyptian side of the border, drawing return fire both from Egyptian security forces and presidential guards dominated by Fatah. Interfactional Palestinian tension has sharply

Hamas PM held at border with\$35m stash

increased after the killing of the three sons of an intelligence officer loyal to Mr Abbas on Monday. The decision to bar Mr Haniyeh by closing the border for several hours - made by the Israeli defence minister Amir Peretz - was far from automatic since other <u>Hamas</u> officials have been allowed through Rafah with money in suitcases, most notably the Palestinian foreign minister Mahmoud Zahar who brought\$20m into Gaza in June.

<u>Hamas</u> officials insist that having to resort to bringing donated cash through the crossing was a direct consequence of the Israeli and international boycott of the Palestinian Authority, mounted in response to <u>Hamas</u>'s election in January. Ghazi Hamad, the <u>Hamas</u> Cabinet spokesman, who had been with Mr Haniyeh, said in El Arish that <u>Hamas</u> had a duty to ensure that Palestinians did not "starve" because of the "siege".

He added: "We cannot accept what is going on without doing anything.

It is a Palestinian crossing not an Israeli crossing and we should be able to take the money through without a problem."

Mark Regev, the Israeli foreign ministry spokesman, said last night: "It has never been about preventing Mr Haniyeh from entering Gaza. The issue is the money - tens of millions of dollars which can be used to help the terrorist wing of <u>Hamas</u>, including to fire rockets."

On the fact that <u>Hamas</u> officials had previously been allowed in with cash, Mr Regev said: "It has been going on too long and we wanted to put a stop to it."

The Israeli Supreme Court last night largely upheld the policy of targeted assassinations of militants. The unanimous ruling fixed some legal limits, but it did not insist on prior court approval for the attacks, leaving the limits only theoretical and endorsing the killings in practice.

Load-Date: December 16, 2006



Fighting in Gaza kills 7 Hamas militants, young girl

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

November 5, 2006 Sunday

FOURTH EDITION

Copyright 2006 St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A12

Length: 459 words

Byline: By Diaa Hadid THE Associated Press

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

Israeli troops pressing ahead with an offensive in the Gaza border town of Beit Hanoun killed seven <u>Hamas</u> militants and a girl on Saturday.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas appealed for U.N. Security Council intervention to stop the Israeli military operation against the town, where Palestinians have fired rockets at Israel. Violence in the town since Wednesday has taken the lives of more than 40 Palestinians.

Abbas "asks the members of the council to move quickly and discuss the tragic situation in the Palestinian territories caused by the Israeli aggression," his spokesman, Nabil Abu Rdeineh, said in a statement.

The Israeli army says the town was targeted as a major launching ground for rockets aimed at Israeli communities nearby.

The European Union urged Israel and Palestinians on Saturday to halt the violence, and the Interim Arab Parliament denounced the "daily Israeli attacks and repeated massacres against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip."

Since taking over Beit Hanoun, troops have conducted house-to-house searches, sometimes breaking through inner walls.

They have posted snipers on roofs and rounded up hundreds of men for questioning, releasing most of them later.

Since nightfall Friday, aircraft have struck a dozen times, targeting militants laying explosives or preparing rockets.

In Saturday's violence, Israeli aircraft killed a <u>Hamas</u> rocket maker in a missile strike on his minivan, and ground forces blew up a weapons storehouse. Six <u>Hamas</u> gunmen were killed in separate incidents, and a civilian died when his house, apparently weakened by the shock of explosions, collapsed on him, according to Palestinian reports.

In another incident, a 12-year-old girl died after being shot in the head by an Israeli sniper, Palestinian officials said.

Fighting in Gaza kills 7 Hamas militants, young girl

The Israeli military expressed regret, saying the sniper had been aiming at an armed militant and had hit the girl by mistake.

Palestinian negotiations

Meanwhile, Palestinian negotiators said they were nearing agreement on forming a new government they hope will be acceptable to the West and end the international freeze on aid to the Palestinian Authority.

The <u>Hamas</u> government of Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh is shunned by the many nations for refusing to recognize Israel and renounce violence.

Officials close to Abbas and Haniyeh said progress was being made on a proposal by <u>Hamas</u> to set up a government of experts who have some ties to <u>Hamas</u> and Abbas' Fatah movement.

As part of the agreement, the new prime minister would have *Hamas* ties, according to the officials.

The new government's program, the key sticking point in the past, would be intentionally vague, the officials said. <u>Hamas</u> leaders are to make a decision Sunday on whether to present it as the official offer.

Graphic

PHOTO

PHOTO - Palestinian <u>women</u> mourn Saturday at the funeral of two brothers, Ayman and Raed Yassin, in the northern Gaza Strip town of Beit Lahia. The men were killed Friday in Israeli shelling on the town. Seven Palestinians were killed by Israeli fire in Gaza Saturday, and a 12-year-old girl was accidentally killed by a sniper. AFP / Getty Images

Load-Date: November 5, 2006



Hamas is using its media properties to back terrorists and incite violence

The Philadelphia Inquirer November 17, 2006 Friday

Copyright 2006 Philadelphia Newspapers, LLC All Rights Reserved

The Philadelphia Inquirer

Found on Philly . com

Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. A19

Length: 783 words

Body

Jonathan L. Snow

is manager of research for the Coalition Against Terrorist Media, a project of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies (www.defenddemocracy.org) in Washington

Gaza is exploding in violence. Street battles have been going on in the territory ever since <u>Hamas</u> took control of the government in January. These fights have ranged from skirmishes between Palestinian factions to military engagements between <u>Hamas</u> gunmen and the Israeli Defense Forces.

A standoff on Nov. 3 between the IDF and <u>Hamas</u> terrorists hiding inside a mosque illuminates a dangerous development: <u>Hamas</u>'s use of the media as a weapon of terror.

Earlier that week, Israel launched a military offensive, "Operation Autumn Clouds," in an attempt to stop weapons smuggling and keep rockets from being fired at Israeli targets from Gaza. The IDF is trying to prevent <u>Hamas</u> and other terror groups from creating a Hezbollah-like terrorist infrastructure in the Gaza Strip.

The standoff at a mosque in the northern Gaza town of Beit Hanoun began when militants fleeing the IDF soldiers sought refuge there. The Israelis encircled the mosque, demanding the surrender of the terrorists inside, most of whom were believed to be members of the Ezzedin al-Qassim Brigades, the armed wing of the <u>Hamas</u> movement.

Scenes like this are not unusual in the region. What was different in this case was how the 19-hour standoff came to a close. As options for the gunmen began to diminish, a <u>Hamas</u>-run radio station in Gaza, Sawt al-Aqsa (Voice of al-Aqsa), put out a message over the airwaves calling on Palestinian <u>women</u> to act as human shields for the terrorists inside the mosque. Hundreds of <u>women</u> responded, placing themselves between the gunmen and the IDF troops, allowing the armed men to escape under the cover of the mob.

The international media heavily reported the story, with a focus on the fact that two of the <u>women</u> who rushed out as human shields were accidentally killed. What is not being discussed is how <u>Hamas</u> used its own media arm to allow scores of armed terrorists to escape almost certain capture, nor how <u>Hamas</u> has repeatedly used its media properties to recruit suicide bombers, incite violent attacks, raise money, and provide direct operational support for terrorists.

The Sawt al-Aqsa radio station is just one part of a web of <u>Hamas</u> media properties, including newspapers, magazines, Internet sites, and radio and television stations. <u>Hamas'</u> television station, also called al-Aqsa, began broadcasting in January, just in time to reinforce <u>Hamas'</u> violent message to Palestinians heading to the polls. The station, modeled after Hezbollah's al-Manar television in Lebanon, uses "news reports," music videos, and fiery speeches to inspire acts of violence and inculcate hate against Jews and the West.

<u>Hamas</u> hopes to soon launch an international broadcast of its television station. It recently began testing its signal via the Saudi-owned Arabsat satellite system, which reaches millions of homes across the Middle East, Northern Africa and Europe, and which already broadcasts Hezbollah's al-Manar.

<u>Hamas</u> is a terrorist group founded to fight against its Jewish neighbors. It has carried out scores of suicide bombings, killing hundreds of people and injuring thousands more. Violence is inherent in the DNA of the movement.

The United States and Europe must recognize the threat posed by <u>Hamas</u>' media, and reject arguments by those who see terrorist media as yet another form of free expression.

Just as the U.S. government designated al-Manar as a terrorist organization, it should do the same for al-Aqsa. This would put strict limits on the kinds of business that U.S. companies and banks can do with the station - a potentially crippling economic hit for a movement already facing a cash crunch.

The European Union, likewise, should prevent <u>Hamas</u> TV from being carried on European satellites. Private-sector companies, which had advertised on al-Manar until being alerted to its true nature, must also refuse to purchase commercial space on the <u>Hamas</u> station.

Further, U.S. and European officials must put more pressure on the Saudi government, which is the majority owner of Arabsat, to deny al-Aqsa, as well as al-Manar, distribution over their satellites. Saudi Arabia portrays itself as an ally against terrorism; removing al-Manar and al-Aqsa television would certainly help improve its shaky image in this regard.

The proliferation of terrorist-controlled media outlets represents a direct threat to any country that it reaches. Taking them off the international airwaves is not an assault on free speech, but rather a legitimate effort to save lives.

Contact Jonathan L. Snow at Jon@defenddemocracy.org.

Load-Date: November 17, 2006



Hamas uses harsh rules to bolster its power in Gaza Strip

thespec.com
September 18, 2007 Tuesday

Final Edition

Copyright 2007 Metroland Media Group Ltd All Rights Reserved

Section: CANADA/WORLD; Pg. A04

Length: 575 words

Byline: Scott Wilson, The Washington Post

Dateline: GAZA CITY

Body

For years, the seaside Flower of the Cities resort was that rare place in the Gaza Strip where the dress code did not rule out bikinis. Now, with some of its cinder-block cabanas turned into prayer rooms, the beach club shows how <u>Hamas</u> is consolidating its hold here three months after seizing power.

Bushy beards and black head-to-toe cloaks for <u>women</u> have become common at the club, which the armed Islamic movement torched in June after routing the secular Fatah party on the streets. The facility has been rebranded the al-Aqsa Resort, with a new logo featuring the revered mosque complex in Jerusalem next to a beach umbrella. *Hamas* followers collect the \$2.50 entrance fee.

Like the party it supported, the bikini crowd has disappeared, leaving the trash-flecked beach and murky swimming pool to Bassem al-Khodori and a half-dozen other *Hamas* supporters, who now have jobs at the resort.

"Before," said Khodori, 32, a cafeteria worker, "only the others were allowed."

Facing money shortages, a shrinking private sector and growing political resistance, <u>Hamas</u> leaders are increasingly imposing harsh interpretations of Islamic law and using brute force to bolster their isolated administration, which remains illegitimate in the view of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah and his U.S.-backed government in the West Bank.

Reconciliation between the two largest Palestinian parties -- now running parallel governments in what had been envisioned as the two territories of a Palestinian state with a single government -- appears as distant as when Abbas dissolved the <u>Hamas</u>-led power-sharing government after the fighting in June.

Many of Gaza's almost 1.5 million residents, who celebrated Israel's withdrawal two years ago only to fall into civil war soon after, have seen their lives improve in some ways and suffer in others as the result of the political split within the Palestinian Authority and *Hamas*' brand of rule here.

While <u>Hamas</u> has imposed order on Gaza's lawless streets, gunmen from its Executive Force, a 5,000-member paramilitary unit, have employed repressive tactics against Fatah supporters and local journalists.

International aid is again funding Palestinian government salaries, helping revive parts of Gaza's economy. But the closure of the cargo crossings from Israel for all but emergency aid is depriving Gaza's small manufacturers of raw

Hamas uses harsh rules to bolster its power in Gaza Strip

materials. An estimated 85 per cent of the territory's manufacturing sector has been shut down since June and more than 35,000 workers have been laid off, according to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Gaza's streets have taken on an increasingly Islamic cast in recent months. The improved everyday security has brought people back to the markets, beaches and parks, many of them <u>women</u> wearing for the first time the full black gown, gloves and face covering favoured by the most conservative Muslims.

Gunmen from the Executive Force are posted along the main avenues and at intersections. In Friday sermons, imams appointed by the <u>Hamas</u>-run administration accuse Abbas of collaborating with Israel and the Bush administration.

After Friday prayers in recent weeks, Fatah supporters have marched through Gaza's streets in protest against the <u>Hamas</u> administration. "Shia!" the demonstrators shouted, an insulting reference to the Sunni Muslim movement's inflexible Islamic character and financial support from the Shiite government of Iran.

Load-Date: September 18, 2007



Hamas threatens to break ceasefire after Israeli air strikes

The Daily Telegraph (LONDON)

October 16, 2006 Monday

Copyright 2006 Telegraph Group Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; International; Pg. 16

Length: 699 words

Body

ISRAEL and <u>Hamas</u> were on the brink of war last night as a senior member of the Islamic movement hinted that it would stop observing a 20-month-old ceasefire in retaliation for the latest Israeli assault on the Gaza Strip.

The Israeli military insisted that it would carry on targeting <u>Hamas</u>, after what it described as clear evidence that the movement was smuggling weapons into Gaza to mount cross-border attacks.

After a series of raids by Israel over the past four days in which 22 Palestinians, mostly <u>Hamas</u> members, died, Atef Idwan, a minister in the <u>Hamas</u> government, said Israel's offensive showed the ceasefire was effectively over.

"Which is better - to respond to the Israeli aggression or not to respond?" asked Mr Idwan, who serves as minister for refugee affairs. "Which is better - to defend yourself or surrender to the enemy? The ceasefire should be bilateral but what we see now shows Israel has never committed to a ceasefire."

Amos Gilad, a senior Israeli defence official, accused <u>Hamas</u> of smuggling weapons into Gaza to try to turn the small scrap of land crowded with 1.4 million Palestinians into a "second Lebanon".

"Our policy is clear - we will deploy all our efforts to prevent rocket firings and this contraband," he said, indicating that this would include "ground and air attacks on terrorists and their infrastructure".

"Hamas, which is reinforcing itself, constitutes a threat to Israel's security," he said. "Our priority is to make it more difficult for the continuation of terrorism."

The latest deaths happened as Israel mounted armed incursions into Gaza, apparently targeting members of <u>Hamas</u>. Israeli attack helicopters targeted <u>Hamas</u> fighters but several civilians, including at least one woman and three children, died in the crossfire.

<u>Hamas</u> militants have so far responded at a relatively low level, firing home-made Qassam rockets from Gaza into Israel without any reports of injuries. While this is likely to provoke further Israeli military reaction, it would be far worse if <u>Hamas</u> returned to using suicide bombings.

No such attacks have taken place since the leadership agreed to observe the ceasefire negotiated in February last year.

Mr Iswan said that while his side had largely observed the ceasefire, Israel has continued to mount operations against Palestinian targets. "Israel asked others to ask for the ceasefire, but Israel has never stopped its crime against the Palestinian people," he said.

Hamas threatens to break ceasefire after Israeli air strikes

"The Palestinian people should defend himself. Israel is beating us badly, that is true, but that does not mean we should not respond." Human rights groups have reported that Israel has killed more than 230 Palestinians, including scores of civilians, since it launched Operation Summer Rains in the summer. Two Israeli soldiers, including one killed by so-called friendly fire, have died in the same period.

Israel argues that the large number of Palestinian fatalities resulted from operations it carried out after the capture of Corporal Gilad Shalit by Palestinian militants in June.

Meanwhile, the career of Moshe Katsav, the president of Israel and moral figurehead of the Jewish state, hung in the balance last night as police recommended that he face rape charges for alleged sexual assaults on <u>female</u> members of his staff.

The decision surprised many, as police sources had indicated that the president, who is married with five children and six grandchildren, was likely only to face a charge of sexual harassment.

Israeli police said in a statement: "There is sufficient evidence indicating that in several cases . . . the president carried out acts of rape, forced sexual acts, sexual acts without consent and sexual harassment."

The police recommendation was passed to Menachem Mazuz, the Israeli attorney general, who is expected to make the final decision on whether to press charges in about four weeks.

Any such charges would cause a constitutional conundrum as Mr Katsav, 60, enjoys immunity from criminal prosecution in his capacity as Israel's head of state. For any prosecution to proceed, he would have to stand down as president.

Mr Katsav vehemently denies all the allegations, and has said he is the victim of a "witch hunt".

Load-Date: October 16, 2006



Hamas seizes upper hand as 15 are left dead in Gaza

The Independent (London)

June 14, 2007 Thursday

Fourth Edition

Copyright 2007 Independent Print Ltd All Rights Reserved



Length: 792 words

Byline: Donald Macintyre in Jerusalem

Body

<u>Hamas</u> has moved to consolidate military gains in Gaza at the expense of the rival Fatah faction after another day of internecine fighting, which left at least 15 more Palestinians dead.

The Islamic faction's military wing launched attacks on three security bases in Gaza City late yesterday, as it sought to extend its command of Gaza to the south of the strip in fighting around the town of Rafah. The moves came after *Hamas* had warned armed members of security services loyal to Fatah in northern Gaza - where *Hamas* had seized a major security base - that the "coup seekers" (as it termed Fatah) had until 7pm tomorrow to hand in their weapons. The Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas told reporters that the fighting was "madness" but both factions ignored his appeals for a truce. About 1,000 demonstrators were fired on as they marched past masked gunmen through Gaza City, chanting: "End the killing." The shooting - it was not immediately clear by whom - killed two demonstrators and wounded at least four others.

Gaza medics said yesterday's carnage brought the total number killed since Sunday to at least 60. The UN refugee agency UNRWA announced it was temporarily suspending most of its operations after two of its employees - one a dustman working in Khan Yunis - were killed by crossfire and two others seriously wounded. The agency said it would only provide emergency aid for the time being. With Fatah fighters on the defensive for most of the day, one of the most concentrated battles between gunmen occupying rooftops of apartment blocks was around the headquarters of the Fatah-dominated Preventative Security force.

Dr Wael Abdel Jawad, a physician trapped in his apartment, told AP he heard Fatah fighters shouting at colleagues on an adjacent roof to send them more ammunition. He added: "All of us are terrified here. Shooting came through the windows of our apartment, children are screaming. We are hearing from a nearby mosque the call by <u>Hamas</u> to surrender." Muawayiah Hassanein, the director of Ambulance and Emergency Services, complained to Reuters that fighters from both factions had fired at ambulances, and had hijacked two vehicles on Tuesday, later returning only one. Both factions have accused the other of using ambulances as military vehicles. <u>Hamas</u> forces also entered the Beach Camp and led hundreds of people in the Bakr family - which has fought battles with <u>Hamas</u> in recent months - to a nearby mosque with their hands raised, according to a resident. A clan member said last night that two <u>women</u> seeking to take a child to hospital had been shot dead by nervous <u>Hamas</u> gunmen and a clan leader's home was burnt down.

Hamas seizes upper hand as 15 are left dead in Gaza

Egyptian police said more than 40 Palestinian security troops - apparently Fatahaffiliated - crossed the border from Gaza yesterday. The Egyptian state news agency also reported that scores more Palestinians were waiting at the closed crossing.

One <u>Hamas</u> activist, Amir Abu al-Amareen, said at a funeral for a <u>Hamas</u> militant in Gaza City, that the struggle was not with Fatah as such, but with those who wanted a repeat of 1996, the year Yasser Arafat moved against <u>Hamas</u>. He declared: "It's time these collaborators realised we are not weak." Meanwhile, Tzipi Livni, the Israeli Foreign Minister, warned in Jerusalem that increasing <u>Hamas</u> control of Gaza would raise questions about Israel's "ability to reach agreements with [Mr Abbas] and whether it would be possible to implement them" in the territory.

Given the prior lack of diplomatic progress on a two-state solution, it was not immediately clear what agreements she had in mind but one Israeli official implied it might be easier to talk with Mr Abbas about easing roadblocks in the West Bank - where Fatah is more dominant - than about prisoner exchanges in Gaza, where the Israeli corporal abducted nearly a year ago, Gilad Shalit, is held but over which the Palestinian President appears to have little control.

Mark Regev, the Foreign Ministry spokesman, said Israel wanted "Palestinian moderates" to succeed and added: "The fact that <u>Hamas</u> appears militarily to be gaining the upper hand is bad for Israel, bad for the Palestinians and bad for peace."

Meanwhile the German EU presidency appears to have backed Fatah forces loyal to Mr Abbas, fighting against those of <u>Hamas</u>, elected to run the Palestinian Authority in 1996. A spokesman for the German Foreign Ministry said the presidency "sharply criticises the attacks ??? on the national security forces". rival Yitzhak Rabin when the latter resigned just before the 1977 elections and when he was assassinated in 1995. He lost both the subsequent elections.

Mr Peres was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize with Yasser Arafat and Mr Rabin after the signing in 1993 of the Oslo accords.

Load-Date: June 14, 2007



Gazans gingerly adapt to Hamas Many residents are being careful to appear as pious Muslims.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

July 1, 2007 Sunday

FOURTH EDITION

Copyright 2007 St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A8

Length: 438 words

Byline: By Sarah El Deeb the Associated Press

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

Men are growing beards to show devotion to Islam, <u>women</u> are lowering hemlines, coffee shop debates on politics have fallen silent - Gazans are adjusting to <u>Hamas</u> rule.

The changes are largely pre-emptive. <u>Hamas</u> has avoided a heavy-handed religious crackdown and has assured Gazans the movement is not setting up a harsh Islamic regime, akin to Taliban rule in Afghanistan.

Still, many people are apprehensive, their fears stoked by <u>Hamas</u> hard-liners such as Mahmoud Zahar, who said this week that he envisions a time when "with God's help, Islam will be in every home."

Not making enemies is a preferred survival tactic two weeks after <u>Hamas</u> militiamen defeated Fatah fighters loyal to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

"It's not safe to say anything," said Samir Filfel, 42, a school guard who spent Friday with his wife and 10 children at Gaza City's beach.

Emad, captain of a small pleasure boat, said he stopped talking politics with his customers. "When we go home, we can talk about <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah," said the skipper, who would give only his first name in fear of angering <u>Hamas</u> militants.

The fierce-looking militiamen in black uniforms have turned from menace to helper for some Gazans.

By dialing 109, <u>women</u> can quickly summon help if they feel harassed on the streets. Shoppers have been known to fight price-gouging by threatening to call the Executive Force, which advertises the emergency number on car stickers. During Fatah rule, police rarely showed up to settle disputes.

For many Gazans, a sense of personal safety after a year of factional fighting is the upside of <u>Hamas</u> rule. There is no more fear of stumbling into the middle of a street battle or getting hit by a stray bullet.

There are no signs yet of *Hamas* trying to impose strict Islamic rule.

Gazans gingerly adapt to Hamas Many residents are being careful to appear as pious Muslims.

Even before the takeover, Gaza had become increasingly conservative, a response to poverty, isolation and fighting with Israel. The vast majority of <u>women</u> wear head scarves. A growing number even put on face veils, which were unheard of in the Palestinian territories a generation ago.

Ibrahim Ibrach, a political analyst, said <u>Hamas</u> wants to cement its rule, not alienate Gazans with draconian measures. This could change, he said, if Gaza's isolation continues for a long time.

Mosque preacher Khalil Yassin said distrust of <u>Hamas</u> was undeserved, saying the movement would never use force to spread its beliefs.

"The problem is people don't understand *Hamas* well," he said.

"We have total conviction that God is on our side," Yassin said.

"The problem is people don't understand <u>Hamas</u> well. We have total conviction that God is on our side." Khalil Yassin, **Hamas** preacher

Notes

The Gaza Strip

Graphic

PHOTO

PHOTO - A veiled Palestinian woman stands Friday with her children on the beach in Gaza City. Thousands of Gazans headed to the beach on Friday, the traditional day of rest in the Muslim world. The Associated Press {Missouri First Edition photo, Page A9} PHOTO - A Palestinian man looks out Saturday from his apartment riddled with bullet holes in factional fighting between <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah in recent weeks, in Gaza City. <u>Hamas</u> gained control of the Gaza Strip more than two weeks ago. The Associated Press

Load-Date: July 1, 2007



Iranians found 'helping Hamas': Gaza ceasefire after day of bloody battles

The Gazette (Montreal)
February 3, 2007 Saturday
Final Edition

Copyright 2007 The Gazette, a division of CanWest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A18

Length: 337 words

Byline: MATTHEW FISHER, CanWest News Service

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

After 17 more Palestinians died and nearly 200 were wounded in fighting between <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah in the Gaza Strip yesterday, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who leads Fatah, and <u>Hamas</u>'s exiled leader, Khaled Meshal, agreed on an immediate ceasefire.

What may be the most intense fighting since the conflict broke out two months ago escalated sharply with Fatah claiming yesterday to have arrested several Iranians, including a general whom it is alleged had been teaching **Hamas** how to make bombs.

Despite wild gunfights, which took place all over the tiny enclave throughout the night and into yesterday morning prayers, Egyptian diplomats said there was an agreement in principle from the two warring parties to observe yet another ceasefire similar to the one that lasted less than 48 hours this week.

It also was announced Abbas and the Syrian-based Meshal would meet on Tuesday in the holy city of Mecca to try to agree on a Saudi-brokered national unity government - something that has eluded <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah since <u>Hamas</u> won a stunning parliamentary majority in elections nine months ago.

A similar meeting between Abbas and Meshal in Syria last month failed.

And there was little evidence of much goodwill on the ground yesterday in Gaza, where huge plumes of smoke wafted above the Islamic University - a *Hamas* stronghold.

<u>Hamas</u> accused Fatah of trying to burn the university down but Fatah countered it was apprehending the Iranians, who were described as weapons experts.

Seven Iranians were arrested and 1,400 small arms and rockets seized, said Fatah - which also reported the arrest of more than a dozen Palestinian **women** it said were working with the Iranians.

Meanwhile, most Gazans stayed home as gangs of masked and heavily armed men roamed the streets.

But even remaining inside did not always afford much protection. A Palestinian woman was killed when a bullet pierced her home, Israel Radio reported. Four children were among those killed when they were caught in the crossfire, according to Associated Press.

Load-Date: February 3, 2007



Hamas Reports Progress On Freeing Israeli Soldier

The New York Times

January 1, 2007 Monday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2007 The New York Times Company

Section: Section A; Column 5; Foreign Desk; Pg. 6

Length: 884 words

Byline: By STEVEN ERLANGER **Dateline:** JERUSALEM, Dec. 31

Body

Palestinian groups involved in holding an Israeli soldier who was captured in late June said Sunday that significant progress had been made toward a prisoner exchange that would release him.

A spokesman in Gaza for the military wing of <u>Hamas</u> said Sunday that "there is a breakthrough" in the prisoner issue "and we hope it will be concluded very soon." The spokesman, Abu Ubaida, suggested that a deal could be close for the release of Cpl. Gilad Shalit, captured by <u>Hamas</u> and two other militant groups in a raid into Israel on June 25.

A spokesman for the larger <u>Hamas</u> movement in Gaza, Fawzi Barhum, confirmed Sunday that "there has been progress," while the Palestinian prime minister, Ismail Haniya, of <u>Hamas</u>, said last Thursday that the Israeli soldier would be freed soon.

Egypt has spent months trying to broker a deal. But its efforts have been stymied repeatedly by the refusal of <u>Hamas</u> leaders in exile -- in particular Khaled Meshal, who heads the <u>Hamas</u> political bureau -- to sanction an agreement that would send Corporal Shalit home before hundreds of Palestinian prisoners are released.

The government of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel played down the prospect of quick results. A spokeswoman for Mr. Olmert, Miri Eisin, said a release was not imminent and there remained "problems," a view echoed by the Palestinian negotiator, Saeb Erekat.

Mr. Olmert is to meet Thursday with President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt in Sharm el Sheik, Egypt, and there has been news media speculation that a deal could be announced there.

The Egyptian foreign minister, Ahmed Aboul Gheit, said a prisoner exchange would be discussed at the meeting. "The deal is ready," he told the London daily newspaper Al Hayat. But the deal "awaits a Palestinian side capable of taking its own decisions."

"Once the decision is Palestinian, without foreign pressure, then the exchange will take place," Mr. Aboul Gheit said, an apparent and apparently bitter reference to the influence that Syria and Iran have over Mr. Meshal and the military wing of <u>Hamas</u>. Mr. Meshal lives in exile in Damascus, Syria, where the government has rebuffed all Western requests to close his office.

Hamas Reports Progress On Freeing Israeli Soldier

"The deal will be done once both sides agree on the overall deal Egypt has proposed and is trying to put into effect," Mr. Aboul Gheit said.

The Egyptians have been working on a deal under which Corporal Shalit would be delivered into their hands. The Israelis, who will not deal directly with <u>Hamas</u>, would then begin to release some Palestinian prisoners, beginning with <u>women</u> and youngsters, with more to follow once the corporal is back in Israel.

The total of Palestinian prisoners to be released has been described variously at 450 to 1,000, including some who have served long sentences in Israeli prisons for serious offenses. The Israelis are always reluctant to release prisoners convicted of involvement in killing Israelis.

Mr. Olmert is also trying to ensure that the Palestinian Authority president, Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah, gets credit for the swap, not the militants of *Hamas* and the Popular Resistance Committees who captured Corporal Shalit.

The Palestinian groups put the onus on Israel. "The swap depends on whether there is an Israeli intention to make it happen," said a spokesman for the Popular Resistance Committees, who calls himself Abu Mujahed. He said Corporal Shalit was in good health.

The capture of the corporal resulted in a return of Israeli soldiers to the Gaza Strip, which they had left in 2005. A bloody summer and autumn followed, with a series of Israeli incursions, continuing Palestinian rocket attacks into Israel from Gaza and fierce internal Palestinian fighting as *Hamas* and Fatah struggled for power.

Mr. Olmert had made the release of Corporal Shalit a condition for a serious meeting with Mr. Abbas, but changed his mind as the situation deteriorated and Washington pressed for some political movement with Fatah.

As of November, Israel was holding 9,075 Palestinian prisoners, including 345 minors, according to the independent Israeli human rights group B'Tselem.

On Friday, the Israeli soldier's father, Noam Shalit, published a letter in the Palestinian daily Al Quds, addressing his son and appealing to his captors.

He wrote: "The fact that we don't know how you are, how you feel, how you are making it through the winter, and how the Palestinian organizations holding you are treating you, is very hard for us. They declare that you are a prisoner of war, but unfortunately, they are preventing you from receiving the rights to which you are entitled as a prisoner of war according to international law, and also according to the exalted Islamic law."

Mr. Shalit then quoted verses from the Koran on the treatment of prisoners and said he hoped that during the Muslim feast of Id al-Adha, which began over the weekend, "a change would take place in the position of the Palestinian organizations holding you," to enable the Palestinian families of prisoners held in Israel to soon see their relatives.

He asked the captors to show his son the letter, which ends: "Don't break before you are released, which is very close, and we are doing all we can so that your release and the release of the Palestinian prisoners will be very close."

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photo: Cpl. Gilad Shalit, in an undated photo provided by his family, was captured by gunmen on June 25.

Load-Date: January 1, 2007



Hamas close to controlling Gaza Strip, moves in on political and security nerve center

Deseret Morning News (Salt Lake City)

June 14, 2007 Thursday

Copyright 2007 The Deseret News Publishing Co.

Length: 1262 words

Byline: Associated Press

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip -- <u>Hamas</u> fighters overran two of the rival Fatah movement's most important security command centers in the Gaza Strip on Thursday, and witnesses said the victors dragged vanquished gunmen into the street and shot them to death execution-style.

<u>Hamas</u> also seized control of Rafah in the south, Gaza's third-largest city, according to witnesses and security officials. It was the second main Gaza city to fall to the militants, who captured nearby Khan Younis on Wednesday.

<u>Hamas</u> captured the Preventive Security headquarters and the intelligence services building n Gaza City, major advances in the Islamic group's attempts to take over Gaza.

After the rout at the Preventive Security headquarters, some of the <u>Hamas</u> fighters kneeled outside, touching their foreheads to the ground in prayer. Others led Fatah gunmen out of the building, some shirtless or in their underwear, holding their arms in the air. Several of the Fatah men flinched as the crack of gunfire split the air.

A witness, who identified himself only as Amjad, said men were killed as their wives and children watched.

"They are executing them one by one," Amjad said in a telephone interview, declining to give his full name for fear of reprisals. "They are carrying one of them on their shoulders, putting him on a sand dune, turning him around and shooting."

Fatah officials said <u>Hamas</u> shot and killed seven of its fighters outside the Preventive Security building. A doctor at Shifa Hospital, said he examined two bodies that had been shot in the head at close range. The officials and the doctor spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals.

Militants and civilians were looting the compound, hauling out computers, documents, office equipment, furniture and TVs.

The moderate President Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah, for the first time in five days of fierce fighting, ordered his elite presidential guard to strike back. But his forces were crumbling fast under the onslaught by the better-armed and better-disciplined Islamic fighters.

In all, 14 fighters and civilians were killed and 80 wounded in the battle for the Preventive Security complex, bringing the day's death toll to 25 by mid-afternoon, hospital and security officials said. About 90 people, mostly fighters but also <u>women</u> and children, have been killed since a spike in violence Sunday sent Gaza into civil war.

Hamas close to controlling Gaza Strip, moves in on political and security nerve center

The two factions have warred sporadically since <u>Hamas</u> took power from Fatah last year, but never with such intensity. <u>Hamas</u> reluctantly brought Fatah into the coalition in March to quell an earlier round of violence, but the uneasy partnership began crumbling last month over control of the powerful security forces.

<u>Hamas</u> had been tightening its ring around the Preventive Security complex for three days, stepping up its assault late Wednesday, with a barrage of bullets, grenades, mortar rounds and land mines that continued until the compound fell. Electricity and telephone lines were cut, and roads leading to the complex were blocked. <u>Hamas</u> claimed it confiscated two cars filled with arms sent as reinforcements.

As <u>Hamas</u> took this major battle spoil, the Palestine Liberation Organization's top body recommended that Abbas declare a state of emergency and dismantle Fatah's governing coalition with <u>Hamas</u>. Abbas said he would review the recommendations and make decision within hours, said an aide, Nabil Amr.

"We are telling our people that the past era has ended and will not return," Islam Shahawan, a spokesman for <u>Hamas</u>' militia, told <u>Hamas</u> radio. "The era of justice and Islamic rule have arrived."

Sami Abu Zuhri, a <u>Hamas</u> spokesman, heralded what he called "Gaza's second liberation," after Israel's 2005 evacuation of the coastal strip.

Israel was watching the carnage closely, concerned the clashes might spawn attacks on its southern border. Israeli Defense Minister Amir Peretz told a weekly meeting of security officials that Israel would not allow the violence to spread into attacks on southern Israel, meeting participants said.

The European Union said it suspended humanitarian aid projects in the Gaza Strip, citing the escalating violence there.

The Islamic group also had its sights on two other key command centers in Gaza City on Thursday.

In a broadcast on <u>Hamas</u> radio, the Islamic fighters demanded that Fatah surrender the National Security compound by mid-afternoon. Light clashes were under way there when the ultimatum was delivered.

Rocket-propelled grenades were fired toward Abbas' Gaza compound, provoking return fire from his presidential guard. For the first time since the fighting began, Abbas ordered his guard to go on the offensive against *Hamas* at the compound, and not simply maintain a defensive posture, an aide said.

He spoke on condition of anonymity because the situation was fluid.

Earlier <u>Hamas</u> fired dozens of rocket-propelled grenades at the intelligence services building. When they captured it, the fighters raised the green Islamic flag.

In Rafah, <u>Hamas</u> took over the Preventive Security building, according to witnesses and said Col. Nasser Khaldi, a senior police official.

"I can see the Preventive Security building in front of me. <u>Hamas</u> has raised its green flags over it," a civilian resident, who identified himself only as Raed, said by telephone. "There are men carrying away equipment from inside. ... (The Fatah-allied) National Security men ran away."

Gaza hospitals were operating without water, electricity and blood. Even holed up inside their homes, Gazans weren't able to escape fighting that turned apartment buildings into battlefields.

Moean Hammad, 34, said life had become a nightmare at his high-rise building near the Preventive Security headquarters, where Fatah forces on the rooftop were battling *Hamas* fighters.

"We spent our night in the hallway outside the apartment because the building came under crossfire," Hammad said. "We haven't had electricity for two days, and all we can hear is shooting and powerful, earthshaking explosions.

Hamas close to controlling Gaza Strip, moves in on political and security nerve center

"The world is watching us dying and doing nothing to help. God help us, we feel like we are in a real-life horror movie," he said.

Shaher Hatoum, a nurse at nearby Al Quds hospital, said the facility had no electricity, water or blood, and that wounded were propped up on ward floors. Hundreds of bullets flew through windows, and fighters ignored the hospital's appeals to hold fire just long enough to have the generator and water pipes fixed, he said.

"We are waiting here for our end," Hatoum said.

Fatah has threatened to carry the fighting to the West Bank, where <u>Hamas</u> is weak. There have been sporadic battles in the West Bank this week, and on Thursday, Fatah went across the territory rounding up <u>Hamas</u> fighters in an effort to assert control.

Sheik Saleh Arrouri, a <u>Hamas</u> leader in the West Bank, told a radio station that Abbas called a joint meeting of the territory's Fatah and <u>Hamas</u> leadership in Ramallah for later Thursday.

The violence has exposed the depths of the disarray in Fatah's ranks since <u>Hamas</u> ended Fatah's 40-year dominion of Palestinian politics last year.

Fatah has asked Israeli permission to bring in more arms and armored vehicles, but Tzahi Hanegbi, chairman of the Israeli parliament's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, told Army Radio that arming Fatah would be "insane" because the weapons would fall into <u>Hamas</u> hands.

He said Israel was considering backing Fatah forces in the West Bank, but did not elaborate.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said Wednesday he discussed the possible deployment of a multinational force in Gaza with the Security Council.

Load-Date: June 14, 2007



<u>Fierce battles in Gaza; Hamas seizes control of main road; 50 killed this</u> week in clashes

Deseret Morning News (Salt Lake City)

June 13, 2007 Wednesday

Copyright 2007 The Deseret News Publishing Co.

Length: 1142 words

Byline: Associated Press

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip -- Fierce battles over strategic positions spread Wednesday to central Gaza, with <u>Hamas</u> fighters wresting control of the coastal strip's main north-south road and positioning to cut off reinforcements to beleaguered forces of the rival Fatah faction.

In the southern town of Khan Younis, a one-ton bomb in an underground tunnel tore through the headquarters of a security force loyal to President Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah, said Ali Qaisi, a presidential guard spokesman. At least one person was killed and eight were wounded, medics said.

Before the blast, *Hamas* militants demanded officers inside the building come out and threatened to blow it up if they did not, witnesses said.

Security forces said they had lost control of the town.

"Khan Younis is finished, but we are still holding on in Rafah," said Ziad Sarafandi, a senior security official, referring to a town south of Khan Younis.

At least seven other militants died in fighting elsewhere in Gaza, and two people died of wounds sustained earlier. An unidentified young man protesting violence in Gaza City was killed by *Hamas* gunmen, witnesses said.

Shops in Gaza City were closed and streets were empty as terrified residents huddled in their homes. The U.N. Relief and Works Agency said it could not distribute food to the 30 percent of the Gaza Strip that relies on international aid.

<u>Hamas</u> leaders blamed the Gaza fighting on President Mahmoud Abbas, saying his security forces were riddled with criminals. Abbas, of Fatah, called the fighting "madness" and appealed to <u>Hamas</u>' exiled leader in Syria, Khaled Mashaal, to end the violence.

The State Department denounced the violence as a direct attack by the most radical elements of <u>Hamas</u> on legitimate Palestinian authorities. Spokesman Sean McCormack said Washington had no indication that Israel might intervene to try to stop the infighting.

Violence between the factions, which nominally share power in the Palestinian government, has rapidly spiraled toward all-out civil war, with more than 50 reported killed since Monday. *Hamas* has systematically taken control of security positions in the north and south, apparently leaving the main battle for the strip's political nerve center in Gaza City for last.

Fierce battles in Gaza; Hamas seizes control of main road; 50 killed this week in clashes

The fighting has spilled into the Fatah-dominated West Bank. The factions exchanged fire in the city of Nablus and a nearby refugee camp after Fatah gunmen tried to storm a pro-<u>Hamas</u> TV production company. <u>Hamas</u> said 12 of its fighters were wounded.

The incident began when gunmen from the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, a violent Fatah offshoot, seized several employees of the production company. *Hamas* gunmen rushed to the scene, and a battle erupted and spread to nearby Al Ein refugee camp.

Al Aqsa leaders said the attack was retaliation for <u>Hamas</u> attacks on positions of Fatah-allied security forces in Gaza.

Gunmen also fought for control of high-rise buildings in Gaza City that serve as sniper positions. Six militants died in clashes near the besieged house of a senior Fatah commander in Gaza City, in addition to four killed there Tuesday, *Hamas* said.

An announcer on a <u>Hamas</u> radio station said the offensive would proceed to the presidential compound and the national security headquarters in Gaza City.

<u>Hamas</u> demanded Fatah-allied security forces in the north give up their weapons by 7 p.m. (noon EDT) Friday, or risk having them taken by force. The ultimatum was delivered in text messages and radio announcements.

Abbas urged an end to the bloody confrontations. He spoke by phone with the Damascus-based Mashaal to try to stop the crisis, said Abbas aide Nimr Hamad.

"This is madness, the madness that is going on in Gaza now," Abbas told reporters.

<u>Hamas</u> spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri said the clashes could have been avoided if Abbas had given the <u>Hamas</u>-led Cabinet control over the security forces, which he blamed for a wave of kidnappings, torture and violence in Gaza.

"The president bears complete responsibility for the current crisis," he said. "Because of the president's hesitations and his inability to move to deal with the issues, we had to take this step. This could have been avoided with only one decision from the president."

The mounting bloodshed touched off protests in two main Gaza towns.

Several hundred tribal leaders, <u>women</u>, children and Islamic Jihad militants turned out in Gaza City for a protest initiated by Egyptian mediators. Some demonstrators scattered after masked <u>Hamas</u> gunmen fired in the air, but others pushed on, carrying Palestinian flags and shouting, "Do not shoot" and "national unity" over a loudspeaker.

Health officials said one protester was killed and 14 were wounded and taken to the hospital in civilian cars because ambulances could not navigate the heavy fire.

Witnesses said <u>Hamas</u> gunmen shot at the protesters as they approached the house of the Bakr family -- Fatah loyalists -- in Gaza City, trapping the demonstrators.

Protester Bilal Qurashali said he saw a man shot in the head.

Separately, <u>Hamas</u> gunmen opened fire from a high-rise building at about 1,000 protesters in Khan Younis, wounding one and breaking up the protest.

A Fatah-affiliated officer was shot to death at the National Security compound in the town.

Gunbattles also broke out in the center of the southern town of Rafah, and <u>Hamas</u> fired guns and mortars at five security posts along the border fence with Israel, a security official said.

<u>Hamas</u> claimed another strategic victory, saying it seized a Fatah post on the main north-south road, where security forces often stopped cars carrying <u>Hamas</u> loyalists.

Fierce battles in Gaza; Hamas seizes control of main road; 50 killed this week in clashes

<u>Hamas</u> also seized control of a Fatah post on Gaza's coastal road -- another main artery for reinforcing Fatah troops.

<u>Hamas</u> and Fatah have waged a power struggle since <u>Hamas</u> won parliamentary elections last year, ending four decades of Fatah dominance. On Tuesday, <u>Hamas</u> ignored pleas by Abbas and exasperated Egyptian mediators to honor a cease-fire.

Abu Zuhri said *Hamas* did not intend to stop the fighting.

"We are going ahead with the steps we have taken in confronting all the security posts and to clear the security posts," he said.

In contrast, Fatah commanders complained they were not given clear orders by Abbas to fight back and that they had no central command. Fatah's strongman in Gaza, Mohammed Dahlan, has spent the last few weeks in Cairo for treatment of a knee injury. Other leading Fatah officials left Gaza for the West Bank after earlier bloodshed.

The power struggle escalated Tuesday when Fatah suspended the activities of its ministers in the coalition government and warned it would pull out if fighting does not stop.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert proposed stationing international forces along the Gaza Strip's volatile border with Egypt to prevent arms from reaching Palestinian militants, including *Hamas*. However, he ruled out assistance to Abbas' forces.

Load-Date: June 13, 2007



Rabbi defends Hamas war

The Dominion Post (Wellington, New Zealand)
October 28, 2006 Saturday

Copyright 2006 Fairfax New Zealand All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; NATIONAL; Pg. 10

Length: 275 words

Byline: PATTERSON Colin

Body

ONE of the premier thinkers in the progressive Judaism movement is in Wellington to pass on his teachings to the capital's Jewish community.

Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, 82, believes in spiritual renewal.

"You should take your old ideas about God and trash them. We're no longer talking about an old man in the sky who watches over us."

Rabbi Schachter-Shalomi talks of Judaism being a community. His community accepts <u>women</u> as rabbis, and gays and lesbians as believers.

Born in Poland, Rabbi Schachter-Shalomi was a teenager in Vienna when the Nazis took over in 1938.

His family fled through Belgium and occupied France before escaping to America in 1941.

In his new country Rabbi Schachter-Shalomi entered a life of study, teaching and writing.

While officially retired from his teaching jobs, Rabbi Schachter-Shalomi is busier than ever. He travels the world, speaking about issues that confront Judaism today.

On Middle East conflicts, he unhesitatingly defends Israel and its recent war with <u>Hamas</u> and Hizbollah that cost thousands of civilian lives.

"When the president of Iran and heads of Hizbollah and <u>Hamas</u> make statements that they want to obliterate Israel and drive its population into the sea, we see a visceral threat."

However, the US invasion of Iraq was not done at the behest of Israel.

"Israel had done w	hat it needed to	do when it	destroyed the	Iraqi nuclear	installation.	That was a	a real	threat.	The
invasion was some	thing the Pentag	on cooked	up way before	it happened."					

-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

CAPTION:

Rabbi defends Hamas war

Spritual renewal: 'You should take your old ideas about God and trash them,' says Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi.

Picture: DIEGO OPATOWKSI

Load-Date: October 30, 2006



Hamas seizes Fatah base as bloody battles push Gaza towards civil war

The Independent (London)
June 13, 2007 Wednesday
Fourth Edition

Copyright 2007 Independent Print Ltd All Rights Reserved



Length: 644 words

Byline: Donald Macintyre in Jerusalem

Body

The fate of the increasingly powerless Palestinian national unity government was hanging by a thread last night after another day of brutal fighting between the two main factions in Gaza brought the two-day death toll to at least 36.

<u>Hamas</u> said it had seized control of the northern Gaza headquarters of the large Fatah-dominated national security force. A protracted and bloody battle was fought between 200 of its gunmen, firing mortars and grenades, and up to 500 security force members holed up inside left. At least 12 were killed and 30 injured. More than two dozen jeeps carrying Fatah reinforcements to the battle failed to get through roadblocks manned by <u>Hamas</u> gunmen. As the savage conflict brought Gaza yet again to the brink of civil war, a rocket-propelled grenade damaged the home of Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, a leader of <u>Hamas</u>. In the West Bank city of Ramal-lah, Fatah militants kidnapped a <u>Hamas</u> deputy minister.

Also in Ramallah, Fatah's central committee decided last night to suspend its membership of the coalition government and promised to pull out altogether if the fighting did not stop. Earlier in the day, *Hamas* gunmen controlling the rooftop of the European Hospital in Khan Yunis exchanged heavy fire with Fatah security forces at a nearby base; 15 children at a kindergarten in the line of fire were rushed into the hospital building to protect them from the shooting.

Yesterday's and Monday's combat appears to have ignored even the minimal previous constraint. Street executions were carried out, at least one militant from each faction was hurled from the upper floors of high buildings, and fighting spilled into hospital precincts.

With many medics unable to get to work because of the gunfire, Dr Wessam Awadallah of Gaza City's main Shifa hospital told AP that masked men had been roaming the premises, occasionally exchanging fire. "We don't know who they are, or who they are fighting," he said. "There will come a moment when we will not be able to treat anyone, and [we will] let them die."

In the northern Gaza town of Beit Hanoun, the hospital shut after three people were shot dead inside on Monday. According to the Red Cross, one was killed in the operating room, which the ICRC called "serious violations of international humanitarian law".

Hamas seizes Fatah base as bloody battles push Gaza towards civil war

The UN Relief Works Agency (Unrwa) was forced yesterday to close five food distribution centres and seven of its 18 health clinics. John Ging, Gaza's operations director, said Unrwa was "extremely" concerned about the "dreadful humanitarian situation" facing the one million refugees it serves, but added: "We cannot deliver food and medical services in the crossfire."

He added: "This senseless fighting must stop and must make way for dialogue and negotiation. The civilian population of the Gaza Strip demand it and deserve it."

With masked gunmen on rooftops and at street corners, many roads in the strip were deserted as civilians took refuge from the gun battles. At one point, Fatah security forces staged a short-lived seizure of the <u>Hamas</u> run Al-Aqsa TV and radio stations in Gaza.

In Jerusalem, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said publicly for the first time that he would consider an international border force to stop weapons-smuggling from Egypt by the militant factions, apparently in a move to curb the military power of <u>Hamas</u>. An Israeli official told Reuters that if the international community could not provide a robust enough force, the offer might pave the way for Israel to do so itself.

While <u>Hamas</u> described the attack on Mr Haniyeh's home as an assassination attempt, a cousin of Abdel A ziz Rantisi, the <u>Hamas</u> leader assassinated by Israel in 2004, was kidnapped and killed by Fatah gunmen. The home of a <u>Hamas</u> parliamentarian was also burnt down.

Elsewhere, security officials said that three <u>women</u> and a boy aged 14 had been killed in an attack by <u>Hamas</u> gunmen.

Load-Date: June 13, 2007



Hamas threatens new suicide bombings; Israeli air strikes in Gaza kill four, wound dozens

The Calgary Herald (Alberta)

May 18, 2007 Friday

Final Edition

Copyright 2007 The Calgary Herald, a division of Canwest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A20

Length: 437 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, CanWest News Service

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

<u>Hamas</u> threatened a new wave of suicide bombings inside Israel to avenge multiple air raids over the Palestinian territory by Israeli warplanes on Thursday that killed four <u>Hamas</u> fighters, including one described as a senior commander.

Three other Palestinians died in factional violence between <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah. Two of them were shot as they attended funerals in southern Gaza for some of the more than 40 other Palestinians who have been killed since Islamic rivals <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah resumed their bloody conflict last weekend after a three-month lull.

The punishing Israeli air strikes, which began with several that killed five Palestinians on Wednesday, didn't stop <u>Hamas</u> from launching 17 more Qassam rockets into the Jewish state during the next 24 hours, including one that crashed through the roof of a high school and into a classroom while students took exams in the next room.

Under pressure from terrified and angry residents of communities in southern Israel that lie within range of <u>Hamas</u>'s Qassams, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert also ordered several tanks and a small number of infantry to cross into northern Gaza for the first time in six months, to better observe areas often used to launch rockets. The Israeli Defence Forces positioned artillery units just outside the Palestinian enclave so as to be able to immediately counter-fire after any rocket launches.

Israel also electronically took control of radio stations in Gaza to warn residents there to flee places used to launch rockets, an Israeli television station reported.

The Israeli air strikes seriously damaged a multi-storey <u>Hamas</u> compound, a trailer used as a barracks and two vehicles with men inside. Palestinian hospitals reported dozens of wounded, including <u>women</u> and children who were injured in the bombing of the compound.

Khaled Meshal, <u>Hamas</u>'s top leader, who lives in Syria, said on his group's Al-Aqsa television station Thursday that Israel's actions presented Palestinians with a "historic opportunity" to bring <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah together to fight their common enemy.

Hamas threatens new suicide bombings; Israeli air strikes in Gaza kill four, wound dozens

But there was little sign of that in Gaza. The fourth ceasefire in as many days held slightly better than the others, but gunmen still controlled all the major roads and there were several shootouts.

For the first time since fighting erupted again, some Gazans briefly surfaced to buy food, but most remained in their homes, mindful of how ambushes and mortar, rocket and sniper attacks could happen at any time.

Former Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who leads opinion polls to succeed Olmert, demanded that Israel cut off power and other public services to Gaza.

Graphic

Photo: Hatem Moussa, Associated Press; Palestinians search the rubble of a <u>Hamas</u> compound in Gaza City after an Israeli air strike Thursday. Israel was responding to rocket barrages.;

Load-Date: May 18, 2007



<u>Hamas promotes 'Gaza Riviera'; Territory won't become a Taliban-style</u> police state, Islamist leader says

Edmonton Journal (Alberta)

July 29, 2007 Sunday

Early Edition

Copyright 2007 Edmonton Journal, a division of Canwest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A4

Length: 874 words

Byline: Dion Nissenbaum, McClatchy Newspapers

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip - If you think of the Gaza Strip as a volatile, violent battleground run by Islamist militants bent on destroying Israel, *Hamas* wants you to think again.

Think: "Safe, clean and green."

One month after seizing the Gaza Strip in a military rout that shattered brittle Palestinian unity, <u>Hamas</u> is embarking on a radical marketing campaign to promote what it calls "the new face of Gaza."

They call it the "Gaza Riviera."

Lime-green <u>Hamas</u> banners flutter over Gaza City with a message in English for aid workers and journalists worried about being kidnapped: "No more threat for our foreign visitors and guests."

Bearded gunmen in blue-grey camouflage uniforms who seized control of Gaza rush to settle routine neighbourhood squabbles and family disputes.

Once-deserted Mediterranean beaches are filled with dozens of families enjoying picnics until long after midnight to escape the summer heat.

On Monday, <u>Hamas</u> is planning to take journalists on a tour of the Gaza Strip, from the packed beaches to the bullet-scarred security compounds its Islamist fighters overran last month when they ousted Fatah forces loyal to Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

While the United States and Israel are working to help Abbas transform the West Bank into a model of pro-western modernity -- and isolate and marginalize <u>Hamas</u> in the Gaza Strip in the process -- <u>Hamas</u> is working to assure the world that it has no plans to turn the Gaza Strip into a Taliban-style police state.

"This is our new Riviera," boasted Mahmoud Zahar, the <u>Hamas</u> leader who has narrowly escaped several assassination attempts, including a 2003 Israeli airstrike on his Gaza City home.

"This is the most secure period in the history of Gaza."

Hamas promotes 'Gaza Riviera'; Territory won't become a Taliban-style police state, Islamist leader says

Using a mix of military force and political persuasion, <u>Hamas</u> has succeeded in creating a sense of safety in the Gaza Strip. But many Palestinians don't believe this quiet will last very long.

Attacks on Internet cafes have come to a halt. For the time being, rival Gaza Strip families have stopped taking up arms to resolve their disputes. And fears of renewed factional fighting between disciplined <u>Hamas</u> forces and demoralized Fatah fighters are virtually nil.

But <u>Hamas</u> hasn't reined in Islamic Jihad and other militant groups, which regularly fire rudimentary Qassam rockets at southern Israeli towns and could provoke an Israeli invasion. Israel routinely responds by launching airstrikes on Palestinian militants. On Thursday alone, five Palestinians were killed in several Israeli airstrikes.

The <u>Hamas</u> "safe streets" marketing campaign also obscures intractable problems facing <u>Hamas</u> -- which was the leading perpetrator of suicide bombings against Israeli civilians between 2000 and 2005 -- as it tries to use its impoverished base in Gaza to establish itself as a central political player in the new Middle East.

Hundreds of Gaza Strip police officers, judges and soldiers loyal to Abbas refuse to work for *Hamas*. Israel allows almost nothing but critical food and medical supplies across its border with Gaza, creating a shortage of everything from cigarettes to concrete mix. Major Gaza Strip factories, unable to get raw material in and finished goods out, have been shuttered.

United Nations officials and humanitarian groups have warned that the battered economy is in danger of collapse. And growing numbers of middle-class families are quietly preparing to escape as soon as the borders open.

Sitting on a southern Gaza Strip beach, Ahmed Yousef, the <u>Hamas</u> leader behind the "safe, clean and green" slogan, said his group has no plans to impose strict Islamic rule on the 1.5 million residents.

"If we succeed here, the people in the West Bank will keep looking to this model," Yousef said as groups of <u>women</u> in long black abayas waded into the ocean for an early evening swim.

"We don't want to promote the way of the Taliban."

Yousef criticized Gaza Strip militants who kidnapped westerners such as Alan Johnston, the BBC correspondent who was freed after 114 days in captivity after *Hamas* took control.

After Johnston's release, Israel quickly noted that <u>Hamas</u> was still holding Gilad Shalit, the young Israeli soldier it had captured last summer.

But Yousef said <u>Hamas</u> would hold Shalit for 10 years if that's what it took to free hundreds of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails. And he warned that the group might try to capture more Israeli soldiers if there's no deal for Shalit.

"If the Israelis are not interested in releasing those prisoners, we have to find another way," he said. "We will keep trying to capture an Israeli soldier. If one is not enough, the second, or maybe the third, maybe the Israelis will accept that."

Yousef pointed to the triumph of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his Islamist-rooted political party in this month's elections in Turkey as a model of a patient, gradual Muslim political movement generating change.

Though <u>Hamas</u> still refuses to explicitly accept Israel as a neighbour, Yousef urged Israel and the world to work with them.

"You can deal with <u>Hamas</u> and work with them to moderate them," Yousef said. "Don't make them your enemy. We should try these things before blocking the road. Everybody tried to destroy <u>Hamas</u> and didn't give us a chance. Deal with us."

Graphic

Photo: Reuters, File; The temporal troubles of Palestinian politics seem oceans away as families enjoy the warm weather on a Gaza City beach.;

Load-Date: July 29, 2007



Hamas faces burden of victory; GAZA SEIZURE COMPLETE; Way now clear for extreme Islamist state

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

June 16, 2007 Saturday

National Edition

Copyright 2007 National Post All Rights Reserved

Section: WORLD; Pg. A18

Length: 834 words

Byline: Peter Goodspeed, National Post

Body

Early yesterday, <u>Hamas</u> gunmen shouting "Allahu Akbar" (God is Great) entered the seaside compound of Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian Authority President, and completed their seizure of the Gaza Strip.

Now, after five days of intense fighting, in which they staged a successful coup and shattered the unity of the Palestinian Authority, *Hamas*'s leaders face the burden of victory.

They have gained control of one of the most densely populated, isolated and impoverished pieces of real estate in the world. The question is: what will they do next?

Just hours after <u>Hamas</u>'s victory was apparent, Islam Shahawan, a spokesman for its Executive Force, boasted, "The era of justice and Islamic rule has arrived."

Ismail Haniyeh, the dismissed <u>Hamas</u> Prime Minister, ignored Mr. Abbas's dissolution of the fractious unity government, insisting he remains in charge of a government that rules both Gaza and the West Bank.

"The Gaza Strip is an indivisible part of the homeland," he said.

In <u>Hamas</u>'s new domain, looters had a field day rummaging through Fatah's wrecked offices as black-clad, gunmen sauntered through the dusty streets in a show of force.

All three reactions touched some of the deepest worries surrounding this week's internecine fighting.

<u>Hamas</u>'s victory may clear the way for the creation of a radical Islamist state at the epicentre of the Middle East's most intractable conflict.

Fighting between *Hamas* and Fatah may still spread to the West Bank.

And Gaza, already widely regarded as a cesspit of despair, may descend into the kind of anarchy and chaos that only breeds further turmoil.

There is no doubt the week's events have ushered in a brutal new reality in the Middle East. In beating Fatah and sending its leaders in Gaza scurrying to safety in Egypt and the West Bank, *Hamas* displayed no tolerance for its

Hamas faces burden of victory; GAZA SEIZURE COMPLETE; Way now clear for extreme Islamist state

enemies. Anyone connected to Fatah was attacked, including the wives and children of militiamen. A crowd of protesters demonstrating against the fighting was fired upon; prisoners were executed and in some cases they were thrown from the roofs of buildings.

It's a bad omen for the type of religious state *Hamas* wants to set up.

In the months leading up to this week's battles, Gaza residents have been subjected to a barrage of threats and intimidation from different *Hamas* factions.

In early June, a group calling itself the Islamic Swords of Justice threatened to kill <u>female</u> television news readers if they refuse to wear strict Islamic dress.

"You are without shame or morals," the group declared. "We will cut your throat from vein to vein if need be to protect the spirit and morals of this nation."

The same group claimed responsibility for a string of bomb attacks on Internet cafes, Christian bookstores and restaurants serving alcohol.

Internet cafe s, which provide isolated residents with their most reliable link to the outside world, have been targeted because "they divert the attention of an entire generation to other issues that are not jihad or worship."

A violent religious fundamentalism centred on Gaza could also transform the Israel-Palestinian conflict. After all, *Hamas* is an acronym for the Arab words for Islamic Resistance Movement; the word itself means "zeal."

Ironically, it was founded in 1987 at the time of the first Palestinian uprising, or intifada, in Gaza and the West Bank. It was tolerated by Israel, which then occupied Gaza, in the hope the Islamic fundamentalists would provide a counterweight to the then-dominant secular militancy of Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement.

Now <u>Hamas</u> has overwhelmed Fatah in Gaza and threatens to carry its fight to the West Bank, Israel finds itself pressed to support Fatah by releasing frozen tax funds and opening its doors to trade and aid with the West Bank.

"The fact that President Abbas has fired the <u>Hamas</u> government is a very positive move in our opinion and makes it easier to deal with and help the moderates," Miri Eisin, a spokeswoman for Ehud Olmert, the Israeli Prime Minister, said yesterday.

Israel still maintains a choke-hold on Gaza, controlling all movement in and out of the small coastal strip of scrub desert. It also supplies the territory's 1.4 million people with all their water and electricity.

Right now, the biggest problem facing Israel and <u>Hamas</u> is to find a way round that relationship. <u>Hamas</u> refuses to recognize Israel's right to exist. As a result, it faces international isolation and an aid freeze. Israel refuses to have anything to do with <u>Hamas</u> until it renounces terrorism and agrees to recognize previous signed peace agreements.

For now, Israel has said it is willing to continue allowing humanitarian shipments into Gaza provided its officials don't have to deal with *Hamas* members when the parcels are delivered.

United Nations officials say they have enough supplies in Gaza warehouses to last "several weeks."

But it won't take much to destroy the strip's economy, which is already crippled by corruption and conflict, and where unemployment has reached 70%.

pgoodspeed@nationalpost.com

Graphic

Hamas faces burden of victory; GAZA SEIZURE COMPLETE; Way now clear for extreme Islamist state

Graphic/Diagram:; (See hardcopy for Graphic);

Load-Date: June 16, 2007



Terror as Hamas opens fire at Israelis, fugitives

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

June 20, 2007 Wednesday

First Edition

Copyright 2007 The Age Company Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; International News; Pg. 13

Length: 533 words

Byline: Ed O'Loughlin

Body

Deadly power play claims another life on the Israeli-Gaza border. Ed O'Loughlin reports.

THE "sleeve" has long been an unlovely fact of life at the Erez crossing, a kilometre-long cement corridor designed to keep terrorists clear of the Israeli-Gaza border gate.

Known as "the tunnel" among aid workers, United Nations staff and foreign journalists, it was also a concrete manifestation of day-to-day co-operation between the Israeli army and the Fatah-controlled Palestinian Authority.

Nobody could approach the Israeli border complex without first being cleared by the authority's police at the other end, who co-ordinated movements with their Israeli counterparts by walkie-talkie.

But that was all last week. Yesterday the only Palestinian Authority security men still visible at Erez were a couple of hundred unarmed Fatah fugitives desperate to flee into Israel, who had camped for four days at the border gate. Behind them, Bedouin looters were dismantling the tunnel itself, stripping off tin roof sheets and digging up pipes and wiring.

"If we went back to Gaza, <u>Hamas</u> would execute us," said a 30 year-old man who gave his name as Abu Faras. "We don't have the same ideology as them and they are shooting everybody who has different beliefs."

Abu Faras lay on the floor of the tunnel among a group of injured men, his leg crudely bandaged to staunch bleeding from a gunshot wound. Along with a dozen others in the tunnel, he was injured on Monday night when gunmen from a breakaway Fatah faction called the Popular Resistance Committees, now allied with <u>Hamas</u>, entered the tunnel and sprayed bullets along it. At least one would-be refugee was killed.

The Popular Resistance Committees claimed it was attacking the Israeli soldiers who were posted at the end of the sleeve to stop the fugitive Fatah men from breaking through to Israel. The Fatah men claimed they themselves were the targets, and *Hamas* was responsible.

The day before, troops had fired tear gas to hold back a stampede. Yesterday buses were being assembled on the Israeli side of the border, reportedly waiting for a possible order to ferry the fugitives through Israeli territory to Fatah-controlled areas of the West Bank.

Terror as Hamas opens fire at Israelis, fugitives

Further away from the gate, civilians gathered - <u>women</u> with children, the sick and the old, perhaps 50 in all - hoping for a chance to leave once the Fatah men were taken care of.

Israel allowed scores of senior Fatah leaders to flee last week while fighting was still under way, and the top commanders, including Fatah security boss Mohammed Dahlan, left the strip weeks ago.

Cancer patient Mariam Yahi, 63, was on her way to Tel Aviv for chemotherapy last week when the border was closed. "Two days ago I was OK, but now my situation is getting worse," she said.

The first sign of Gaza's new master, the Islamic fundamentalist <u>Hamas</u> movement, came a kilometre from the border, where a masked but unarmed commander was supervising a checkpoint with a one-armed subordinate.

"This is as close as we can go," said the commander, who called himself Abu Hassan. "If we went any closer that tank there would shoot at us."

He claimed that the fugitives had nothing to fear from *Hamas* now that the fighting was over.

Graphic

PHOTO: "If we went back to Gaza, <u>Hamas</u> would execute us". Palestinians attempting to cross into the West Bank wait at the Erez crossing in the northern Gaza Strip. PICTURE: EPA

Load-Date: July 19, 2007



Hamas won the propaganda war this week

The Times (London)
July 6, 2007, Friday

Copyright 2007 Times Newspapers Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: FEATURES; Pg. 19

Length: 1149 words **Byline:** Gerard Baker

Body

* Gerard Baker says freeing Alan Johnston was no good deed

How do you like your jihadi? Is yours the avenging physician sort; self immolating practitioner of weird medicine outside nightclubs and airport terminals who hopes to take hundreds of innocents with him on his journey to Paradise?

Or do you prefer the voice of sweet reason, the heroic freedom fighter turned politician, who magnanimously leaps into a hostage drama and helps to free your innocent journalist from his captors?

Not difficult, is it?

We've had an exercise in good-cop, bad-cop with our Islamist friends in the past week. In London and Glasgow, the nutters -the scale of their murderous ambition matched only by their ineptitude with a car a mobile phone and a tankful of petrol -tried the explosive, take-no-prisoners approach to persuading the West to do their bidding Over in Gaza, they're a bit more sophisticated. They've figured out that, at least when it comes to Europeans rather than Israelis, the direct approach is less effective than the power of high-profile good deeds. *Hamas* prefers the take-prisoners-and-then-generously-let-them-go approach.

Try as they may the nutters will never really win what Gordon Brown calls the battle for hearts and minds. True, they'll get a good hearing from the assorted crowd of self-loathing media panjandrums and Labour MPs who will evenhandedly say: "It's quite wrong to blow up <u>women</u> in London nightclubs, but we shouldn't forget about the suffering of the people of Iraq and Afghanistan." True, they'll also get treated with kid gloves by the politically correct lobby, who will insist that, however else we describe them, we must never call them Muslims, since they're not the face of that peaceable religion.

But fortunately most British people aren't sophisticated enough to buy this sort of casuistry. They think they know a homicidal maniac when they see one. The philosophy they adhere to was best captured by the magnificent John Smeaton, the BAA baggage handler turned have-a-go hero in Scotland, who, when asked by a TV interviewer what message he had for the terrorists, said: "This is Glasgow we'll just set about you."

With <u>Hamas</u>, however, whose worldview and geopolitical ambitions are exactly the same as those fireball physicians, it's all very different. Thanks to their efforts in the past few months, they are the stabilisers, the people who have brought peace to Gaza. Their transformation into popular heroes was completed this week when they pulled off the release of a kidnapped BBC man. The whole world now loves them.

What I especially admired about the choreography of the Alan Johnston release was the way Ismail Haniya and his friends had clearly learnt the lessons of Britain's recent little hostage crisis in Iran; play the magnanimous saviour for the TV cameras and you'll have them eating out of your hand. Unlike Tehran, <u>Hamas</u> made sure not to commit the mistake of crass overkill, and avoided sending Johnston off with a goody bag and a poly-cotton suit. We are left in awe of their magnanimity and a renewed respect for their role as pivotal players in the Middle East drama.

Funny isn't it, how, when the US or British governments do anything they claim is good we always assume there's some ulterior motive? They foil a terrorist plot and the world's media note with heavy irony the coincidence of a president's or prime minister's flagging approval ratings. But when <u>Hamas</u> pulls a stunt like the one it managed this week, we're all transfixed, lost in innocent admiration at the sheer humanity of these people. Our credulity is mocked further because we really ought to know that this latest incident is straight from the <u>Hamas</u> playbook -doing little works of charity and economic efficiency in Gaza and the West Bank, the Palestinian equivalent of making the trains run on time to further their bloodcurdling big objectives.

I'm missing something important in conflating these two events this week, you will probably object. We in the West will never accept the theocratic motive of the Islamists. We will never acquiesce in their lunacies -the intolerance of homosexuality, the degradation of **women**, the forced conversion of the infidels.

But we should at least listen to their anger and frustration about what is happening in the Middle East. We hate the suicide bombers and their so-called theology, but we have to understand that there is something justifiable in the anger that they feel about Iraq and Palestine -and it is this that makes <u>Hamas</u> so popular in Gaza.

This is a nice distinction we make in the West that means nothing to the followers of the Muslim Brotherhood, of which *Hamas* is a member and to which al-Qaeda is affiliated. They see removing America, Israel and Britain from the Middle East as the necessary first step towards global Islamic theocracy. But let's indulge it, at least for a while and ask, do they have a point?

On Iraq, I've no doubt that the American excesses of Abu Ghraib and the occasional lethal clumsiness of US forces have fuelled resentment. But that is largely because it is these peripheral facts on which we in the West focus so much of our attention, and they distract us from the central narrative.

Which is this: the Americans went into Afghanistan and Iraq with the aim of stopping one bunch of Muslims from killing another. They are still there in both countries today performing precisely this mission.

Now it may be that history will judge this an epically stupid thing to have done; that, in the end, the great claims some of us made that the Middle East could be dragged out of its medievalist obscurantism were pie in the sky. But we really have to stop indulging the Islamists' propaganda that today's carnage in Iraq is the result of American aggression. It isn't -it is the result of Islamist aggression.

Then, of course, there's Israel. The plight of the Palestinian people is heart-rending. A just settlement, and preferably a two-state solution with secure and sustainable borders, is essential.

All that is true. But we need to be much less naive about <u>Hamas</u>. That is not its real goal. Its members want to destroy Israel and wage war on the West. Just as we buy into the Islamist propaganda on Iraq, so we risk signing up for the <u>Hamas</u> propaganda in Palestine. Do we really think our acceptance of their leadership will be treated by them as an act of magnanimity on our part? Or will they see it as another critical triumph on the path to their ultimate victory?

Let's never lose sight of a simple chilling fact that unites the suicidal maniacs in Britain and the sweet reasonable hostage-saviours in Gaza. <u>Hamas</u> was the big winner this week. That makes us all, whether we're sipping beers in pavement cafes in Israel, boarding planes in Glasgow or out for a ladies' night in the Haymarket, much, much less safe.

For the latest on the terrorist incidents, click on timesonline.co.uk/news

Load-Date: July 6, 2007



Hamas might find it needs Fatah; Lifeline of Western support may depend on unity

The Gazette (Montreal)

June 17, 2007 Sunday

Final Edition

Copyright 2007 The Gazette, a division of CanWest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A1

Length: 2328 words

Byline: CRAIG S. SMITH and GREG MYRE, New York Times

Body

Islamist fighters of <u>Hamas</u> seized control of Gaza last week. For the first time in the history of the Palestinians' fight for nationhood, there seemed a real possibility that two Palestines rather than one might emerge - one in Gaza, dominated by **Hamas**, the other in the West Bank, led by Fatah.

But Palestinian society is not so simple. There are many historical, economic and tribal loyalties that bind it together, and many of those cross - rather than coincide with - the frontiers of the two territories.

In addition, there are compelling reasons the two communities need unity.

A look at the history of these territories, how they developed differently over time and what their populations still share, shows why they are at odds now but also why it might be too early to write off the possibility that this breach can be bridged.

They have always had distinct traits, culturally and geographically - the West Bank supporting a landlocked urban and agricultural society, Gaza facing the sea.

Those differences increased after the creation of Israel in 1948, when Gaza fell under the administration of Egypt and the West Bank was annexed by Jordan.

Egypt treated Gaza as a Palestinian enclave and encouraged a strong sense of Palestinian identity. Many Gazans who studied in Egypt during those years were influenced, in turn, by the Muslim Brotherhood, whose goal is to establish Islamic theocracies across the Arab world.

Back in Gaza, some of those men founded *Hamas* in 1987.

Jordan, on the other hand, suppressed Palestinian nationalism in favour of Jordanian identity, and Palestinians in the West Bank were more influenced by the secular societies of Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, where many went to study. Others travelled even farther abroad, bringing back a liberal view of the world.

By the time the two territories came under Israeli occupation together after the 1967 Arab-

Hamas might find it needs Fatah; Lifeline of Western support may depend on unity

Israeli War, they were very different places. Their separate legal and educational systems were not consolidated until after the Palestinian Authority was established in the mid-1990s.

There were high hopes back then that the two territories could be tied together into a Palestinian state. In signing the 1993 Oslo accords, Israel pledged to treat the West Bank and Gaza as "a single territorial unit" and guaranteed "safe passage" for Palestinians travelling between them.

A road specifically for Palestinians was established between the West Bank and Gaza, a distance of about 40 kilometres. It functioned, but sporadically, until the second Palestinian uprising began in September 2000.

When it was open, the traffic was largely one way, carrying unemployed Gazans to the West Bank in search of work in the better economy there.

But since Israel withdrew from Gaza in September 2005, effectively severing the remaining links between the two territories, the West Bank and Gaza have grown even farther apart.

Gaza, which has suffered the most economically in the past few years, has become increasingly conservative and increasingly religious, largely because of the growing influence of *Hamas*.

<u>Women</u> in Gaza are more likely to be wear full Islamic dress and much less likely to work outside the home than their counterparts in the West Bank. Even in Gaza's large garment factories, the vast majority of the workers sitting behind the sewing machines are men.

Gaza's cultural life tends to centre on the local mosque, and its small, anemic economy consists almost entirely of small-scale businesses and jobs provided by the Palestinian Authority.

The West Bank, meanwhile, has a far richer economic life that includes industry, farming and a service sector. Its cities even have a few cinemas, art exhibitions, decent restaurants and night clubs.

In some ways, the current conflict is a local dispute specific to Gaza.

When Yasser Arafat returned from exile and established the Palestinian Authority in 1994, he divided his time between the West Bank and Gaza in an attempt to develop unity between the two territories.

But within two years, his security forces in Gaza, led by Muhammad Dahlan, were cracking down on <u>Hamas</u> leaders. Many <u>Hamas</u> leaders were jailed and their beards shaved to humiliate them. Some claim they were tortured.

<u>Hamas</u> has never forgiven Dahlan and other Fatah leaders for the harsh treatment, and those resentments have fuelled tension in Gaza ever since.

When <u>Hamas</u> won national elections last year and formed a government, no one expected Dahlan's security forces to submit to <u>Hamas</u> control. To counter his power, <u>Hamas</u> organized a security force of its own under the Ministry of the Interior.

It seemed only a matter of time before the two forces would clash in Gaza's narrow confines. The current crisis began when the Palestinian Authority president and Fatah leader, Mahmoud Abbas, appointed Dahlan as his national security adviser to oversee all security forces in the Palestinian territories.

While <u>Hamas</u> is now in control of Gaza and Fatah of the West Bank, neither has achieved total political support in either place, and each organization needs a political presence in both places to remain viable in the long term.

For now, <u>Hamas</u> appears to be winning, but its latest gains are primarily military, not political. While the movement is popular politically among the urban poor and the young in both the West Bank and Gaza, Fatah remains the stronger movement in the West Bank - where people are relatively better off and where it has built an extensive system of patronage. It still has support among many moderate Gazans, too.

<u>Hamas</u>'s military victory last week obscures the fact that Fatah has been gaining political support in Gaza during the past year, according to Mouin Rabbani, an analyst at the International Crisis Group in Jordan. He says this might be because a larger percentage of Gazans depend on Fatah finances to make a living. <u>Hamas</u>, meanwhile, has been gaining support in the West Bank because Palestinians there are discouraged by Fatah's corruption and policy failures, Rabbani said.

<u>Hamas</u> could face a backlash if Palestinians generally blame it for undermining unity. It could also be blamed for giving Israel, the United States and others further reason to isolate <u>Hamas</u> and work with Fatah in the West Bank at the expense of <u>Hamas</u> in Gaza.

The <u>Hamas</u>-Fatah divide also cuts across clan lines at a time when clan loyalty has been growing stronger, in Gaza in particular. If political factions bring only more chaos and insecurity, clan loyalties could take over.

Many ordinary Palestinians are upset with both factions for allowing the feud to spiral out of control and for their inability to work toward the larger goal of Palestinian statehood and the prospects of a secure economic future.

Unity would be an advantage economically on the most basic levels: Gaza could be an outlet to the world for West Bank products; the West Bank could expand the prospects for jobs and living space for poverty-stricken, overcrowded Gazans.

After the fighting last week, some people feared that <u>Hamas</u> might try to repeat in the West Bank the military victory that it won over Fatah in Gaza. But it is unlikely that that would sit well with the moderate Arab states that have backed <u>Hamas</u> and recently worked so hard to forge the unity government with Fatah that has now collapsed.

<u>Hamas</u> could even find itself shut off from Egypt, which is wary of encouraging a movement on its border that is inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood, which Egypt fights at home.

Palestinians in both the West Bank and Gaza, meanwhile, recognize that Fatah alone holds the lifeline of Western financial support.

So if military dominance gives <u>Hamas</u> bargaining power, the economic imperative of a unified Palestinian body politic argues, in the end, for some accommodation with Fatah.

A look at the history of these territories, how they developed differently over time and what their populations still share, shows why they are at odds now but also why it might be too early to write off the possibility that this breach can be bridged.

They have always had distinct traits, culturally and geographically - the West Bank supporting a landlocked urban and agricultural society, Gaza facing the sea.

Those differences increased after the creation of Israel in 1948, when Gaza fell under the administration of Egypt and the West Bank was annexed by Jordan.

Egypt treated Gaza as a Palestinian enclave and encouraged a strong sense of Palestinian identity. Many Gazans who studied in Egypt during those years were influenced, in turn, by the Muslim Brotherhood, whose goal is to establish Islamic theocracies across the Arab world. Back in Gaza, some of those men founded <u>Hamas</u> in 1987.

Jordan, on the other hand, suppressed Palestinian nationalism in favour of Jordanian identity, and Palestinians in the West Bank were more influenced by the secular societies of Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, where many went to study. Others travelled even farther abroad, bringing back a liberal view of the world.

By the time the two territories came under Israeli occupation together after the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, they were very different places. Their separate legal and educational systems were not consolidated until after the Palestinian Authority was established in the mid-1990s.

Hamas might find it needs Fatah; Lifeline of Western support may depend on unity

There were high hopes back then that the two territories could be tied together into a Palestinian state. In signing the 1993 Oslo accords, Israel pledged to treat the West Bank and Gaza as "a single territorial unit" and guaranteed "safe passage" for Palestinians travelling between them.

A road specifically for Palestinians was established between the West Bank and Gaza, a distance of about 40 kilometres. It functioned, but sporadically, until the second Palestinian uprising began in September 2000.

When it was open, the traffic was largely one way, carrying unemployed Gazans to the West Bank in search of work in the better economy there.

But since Israel withdrew from Gaza in September 2005, effectively severing the remaining links between the two territories, the West Bank and Gaza have grown even farther apart.

Gaza, which has suffered the most economically in the past few years, has become increasingly conservative and increasingly religious, largely because of the growing influence of *Hamas*.

The West Bank, meanwhile, has a far richer economic life that includes industry, farming and a service sector. Its cities even have a few cinemas, art exhibitions, decent restaurants and night clubs.

In some ways, the current conflict is a local dispute specific to Gaza.

When Yasser Arafat returned from exile and established the Palestinian Authority in 1994, he divided his time between the West Bank and Gaza in an attempt to develop unity between the two territories. But within two years, his security forces in Gaza, led by Muhammad Dahlan, were cracking down on *Hamas* leaders. Many were jailed and their beards shaved to humiliate them. Some claim they were tortured.

<u>Hamas</u> has never forgiven Dahlan and other Fatah leaders for the harsh treatment, and those resentments have fuelled tension in Gaza ever since.

When <u>Hamas</u> won national elections last year and formed a government, no one expected Dahlan's security forces to submit to <u>Hamas</u> control. To counter his power, <u>Hamas</u> organized a security force of its own under the Ministry of the Interior. It seemed only a matter of time before the two forces would clash in Gaza's narrow confines. The current crisis began when the Palestinian Authority president and Fatah leader, Mahmoud Abbas, appointed Dahlan as his national security adviser to oversee all security forces in the Palestinian territories.

While <u>Hamas</u> is now in control of Gaza and Fatah of the West Bank, neither has achieved total political support in either place, and each organization needs a political presence in both places to remain viable in the long term.

For now, <u>Hamas</u> appears to be winning, but its latest gains are primarily military, not political. While the movement is popular politically among the urban poor and the young in both the West Bank and Gaza, Fatah remains the stronger movement in the West Bank - where people are relatively better off and where it has built an extensive system of patronage. It still has support among many moderate Gazans, too.

<u>Hamas</u>'s military victory last week obscures the fact that Fatah has been gaining political support in Gaza during the past year, according to Mouin Rabbani, an analyst at the International Crisis Group in Jordan. He says this might be because a larger percentage of Gazans depend on Fatah finances to make a living. <u>Hamas</u>, meanwhile, has been gaining support in the West Bank because Palestinians there are discouraged by Fatah's corruption and policy failures, Rabbani said.

<u>Hamas</u> could face a backlash if Palestinians generally blame it for undermining unity. It could also be blamed for giving Israel, the United States and others further reason to isolate <u>Hamas</u> and work with Fatah in the West Bank at the expense of <u>Hamas</u> in Gaza.

The <u>Hamas</u>-Fatah divide also cuts across clan lines at a time when clan loyalty has been growing stronger, in Gaza in particular. If political factions bring only more chaos and insecurity, clan loyalties could take over.

Hamas might find it needs Fatah; Lifeline of Western support may depend on unity

Many ordinary Palestinians are upset with both factions for allowing the feud to spiral out of control and for their inability to work toward the larger goal of Palestinian statehood and the prospects of a secure economic future.

Unity would be an advantage economically on the most basic levels: Gaza could be an outlet to the world for West Bank products; the West Bank could expand the prospects for jobs and living space for poverty-stricken, overcrowded Gazans.

Palestinians in both the West Bank and Gaza, meanwhile, recognize that Fatah alone holds the lifeline of Western financial support.

So if military dominance gives <u>Hamas</u> bargaining power, the economic imperative of a unified Palestinian body politic argues, in the end, for some accommodation with Fatah.

Graphic

Photo: MOHAMMED SALEM, REUTERS; A <u>Hamas</u> fighter walks in front of a picture of the late president Yasser Arafat yesterday inside Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas's headquarters in Gaza. Hundreds of Fatah supporters tried to flee Gaza through the Erez crossing into Israel yesterday.;

Load-Date: June 17, 2007



Gunbattle involving Hamas militants leads to closing of Egypt-Gaza border crossing

Deseret Morning News (Salt Lake City)

December 14, 2006 Thursday

Copyright 2006 The Deseret News Publishing Co.

Length: 1171 words

Byline: Ibrahim Barzak Associated Press

Body

RAFAH, Gaza Strip -- <u>Hamas</u> militants, angry that Israel had blocked the Palestinian prime minister's return to Gaza, burst into the Rafah border terminal Thursday and engaged in a gunbattle with guards before it was closed.

After dark, two loud explosions rocked the area and police said militants blew a hole in the border fence about a half-mile from the crossing.

The border violence came amid rising tensions between Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh's <u>Hamas</u> faction and its political rival, Fatah.

In Gaza City, police arrested a *Hamas*-linked militant in the murder of a security chief's three boys, shot Monday as they arrived at school. The militant's allies retaliated for the arrests by kidnapping a security officer.

During the shootout at the Rafah border crossing, travelers dived for cover and a top *Hamas* official furiously tried to persuade the militants to disperse. Later, European monitors said the border would not be reopened Thursday.

Two *Hamas* militants were wounded in the gunbattle.

Haniyeh, a senior leader of *Hamas*, cut short a lengthy trip abroad to try to quell the factional violence at home.

But Israeli Defense Minister Amir Peretz ordered the border closed to prevent Haniyeh from bringing in tens of millions of dollars he raised abroad for his cash-strapped government, Israeli security officials said.

Haniyeh headed to the border yesterday in a second attempt to cross, this time without the money, which was left with Palestinian officials in the Sinai town of el-Arish, said Palestinian official Hani Jabour, who was with Haniyeh.

But Egyptian authorities halted his convoy several miles from the crossing point, apparently seeking to mediate to ensure he could cross safely, Jabour said.

Jabour and other Palestinian officials said Israel had agreed to let Haniyeh in without the money. There was no immediate confirmation from Israel, and European monitors who police the terminal said they will not return to the area Thursday.

"We will not be going back, not today," said Maria Telleria, spokeswoman for the monitors.

Under an international agreement, the border crossing can only open in the presence of the monitors, meaning that Haniyeh cannot legally enter Gaza. Telleria said the border would be reopened Friday.

Gunbattle involving Hamas militants leads to closing of Egypt -Gaza border crossing

Under an agreement signed a year ago, Israel does not have the right to close the border. But it has used the threat of military action repeatedly in recent months to force the border to close.

Haniyeh's government has been crippled by international economic sanctions that have left it unable to pay full salaries to its 165,000 workers.

Top <u>Hamas</u> officials have recently smuggled in millions of dollars to help keep the government afloat. A Palestinian official said Haniyeh was carrying \$35 million he raised during his recent trip, which included stops in Syria and Iran.

<u>Hamas</u> militants waiting outside the Rafah terminal grew impatient waiting for Haniyeh's return and broke into the compound, shooting in the air.

The Palestinian Presidential Guard, responsible for security at the terminal, began firing at the militants, according to an Associated Press reporter at the terminal.

Travelers in the lobby ran for cover, some carrying their luggage. <u>Women</u> and children hid behind walls and taxis standing outside.

The <u>Hamas</u> militants chanted "God is great, let's liberate this place," and seized the arrival hall as border guards escorted the European monitors to safety.

Haniyeh aide Ahmed Yousef ran into the terminal to try to persuade the gunmen to leave.

"There is chaos here," said Wael Dahab, a spokesman for the Presidential Guard.

Earlier in the day, intelligence officers entered a <u>Hamas</u>-dominated neighborhood of Gaza City to arrest Hisham Mukhmir of the Popular Resistance Committees, a militant group closely linked to <u>Hamas</u>, witnesses said.

The officers said they came under fire during their pursuit of a suspect in the killings of the three sons of a Fatah-linked security official -- an attack Fatah blamed on <u>Hamas</u>.

Three of the officers were wounded, including one in serious condition, security officials said. The officials said they arrested the suspect, but declined to confirm that it was Mukhmir.

Abu Mujahid, a spokesman for the Popular Resistance Committees, said his group supports efforts to arrest those responsible for the killing. "Any person found guilty of killing children deserves to be killed in front of the people, even if he belongs to the PRC," he said. "His factional immunity is lifted, and the PRC is ready to help with any investigation."

But some PRC militants were furious at the arrest, and several hours later they kidnapped an intelligence officer, Maj. Mohamed Abu Siyam, in Gaza City, intelligence officials said. Abu Abir, another PRC spokesman, said Abu Siyam would not be released until Mukhmir was freed, warning that more intelligence officers would be abducted.

This kidnapping "will not be the last," he said. "Every intelligence officer should stay at home."

The new tension came a day after the brazen daylight shooting of a <u>Hamas</u> activist outside a courthouse in the southern Gaza town of Khan Younis. <u>Hamas</u> blamed Fatah for that killing, an accusation that Fatah denied.

After nightfall Wednesday, gunmen fired shots at a <u>Hamas</u> rally at the Nusseirat refugee camp in central Gaza, witnesses said. One demonstrator was hurt.

Activists from both sides blamed President Mahmoud Abbas, of Fatah, for the continuing violence. "We ask the president to live up to his responsibilities before God and the law," said Salah Bardawil, a *Hamas* lawmaker.

About 1,000 Fatah supporters marched to Abbas' house in Gaza City, demanding action. "The time has come to exercise your powers and stop this farce," said Maj. Othman Shalouf, 39, a security officer. "Security agencies are able to control things, but we need a political decision from you."

Gunbattle involving Hamas militants leads to closing of Egypt -Gaza border crossing

Abbas was at his office in the West Bank city of Ramallah at the time and had no plans to go to Gaza.

The Palestinian president is expected to outline his plans for new elections in a speech Saturday.

<u>Hamas'</u> sweeping victory in January's elections pushed Fatah out of power but led to an economic and political stalemate.

Israel, the U.S. and the EU, which regard <u>Hamas</u> as a terror group, all cut off contacts, economic ties and aid to the Palestinian government, further deepening poverty and instability in the West Bank and Gaza.

Formation of a new government is seen as a first step toward possible renewal of peace talks with Israel.

Meanwhile, Israeli troops shot and killed a Palestinian man in the West Bank village of Kufr al-Dik, Palestinian security officials said. The Palestinian officials said the man threw stones at two army jeeps.

The Israeli army said soldiers in the village encountered a riot, with residents throwing stones and cinder blocks, but had no information indicating troops had opened fire.

Earlier Thursday, Palestinian militants fired a rocket into Israel from Gaza despite a truce, the Israeli military said. The rocket caused no casualties and no one took responsibility.

Load-Date: December 14, 2006



<u>Islamic Resistance Movement 'murderous terrorists,' Abbas says; Hamas</u> seeking 'Kingdom of Gaza,' Palestinian president claims

The Vancouver Sun (British Columbia)

June 21, 2007 Thursday

Final Edition

Copyright 2007 The Vancouver Sun, a division of CanWest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A13

Length: 678 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, CanWest News Service

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

JERUSALEM -- Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, whose secular Fatah movement was routed by Islamist <u>Hamas</u> in a battle for control of the Gaza Strip last week, denounced the Islamic Resistance Movement on Wednesday as "murderous terrorists."

What <u>Hamas</u> sought, Abbas said in a speech on Palestinian television, was a "Kingdom of Gaza" which would be ruled by those who use "assassination and killing to achieve their goals."

His remarks personalized the growing war of words between <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah, which now have firm control of Gaza and the West Bank respectively, creating the prospect or rival Palestinian mini-states. Abbas announced he had proof *Hamas* had tried to murder him by planting a bomb under a road on which he was about to travel.

Hamas, which refuses to recognize the Israel, is listed as a terrorist group by Canada and other western nations.

As <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah squabbled, Israel opened its border with the Gaza Strip a little more on Wednesday to allow hundreds of foreign nationals trapped by last week's fighting between <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah to escape and permitted dozens of Palestinians who had been wounded to receive emergency treatment in Israeli hospitals. Islamic Jihad, which is not formally affiliated with <u>Hamas</u> but shares its radical Islamic ideology and its ambition to destroy Israel, answered this slight softening of the Israeli position by firing five rockets into the Jewish state.

Israeli warplanes, in turn, struck at rocket launching sites in Gaza and Israeli ground troops killed four suspected terrorists in separate firefights near the Egyptian border.

Israel's competing responses to the tense situation in Gaza underlined the difficulties that confront Israeli policy makers determined to counter a radical Islamic movement on their southern doorstep. There had been guarded hope in some circles that last week's dramatic developments in the coastal strip might provide fresh impetus for peace talks between Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Abbas, both of whom are regarded as relatively moderate. It was announced on Wednesday that they intend to meet for the first time since <u>Hamas</u> conquered Gaza, most likely next week at the West Bank oasis of Jericho.

Islamic Resistance Movement 'murderous terrorists,' Abbas says; Hamas seeking 'Kingdom of Gaza,'
Palestinian president claims

"Both of them are very weak and cannot make any moves towards a comprehensive settlement," said Meir Litvak who specializes in Middle Eastern history and Islamic radicalism at Tel Aviv University's Dayan Centre.

The central issue for Abbas is also his Achilles heel, Litvak said. It was the right of return for several million Palestinian refugees.

For Olmert it is the necessity to withdraw Jewish settlements from the West Bank, which is politically impossible for him at this time, Litvak added.

Hillel Frisch, a historian at Bar-llan University who specializes in the politics and religion of Palestinian nationalism, said Israel now faces threats on four fronts -- Gaza, Lebanon, Syria and Iran.

Olmert and U.S. President George Bush agreed in Washington on Tuesday to offer financial and diplomatic support for Abbas's emergency government, which replaced the <u>Hamas</u>-led parliament. This was intended to demonstrate that the only way forward was for Palestinians to forsake <u>Hamas</u> for Fatah.

The policy of trying to isolate <u>Hamas</u> internationally was "a repeat of what Olmert tried to do when <u>Hamas</u> was elected," Frisch said. "I don't think that an international boycott of <u>Hamas</u> will succeed and Israel will have to go into Gaza militarily."

"To conquer Gaza again now would be a mistake that would threaten the existence of the Jewish state because it would undermine more serious and difficult challenges on its northern borders and elsewhere," Litvak said. "When you have a lot of problems, you have to have priorities."

Menachem Klein, a political scientist from Bar-Ilan University who favours substantive peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians, said that a resumption in blocked financial aid that Olmert, Bush and the European Union had agreed to "was not really anything substantial. It's impossible to do anything dramatic without considering final status issues."

Graphic

Photo: David Silverman, Getty Images; A Ukrainian boy gives a victory salute from a bus as it departs the Gaza Strip for safety in Israel Wednesday. A flood of East European <u>women</u> and their children were removed from Gaza.

Load-Date: June 21, 2007



Gaza edges closer to civil war as battles rage on; Fatah and Hamas break third ceasefire, while Israel responds to Hamas rockets

The Straits Times (Singapore)
May 17, 2007 Thursday

Copyright 2007 Singapore Press Holdings Limited All Rights Reserved

Length: 497 words

Byline: Abraham Rabinovich, For The Straits Times

Body

JERUSALEM - FOURTEEN Palestinians were killed in Gaza yesterday as factional fighting raged for a fourth day between *Hamas* and Fatah fighters, threatening to plunge the Palestinians into a new political crisis.

The bloodshed followed a brief ceasefire on Tuesday night - the third such announcement this week by the two camps - which failed to hold.

Yesterday, Israel was also drawn into the battles, launching an air strike at a <u>Hamas</u> building after the organisation's militants launched barrage after barrage of rockets at Israeli towns. Palestinian officials said at least four gunmen were killed.

The previous day, a score of rockets fired from the Gaza Strip had struck the Israeli town of Sderot in what Israeli analysts saw as a Palestinian ploy to provoke a major Israeli attack that would unite the Palestinians against a common foe and avoid civil war.

The rocket attack on Israel came after a day of escalating clashes between Fatah and <u>Hamas</u> in the Gaza Strip that left 15 dead, most of them members of the Presidential Guard affiliated with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who also heads Fatah.

The ongoing bloodshed has renewed fears of a full-scale civil war in Gaza and has left the fragile government uniting Mr Abbas' Fatah and the Islamic *Hamas* teetering just two months after it assumed office.

An atmosphere of increasing chaos and desperation now grips Gaza. Gunmen in black ski masks roam the streets, setting up random roadblocks.

In a telephone interview with a Gaza businessman, the Tel Aviv daily Ha'aretz quoted him as saying that after enduring six years of upheaval, the recent upsurge in internal fighting had pushed him to decide to take his family to Jordan or Egypt.

'The crazies have turned Gaza into a hell,' he said. 'What the Israelis failed to do, Fatah and <u>Hamas</u> have succeeded in doing - to expel me from my home.'

Page 2 of 2

Gaza edges closer to civil war as battles rage on Fatah and Hamas break third ceasefire, while Israel responds to Hamas rockets

The rocket barrage fired at Sderot, the largest Israeli town within easy range of Gaza, was the most intensive since such attacks began about six years ago. A woman was moderately wounded and 25 others were treated for light wounds or shock.

The Israeli government has so far acted with restraint to the rocket attacks in recent weeks, launching only a handful of retaliatory strikes on rocket crews.

Officials said yesterday that Tuesday's barrage necessitated stronger action, but hinted that the government would continue to refrain from a major ground attack.

It is not clear whether this is because of an American veto on such action, a desire by Prime Minister Ehud Olmert not to be seen as undermining the peace initiative launched by the Arab League or a wish not to become bogged down in Gaza.

abra@netvision.net.il

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FROM AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE AND ASSOCIATED PRESS

Load-Date: May 16, 2007



More than 20 hurt in Gaza arrests; Hamas sweep takes four senior Fatah rivals into custody for 'public security' violations

The Vancouver Sun (British Columbia)

August 11, 2007 Saturday

Final Edition

Copyright 2007 The Vancouver Sun, a division of CanWest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A12

Length: 275 words

Byline: Nidal al-Mughrabi, Reuters

Dateline: GAZA

Body

GAZA -- More than 20 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip were wounded on Friday in violence sparked when <u>Hamas</u> forces arrested some 20 members and supporters of rival Fatah in one of <u>Hamas</u>'s largest sweeps since it took over the territory.

Fatah and <u>Hamas</u> representatives said at least four senior Fatah members were taken into custody in the northern town of Beit Hanoun.

"Four Fatah leaders were arrested not because of who they are, but for violating public security," said Saber Khalifa, a spokesman for *Hamas*'s Executive Force, without elaborating.

He said the men were being interrogated.

Beit Hanoun residents said <u>Hamas</u> forces fired into the air to disperse relatives of the detainees, mainly <u>women</u>, who protested against the arrests near an Executive Force post.

Television also showed footage of <u>Hamas</u> men later raiding several weddings near the area. Residents threw stones at them while the forces fired back and in the air.

More than 20 people were injured in the fighting, including one who suffered a gunshot wound, witnesses said.

A Fatah source said <u>Hamas</u> forces also detained at least 15 supporters of the group in Khan Younis, located in south Gaza. There was no immediate <u>Hamas</u> comment on those arrests.

<u>Hamas</u> took over the Gaza Strip in June following weeks of battles against Fatah fighters. The Islamist group won a parliamentary vote last year and was part of a unity government with Fatah before talks broke down prior to the violence.

<u>Hamas</u> forces on Thursday detained a hospital doctor affiliated with Fatah for several hours a day after he was fired from his managerial post. His arrest had prompted protests by his fellow medical workers.

More than 20 hurt in Gaza arrests; Hamas sweep takes four senior Fatah rivals into custody for 'public security' violations

Load-Date: August 11, 2007



After Hamas victory, the priority in Gaza is 'food and peace'

The Independent (London)
June 20, 2007 Wednesday
Fourth Edition

Copyright 2007 Independent Print Ltd All Rights Reserved



Length: 1175 words

Byline: DONALD MACINTYRE in Gaza City

Body

Bearing the stamp of Preventative Security, and marked "Highly Secret", the single dirty document on the ground instructed the reader to assemble information on one Abdel Rahman Salah Shadeh Karnua. But it was a rarity among the papers scattered among the detritus in the yard.

Most of the secret files of the most hated - by <u>Hamas</u> - Palestinian security apparatus had been carefully collated and spirited away by the victorious Islamic faction after what had been the most decisive as well as the bloodiest engagement of the five-day civil war. Few of the hundreds more scattered documents were as tantalising, a salary slip here showing an officer's pay of 1800 shekels a month, a ripped and trodden-on photograph there of Rashid Abu Shbak, after Mohammed Dahlan, the Fatah security chief most demonised by <u>Hamas</u>'s military wing.

If there was a real sense of regime change at all in Gaza yesterday it was here at the Preventative Security headquarters where the scorched window frames, the walls pockmarked by gunfire, a burnt-out pick-up truck, the large patch of dried blood on the rubbish-strewn floor of one office and the twisted corrugated iron roof of an outside lean-to all attested to the lethal ferocity of last Thursday's fighting.

Three years ago, Raed Ali, now 26 was one of the balaclava-clad, RPG-toting <u>Hamas</u> militants who fought Israeli forces in the streets of the Zeitoun district of Gaza City, when six Israeli soldiers were killed after their armoured personnel carrier was blown up. Yesterday, this slight, bearded man, a Kalashnikov slung on his shoulder, a mobile phone in the pocket of his webbing, and wearing the crisp new blue fatigues of a sergeant in the 3,000-strong <u>Hamas</u> Executive Force, was proud to show us round what he saw as the liberated prison cells of what since Yasser Arafat's time had been main Fatah-run centre for interrogating political detainees.

It is still hard to disinter the accounts both sides have of executions committed by the other during the battle, each denied by the other. Sgt Ali said they found the bodies of five men executed by Fatah security men before their defeat. *Hamas* has identified one of the dead as its own, Issam al Juja. Fatah says at least seven of its men were killed in cold blood in the street outside the building after the battle. While he refused to accept this, Sgt Ali pointed to the graffiti on the walls of the cells, one of which contained a drawing of a man - presumably the artist - behind bars with the caption "Oh God, I swear this is injustice."

In the bubble coming from his mouth was a small bottle, of the sort Sgt Ali claimed had in previous times been inserted in prisoners' rectums as an instrument of torture.

"All the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip hated Preventative Security," Sergeant Ali said. Of the outcome of a conflict which cost upwards of 90 lives last week he added: "Of course, we are very happy now, because victory has been achieved for the security of the citizens of Gaza." He said the battle had not been against Fatah as such but against the "coup team" led by Mr Dahlan and Mr Abu Shbak. "We all want to achieve national unity," he insisted, on message.

But you needed to see the green flag of <u>Hamas</u> flying over this former Fatah bastion to appreciate the shift in internal control, because otherwise Gaza City was pretty much Gaza City yesterday; it bore little sign so far of overnight transformation into the fundamentalist Islamic Hamastan of - some - popular imagination. With the Fatahdominated civil police force having been ordered from Ramal-lah to stay at home - ironically in return for what they have now been promised will, at last, be a proper salary - the traffic was instead being directed with variable competence by young volunteers wearing green baseball caps and bright green jerkins carrying the <u>Hamas</u> insignia.

But one of the ugliest immediate hangovers of the conflict remains unresolved. Up to 150 Palestinians, including <u>women</u> and children in the families of lower-ranking Fatah officials who were not included on the VIP list admitted at the end of last week to Israel and the West Bank, remained trapped at the Erez crossing. Israeli tanks entered the crossing yesterday to protect ambulances retrieving - for treatment in Israeli hospitals - half a dozen people wounded after Monday's gun battle between Palestinian militants and Israeli forces at the crossing, where yesterday young male Palestinian looters were busy dismantling what was left of the tunnel that leads from the border to a now abandoned and largely destroyed Palestinian security post.

At the supermarket in Palestine Street, a middle-class woman who would give her name only as Mona, a member of Gaza's tiny Palestinian Christian minority, was stocking up against food shortages, now that Gaza faced being even more of a "big prison" than before, she said. She was afraid that <u>Hamas</u> internal control would now mean harrassment of those who, like her, did not cover their heads. No, she had not been threatened, neither in the year that the <u>Hamas</u> cabinet had been in office, not in the past few days. But she was fearful, despite denials by <u>Hamas</u>, that it would happen soon.

Few others seemed fearful of speaking their minds on the crisis. Neman Hussein, the supermarket manager, admitted that the panic buying because of the fear of a prolonged sealing of Gaza's borders was not repeated yesterday but still claimed that he would run out of some staples such as flour and powdered milk in a matter of days if his stocks were not replenished. "Only God knows what will happen," said Mr Hussein, who blames Fatah and <u>Hamas</u> equally for last week's savage infighting. "All we need is peace and food."

Outside Shifa hospital, where fierce gun battles last week cleared the surrounding streets, Muhialdin Melahas, 45, a taxi driver, and Nidal Habib, 37, who allots tickets to passengers as the taxis queue, spoke of their anxieties about being caught between <u>Hamas</u> control in Gaza and an administration in Ramallah that had disowned it.

"We need security and a living to feed our families," said Mr Melahas. "But the world will not recognise this government [in Gaza]. They say it is a terrorist organisation. I don't really see how it can last."

Mr Habib said there were not yet serious shortages "but if this situation lasts for a couple of weeks there will be problems. And we are worried that the Israelis are going to attack us."

Both men remained convinced that a fresh Fatah-<u>Hamas</u> deal was the only solution. "We don't know what this new government in Ramallah is trying to do," said Mr Melahas.

Mr Habib added: "Abu Mazen [President Mahmoud Abbas] should come here or go on television and tell us. If we have just <u>Hamas</u>, Fatah will cause problems and if we have just Fatah, then <u>Hamas</u> will cause problems. But it needs to be an agreement at the roots where they both really agree on everything, not like Mecca [where the national unity government was brokered by Saudi Arabia in February]."

Last night, at least, that seemed a distant prospect.

Load-Date: June 20, 2007



Gunbattle breaks out at Gaza Strip crossing; Hamas gunmen fight with Fatah-allied border guards

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

December 15, 2006 Friday

Copyright 2006 Woodward Communications, Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NATIONAL/WORLD; Pg. a10

Length: 936 words

Byline: ASSOCIATED PRESS **Dateline:** RAFAH, Gaza Strip

Body

<u>Hamas</u> gunmen seized control of the Gaza Strip's border crossing with Egypt on Thursday in a ferocious gunbattle with Fatah-allied border guards after Israel blocked the <u>Hamas</u> prime minister from crossing with tens of millions of dollars in aid.

A bodyguard died in what <u>Hamas</u> called an attempt to kill Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh as he left the border crossing for Gaza City.

More than two dozen people were wounded in the fighting, deepening factional violence that has pushed the rivals closer to civil war. One of the injured was Haniyeh's 27-year-old son, Abed.

Hamas officials said the 24-year-old guard was shot in the head during intense gunfire from Fatah forces.

"The bodyguard to Ismail Haniyeh was killed during an assassination attempt," said <u>Hamas</u> spokesman Fawzi Barhoum.

Haniyeh cut short a trip abroad and was trying to return to Gaza. Israeli officials said from the beginning that Haniyeh could cross into Gaza without the money. Egyptian mediators helped resolve the standoff and Haniyeh finally was allowed to cross into Gaza late Thursday. But Maria Telleria, spokeswoman for European monitors at the crossing, said Haniyeh left the funds, estimated at \$35 million, in Egypt.

After he crossed, there was a new burst of gunfire and Haniyeh's convoy was forced to speed away. Officials said Haniyeh was unharmed but his son was shot and slightly injured in the exchange.

Arriving home around midnight, Haniyeh was furious over the gunfire at his convoy. He blamed Israel for the delay but added: "We know the party that shot directly at our cars, injuring some of the people with me ... and we also know how to deal with this."

About 50 gunmen greeted Haniyeh at his home in a refugee camp next to Gaza City, firing in the air and throwing candies.

Earlier Thursday, pro-Fatah Palestinian officers arrested a <u>Hamas</u>-linked militant in the killing of the three young sons of a Fatah security chief. The militant's allies retaliated by kidnapping a security officer.

Gunbattle breaks out at Gaza Strip crossing Hamas gunmen fight with Fatah-allied border guards

Thursday's gunbattle at the border erupted after <u>Hamas</u> militants, angry that Israel was preventing Haniyeh from returning, stormed the Rafah terminal.

The pro-Fatah Presidential Guard, responsible for securing the area, opened fire, setting off a gunfight. Terrified travelers ran for cover, some carrying their luggage. Crying <u>women</u> and children hid behind walls and taxis, while the European monitors who police the crossing fled. Two <u>Hamas</u> militants were among those wounded.

The <u>Hamas</u> militants, chanting "God is Great, let's liberate this place" took over the arrival hall, and border guards escorted the European monitors to safety. Two loud explosions rocked the area, and security officials said militants had blown a hole in the border fence about a half mile from the terminal.

The rampage destroyed furniture and computer equipment inside the terminal and plunged the area into darkness. Hospital officials said at least 27 people were wounded, two seriously.

With the terminal closed, Haniyeh was stranded on the Egyptian side of the border for several hours. Late Thursday, the Presidential Guard regained control of the terminal and the European monitors moved back in.

Thursday's unrest was likely to strain the U.S.-brokered deal that turned over control of the crossing to the Palestinians last year after four decades of Israeli control. The border can only operate in the presence of European monitors.

Israeli Defense Minister Amir Peretz, working with the EU monitors, had ordered the border closed to prevent Haniyeh from bringing in tens of millions of dollars he raised during a tour of Muslim countries, security officials said.

A senior Israeli security official said they were not trying to block Haniyeh's entry, only to keep out the money. The official said Israel had information the money would be used to strengthen *Hamas* or fund terror attacks, but he declined to provide further details. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the matter with the press.

A Palestinian official said Haniyeh was carrying \$35 million he raised during his trip, which included stops in Syria and Iran.

Haniyeh left Gaza on Nov. 28 for what was supposed to be a monthlong trip to the Muslim world, with the goal of raising money for his government.

The Palestinian Authority has been crippled by international economic sanctions that have left it unable to pay full salaries to its 165,000 workers. Israel and Western donor nations cut off hundreds of millions of dollars for the government after <u>Hamas</u> won legislative elections early this year, demanding the militant group renounce violence and recognize Israel.

Hamas officials have brought in more than \$50 million to Gaza this year - far short of the government's needs.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, of Fatah, has been trying to persuade <u>Hamas</u> to join his more moderate party in a coalition government in hopes of lifting the sanctions. But talks between the sides broke down late last month.

Tensions heightened after Abbas threatened to call new elections, drawing charges from <u>Hamas</u> that he is plotting a coup. Abbas is scheduled to deliver a speech outlining his plan on Saturday.

The latest violence broke out Monday when gunmen riddled the car of a Fatah security officer, killing his three sons. Fatah accused <u>Hamas</u> of carrying out the shooting - a charge <u>Hamas</u> denied. The officer, apparently the target of the attack, was not in the car.

On Wednesday, gunmen in the southern Gaza Strip ambushed a <u>Hamas</u> commander and killed him in an execution-style slaying outside a courthouse. <u>Hamas</u> accused Fatah of being behind the killing.

Load-Date: December 15, 2006



<u>Terrorist group Hamas takes control in Gaza; Palestinian media report Fatah</u> <u>fighters surrendering near Gaza City waterfront</u>

The Vancouver Sun (British Columbia)

June 14, 2007 Thursday

Final Edition

Copyright 2007 The Vancouver Sun, a division of CanWest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A11

Length: 908 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, CanWest News Service

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

JERUSALEM -- After eight months of often bloody fighting, <u>Hamas</u>'s rout of Fatah forces in the Gaza Strip was nearly complete Wednesday.

However, in a potentially calamitous development that underscored fears of a wider Palestinian civil war, there were also bloody clashes Wednesday between <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah factions 50 kilometres north of Jerusalem in the West Bank's biggest city, Nablus, after Fatah stormed a <u>Hamas</u>-controlled television station.

An hour-long firefight near Nablus's main square ended with Fatah gunmen grabbing about a dozen hostages who Fatah said were <u>Hamas</u> supporters. The kidnappers later tried to use the BBC as a conduit so that their hostages could plead with **Hamas** to immediately stop its offensive in Gaza.

"If they don't, there will be blood for blood," one of the kidnappers told the BBC after images were shown of the obviously terrified hostages.

The Islamic Resistance Movement, as <u>Hamas</u> officially styles itself, had by nightfall gained control of Gaza except for a few heavily fortified Fatah offices and checkpoints in Gaza City and one Fatah security compound in the southern town of Rafah. But most of these last Fatah redoubts in the tiny Palestinian enclave were surrounded.

<u>Hamas</u>, which refuses to recognize the Israeli state and is listed as a terrorist group by Canada and other western countries, gave Fatah members in Gaza a 48-hour ultimatum to surrender their arms or have them taken from them by force. This happened as Palestinian media reported large numbers of Fatah fighters near Gaza City's waterfront had already given themselves up, turned their weapons in, and been led by jubilant <u>Hamas</u> followers to a mosque.

The military ascension of <u>Hamas</u> in Gaza, combined with its parliamentary victory in elections in Gaza and the West Bank last year, represents a serious challenge to Israel.

The Jerusalem Post summed up the Israeli view in a word Wednesday when it referred to Gaza as "Hamastan" in a headline. There has been media speculation in Israel that it may be forced to intervene in the West Bank to ensure that Fatah, which is still much stronger there than in Gaza, does not lose again. A total <u>Hamas</u> victory in Gaza would also increase the likelihood of a major Israeli offensive there.

Terrorist group Hamas takes control in Gaza; Palestinian media report Fatah fighters surrendering near Gaza City waterfront

If Fatah, which has significant western backing, maintains control of the West Bank, it would likely mean the Palestinian Authority would be split into competing entities, with <u>Hamas</u> -- which only has ties to a few Arab states and Iran -- holding sway in Gaza.

Speaking in the West Bank, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who leads Fatah, called the latest violence "madness."

"There is one party to blame: everyone who carries weapons and shoots and attacks is responsible," Abbas said.

Officials for Fatah released a statement to Palestinian television late Wednesday saying that Abbas and Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, who leads *Hamas* in Gaza, had issued a joint statement that called on all sides "to halt fighting, and to return to language of dialogue and respect of agreements." But there was no evidence of any halt in the fighting in Gaza.

<u>Hamas</u> gave Egyptian mediators its terms for a ceasefire earlier in the day. They were that <u>Hamas</u> must have sole control of all of Palestinian security services in Gaza, which have until now, largely been in the hands of Fatah loyalists. Fatah had announced late Tuesday that it was suspending its involvement in a <u>Hamas</u>-led unity government until there was a durable ceasefire.

In Wednesday's worst attack, five Fatah members of the Palestinian Authority's Preventive Security Force were killed after <u>Hamas</u> dug a tunnel under their headquarters in the town of Khan Younis and blew it up with what was described as a one-tonne bomb. Fatah later blew up a section of wall along the Egyptian border. Egyptian officials reported that about 40 Fatah members used the hole created by the blast to escape into their country.

Most of Gaza's 1.5 million residents have remained in their homes since the latest explosion of violence began five days ago. Among those who ventured outside were several thousand peace protesters but their attempt to march to the centre of Gaza City ended in panicked confusion after they were shot at and a 16-year-old boy was killed.

At least 14 Gazans died in Wednesday's violence, bringing estimates of the death toll to about 180 since the protracted power struggle between *Hamas* and Fatah spilled into open warfare last November.

After two of its Palestinian employees in Gaza were killed Tuesday, the UN said it was substantially scaling back emergency medical aid and a food distribution program there.

<u>Hamas</u>'s near-conquest of the smaller of the two Palestinian territories represents another serious rebuke for U.S. policy in the Middle East. In an effort to shore up secular Fatah -- which unlike <u>Hamas</u>, recognizes Israel's right to exist -- the U.S. had trained and armed its security forces in Gaza. Israeli intelligence has reported that many of the weapons and much of the ammunition that the U.S. had sent Fatah had fallen into **Hamas**'s hands.

In another development, Israel revealed Wednesday it had detained two Palestinian <u>women</u> from Gaza three weeks ago on suspicion they were planning to enter the Jewish states as suicide bombers for Islamic Jihad. The <u>women</u>, who were in their thirties and between them, had 12 children, had received special permits to travel through Israel to the West Bank for medical treatment.

Load-Date: June 14, 2007



Hamas and Fatah reported close to deal on unity rule

The International Herald Tribune

November 7, 2006 Tuesday

Copyright 2006 International Herald Tribune All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 1 Length: 1023 words Byline: Greg Myre

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Taghreed El-Khodary contributed reporting from Gaza.

The Palestinian Authority president, Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah, and the prime minister, Ismail Haniya of <u>Hamas</u>, tried but failed Monday to clinch a deal on a national unity government that would be made up of professionals and technocrats not directly linked to either group.

The factions appeared close to an agreement on a new Palestinian government that would seek to end the international isolation of the current one led by <u>Hamas</u> and win a restoration of Western assistance that was cut after <u>Hamas</u> came to power in the spring.

As the talks broke up Monday night in Gaza City, negotiators and aides said the two leaders were expected to try again Tuesday.

"There are issues to be discussed tomorrow and maybe the day after," said Nabil Aburdeineh, a spokesman for Abbas. But, he added: "We agreed on one thing: A national government of professionals will be coming."

<u>Hamas</u> and Fatah have been trying for months to establish a unity government. Back on Sept. 11, Abbas and Haniya announced that they had reached an agreement in principle. But the negotiations quickly stalled amid increased fighting between <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah, and the meeting Monday between the two leaders was their first in weeks.

Abbas, whose headquarters are in the West Bank city of Ramallah, travels only occasionally to Gaza, where most senior <u>Hamas</u> leaders are based. Abbas's decision to travel to Gaza signaled that the negotiations had reached an advanced stage.

And Mustafa Barghouti, a prominent legislator brokering the talks, said earlier Monday that the sides had already reached an agreement in principle.

"Both parties have realized that no one party can lead the Palestinians, and there is a need for a coalition that will include everyone," Barghouti said. "This government won't be a <u>Hamas</u> or a Fatah government it will be a national unity government."

Hamas and Fatah reported close to deal on unity rule

<u>Hamas</u> and Fatah did not say what issues were still dividing them. However, Aburdeineh said they had not discussed the names of the new cabinet ministers.

The political developments came as Israeli forces battled Palestinian militants for a sixth straight day around the northern Gaza town of Beit Hanun.

At least four Palestinians were killed by Israeli fire on Monday, including two militants and two civilians, Palestinian medical workers said. Also, an 18-year-old Palestinian <u>female</u> suicide bomber blew herself up as she approached several soldiers, killing herself and slightly wounding one soldier, the military said.

Even if the Palestinians established a new government, it is not clear whether its yet-to-be-defined policies would meet the benchmarks set by the United States and the European Union, which are calling for the recognition of Israel, a renunciation of violence and an acceptance of previous agreements between Israel and the Palestinians.

Unless Western countries and Israel agree to deal with a new Palestinian government and resume the flow of money, the Palestinians are likely to remain mired in their current crisis.

The Palestinian political negotiations will not change the status of Abbas, who was elected president in January 2005 and will retain his post. However, Haniya and his <u>Hamas</u>-dominated cabinet would be expected to step down to make way for a new government.

Haniya, in remarks to his cabinet on Monday afternoon, suggested that the government was on its way out, without saying so explicitly.

"Palestine is bigger than all of us," he told the cabinet, according to Reuters. "It is very easy for us to move to another position in the interests" of the Palestinian people.

Many details of the proposed government were not immediately clear. But it appeared <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah would both appoint several ministers. The new ministers would be professionals and technocrats who could be aligned with, but not directly affiliated to any faction. <u>Hamas</u> would chose the prime minister, members of the group said. Smaller Palestinian parties would also be able to name a number of ministers.

Ghazi Hamad, spokesman for the Palestinian Authority government, said <u>Hamas</u> had already selected a candidate for the prime minister's post, but declined to name him.

Haniya and his cabinet took power in March, two months after defeating Fatah in parliamentary elections. Fatah had dominated Palestinian politics for decades.

However, the international isolation, the cutoff of money, and internal Palestinian fighting have left Haniya and the cabinet unable to function as a government.

The Palestinian Authority government has been able to pay its 175,000 employees only sporadically and partially. Many government services have either ground to a halt or been provided at greatly reduced levels.

Meanwhile, in violence Monday, the woman suicide bomber, Mervat Masoud, detonated her explosive as she neared a group of soldiers who had ordered her to stop, the military said.

"My mother, be patient," Masoud, a student at the Islamic University in Gaza City, said in a video released by Islamic Jihad after her attack. "Consider me a martyr and God willing, we will meet in paradise."

Masoud said she carried out the bombing as revenge for an attack on a Gaza beach in June. Seven Palestinians were killed in that attack, including five members of one family, the Ghaliyas. Palestinians blamed Israel, but the Israeli military said that although it was firing in the area, it did not hit the family.

Also Monday, an Israeli air strike in northern Gaza killed a 15-year-old schoolboy and a man in his 20s, and also wounded several youths on their way to a nearby school, Palestinian medical workers and security officials said.

Hamas and Fatah reported close to deal on unity rule

The Israeli military said it targeted militants who had come to collect launchers that had been used to fire rockets at Israel a day earlier.

Israeli troops entered Beit Hanun, in the northeast corner of Gaza, last Wednesday in an attempt to suppress Palestinian rocket fire.

More than 50 Palestinians and one Israeli soldier have been killed in the fighting since then. The Palestinians have continued to fire rockets, with two landing in southern Israel on Monday, but causing no damage, the military said.

Load-Date: November 7, 2006



Hamas wins its own six-day war; Pyrrhic victory in Gaza redraws Middle East's political map

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

June 16, 2007 Saturday

Third Edition

Copyright 2007 The Age Company Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; International News; Pg. 15

Length: 644 words

Byline: Ed O'Loughlin, Ramallah

Body

IN ONLY six days of fighting, the Islamic fundamentalist <u>Hamas</u> movement has seized full internal control of the Gaza Strip, completely redrawing the political map of the Middle East.

But as Israel found after its own Six Day War, 40 years ago this month, apparently decisive military victories can create massive political headaches.

By defeating the once-ruling Fatah party in Gaza, <u>Hamas</u> has made itself master of a 365-square-kilometre prison and its 1.3 million desperate inmates, blockaded by Israel and shunned by the West. Worse even than that, Gaza awoke yesterday morning to find that, overnight, it had been politically divorced by the other main block of Palestinian territory in the West Bank, where Fatah is still in control.

Palestinian Authority chairman Mahmoud Abbas had dithered for days while his Fatah Party's leaderless and demoralised gunmen were progressively routed by <u>Hamas</u>, but he moved with unwonted decisiveness after the horse had bolted.

On Thursday night, when the last vestiges of Fatah resistance were crumbling in Gaza City, he ordered his vaunted, US-sponsored Presidential Guards to go to the rescue of their Fatah comrades. But the rest of Mr Abbas' security forces in Gaza had by then already deserted, died or been captured - at least 90 people died in the clashes, including several <u>women</u> and children and many Fatah fighters and commanders who were shot after being taken prisoner.

And when <u>Hamas</u> fighters stormed Mr Abbas' own office compound in Gaza later that night they found that the Presidential Guard had vanished.

Any hopes a deal could be patched up to preserve at least a facade of Palestinian unity vanished that same night when Mr Abbas announced he had sacked <u>Hamas</u> Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh and <u>Hamas</u> ministers - in effect voiding <u>Hamas</u>' win in parliamentary elections last year.

<u>Hamas</u> disputes Mr Abbas' power to do this but henceforth, <u>Hamas</u> will rule only in Gaza, dependent on continued support from Syria and Iran. Mr Abbas, meanwhile, will be President in the West Bank, with support from the US and Israel. The elusive dream of a two-state solution to the Middle East conflict - a future independent Palestinian state side by side with Israel - is mutating into an even more improbable three-state solution.

Hamas wins its own six-day war Pyrrhic victory in Gaza redraws Middle East's political map

Instead of being united under Israeli military occupation, the 3.6 million residents of what, until this week, was in theory the Palestinian Authority are divided politically as well as geographically, their case for a single independent state weakened.

While <u>Hamas</u> gunmen were still hunting down and killing wanted Fatah commanders in Gaza yesterday, Fatah in the West Bank had begun rounding up <u>Hamas</u> members and sympathisers, burning and looting <u>Hamas</u> offices and killing at least one leader. Last night Fatah gunmen patrolled Ramallah, firing into the air.

For Israel, the new situation is, in one sense, a massive strategic game - it has long been a goal of Israeli security policy to divide Gaza from the West Bank. But the sudden emergence of a hostile Islamic statelet on its southern border takes most of the gloss off this achievement.

The Israeli Government is under pressure to cut off water and power to the Gaza Strip, but to do so would be viewed in the outside world as a crime against humanity. Nor can the Government comfortably maintain the status quo, which requires numerous day-to-day contacts between Israel and the authority in Gaza - now exclusively *Hamas*.

In the West Bank it will not be so easy for the US and Israel to sponsor Fatah as counterweight to <u>Hamas</u>, should hostilities spread there from Gaza. In the fenced-off Gaza Strip, there was little chance that Mr Abbas' forces could turn their US-supplied light and medium weapons against Israel. In the West Bank, members of Fatah's al-Aqsa Brigades could easily turn their guns on Israeli military targets or Jewish settlers.

Graphic

FIVE PHOTOS: A <u>Hamas</u> militant stands next to a burning Jeep in the grounds of a building belonging to pro-Fatah forces in the southern Gaza Strip. PICTURE: AFP; Gaza under a cloud: <u>Hamas</u> fighters celebrate after putting their Fatah rivals to flight but emergency services are at full stretch. PICTURES: REUTERS, GETTY

Load-Date: July 19, 2007



<u>Fatah in tatters after Gaza clashes; MIDDLE EAST - 24 die as Hamas</u> captures rival faction's base

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

June 14, 2007 Thursday

First Edition

Copyright 2007 The Age Company Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; International News; Pg. 13

Length: 537 words

Byline: Ed O'Loughlin, Gaza

Body

THE Palestinian Fatah movement has moved closer to complete defeat in the Gaza Strip after a series of damaging setbacks in clashes with its Islamic fundamentalist rival, *Hamas*.

In its biggest reversal yet, 500 members of the Fatah-aligned National Security Force - officially part of the Palestinian Authority - fled, died or surrendered when a smaller group of <u>Hamas</u> militants overran their base in northern Gaza early yesterday. At least 12 fighters died on each side and many more were wounded.

The loss of the base near Jabaliya ends Fatah's armed presence in the northern Gaza Strip. It followed two days of clashes in which more than 50 people have been killed in this fenced-off enclave of 1.3 million Palestinians.

The new outbreak of violence has already surpassed other recent flare-ups for its brutality. Fighting erupted in several hospitals, a pro-<u>Hamas</u> doctor was deliberately shot in a hospital, <u>women</u> and children were killed at close range and at least two gunmen - one from either side - were tied up and thrown from high buildings.

The home of Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, the <u>Hamas</u> political leader, was attacked twice with rocket-propelled grenades. <u>Hamas</u> gunmen fired on the heavily-guarded compound of the Fatah leader, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, one of a small number of Gaza bases still under Fatah control.

Both Mr Haniyeh, who was in his house at the time, and Mr Abbas, who is not in Gaza, have appealed in vain for a halt to the violence. Meeting in the largely Israeli-controlled West Bank, Fatah's leadership has said it will suspend its participation with *Hamas* in a unity government set up to reduce tensions.

Hundreds of Palestinians, many of them civilians, have died in factional feuding since Fatah lost parliamentary elections to *Hamas* last year.

At the heart of the dispute is control of the Palestinian Authority's estimated 60,000-strong security forces, a confused and bloated network of competing agencies set up by the late Yasser Arafat to both reward and divide his followers in Fatah. Initially the security forces answered only to Mr Arafat, but in 2003 the US Government, accepting Israel's claim that he should be shunned as a sponsor of terrorism, pressured the Palestinian Authority into creating a new beefed-up post of prime minister to take over most of Mr Arafat's functions.

Fatah in tatters after Gaza clashes MIDDLE EAST - 24 die as Hamas captures rival faction's base

The job was tailored especially for Mr Abbas, a former Arafat deputy who helped broker the Oslo Accords and who is regarded by the US as a moderate partner for negotiations. But after Mr Arafat died in November 2004, Mr Abbas succeeded him to the presidency, and when *Hamas* defeated Fatah in parliamentary elections last year it insisted that the cabinet, now *Hamas*-controlled, should continue to exercise control over the security forces.

Instead, with US and Israeli backing, Mr Abbas sought to resume direct control himself, appointing Gaza strongman Mahmoud Dahlan to act as his security chief. <u>Hamas</u> set up its own 5000-strong "Executive Force" in a move denounced by Fatah as an unconstitutional "coup".

Feuding broke out as <u>Hamas</u> accused Mr Abbas and Mr Dahlan of collaborating with Israel and the US to overturn the results of a democratic election.

Graphic

PHOTO: A <u>Hamas</u> fighter takes up combat position during clashes with Fatah militants and Palestinian security members in Gaza City. PICTURE: AFP

Load-Date: July 3, 2007



Hamas gunmen wound four protesters, as tensions rise after deaths of children

Deseret Morning News (Salt Lake City)

December 12, 2006 Tuesday

Copyright 2006 The Deseret News Publishing Co.

Length: 669 words

Byline: Ibrahim Barzak Associated Press

Body

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza Strip -- Thousands of Palestinians throughout Gaza and the West Bank turned out Tuesday to protest the deaths of three children in a drive-by shooting, and <u>Hamas</u> gunmen -- blamed by many for the killings -- opened fire on demonstrators from the rival Fatah movement.

The killings of the three boys -- ages 3, 6 and 9 -- whose car was riddled with bullets as they rode to school in Gaza City, sparked widespread rage, grief and soul-searching in the Palestinian areas. Children stayed home from school and stores were closed to protest the violence.

While Gaza has been plagued by months of infighting, the brutality of Monday's shooting -- in an area crowded with families and schoolchildren -- was especially shocking and raised fears of more factional violence. <u>Women</u> led many of Tuesday's protests, demanding safety for their children.

"This is something we have never experienced here. We are asking ourselves: Are we close to civil war?" asked Mayson Muzien, 27, who joined dozens of <u>women</u> at a mourning tent outside the residence of President Mahmoud Abbas in Gaza City. Many protesters carried posters with life-size photos of the dead boys' bloodied faces, as well as other victims of Palestinian infighting.

Monday's drive-by shooting immediately raised fears of renewed fighting between Fatah and <u>Hamas</u>, which have been locked in a power struggle since <u>Hamas</u> won parliamentary elections in January.

Fatah officials accused *Hamas* of carrying out Monday's attack.

The children's father, Baha Balousheh, is an intelligence officer and Fatah loyalist who helped lead a crackdown on <u>Hamas</u> a decade ago. Balousheh, who was not in the car, had escaped two previous assassination attempts. The Islamic group denied involvement and condemned the killing.

The shooting Tuesday's left four people wounded at a protest led by Fatah in the southern Gaza town of Khan Younis.

Saleh Hammad, a local Fatah leader, said the demonstration was peaceful, although he acknowledged that some children threw stones. "Even if one or a few children lost their temper and stoned the members of the unit, this is not a reason to be fired at," he said.

Islam Shawan, a <u>Hamas</u> spokesman, said the militiamen did not fire at the crowd. "Our personnel were attacked by shooting and stones," he said.

Hamas gunmen wound four protesters, as tensions rise after deaths of children

But hospital officials confirmed four people were wounded, one moderately. The demonstration quickly dispersed, and there were no further signs of fighting.

Abbas, a political moderate, ordered security forces loyal to his Fatah party to take up positions on main roads and at major intersections throughout Gaza City in an effort to maintain order. In many places, <u>Hamas</u> militiamen patrolled nearby. While the atmosphere was tense, there were no reports of violence.

In Gaza City, schools were forced to cancel classes after children refused to go to class. In some cases, students burned tires, blocked roads or held small demonstrations outside the buildings.

Grieving <u>women</u> called into local radio stations, while newspaper editorials criticized Palestinian leaders for allowing security to deteriorate.

"Are we the brave heroes or are we the terrorists the media speaks of," sobbed one woman who called a Gaza radio station.

Meanwhile, demonstrations took place in all major West Bank cities. Some 1,500 people thronged downtown Nablus, and in Jenin, about 300 children staged a march.

In Hebron, about 1,000 marched through the city, with gunmen firing in the air. Participants called for the resignation of the *Hamas*-led government.

Months of tensions between Fatah and <u>Hamas</u> have heightened since Abbas' efforts to form a unity government with the Islamic group broke down last month. Earlier this week, Abbas threatened to call early elections to end the standoff, drawing <u>Hamas</u> accusations that he is plotting a coup.

Abbas is expected to deliver a major policy speech on Saturday to discuss his plan for early elections, aides said Tuesday. However, Abbas will not give a date to give the unity talks more time, they said.

Load-Date: December 12, 2006



Fatah in tatters after Gaza clashes; 24 die as Hamas captures rival faction's base - MIDDLE EAST

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

June 14, 2007 Thursday

Third Edition

Copyright 2007 The Age Company Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; International News; Pg. 13

Length: 534 words

Byline: Ed O'Loughlin, Gaza

Body

PALESTINE'S Fatah movement has moved closer to complete defeat in the Gaza Strip after a series of damaging setbacks in clashes with its Islamic fundamentalist rival, *Hamas*.

In its biggest reversal yet, 500 members of the Fatah-aligned National Security Force - officially part of the Palestinian Authority - fled, died or surrendered when a smaller group of <u>Hamas</u> militants overran their base in northern Gaza early yesterday. At least 12 fighters died on each side and many more were wounded.

The loss of the base near Jabaliya ends Fatah's armed presence in the northern Gaza Strip. It followed two days of clashes in which more than 50 people have been killed in this fenced-off enclave of 1.3 million Palestinians.

The new outbreak of violence has already surpassed other recent flare-ups for its brutality. Fighting erupted in several hospitals, a pro-<u>Hamas</u> doctor was deliberately shot in a hospital, <u>women</u> and children were killed at close range and at least two gunmen - one from either side - were tied up and thrown from high buildings.

The home of Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, the <u>Hamas</u> political leader, was attacked twice with rocket-propelled grenades. <u>Hamas</u> gunmen fired on the heavily-guarded compound of the Fatah leader, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, one of a small number of Gaza bases still under Fatah control.

Both Mr Haniyeh, who was in his house at the time, and Mr Abbas, who is not in Gaza, have appealed in vain for a halt to the violence. Meeting in the largely Israeli-controlled West Bank, Fatah's leadership has said it will suspend its participation with *Hamas* in a unity government set up to reduce tensions.

Hundreds of Palestinians, many of them civilians, have died in factional feuding since Fatah lost parliamentary elections to *Hamas* last year.

At the heart of the dispute is control of the Palestinian Authority's estimated 60,000-strong security forces, a confused and bloated network of competing agencies set up by the late Yasser Arafat to both reward and divide his followers in Fatah. Initially the security forces answered only to Mr Arafat, but in 2003 the US Government, accepting Israel's claim that he should be shunned as a sponsor of terrorism, pressured the Palestinian Authority into creating a new beefed-up post of prime minister to take over most of Mr Arafat's functions.

Fatah in tatters after Gaza clashes 24 die as Hamas captures rival faction's base - MIDDLE EAST

The job was tailored especially for Mr Abbas, a former Arafat deputy who helped broker the Oslo Accords and who is regarded by the US as a moderate partner for negotiations. But after Mr Arafat died in November 2004, Mr Abbas succeeded him to the presidency, and when *Hamas* defeated Fatah in parliamentary elections last year it insisted that the cabinet, now *Hamas*-controlled, should continue to exercise control over the security forces.

Instead, with US and Israeli backing, Mr Abbas sought to resume direct control himself, appointing Gaza strongman Mahmoud Dahlan to act as his security chief. <u>Hamas</u> set up its own "Executive Force" in a move denounced by Fatah as an unconstitutional "coup".

Feuding broke out as <u>Hamas</u> accused Mr Abbas and Mr Dahlan of collaborating with Israel and the US to overturn the results of a democratic election.

Graphic

PHOTO: A <u>Hamas</u> fighter takes up combat position during clashes with Fatah militants and Palestinian security members in Gaza City. PICTURE: AFP

Load-Date: July 3, 2007



Hamas, Fatah call new ceasefire after infighting kills 17 in Gaza Strip: Iranian bombmaking experts reportedly arrested

Edmonton Journal (Alberta)
February 3, 2007 Saturday
Final Edition

Copyright 2007 Edmonton Journal, a division of Canwest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A15

Length: 370 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, CanWest News Service

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

JERUSALEM - After 17 more Palestinians died and nearly 200 were wounded in fighting between Hamas and

Fatah in the Gaza Strip on Friday, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who leads Fatah, and <u>Hamas</u>' exiled leader, Khaled Meshal, agreed by telephone on an immediate ceasefire.

What may be the most intense fighting since the conflict broke out two months ago escalated sharply with Fatah claiming on Friday to have arrested several Iranians, including a general whom it is alleged had been teaching *Hamas* how to make bombs.

That charge comes a day after <u>Hamas</u> fighters used machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades to ambush a Fatah convoy.

Despite gunfights, which took place throughout the night and into Friday morning prayers, Egyptian diplomats said there was an agreement in principal from the two warring parties to observe yet another ceasefire similar to the one that lasted less than 48 hours earlier this week.

It was also announced that Abbas and the Syrian-based Meshal would meet on Tuesday in the holy city of Mecca to try to agree on a Saudi brokered national unity government -- something that has eluded <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah since <u>Hamas</u> won a stunning parliamentary majority in elections nine months ago.

A similar meeting between Abbas and Meshal in Syria last month failed.

And there was little evidence of much goodwill on the ground Friday in Gaza, where huge plumes of smoke wafted above the Islamic University -- a <u>Hamas</u> stronghold. <u>Hamas</u> accused Fatah of trying to burn the university down, but Fatah countered it was apprehending the Iranians, who were described as weapons experts.

Seven Iranians were arrested and 1,400 small arms and rockets seized, said Fatah -- which also reported the arrest of more than a dozen Palestinian **women** it said were working with the Iranians.

Hamas called the Fatah claims "ridiculous."

Hamas, Fatah call new ceasefire after infighting kills 17 in Gaza Strip: Iranian bombmaking experts reportedly arrested

An eighth Iranian had committed suicide, according to Palestinian news agencies, but there was no independent confirmation of the report.

Israel has long asserted that Iran had operatives in Gaza and the West Bank who were helping to

finance, arm and train <u>Hamas</u> and other organizations such as Islamic Jihad, which most western countries including Canada consider to be a terrorist group.

Load-Date: February 3, 2007



Hamas in Israeli 'crosshairs'; 'We'll bring attacks to an end'

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

May 22, 2007 Tuesday

National Edition

Copyright 2007 National Post All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A1

Length: 724 words

Byline: Nidal Al-Mughrabi, Reuters, with files from Matthew Fisher, CanWest News Service

Dateline: GAZA

Body

GAZA - At least five Palestinians and an Israeli woman were killed yesterday in renewed attacks, and a senior Israeli Cabinet minister said all *Hamas* leaders involved in cross-border rocket fire could be targeted.

The woman's death in the southern Israeli town of Sderot marked the first fatality in a Palestinian rocket attack since November and is likely to stoke further Israeli anger at what Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni called an "intolerable" situation.

"No nation would tolerate the consistent rocketing of its citizens and neither will Israel," David Baker, a senior aide to Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, said upon learning of the death in Sderot. "We will continue to take whatever steps are necessary to bring these attacks to an end."

Israeli-Palestinian violence has surged in recent days, while Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah faction and *Hamas* have struggled to maintain calm between their own fighters following weeks of internal clashes.

Islamic Jihad, the Popular Resistance Committees and <u>Hamas</u> all claimed responsibility for the rocket attack. <u>Hamas</u> had avoided such strikes after most terror groups declared a truce months ago but had renewed them following Israeli violence.

Mr. Abbas said Israel's attacks would have "grave consequences for the entire region" and that attackers should stop their rocket fire "so as not to give the Israelis the excuse they use to justify their attacks that have killed innocent victims," said the Palestinian President's spokesman, Nabil Amr.

Israel's security Cabinet decided on Sunday to escalate military action in response to some 150 rockets fired from Gaza since last week, which have put political pressure on Mr. Olmert.

"It is our obligation to harm the rocket launchers and our obligation is to continue to harm *Hamas*," Ms. Livni said during a news conference in Sderot with European Union Foreign Policy Chief Javier Solana.

Dozens of Israelis burned tires on a street in Sderot following the deadly rocket attack. The crowd scattered when a siren wailed that signals incoming rocket attacks.

Hamas in Israeli 'crosshairs'; 'We'll bring attacks to an end'

Palestinians fear Israel may soon raid Gaza should the violence continue. Several vehicles and artillery batteries have been stationed near the northern border for days.

In Gaza, Palestinian <u>women</u> dressed in black, donning masks with the words "al- Aqsa Brigades," which is part of Fatah, and clutching rifles told reporters they were ready to commit suicide bombings against any Israeli troops who entered Gaza.

An Israeli air strike killed at least four members of Islamic Jihad on their way to launch rockets at the Jewish state.

Israeli National Infrastructure Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer said Israel should target all militant leaders.

"I don't distinguish between those who carry out the [rocket] attacks and those who give the orders. I say we have to put them all in the crosshairs," he told Israel Radio.

Israel's Internal Security Minister, Avi Dichter, said <u>Hamas</u>'s leader-in-exile Khaled Meshaal, whom Israel tried to assassinate in Jordan in 1997, and Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Ismail Haniyeh, who lives in Gaza, could be targeted.

"Khalid Mashaal isn't immune, not in Damascus, not anywhere," Mr. Dichter said in an interview broadcast on Israel Army radio.

Thousands of <u>Hamas</u> supporters had earlier taken to the streets of Gaza City and gunmen fired into the air, vowing revenge, one day after an Israeli air strike on the home of <u>Hamas</u> politician Khalil al-Hayya.

"We will keep to the same path until we win one of two goals: victory or martyrdom," Mr. Haniyeh, a <u>Hamas</u> leader, said at the funeral service.

One man was killed in an earlier Israeli air strike on what the Jewish state called a rocket manufacturing facility and Palestinians described as a stonemason's shop. The air strikes also cut electricity to about 50,000 people.

Mr. Abbas will go to Gaza today to speak to leaders about maintaining law and order, following weeks of internal fighting, and perhaps renewing a truce with Israel, Foreign Minister Ziad Abu Amr said.

Saeb Erekat, the Palestinian Authority's chief negotiator, said the Palestinians were prepared to renew a ceasefire that had been agreed on last November and had been generally observed until last week. "We want assurances from a third party to reinforce the calmness," Mr. Erekat said in an interview with Voice of Palestine radio.

Graphic

Black & White

Photo: George Azar, Bloomberg News; Mourners carry the bodies of Palestinians killed in an Israeli air strike from the historic Omari Mosque through the streets of downtown Gaza City yesterday.;

Load-Date: May 22, 2007



We should start talking to Hamas, but will we ever understand them?

The Independent (London)

November 4, 2006 Saturday

Fourth Edition

Copyright 2006 Independent Print Ltd All Rights Reserved



Section: NEWS; Pg. 14

Length: 603 words **Byline:** Deborah Orr

Body

More distressing scenes from Gaza, with yesterday's Israeli tank incursion seemingly planned with the intention of bulldozing a mosque. Such a provocative act is hardly a springy step on the road to peace and reconciliation, so the sight of massed <u>women</u> taking nonviolent defensive action to stop the tanks in their tracks and being killed for it is appalling.

Yet the crowds of <u>women</u>, mostly burqa'd to the hilt, are themselves a graphic illustration of just how much more po-larised the Israeli-Palestinian situation has become. It used to be, in the secular non-state of Palestine, that you could spot an isolated village under the sway of <u>Hamas</u> because the <u>women</u> were wearing headscarves. Now <u>women</u> are taking up the full militant rig of Political Islam in a display of ardent support for <u>Hamas</u> that has been similarly displayed at the ballot box.

Palestine, for the first time since the creation of Israel - and long before - now has a government with a substantial Islamic component. *Hamas*, despite all indications to the contrary, is under the impression that its democratic credentials ensure that eventually the Israeli government, and the rest of the West, will have to engage with it.

Should we talk to <u>Hamas</u>? In London the opportunity arose this week with a small delegation of senior representatives visiting the capital in a modest attempt to break the diplomatic deadlock. Having listened to what they have to say, I have to report that hanging out with terrorist organisations fulfils all of its promise in terms of frustration.

The two men, Ahmad Yousef, senior adviser to the Palestinian prime minister Ismail Haniyeh, and Said Adu Musameh, a former <u>Hamas</u> leader who is now a member of the national assembly, no doubt have influence in Palestine. Their proposal is for a 10-year period of peaceful coexistence, during which, they suggest, the Palestinian people can be persuaded to re-examine the powerful mythology of victimhood that characterises the national identity, in return for an end to the occupation.

The vexed question of recognition of Israel's right to exist, they imply, can be tackled during this period, and positively. For now, though, *Hamas*, will concede only that it recognises the "reality of Israel's existence", which is nothing more than a statement of the obvious.

We should start talking to Hamas, but will we ever understand them?

Their certainty that they can deliver an extended period of peaceful co-existence is probably sincere. The idea of Hudna, or truce, is deeply imbedded in Islamic history. Islamicists take the concept very seriously, and point out that no Hudna has been broken for 800 years.

<u>Hamas</u> itself has for some time desisted from using suicide bombers, and insists that such groups as Islamic Jihad can be controlled by Hudna as well. Though when asked why <u>Hamas</u> didn't undertake to stop rockets into Israel as well, Yousef replied rather disingenuously that there was no point in stopping them, because they were merely symbolic. Since the rockets remain a useful stick to beat Palestine with, on the contrary, mere symbolism logically dictates that rocket attacks should stop forthwith.

But the real trouble is that this proposed ceasefire can be guaranteed only under what Ahmad Yousef calls "Islamic principles and with an Islamic strategy". What this delegation seems quite unable to understand is that an intellectual concession such as this is likely to remain for ever unpalatable to Israel, as it is to all Westerners who fear and distrust political Islam. *Hamas* should be engaged with by the West, if we really believe in our democratic ideals. But it is bleakly difficult to see just where the lingua franca might emerge.

Load-Date: November 4, 2006



Hamas lays siege to Fatah forces; Bloody Gaza Offensive; Palestinian security services holed up in fortified bunkers

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

June 13, 2007 Wednesday

All But Toronto Edition

Copyright 2007 National Post All Rights Reserved

Section: WORLD; Pg. A12

Length: 713 words

Byline: Charles Levinson, The Daily Telegraph

Dateline: GAZA CITY

Body

GAZA CITY - Ahmed al Afifi, the Palestinian intelligence chief, nervously fingered a .45 pistol in his Gaza City home hours after it was hit by two *Hamas* mortars.

The first round blew a crater in his driveway. The second, a dud, stuck in his flower bed like a garden ornament.

"Hamas is trying to take control of everything," Mr. Afifisaid yesterday after the fighting had raged all night.

<u>Hamas</u> has been locked in a bloody power struggle with the rival Fatah party ever since it won a landslide parliamentary election in January last year. After months of on/off violence, the stalemate between the militant Islamists and the ousted Fatah moderates seemed destined to keep the Palestinian government paralyzed.

Now, <u>Hamas</u> is pressing a fierce offensive in the Gaza Strip, systematically laying siege to the Fatah-dominated security services and looking at last for the decisive victory that could give it complete control of the Palestinian government.

The Fatah security services ruled the streets here for 15 years but are now holed up in fortified bunkers and a few neighbourhoods awaiting a threatened full-fledged assault by *Hamas*.

The unprecedented surge of violence threatens to topple the Palestinian unity government less than three months after it was formed.

Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah, who is also President of the Palestinian Authority, has accused <u>Hamas</u> of staging a coup attempt and vainly called for a truce.

But the <u>Hamas</u> mortars continued to whistle overhead throughout the day, pounding into Mr. Abbas's presidential compound in Gaza City.

Mr. Abbas was safe in the West Bank city of Ramallah, but his Fatah loyalists fought back.

They fired a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) at the home of Ismail Haniyeh, the Prime Minister

Hamas lays siege to Fatah forces; Bloody Gaza Offensive; Palestinian security services holed up in fortified bunkers

and <u>Hamas</u> leader, just north of Gaza City and used armoured personnel carriers with high-calibre cannons for the first time in this power struggle.

<u>Hamas</u> has staked out claims to large swaths of the Gaza Strip, declaring northern and central Gaza to be "closed military zones," evoking a measure the Israeli army uses to cordon off areas during operations against militants.

"Stay at home and you will be safe," *Hamas* warned Fatah fighters in an announcement over a radio station.

As reports poured in of <u>Hamas</u> victories across the war-torn territory, Fatah insisted the tide would quickly turn once the order was given to launch a counterattack.

The faction's leaders said they were showing restraint in the hopes of avoiding a full-fledged civil war.

"We are just waiting for the orders from our leaders and then we will vanquish <u>Hamas</u> and they will learn a lesson they will never forget," said a masked Fatah gunman who gave his name as Abu Abbas.

The orders finally came last night in a statement from the Fatah-controlled National Security Forces.

"Advance the forces. Confront the seekers of the coup. The patience of the security forces is over and we will react with all our strength," the statement said.

But those Fatah-supporting soldiers holding on to their remaining neighbourhoods in Gaza City seemed nervous and edgy.

As Egyptian mediators desperately attempted to avert a full-blown civil war, bursts of machine gun fire, exploding RPGs and cannon booms echoed around the city for the fourth day in a row.

In the past 48 hours, about 19 Palestinians have been killed, tossed from rooftops, executed at point-blank range and shot in hospital wards. That number seems certain to rise.

At least 80 have now been killed since mid-May.

Among yesterday's victims were a 14-year-old boy and three <u>women</u>, who died in a <u>Hamas</u> attack on a Fatah security officer's home.

"They're firing at us, firing RPGs, firing mortars. We're not Jews," the brother of Jamal Abu Jediyan, a Fatah commander, pleaded during a live telephone conversation with a Palestinian radio station.

Minutes later, both men were dragged into the streets and riddled with bullets.

The fighting has spread to the West Bank where Fatah militants from the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades kidnapped a deputy minister from *Hamas* and seized control of a *Hamas*-run TV station.

Terje Roed-Larsen, the UN envoy to the Middle East, said, "The picture which emerges is very dark, and apparently getting darker. There are reasons for real concerns in the international community."

Editorial cartoon, Page A14

Graphic

Black & White Photo: Abid Katib, Getty Images; Relatives yesterday mourn the death of Jamal Abu al-Jadian, senior leader of Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, affiliated to Fatah, in Beit Lahia, northern Gaza Strip. After exchanging

Hamas lays siege to Fatah forces; Bloody Gaza Offensive; Palestinian security services holed up in fortified bunkers

gunfire with <u>Hamas</u> gunmen near his home on Monday night, he took refuge in a nearby house in the town of Beit Lahiya, where his body was found riddled with 40 bullets.;

Load-Date: June 13, 2007



Gaza civilians fleeing Hamas trapped at crossing into Israel

Prince Rupert Daily News (British Columbia)

June 20, 2007 Wednesday

Final Edition

Copyright 2007 Prince Rupert Daily News All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 10

Length: 358 words

Byline: Associated Press

Dateline: EREZ CROSSING, Gaza Strip

Body

EREZ CROSSING, Gaza Strip (AP) -- Israel's new defence minister ordered the army on Wednesday to allow into Israel any of the hundreds of Gazans holed up at a fetid crossing who might desperately need medical treatment.

A teenager with leukemia was on his way through shortly after, the military said. In related news, Israel's Supreme Court was hearing a petition Wednesday by a human rights group, demanding that Israeli authorities offer immediate medical treatment to 26 critically ill Palestinians hospitalized in Gaza.

About 200 Gazans, petrified by the chaos in the <u>Hamas</u>-controlled coastal strip, have been camped out for six days in a tunnel on the Palestinian side of the Erez crossing with Israel, pleading with Israeli authorities to grant them safe passage to the West Bank.

<u>Hamas</u> seized control of Gaza last week after vanquishing security forces allied with the rival Fatah faction, leaving many Gazans petrified that chaos and further violence will ensue. Some in the tunnel fear their lives are in danger because of their Fatah loyalties; others seek a better life than volatile Gaza can offer.

Among their number are people wounded in gunbattles between the rival factions.

With no sanitary facilities at the tunnel, the stench of urine and sweat has permeated the air. Food and water were in short supply as **women**, children and young men sat waiting on mats or concrete.

The situation at the crossing was expected to be one of the first issues Defense Minister Ehud Barak would tackle after he took over the job on Tuesday. And on Wednesday, Barak instructed officials to let in "humanitarian cases" at the crossing.

No numbers were specified, and specific guidelines for determining urgency were not released. But shortly after the order was issued, a 17-year-old boy with leukemia was on his way through the passage, said Shadi Yassin, a military liaison official.

On Tuesday, Israel allowed in two Palestinians wounded in a shootout at the terminal the previous day. Three other people hospitalized in Gaza in the course of *Hamas*-Fatah infighting last week also were allowed to pass.

Hamas' takeover of Gaza led Israel to seal its borders.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Emilio Morenatti, Associated Press; SEEKING SAFETY: A Palestinian boy and baby wait to cross to the safety of the Israeli side of the Erez Crossing, in the northern Gaza Strip.;

Load-Date: June 20, 2007



Women form shield to save Hamas gunmen

Prince George Citizen (British Columbia)

November 4, 2006 Saturday

Final Edition

Copyright 2006 Prince George Citizen All Rights Reserved

Section: WORLD; Pg. 15

Length: 291 words

Byline: Associated Press

Dateline: BEIT HANOUN, Gaza Strip

Body

BEIT HANOUN, Gaza Strip (AP) -- Hundreds of Palestinian <u>women</u> in robes and head scarves streamed into a Gaza combat zone Friday to help free gunmen besieged by Israeli troops at a mosque. Two <u>women</u> who came under fire were killed and at least 10 wounded, but some gunmen managed to escape.

The <u>women</u>, many with ties to the Islamic militant group <u>Hamas</u>, left their homes after daybreak in response to appeals on the local <u>Hamas</u> radio station or telephone calls from friends and relatives. By nightfall, they were celebrated as heroes, an unusual role in a deeply conservative society that tends to keep <u>women</u> on the sidelines. Until Friday, battling Israeli troops had been men's business in Gaza.

The mosque standoff came on the third day of Israel's fiercest bid in months to halt Palestinian rocket fire on Israeli border communities. The offensive began Wednesday, when Israeli forces took over the northern Gaza town of Beit Hanoun, close to the border with Israel.

In all, 35 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza since Wednesday, including 17 on Friday. Among those killed Friday were the two <u>women</u> protesters, a 16-year-old boy, two medics and at least 10 militants. Most of the deaths Friday were a result of a series of Israeli air strikes after sundown. In the deadliest hit, five Palestinians were killed in an Israeli strike in the Jebaliya refugee camp.

The army said the strikes targeted militants trying to plant explosives or launch rockets.

The Beit Hanoun sweep is different from previous Israeli incursions into Gaza, a senior Israeli military official said. Rather than staying on the outskirts of populated areas, troops are going house to house in Beit Hanoun, sometimes breaking through inner walls to cut down on exposure to gunmen.

Graphic

Women form shield to save Hamas gunmen

Photo: AP photo; A Palestinian woman holds a copy of the Quran, Islam's holy book, during a rally supporting the <u>Hamas</u> government in Gaza City. Two Palestinian <u>women</u> were killed, witnesses said, by Israeli army fire when hundreds of <u>women</u> served as human shields for militants holed up inside a Gaza mosque.

Load-Date: November 4, 2006



Israel threatens Hamas leaders; Retaliation missile strike kills Islamic Jihad men after rocket attacks from Gaza

thespec.com

May 22, 2007 Tuesday

Final Edition

Copyright 2007 Metroland Media Group Ltd All Rights Reserved

Section: CANADA/WORLD; Pg. A03

Length: 274 words

Byline: The Associated Press

Dateline: GAZA CITY, GAZA STRIP

Body

Israeli-Palestinian violence escalated dangerously yesterday when Israel killed five militants in air strikes and hinted *Hamas* political leaders could be their next target.

A rocket fired from the Gaza Strip killed an Israeli woman, the first Israeli to die in a Palestinian rocket attack since November.

Even before the fatal salvo, *Hamas* leaders feared for their safety. They turned off their cellphones, stayed out of official vehicles and reduced their movements as militant groups declared a state of emergency.

In a separate development, alleged <u>female</u> Palestinian suicide bombers with their faces hidden, above, said they are ready to blow themselves up in attacks against the Israeli army.

The <u>Hamas</u> precautions followed an Israeli air strike late Sunday on the home of <u>Hamas</u> legislator Khalil al-Haya that killed eight people. Israel's leaders said they would employ more drastic measures to stop daily barrages of rocket fire into Israel.

Yesterday, an Israeli aircraft fired a missile at a car carrying four Islamic Jihad men, killing all of them. A spokesman for the group said they were targeted just after firing rockets into Israel. Islamic Jihad, which has carried out hundreds of rocket attacks and suicide bombings in recent years, threatened "earth-shaking" revenge.

The Israeli operations appear to have helped cement a truce between <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah, which have clashed in Gaza over the past week. There was a feeling in Gaza that the Israeli retaliation was bringing the Palestinian factions together in the face of a common enemy -- which might have been <u>Hamas</u>'s intention when it ratcheted up its rocket fire at Israel last week.

Graphic

Israel threatens Hamas leaders; Retaliation missile strike kills Islamic Jihad men after rocket attacks from Gaza

Photo: Reuters,

Load-Date: May 22, 2007



<u>Israeli warplanes strike Hamas in Gaza; New wave of revenge suicide</u> bombings threatened against Jewish state

The Gazette (Montreal)

May 18, 2007 Friday

Final Edition

Copyright 2007 The Gazette, a division of CanWest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A1

Length: 749 words

Byline: MATTHEW FISHER, CanWest News Service; AFP

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

<u>Hamas</u> has threatened a new wave of suicide bombings inside Israel to avenge multiple air raids over the Palestinian territory by Israeli warplanes yesterday that killed four <u>Hamas</u> fighters, including one described as a senior commander.

At least three other Palestinians died yesterday in factional violence. Two were shot as they attended funerals in southern Gaza for some of the more than 40 other Palestinians who have been killed since <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah resumed their bloody conflict during the weekend after a three-month lull.

Early today, three more air strikes hit east of Gaza City and killed four other Palestinians and wounded at least six, the Associated Press reported, citing reports by doctors.

The punishing Israeli air strikes, which killed five Palestinians on Wednesday, did not stop <u>Hamas</u> from launching Qassam rockets into the Jewish state. One missile crashed through the roof of a high school and into a classroom while students took exams in the next room.

Under intense pressure from terrified and angry residents in southern Israel, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert ordered several tanks and a small number of

infantry to cross into northern Gaza for the first time in six months.

The Israeli Defence Forces positioned artillery units just outside the Palestinian enclave so as to be able to counterfire immediately after any rocket launches.

Israel also took electronic control of radio stations in Gaza to warn residents there to flee places used to launch rockets, an Israeli television station reported.

Israeli officials emphasized these were "defensive operations" and that

Israel has no intention of undertaking a major ground offensive in the territory.

Israeli warplanes strike Hamas in Gaza; New wave of revenge suicide bombings threatened against Jewish state

Several thousand mostly Russian and Ethiopian Jews from the town of Sderot, which lies in the western Negev desert within what Israelis called "the Gaza belt," were removed by the government and a Russian-Israeli businessman yesterday.

However, the operation was stopped because not enough beds could be found for all those wanting to flee the area. Many residents have taken to living in bomb shelters.

Last night, Olmert made a surprise visit to Sderot, according to his spokesperson, Miri Eisin.

"He met some of the residents, visited the hospital's emergency service and the centre for victims of post-traumatic troubles."

Olmert also had a long meeting at the home of Defence Minister Amir Peretz, who lives in the town, Eisin said.

The Israeli air strikes on Gaza seriously damaged a multi-storey <u>Hamas</u> compound, a trailer used as a barracks and two vehicles with men inside.

Palestinian hospitals reported dozens of wounded, including <u>women</u> and children who were injured during the bombing of the compound.

One *Hamas* fighter was killed as he was preparing to fire rockets into Israel, an Israeli army spokesperson said.

Meanwhile, one person was killed and two more were wounded when a mine exploded as their vehicle drove through the centre of Gaza City, Palestinian security and medical sources said.

The device had been placed in recent days by *Hamas* militants, one of the sources said.

Khaled Meshal, <u>Hamas</u>'s top leader, who lives in Syria, said on his group's Al-Aqsa TV station that Israel's actions presented Palestinians with a "historic opportunity" to bring <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah together to fight their common enemy.

But there was little sign of that in Gaza. The fourth ceasefire in four days held slightly better than the others, but gunmen still controlled all the major roads and there were several shootouts.

Some Gazans briefly emerged to purchase food for the first time since fighting erupted again, but most remained in their homes.

The security situation remained so unstable that Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas postponed a visit to Gaza yesterday. Abbas, who leads Fatah, was to have met with Prime Minister

Ismail Haniyeh, the highest-ranking *Hamas* leader not living in exile.

At a news conference in Ramallah in the West Bank, Mustafa Barghouti, the Palestinian information minister, warned the government might collapse if the factional fighting did not stop, leading to a total separation between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Also yesterday, an alleged plot by <u>Hamas</u> militants to assassinate Abbas was revealed hours after the Palestinian president called off his trip to Gaza.

The visit "was cancelled after the discovery of a tunnel under Salaheddine Road full of explosives," said a senior security official, referring to *Hamas*'s military wing.

A spokesperson for the *Hamas* armed wing denied the plot.

Israeli warplanes strike Hamas in Gaza; New wave of revenge suicide bombings threatened against Jewish state

_			
Gra	\sim	^ 1	^
GI A	LJI		١.
•. •	г.		•

Map: THE GAZETTE; GAZA STRIP.;

Load-Date: May 18, 2007



FATAH PULLS OUT OF UNITY GOVERNMENT; FACTIONAL FIGHTING; Hamas 'taking Palestinians into an ugly civil war'

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

June 13, 2007 Wednesday

National Edition

Copyright 2007 National Post All Rights Reserved

Section: WORLD; Pg. A16

Length: 807 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, CanWest News Service

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

JERUSALEM - With the Gaza Strip on the brink of civil war, the secular Fatah faction announced yesterday it is quitting the Palestinian national unity government with the Islamist <u>Hamas</u> until the fighting between the two rivals stops.

After an emergency meeting called by Fatah's leader, Mahmoud Abbas, who is also President of the Palestinian Authority, Fatah's central committee "has decided that ministers will no longer participate in the government if the shooting does not stop."

The coalition with <u>Hamas</u>, forged with Saudi help at Mecca only three months ago, moved toward complete collapse as a statement from the President's office accused <u>Hamas</u> of "taking the country into an ugly civil war."

In the bloodiest day of factional fighting in months, hospital officials said at least 24 people were killed and 70 wounded. Forty-four people have died in the coastal enclave since Saturday.

At least 10 men were killed as <u>Hamas</u> forces, firing mortars and rockets, captured Fatah's security headquarters in northern Gaza and surrounded other Fatah facilities after what the Islamic Resistance Movement claimed was a Fatah assassination attempt on Ismail Haniyeh, the Palestinian Prime Minister. Mr. Haniyeh's beach-front home near the Egyptian border was hit by rockets as some of his family cowered inside.

Much of the day's fighting centred on a <u>Hamas</u> television station that apparently changed hands twice during the day, with pro-<u>Hamas</u> music briefly replaced by music celebrating Fatah. Control of areas around Khan Younis, in central Gaza, was similarly in play between the rivals.

For its part, <u>Hamas</u> vowed to finish Fatah off if Fatah forces refused to heed an ultimatum to surrender immediately. Mr. Abbas countered by accusing <u>Hamas</u> of "planning a coup."

As Gaza slipped closer to civil war, Israel was watching the results of a Labour party leadership race, which was expected to affect the future of the shaky coalition government of Ehud Olmert, the Prime Minister.

FATAH PULLS OUT OF UNITY GOVERNMENT; FACTIONAL FIGHTING; Hamas 'taking Palestinians into an ugly civil war'

Former premier Ehud Barak declared victory in the leadership race last night, completing a spectacular comeback set to rattle Mr. Olmert's government. With more than 95% of the votes counted, Mr. Barak emerged as the winner with 53% of the vote against former security chief Ami Ayalon, who received 46%. The remaining one per cent spoiled their ballots.

"Should the Gaza Strip ultimately fall to *Hamas*, it will have regional implications," Mr. Olmert said.

Although Israel and most western countries, including Canada, regard <u>Hamas</u> as a terrorist organization and have made plain their preference for Fatah, he underscored Israeli reluctance to get drawn into the factional fighting.

"We cannot go into the Gaza Strip in order to fight the battle between Palestinian pragmatists and extremists," he said.

One way to curb the fighting would be to place an international force on Gaza's border with Egypt to prevent arms smuggling, Mr. Olmert added.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to obtain verifiable information about what is happening in Gaza, including accurate tolls of the dead and wounded. No western journalists have dared to enter the tiny densely populated enclave since the kidnapping of a BBC reporter three months ago. Arab reporters mostly follow the fighting by catching quick glimpses from the buildings in which they hide.

But the telltale plumes of black smoke looming over Gaza and television images of a few wild gun battles in the streets told their own grim story. The situation was worse than ever yesterday, with neither side heeding pleas from Mr. Abbas and Mr. Haniyeh to stop fighting.

With Fatah clearly outmanned and outgunned, the total conquest of the territory by *Hamas* could soon be at hand.

Hospitals in Gaza said several dozen Palestinians died during the fourth day of the most recent violence, bringing to 180 the number of people killed in factional fighting since November.

The latest mayhem in the strip included several execution-style public assassinations, wounded fighters being shot dead in their hospital beds, the murders in their homes of three <u>women</u> and a child, and several men being thrown to their deaths from rooftops.

There were also grave concerns in Israel and the West Bank that the war between <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah might soon spill over into violence in the larger of the two Palestinian territories.

A truckload of gunmen from Fatah's Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades kidnapped a senior <u>Hamas</u> official in Ramallah and Fatah raided a West Bank television station sponsored by <u>Hamas</u>. There were also reports of sporadic clashes between the factions in several West Bank towns, including Nablus.

Major-General Burhan Hamad, the Egyptian army officer heading a mediation team that has failed to get the two sides to abide by dozens of truces in recent weeks, said yesterday's fighting had "killed all hope. They have killed the future."

Graphic

Color Photo: Abid Katib, Getty Images; Relatives yesterday mourn the death of Jamal Abu al-Jadian, senior leader of Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, affiliated to Fatah, in Beit Lahia, northern Gaza Strip. After exchanging gunfire with *Hamas* gunmen near his home on Monday night, he took refuge in a nearby house in Beit Lahia, where his body was found riddled with 40 bullets.;

FATAH PULLS OUT OF UNITY GOVERNMENT; FACTIONAL FIGHTING; Hamas 'taking Palestinians into an ugly civil war'

Load-Date: June 13, 2007



Hamas leaders fear for safety; Take precautions as Israel hints they could be targets in Gaza offensive

The Toronto Star May 22, 2007 Tuesday

Copyright 2007 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: NEWS; Pg. A09

Length: 573 words

Byline: Sarah El Deeb, Associated Press; REUTERS NEWS AGENCY

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

Israeli-Palestinian violence escalated dangerously yesterday when Israel killed five militants in air strikes and hinted <u>Hamas</u> political leaders could be their next target. A rocket fired from Gaza killed an Israeli woman, inviting a harsh response.

Even before the fatal salvo, <u>Hamas</u> leaders feared for their safety. They turned off their cellphones, stayed out of official vehicles and reduced their movements.

The precautions followed an Israeli air strike Sunday on the home of <u>Hamas</u> lawmaker Khalil al-Hayya that killed eight people.

Israel denied Hayya, who was not there at the time, was the target. But Israel's leaders said they would employ more drastic measures to stop rocket attacks on Israel.

Yesterday, an Israeli aircraft fired a missile at a car carrying four Islamic Jihad men, killing all of them. A group spokesperson said they were targeted just after they launched rockets into Israel.

Other air strikes yesterday killed a *Hamas* militant and hit suspected weapons-storage facilities, Israel's army said.

More than 40 Palestinians have died in Israeli strikes in the last week.

Militants launched at least 18 rockets at Israel from Gaza yesterday, according to the military and Israeli media, bringing the total over the past week to more than 150. The attacks have disrupted life in Israeli towns near Gaza.

At sundown, a Palestinian rocket hit a car in the town of Sderot, about a kilometre from Gaza, injuring a woman who died en route to hospital.

The salvo came during a meeting in Sderot between Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and Javier Solana, the European Union foreign policy chief. They were not harmed.

Solana denounced the violence, and Livni called for international action "to put pressure on the terrorists and the Palestinian government and not compromise with terror."

Hamas leaders fear for safety Take precautions as Israel hints they could be targets in Gaza offensive

The Israeli security cabinet decided Sunday to step up measures against militants, prompting calls to target the <u>Hamas</u> political leadership.

"We cannot differentiate between those who call for attacks and those who carry out attacks," government spokeswoman Miri Eisin said.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas warned Israel's attacks would have "grave consequences for the entire region." quoted Nabil Amr, a spokesperson for Abbas, as saying militants should stop the rocket fire so Israel would not have an excuse to justify their attacks.

In 2004, at the height of Palestinian-Israeli violence, Israel killed <u>Hamas</u> founder Sheik Ahmed Yassin and his successor, Abdel Aziz Rantisi, in air strikes just weeks apart.

Israeli officials maintained the assassinations frightened the <u>Hamas</u> leadership and led to a significant reduction in the group's attacks, especially suicide bombings.

Now, however, <u>Hamas</u> dominates the Palestinian government after sweeping to power in an election last year. Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh is the most visible <u>Hamas</u> political leader.

He and other <u>Hamas</u> leaders attended a mass funeral yesterday for the Palestinians killed in the Hayya air strike, calling on supporters to persist "until we achieve either victory or martyrdom."

The Israeli operations appear to have helped cement a truce between Palestinian factions <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah, which have recently clashed in Gaza.

Abbas is due in Gaza today to speak to leaders about maintaining law and order following weeks of internal fighting. There may also be talk of renewing a truce with Israel, Reuters quoted Palestinian Foreign Minister Ziad Abu Amr as saying.

Graphic

MOHAMMED SALEM reuters Palestinian <u>women</u> suicide bombers, members of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, told a Gaza news conference yesterday they are ready to die in attacks against the Israeli army if it attacks Gaza. Fighting yesterday claimed the lives of five Palestinians and an Israeli.

Load-Date: May 22, 2007



HAMAS' NEW ORDER TAKES TOLL ON GAZANS; STREETS MORE SECURE, BUT ECONOMY IN TATTERS

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

September 23, 2007 Sunday

FIVE STAR EDITION

Copyright 2007 P.G. Publishing Co.

Section: WORLD; Pg. A-4

Length: 618 words

Byline: SCOTT WILSON, THE WASHINGTON POST

Dateline: GAZA CITY

Body

For years, the seaside Flower of the Cities resort was that rare place in the Gaza Strip where the dress code did not rule out bikinis. Now, with some of its cinder-block cabanas turned into prayer rooms, the beach club shows how *Hamas* is consolidating its hold here three months after seizing power.

Bushy beards and black head-to-toe cloaks for <u>women</u> have become common at the club, which the armed Islamic movement torched in June after routing the secular Fatah party on the streets. The facility has been rebranded the al-Aqsa Resort, with a new logo featuring the revered mosque complex in Jerusalem next to a beach umbrella. <u>Hamas</u> followers collect the \$2.50 entrance fee.

Like the party it supported, the bikini crowd has disappeared, leaving the trash-flecked beach and murky swimming pool to Bassem al-Khodori and a half-dozen other *Hamas* supporters, who now have jobs at the resort.

"Before," said Mr. Khodori, 32, a cafeteria worker, "only the others were allowed."

Facing money shortages, a shrinking private sector and growing political resistance, <u>Hamas</u> leaders are increasingly imposing harsh interpretations of Islamic law and using brute force to bolster their isolated administration, which remains illegitimate in the view of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah and his U.S.-backed government in the West Bank.

Reconciliation between the two largest Palestinian parties -- now running parallel governments in what had been envisioned as the two territories of a Palestinian state with a single government -- appears as distant as when Mr. Abbas dissolved the *Hamas*-led power-sharing government after the fighting in June.

Many of Gaza's almost 1.5 million residents, who celebrated Israel's withdrawal two years ago only to fall into civil war soon after, have seen their lives improve in some ways and suffer in others as the result of the political split within the Palestinian Authority and *Hamas*' brand of rule here.

While <u>Hamas</u> has imposed order on Gaza's lawless streets, gunmen from its Executive Force, a 5,000-member paramilitary unit, have employed repressive tactics against Fatah supporters and local journalists.

HAMAS' NEW ORDER TAKES TOLL ON GAZANS STREETS MORE SECURE, BUT ECONOMY IN TATTERS

International aid is again funding Palestinian government salaries, helping revive parts of Gaza's economy. But the closure of the cargo crossings from Israel for all but emergency aid is depriving Gaza's small manufacturers of raw materials. An estimated 85 percent of the territory's manufacturing sector has been shut down since June and more than 35,000 workers have been laid off, according to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

"We blame <u>Hamas</u>, the reason for all of this," said Hamdi Badr, 49, who two months ago shut down the clothing factory his family has owned since 1969. "But we don't really know what to do."

The steel shutters of storefront factories along Mr. Badr's street are closed, and the only sign of life is dogs sniffing through pyramids of trash. Mr. Abbas' government in the West Bank has cut off municipal funds that Gaza once used for garbage collection.

Mr. Badr flipped on fluorescent lights over rows of empty sewing machines, ceiling fans suddenly stirring the musty air. He employed 50 people when he closed his doors, and earned \$4,000 a month. Now the people and profits are gone.

"It's always the citizens, people like me and the ones who worked here, who pay for these political disputes," he said.

Gaza's streets have taken on an increasingly Islamic cast in recent months. The improved everyday security has brought people back to the markets, beaches and parks, many of them <u>women</u> wearing for the first time the full black gown, gloves and face covering favored by the most conservative Muslims.

Load-Date: September 25, 2007



Dangerous new ferocity in Fatah-Hamas violence

The Australian (Australia)

May 18, 2007 Friday

All-round Country Edition

Copyright 2007 Nationwide News Pty Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: WORLD; Pg. 9

Length: 474 words

Byline: IBRAHIM BARZAK

Body

AΡ

I have been covering the Gaza Strip as a journalist for more than 10 years, but I've never seen factional fighting so bad. This is my account of a nerve-racking four days in Gaza City

WITH battles raging outside my building and my windows blown out by bullets, I sit in a dark hallway outside my apartment with my wife and baby. It's dangerous inside and outside.

Today I have seen people shot before my eyes, I heard the screams of terrified <u>women</u> and children in a burning building, and I argued with gunmen who wanted to take over my home.

I have seen a lot in my years as a journalist in Gaza, but this is the worst it's been.

Much of the fighting is taking place right here in my neighbourhood. I went outside a few times to report, just around the house. I saw a building on fire after <u>Hamas</u> gunmen attacked, and I heard the screams of people who could not get out because of the gunbattles.

I saw <u>Hamas</u> gunmen going in and out of the building, and they were exchanging fire with Fatah forces. There has been another battle going on all day at a nearby 12-storey building.

My building is across from a Palestinian government complex, and both sides are fighting for control of the area. They're taking over rooftops. My apartment is on the top floor of this five-storey building. This morning some Fatah gunmen tried to force their way into my apartment so they could shoot from my windows, overlooking the Palestinian government compound. I had an argument with them, and they left.

There have been clashes between <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah before, but there are dangerous new elements this time. Now they are arresting or even shooting people for the way they look.

If you have a beard, you might be arrested by Fatah security for looking Islamic. If you have a chain around your neck or on your arm, *Hamas* gunmen might shoot you because you look secular.

The random use of weapons and explosives is out of control. People who consider themselves the elite, the politicians, sit with the Egyptian mediators at night and then come out with statements about a truce, and in the morning we see the opposite has occurred. These people are not controlling anything.

Dangerous new ferocity in Fatah-Hamas violence

I saw several people shot right in front of my home today. I'm preparing myself for even worse violence.

Right now there are three couples, neighbours, sitting here on the floor. It's dark because there is no electricity. We are chatting, trying to calm ourselves over the crazy clashes and the sounds of heavy gunfire and explosions which have not let up since 2am in our neighbourhood.

Each of us has a baby, and they're playing.

My baby, Hikmet, is nine months old. I'm astonished by his behaviour. In the morning he was scared by the gunfire and he cried and called "mama", which is his first word. Then he fell asleep for three hours. Since he woke up, he's been calm despite all the shooting.

Load-Date: May 17, 2007



BRITISH ENVOY MEETS WITH A HAMAS LEADER

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

April 6, 2007 Friday

SOONER EDITION

Copyright 2007 P.G. Publishing Co.

Section: WORLD; WORLD BRIEFS; Pg. A-4

Length: 559 words

Body

JERUSALEM -- A senior British diplomat met with the Palestinian prime minister in Gaza yesterday to discuss the fate of a kidnapped BBC correspondent, Alan Johnston.

It was the first meeting between a senior <u>Hamas</u> official and an official European Union envoy since the new Palestinian unity government was formed in mid-March. European Union countries, along with the United States and Israel, have said they would not deal with <u>Hamas</u> because they consider it a terrorist group.

The meeting yesterday between the Palestinian prime minister, Ismail Haniya of <u>Hamas</u>, and the diplomat, Richard Makepeace, the British consul-general in Jerusalem, was described by a British diplomat as having taken place on "humanitarian grounds" and not as a change of policy.

Israeli officials were initially critical, saying the meeting could send the wrong message to <u>Hamas</u>. But shortly after the 30-minute meeting, an Israeli government official, speaking on condition of anonymity, tempered the Israeli stance, saying "the meeting was for humanitarian purposes, and we accept it as that."

Truck crash kills 27

BOGOTA, Colombia -- A truck carrying people blew out a tire and crashed yesterday in northern Colombia, igniting a blaze that killed 27 people, police said.

Among the dead were six children.

Many Colombians started their vacations yesterday, a public holiday, in time for Easter celebrations in this mainly Roman Catholic country.

Ethiopia under pressure

NAIROBI, Kenya -- Ethiopia was under pressure yesterday to release details on detainees from 19 countries held at secret prisons in the country where U.S. agents have carried out interrogations in the hunt for al-Qaida in the Horn of Africa.

Canada, Eritrea and Sweden were lobbying for information about their citizens. Human rights groups say hundreds of prisoners, including **women** and children, have been transferred secretly and illegally to the prisons in Ethiopia.

BRITISH ENVOY MEETS WITH A HAMAS LEADER

Officials from Ethiopia were not immediately available for comment, but in the past have refused to acknowledge the existence of the prisons.

Passengers rescued at sea

SANTORINI, Greece -- Scores of passengers climbed down rope ladders to rescue vessels after a Greek cruise ship struck a reef yesterday and started listing in the Mediterranean, forcing the evacuation of 1,600 people including North Carolina high school students.

Authorities said hundreds of American tourists, at least two school groups from Canada and more than 100 Spaniards were on the Greek-flagged Sea Diamond when it hit the rocks off the island of Santorini shortly before 4 p.m.

More than a dozen ships were involved in the rescue effort, along with six navy rescue helicopters, two military transport planes and four warships.

Ban on female circumcision

NAIROBI, Kenya -- Eritrea's government said it has abolished the practice of <u>female</u> circumcision, describing it as a threat to the lives of <u>women</u>.

Anyone who requests, incites, promotes or witnesses <u>female</u> circumcision is subject to a fine and imprisonment, Eritrea's information ministry said. The ban was imposed on March 31.

With age-old cultural roots, <u>female</u> circumcision or genital mutilation, is practiced today in parts of sub-Saharan Africa and Egypt and other parts of the Arab world such as Yemen and Oman.

Female circumcision is illegal in more than a dozen African countries, although laws are rarely enforced.

Load-Date: April 6, 2007



2 Men Cleared of Charges Of Aiding Hamas Violence

The New York Times
February 2, 2007 Friday
Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2007 The New York Times Company

Section: Section A; Column 1; National Desk; Pg. 16

Length: 566 words

Byline: By LIBBY SANDER **Dateline:** CHICAGO, Feb. 1

Body

Two men were acquitted Thursday of federal charges that they provided money and other aid to the Palestinian organization *Hamas* in the early 1990s.

The racketeering case against the men, Muhammad Salah, 53, a onetime grocer from suburban Chicago, and Abdelhaleem Ashqar, 48, a former university professor from suburban Washington, was announced with much fanfare in 2004 by the United States attorney general at the time, John Ashcroft, as an important part of the government's fight against terrorism.

But Thursday afternoon, after a three-month trial and 14 days of deliberations, a jury of seven <u>women</u> and five men rejected the core of the government's case and acquitted Mr. Salah and Dr. Ashqar of the most serious charge brought under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, that the two men used United States bank accounts to funnel money to <u>Hamas</u>'s military leaders and were therefore responsible for the group's violent tactics against Israel.

The jury convicted the men of lesser charges, including obstruction of justice and, for Dr. Ashqar, criminal contempt.

Both men smiled and wept after the verdict, hugging and thanking family members and supporters in the packed and heavily secured downtown courtroom. "We are not terrorists," Mr. Salah told reporters in the lobby of the courthouse, his young son perched on his shoulders.

Defense lawyers said the verdict was a blow to what they called the United States government's decision to litigate the dispute between Israel and the Palestinians in American courtrooms.

"The government has tried to turn the Israeli-Palestinian conflict into something criminal," said William Moffitt, who is Dr. Ashqar's lawyer. "Maybe the government will get it in their heads that the conflict won't be settled in the criminal courts of the United States."

Prosecutors said they accepted the jury's decision, but also stood by the evidence they presented at trial.

2 Men Cleared of Charges Of Aiding Hamas Violence

"This was about an organization that has publicly claimed credit over and over again for terrorist acts," said Gary S. Shapiro, the first assistant United States attorney in Chicago, "not just acts against the Israeli military, but acts against civilians where Americans and foreign nationals were killed."

Prosecutors based their accusations against Mr. Salah on a 1993 confession he made while in the custody of the Israeli secret police, who arrested him at a checkpoint in the Gaza Strip and found \$97,000 in his hotel room. Mr. Salah told the Israeli police that he had met with top <u>Hamas</u> military officials and given them money. He spent nearly five years in an Israeli prison.

Defense lawyers argued that the confession was false and obtained only after Mr. Salah endured weeks of torture by the Israeli agents.

The case against Dr. Ashqar centered on recorded telephone conversations he had with <u>Hamas</u> officials and records seized in the early 1990s from his home in Oxford, Miss., while he was a graduate student at the University of Mississippi.

Throughout the trial, both defendants denied membership in <u>Hamas</u>, which they pointed out had not been designated a terrorist organization by the United States government until 1997. They maintained that their interactions with the organization were humanitarian in nature, intended only to finance charities and help impoverished Palestinians living under Israeli occupation.

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photo: Muhammad Salah, 53, with his son on his shoulders, after the verdict was delivered yesterday in Chicago. "We are not terrorists," he said. (Photo by Charles Rex Arbogast/Associated Press)

Load-Date: February 2, 2007



400 trapped in Gaza tunnel; Residents flee Hamas; Israel shuts West Bank access

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

June 20, 2007 Wednesday

Main Edition

Copyright 2007 The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Section: NEWS; Pg. 4A

Length: 320 words

Byline: MARGARET COKER

Cox International Correspondent

Body

Beit Hanoun, Gaza Strip --- Despite promises from <u>Hamas</u> leaders that their victory over rival Fatah forces has ushered in an era of security for the Gaza Strip, residents Tuesday expressed more concern than hope about the future of their impoverished coastal territory.

Nowhere was there greater uncertainty than the Erez border crossing, where an estimated 400 Palestinians huddled for a third straight day inside a no man's land separating Israel and northern Gaza. Many said they feared revenge attacks after last week's violent bloodletting in which <u>Hamas</u> Islamists routed Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah faction.

Israel, wary of allowing the Gazans to go through its territory to the Fatah-controlled West Bank, refused to allow them in and insisted their lives were not in danger.

Those stuck at the crossing have been waiting in a squalid concrete tunnel topped with aluminum siding without bathrooms or food.

Some had stories about <u>Hamas</u> fighters killing their relatives in violence that convulsed Gaza during the last few months. Others said that with the new <u>Hamas</u> regime in control --- and their former generals routed --- they have no chance of ever working again in Gaza.

Away from the border crossing, however, Gazans seemed to be adjusting to the new political situation. Shops and markets in Gaza City, five miles away, were doing brisk business. Mothers walked with their children on streets that days earlier had been bloodstained.

Life looks grimmest for those stuck at the Erez crossing.

400 trapped in Gaza tunnel Residents flee Hamas; Israel shuts West Bank access

On Tuesday, with the sun beating overhead, sweaty and crying <u>women</u> and children crowded around slits in the concrete walls to feel gusts of fresh air and relieve the fetid, urine-soaked stench of their temporary home.

An Israeli tank blocked people from leaving or entering the tunnel.

Israel did allow the Red Cross to supply water to those waiting inside and to evacuate five wounded people to the West Bank.

Graphic

Photo: TSAFRIR ABAYOV / Associated PressAn injured Palestinian is taken to a hospital in Israel after fleeing from <u>Hamas</u>-run Gaza. Israel has refused to let in most of the hundreds of Palestinians waiting at its border./ImageData*

Load-Date: June 20, 2007



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

June 23, 2007 Saturday

National Edition

Copyright 2007 National Post All Rights Reserved

Section: WORLD; Pg. A17; Dion Nissenbaum

Length: 1704 words

Byline: Dion Nissenbaum, McClatchy Newspapers, with files from The Daily Telegraph

Dateline: GAZA CITY

Body

GAZA CITY -As they gave up compound after compound to advancing <u>Hamas</u> forces, weary Fatah fighters loyal to Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian Authority President, fell back toward the seaside presidential compound.

They set up .50-calibre machine guns and unloaded crates of ammunition, certain it would be their last stand.

"This is all there is for us," said a special forces officer who called himself Abu Hassan as he oversaw the stacking of ammunition. "We will not surrender. They will execute us."

But there was no last stand. Instead, Fatah leaders fled the Gaza Strip by boat and on foot, leaving lower-level fighters feeling betrayed.

In five days of fighting, Fatah never put up a real fight. The question is why not.

In interviews during and after the fighting, Fatah foot soldiers said they felt abandoned as they realized there would be no counterattack, not even a last-ditch defence.

Some thought incompetent political leaders had done them in, but this land has long been fertile soil for conspiracy theories.

Others wondered whether Mr. Abbas had deliberately ceded the Gaza Strip to <u>Hamas</u> in an attempt to isolate the radical Islamic group and consolidate his power in the much larger West Bank.

"There was total frustration and disappointment," said one Abbas security officer who was among the last to abandon the presidential compound on Thursday night, June 14, and asked to be identified only as A.R. because of fear of retaliation.

"We felt like there was a conspiracy to hand over Gaza to *Hamas*."

Whether it was conspiracy or collapse, Fatah's downfall in Gaza has created an unexpected opportunity for Israel, the United States and others to reestablish full relations with Mr. Abbas and the pro-Western emergency cabinet he installed to replace the elected *Hamas*-dominated government.

The outside world has moved quickly to bolster Mr. Abbas. This week, the United States announced it would lift the financial embargo that had starved the Palestinian Authority since <u>Hamas</u> won elections in January, 2006. Israel agreed to release Palestinian tax revenue it is withholding and on Monday Ehud Olmert, the Israeli Prime Minister, will meet Mr. Abbas for talks at an Egyptian resort.

But the story of Fatah's final hours in Gaza is a reminder of how tenuous Mr. Abbas' position may be.

If he becomes too cozy with Israel, he could be accused of betraying the Palestinian cause. Angry Fatah fighters could view their sense of betrayal as reason to turn on him, or at least temper their support for him.

And the rout could be repeated if Fatah's weaknesses that were so apparent in Gaza are duplicated in the West Bank.

Fatah has long been on the defensive, accused of incompetence, inattention and corruption. Disciplined <u>Hamas</u> forces were fighting for a cause in Gaza; Fatah gunmen were mostly fighting for regular paycheques that stopped coming last year when <u>Hamas</u> won control of the Palestinian Authority.

"I know why Fatah didn't fight back," said Diana Buttu, a former aide to Mr. Abbas and Mohammed Dahlan, the longtime Fatah security chief in Gaza who was nowhere to be found there during the final showdown.

"They haven't been paid salaries in a year and a half, they don't know what they are defending any more, they're defending an authority that was destroyed ages ago. I understand them, and I don't blame them."

There may also have been mixed messages from Mr. Abbas, who, in a move that vexed Israel and Washington, tried to head off the war with *Hamas* by joining it in a coalition government in March.

"We informed [Abbas's circle] that <u>Hamas</u> was preparing a coup, but Fatah didn't expect it," said an Abbas aide with security duties. "It believed in <u>Hamas</u>'s good intentions."

Fatah's fighters in Gaza came from Mr. Abbas' presidential guard, supposedly the PA's elite. They had vowed to give their lives to defend Mr. Abbas and his secular and conciliatory strategies.

By the afternoon of June 14, there was a strong sense they were bracing for a final standoff. <u>Hamas</u> had taken position after position, including Fatah's security headquarters and its intelligence offices.

Fatah gunmen retreated to the protected presidential compound overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. They were tense and anxious. They traded stories about <u>Hamas</u> executing Fatah fighters and using <u>women</u> as human shields. Dazed fighters with bloody bandages stood nearby.

As he smoked cigarettes and watched the preparations, Abu Hassan said he and his men would repel <u>Hamas</u> or die trying. He boasted there were more than

3,000 fighters ready to defend the compound. If so, they were well hidden.

General Khildoun Hijou emerged from a Jeep in his olive-green uniform and tried to give the young soldiers a pep talk. "Be strong," he said.

A 22-year-old member of the presidential guard who asked to be identified only as Hatem recalled bitterly he and other fighters had been sent to the security headquarters to rescue their Fatah colleagues with promises of support from an armoured personnel carrier.

The help never came. Hatem and others were captured. His <u>Hamas</u> captors ordered him to run, then shot him at him as he fled, hitting him in the neck. He lay bleeding in the street with three other fighters until a man on a donkey cart hauled them to hospital.

Of the 30 men sent on the mission, he said only four survived.

As the last Fatah strongholds fell, gun battles blazed in the streets. Fatah fighters in the presidential stronghold staged hit-and-run missions to keep *Hamas* at bay. At best, there were 1,000 soldiers left inside.

Among them was Abu Mohammed, a 26-year-old presidential guard who complained Fatah leaders waited too long to mount an effective counterattack.

"In the beginning of the clashes, whenever anyone wanted to shoot, they got two or three clips at the most," he said. "When we asked for more, they said they didn't have any. They only brought out the weapons very late because the rest of the soldiers had run away."

As the sun set over the Mediterranean, the forces in the presidential compound had dwindled to about 300 elite holdouts. Fatah leaders told them they were going to escape. Some boarded Israeli gunboats deployed off the Gazan coast or commandeered fishing boats. Others quietly snuck down the beach.

With the top leadership on the run, more soldiers laid down their weapons and fled.

One of the last to leave was Morad, a 23-year-old police officer who said the Fatah forces would have fought to the death if they had been given the training, weapons and support the United States had long promised, but never fully provided.

"There was a political game and we paid the price for it," he said. "We were betrayed by Fatah and the Palestinian Authority."

By 10 p.m., the shooting had died down. Civilians started returning to the streets. Celebratory <u>Hamas</u> gunfire replaced the sounds of battle. As <u>Hamas</u> fighters took control of the presidential office, the last Fatah fighters melted into the darkness.

Now, most are in hiding as they wait to see what <u>Hamas</u> rule in Gaza will mean for Fatah members.

"It's a nightmare," said Mohammed, whose presidential guard brother is in hiding. "They didn't believe until now this was happening. This is a nightmare. They feel that they are cowards."

Even by the turbulent standards of the Middle East, the events of the past two weeks have had as great an impact on the condition of the Palestinians as the 1967 Six Day War, when Israel first occupied the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which had been controlled by Jordan and Egypt respectively.

Now the Palestinian territories once more find themselves under the control of different governments, with <u>Hamas</u> establishing its Islamic fiefdom in Gaza and Fatah loyalists forging a rump Palestinian state in the West Bank.

As the main Palestinian negotiator in the ill-fated 1993 Oslo Accords, Mr. Abbas is likely to be more open to doing a deal with Israel than Yasser Arafat, his predecessor as Palestinian president, who in 1999 rejected a comprehensive package negotiated by president Bill Clinton at Camp David that would have given the Palestinians more than 90% of the land occupied by Israel in 1967.

But Mr. Abbas's reliance on Israel to keep him in power -- as demonstrated by the assistance provided by the Israeli military in evacuating his senior commanders from Gaza -- means that he will have difficulty selling any deal he negotiates with Ehud Olmert, the Israeli Prime Minister, to a skeptical Palestinian public.

<u>Hamas</u>, in political terms, might be on the ropes, but its uncompromising agenda of recreating Palestine's pre-1948 borders -- which would necessitate removing Israel from the map of the Middle East -- attracts strong support among West Bank Palestinians as well as Gazans, particularly in the northern West Bank cities of Nablus and Jenin, where <u>Hamas</u> won a majority in last year's elections.

After <u>Hamas</u> men threw Mr. Abbas's cook to his death from the 18th floor of his apartment block in Gaza during last week's violent takeover, the Palestinian President is in no mood to mend relations with <u>Hamas</u>'s political leadership.

But so long as <u>Hamas</u> remains excluded, it still retains the ability in the West Bank, as well as Gaza, to undermine any progress Mr. Abbas is able to make toward the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

Nor, despite the confinement of its leadership to Gaza, is <u>Hamas</u> short of resources or allies. Iran continues to fund <u>Hamas</u> to the tune of \$200-million a year, and many of the fighters responsible for the organization's military success last week were trained and equipped by the Iranian government, which shares <u>Hamas</u>'s ultimate objective of destroying Israel.

Syria, another country that is hardly well disposed toward Israel, is an important supporter of the <u>Hamas</u> cause and Khaled Mashaal, <u>Hamas</u>'s political figurehead, resides in Damascus, where he works closely with both Syria and Iran on devising **Hamas**'s military and political strategy.

The challenge posed to Israel's long-term security by <u>Hamas</u> is not one the Israeli government can afford to ignore, and it is unlikely that the three Israeli armoured divisions that are camped along the Gaza border will remain idle for too much longer. In order to make peace, it might first be necessary to make war.

Graphic

Black & White Photo: Abid Katib, Getty Images; <u>Hamas</u> militants stand by as ambulance workers wheel away the body of a member of the Preventative Security Force in Gaza City this month.;

Load-Date: June 23, 2007



<u>Israeli shelling kills 18 Palestinians in Gaza; A leader of Hamas calls for</u> retaliation - Correction Appended

The International Herald Tribune November 9, 2006 Thursday

Correction Appended

Copyright 2006 International Herald Tribune All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 1353 words

Byline: Ian Fisher and Steven Erlanger

Dateline: BEIT HANUN, Gaza

Body

lan Fisher reported from Beit Hanun and Steven Erlanger from Jerusalem. Taghreed El-Khodary contributed from Gaza.

*

Israeli tank shells killed 18 Palestinians, including 8 children and 6 <u>women</u>, at a cluster of houses here Wednesday, igniting a fury that threatened a steep escalation in violence, with a <u>Hamas</u> leader calling for retaliation against Israel.

In response to one of the largest single losses of life here in years, several top <u>Hamas</u> leaders called for renewed suicide bombings inside Israel, after largely observing a unilateral truce <u>Hamas</u> declared a year and a half ago. Khaled Meshal, leader of <u>Hamas</u>'s political bureau and exiled in Syria, said <u>Hamas</u> would answer the deaths with "deeds, not words."

In a statement, Meshal said: "All Palestinian groups are urged to activate resistance despite the difficult situation on the ground. Our confidence in our military wing to respond is great."

<u>Hamas</u>'s military wing also said in a statement that the United States should be taught "hard lessons" for supporting Israel. The threat, if vague, marked an unusual escalation for <u>Hamas</u>, an Islamic-based militant group that has pointedly portrayed its fight as against Israel alone. It was immediately disavowed by Ghazi Hamad, the spokesman for the <u>Hamas</u>-led government in Gaza.

Witnesses said that the shelling in this northern Gaza town began about 5:30 a.m., at a cluster of houses belonging to three brothers, one of whom died about a year ago, and dozens of extended family members. Ali Athamnah, 29, a doctor, said he heard the crash of a shell, then glass from the window spattered on his face. He looked down from his second-story balcony and saw one relative, Ahmad, wounded and scores of other family members running outside.

Then the other shells hit, and he did not see the crowd standing anymore.

"They just left they withdrew," he said, walking over puddles filled with blood, spattered human remains and sandals, many belonging to children. "They were gone." Others were reported killed while sleeping in other of the half-dozen houses struck.

"Nothing happened," mumbled Isra Athamnah, 5 years old, pocked with shrapnel wounds and in shock. The news that her widowed mother, Sanaa, 35, was dead, and she was now an orphan, did not sink in.

Others described how a tank shell hit a home, sending scores of sleeping members of the extended Athamnah family outside before dawn. The next volleys struck them crowded in a narrow alley between the houses, dismembering several among the dead, who ranged from less than a year to 70 years old, witnesses said.

World leaders, including at the United Nations, the European Union, Russia, Britain and Italy, condemned the incident. "It is hard to see what this action was meant to achieve and how it can be justified," said Margaret Beckett, the British foreign secretary.

Gordon Johndroe, a spokesman for the White House National Security Council, called for restraint by all parties, adding: "We deeply regret the injuries and loss of life in Gaza today. We have seen the Israeli government's apology and hope their investigation will be completed quickly."

The Israelis had pulled out of Beit Hanun on Tuesday morning after a six-day operation in which they effectively occupied the town and fought battles with militants, many of them from <u>Hamas</u>. During that operation, at least 52 Palestinians were killed, some 22 of them believed to be civilians, and one Israeli soldier in an operation Israel said was aimed at stopping Palestinian rocket fire into nearby Israeli towns like Sderot and Ashkelon. Nonetheless, on Wednesday, according to the army, 13 rockets were fired into Israel.

Israeli leaders, already on the defensive over their performance in the war against Hezbollah and the more than 300 Palestinians killed in operations in Gaza since the summer, issued immediate statements of regret. Defense Minister Amir Peretz ordered a halt to artillery attacks in the densely populated Gaza strip carried out to prevent Palestinian fighters from launching rockets into nearby Israeli cities and an immediate investigation into the incident.

The military said it had carried out "preventative" artillery shelling near the area in response to about 10 Qassam rockets fired in the previous 24 hours. The Israeli notion is that shelling open areas will deter Palestinian militants from firing rockets from there, even though the deterrence is not clear and the shells are not uniformly accurate. In this case, the military said in statement, initial reports showed rounds landing "at a location distant from the one reportedly hit."

Both Israeli political and military leaders laid the blame for any deaths on the Palestinian fighters who launch the rockets from civilian areas, then hide among civilians.

This is not the first time that such Israeli shelling has gone awry, hitting houses in Beit Hanun and nearby Beit Lahiya, and killing or wounding those inside or nearby and emboldening extremists on all sides. And it is not the first time, in what has come to seem like a tragic and fated script, that errant rounds have led to a halt or delay in efforts to find new paths of dialogue between Israel and the Palestinians, and among the Palestinian factions themselves.

The Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, and the prime minister, Ismail Haniya of <u>Hamas</u>, both of whom gave blood for the victims and visited them in hospitals, have been engaged in two days of supposedly climatic negotiations to agree on a new Palestinian government to replace the one run by <u>Hamas</u> and isolated internationally.

The intention is to have a government of "national unity" made up of experts and technocrats approved by the varying parties, in the hope that Western aid and Palestinian tax money will again begin to flow to a Palestinian Authority that has been unable to pay full salaries for nine months.

The idea was also to have the new government release an Israeli soldier captured on June 25, which would prompt an Israeli release of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners and a long-delayed meeting between Abbas and the Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert.

But this latest shelling, on top of the Beit Hanun operation that both Abbas and Haniya had already called a "massacre," caused Haniya to request a pause in their negotiations for the next three days of official mourning called on Wednesday in the Palestinian Authority. The two men met briefly Wednesday night, but without apparent result.

If <u>Hamas</u> follows through on calls to resume suicide bombings inside Israel, the whole plan may once again collapse, leaving Israel and the Palestinians in a condition of further violent confrontation with no clear political path.

In June, there was a similar cycle of violence that followed another apparently errant Israeli shelling that killed Palestinian civilians, including seven members of a single family, the Ghaliyas, enjoying a day at the beach. The Israelis said they were shelling areas where rocket teams had fired into Israel, and they denied having fired the particular shell that killed the family.

But no Palestinian believed the Israeli denial, and there was never any conclusive alternative explanation. The Ghaliyas became famous martyrs, and the military wing of <u>Hamas</u> announced that it was ending the cease-fire against Israel. The <u>Hamas</u> government belatedly went along, and <u>Hamas</u> started firing rockets again toward Israel, instead of simply supplying them to others.

More importantly, the <u>Hamas</u> military wing participated in the capture of the Israeli soldier, Corporal Gilad Shalit, later in June, precipitating the current political crisis that surrounded and has outlasted Israel's summer war against Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Calling Wednesday a "black day," Abbas announced the three days of mourning and condemned the Israeli attacks as disproportionately harsh compared to the damage caused by the Palestinian rockets, which he said he also opposed.

On Wednesday night, Israeli rockets killed Ahmed Awad and another <u>Hamas</u> member in the city of Gaza. Awad was said to be a rocket maker and the son-in-law of the <u>Hamas</u> foreign minister, Mahmoud Zahar.

Correction

An article Nov. 9 about an Israeli military attack in the Gaza town of Beit Hanoun that killed 18 Palestinians misstated the type of munitions used. They were artillery shells, not tank shells.

Correction-Date: November 17, 2006

Load-Date: November 17, 2006



<u>Gaza: Order without law: Hamas flexes its muscles to assert political</u> <u>authority: Palestinians welcome safer streets but Fatah rivalry is a volatile</u> <u>undercurrent</u>

The Guardian - Final Edition
August 16, 2007 Thursday

Copyright 2007 Guardian Newspapers Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 25

Length: 1190 words

Byline: Rory McCarthy, Gaza City

Body

Six guards from the <u>Hamas</u> Executive Force stood before the shopping crowds in Palestine Square. The men, who are what passes for a police force in Gaza, were dressed in black and armed with Kalashnikovs and wooden batons.

In the pick-up truck behind them was an unhappy man arrested for carrying a knife. Ahead was their next target: dozens of cigarette sellers hawking under the flimsy shade of a few trees.

Although it was not the most pressing security concern in the overcrowded Gaza Strip, it was still a mission that Munir Mohasin, 21, the thin, young patrol commander, took seriously. He said: "We want this place cleaned up. It's not legal for them to stop and sell here. We've had complaints from the shopkeepers and we had complaints that some of them are being rude to <u>women</u>. Some are selling drugs."

His patrol then descended on the hawkers, shouting and shoving until they had confiscated several large boxes of cigarettes and loaded them into their pick-up. Two sellers were arrested; others escaped with a public telling-off.

The sellers, all struggling to make a living, argued back. "There's nowhere else for us to go," Khader Abu Amjad shouted at Mr Mohasin. "Are we just going to play cat and mouse all day?"

After several minutes in the midday heat and more shouting, the Executive Force moved on and the hawkers went back to selling their cigarettes. Later, back at his local station, Mr Mohasin said: "We're not just stopping people selling in the street; we're working for the security of our country."

This has been the message from the Islamist <u>Hamas</u> movement since it seized full control of security in the Gaza Strip two months ago, the culmination of a six-month near-civil war with its rival, Fatah. Palestinians welcomed the return to safety on the streets and the chance to leave their homes without fear, a point <u>Hamas</u> is keen to highlight.

The <u>Hamas</u>-led government was promptly sacked and has now been further isolated by Israel, the west, and Fatah leaders in the occupied West Bank. Now there is growing concern about steps taken by <u>Hamas</u> in recent weeks that appear to go well beyond maintaining order and suggest that it is trying to extend its authority.

Two weeks ago <u>Hamas</u> took off air The Red Line, a weekly political chatshow that has been hosted for the past decade by Hassan al-Kashef. Although a secular leftist and a former head of the Palestinian Authority's information

Gaza: Order without law: Hamas flexes its muscles to assert political authority: Palestinians welcome safer streets but Fatah rivalry is a volatile undercurrent

ministry, Mr Kashef, 63, had hosted several <u>Hamas</u> leaders on his show in the past year, including Ismail Haniyeh, the former prime minister, and, by satellite link from Damascus, Khaled Meshal, <u>Hamas</u>'s leader in exile.

Recently he broadcast a show about Gaza's economic woes and began by saying what he thought of <u>Hamas</u>. "I was clear that I am with one law, one authority, one legitimate government and that I am against the coup," he said. A few days later, an unsigned letter was received from the <u>Hamas</u> information ministry ordering the TV station not to broadcast The Red Line again. It has been off air ever since. "<u>Hamas</u> made a military coup and now it is making a political coup. But they don't have political experience," said Mr Kashef. "There isn't just one voice in Gaza."

Last month <u>Hamas</u> organised a tour for foreign journalists, a rare foray into public relations to show off what it called "the new face of Gaza: safe, clean and green". But the same day the Executive Force detained several media distributors bringing in Palestinian newspapers from the West Bank. Sami al-Qishawi, director of Gaza's Al-Ayyam newspaper, said the guards were angry over a report of a press conference in Gaza City by a <u>Hamas</u> opponent.

"It is a dangerous sign of control, of trying to have just one voice, of restricting our freedom," said Mr Qishawi. He said although his paper was close to Fatah it was independently financed and had not been alone in reporting the press conference. "We can't just report statistics and the number of people killed," he said. "To make any progress in solving our problems we need to talk about important issues, about freedoms."

A week earlier, a group of armed men, some in masks, others in police uniforms, broke into the office of a Fatah MP in Rafah, southern Gaza. Ashraf Jumaa, one of only a handful of Fatah politicians who has stayed in Gaza, was beaten on the head with a rifle butt and an aide was shot in the leg in what appeared to be a warning. Mr Jumaa insists some of the attackers were members of the *Hamas* militia, the Izzedin al-Qassam Brigades.

"We're in a very bad situation now," said Mr Jumaa. "*Hamas* says it wants to talk to Fatah but they have to prepare the ground for negotiations, not just say they want it."

Other incidents underscore the continued volatility of factional rivalry here. Several Fatah security officials have been killed this month. Last week, the director of Gaza's main Shifa hospital was sacked and another senior doctor was sacked and arrested, apparently because they refused to take orders from <u>Hamas</u> ministries. On Saturday, 15 Fatah figures were arrested by <u>Hamas</u> men after clashes at a wedding where the guests sang Fatah songs. On Monday <u>Hamas</u> guards fired into the air to disperse a Fatah rally in the city and imposed restrictions on public rallies. Gazans are debating whether these incidents have been ordered by <u>Hamas</u> leaders or local commanders acting independently.

<u>Hamas</u> is trying to exert its authority in a complex, politicised climate. The appointed government in the West Bank has told police and lawyers in Gaza to stay away from work or risk losing their salaries. As a result, courts are not working and <u>Hamas</u> is policing with its 6,000-strong Executive Force, a year-old paramilitary group which the West Bank government declared illegal. One prominent Palestinian businessman described it as "order without law".

There is also an economic crisis and a collapse of private businesses unable to import or export goods since Israel closed Gaza's crossings to all but humanitarian aid after <u>Hamas</u> took over. In the West Bank, <u>Hamas</u> politicians have been harassed and arrested.

<u>Hamas</u> says it is just trying to impose order in an increasingly chaotic Gaza. "People feel for the first time there is a full degree of freedom," said Ahmed Yusuf, an adviser to the former premier Mr Haniyeh. "There is a new look here in Gaza . . . There is really a state of law."

He downplayed recent incidents. There had been political problems with Palestine TV, which broadcast Mr Kashef's chatshow and is close to Fatah, he said. On the arrest of the newspaper distributors, he blamed an overzealous local commander. He insisted *Hamas* was not involved in the attack on Mr Jumaa, the Fatah MP.

Gaza: Order without law: Hamas flexes its muscles to assert political authority: Palestinians welcome safer streets but Fatah rivalry is a volatile undercurrent

"We are not building an Islamic state in Gaza or anything that would be a separate entity," Mr Yusuf said. Apart from security, the public goal of *Hamas* now is to return to an agreement with Fatah and secure the elusive reform of the many Palestinian security forces. Although there is little sign of any rapprochement, he said secret talks were under way. "We want to bring them (Fatah) to the table to see how we salvage the problem."

guardian.co.uk/palestinians >=

Load-Date: August 16, 2007



Hamas seeks prisoner exchange with Israel

The Irish Times
April 9, 2007 Monday

Copyright 2007 The Irish Times All Rights Reserved

Section: WORLD; Other World Stories; Pg. 9

Length: 506 words

Byline: Conal Urquhart in Jerusalem

Body

Middle East: <u>Hamas</u> has sent Israel a list of Palestinian prisoners it wants released in return for the freedom of the Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, who has been held since last June, officials said yesterday.

The Israeli government has insisted that Cpl Shalit's release is a prerequisite to progress in Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

The Palestinian list is believed to include Marwan Barghouti, a Fatah leader who was jailed by Israel for his role in the murder of four Israelis and a Greek monk, and around 500 other prisoners.

Ghazi Hamad, a spokesman for the <u>Hamas</u>-led Palestinian government, said: "The big battle will now take place in Israel, because they have problems with releasing prisoners who have blood on their hands or other prisoners for political reasons.

"The Israelis will argue over each name and at what stage they will be released, so this may still take a long time."

Miri Eisen, a spokeswoman for the Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert, refused to confirm the receipt of the list, adding that the release of Cpl Shalit was a priority for the government but was too sensitive to be discussed publicly.

However, Yitzhak Herzog, an Israeli cabinet minister, said there appeared to have been some progress - but "on the other hand I would be very wary . . . because there is still a long way to go".

Cpl Shalit was abducted during a raid on an Israeli border post just outside the Gaza Strip 10 months ago. Israel initially launched a military operation but eventually turned to diplomacy through Egyptian intermediaries.

Those holding Cpl Shalit, a consortium of groups headed by <u>Hamas</u>, have insisted that Israel release more than 1,000 prisoners from its jails, including <u>women</u>, children and long-serving prisoners.

The shape of the proposed deal has been established by Egyptian diplomats, but there has been no apparent progress for several months. The first stage of the exchange would be the release of a minor group of Palestinian prisoners which would be followed by the transfer of Cpl Shalit to Egyptian custody. Then a larger group of prisoners would be released in return for the transfer of Cpl Shalit to Israel; a further group of important prisoners would be released after a few months.

Hamas seeks prisoner exchange with Israel

According to the Israeli media, the Palestinian list is being reviewed by the Shin Bet security agency which will give its recommendations to Mr Olmert. There is a widespread opposition in Israel to releasing Palestinian prisoners who have participated in the killing of Israelis, although some politicians have warned that it may be unavoidable.

Meanwhile, John Sentamu, the Church of England Archbishop of York, yesterday pleaded for the release of Alan Johnston, the BBC Gaza's correspondent kidnapped in Gaza four weeks ago.

"In God's name, please release Alan Johnston. He is not your enemy," the archbishop said. "He is a symbol of ensuring that freedom of the press is not violated - an issue Palestinian journalists are too familiar with after facing routine attacks, harassment and arrests."

- (Guardian service)

Load-Date: April 9, 2007



Gun battles rage across Gaza; Truce breaks between Hamas and Fatah leaving at least six people dead in its wake

The Record (Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario)

February 2, 2007 Friday

Final Edition

Copyright 2007 Metroland Media Group Ltd All Rights Reserved

Section: FRONT; Pg. A6

Length: 523 words

Byline: Associated Press

Dateline: GAZA CITY, GAZA STRIP

Body

Gunfights erupted across the Gaza Strip yesterday, killing at least six people after <u>Hamas</u> militants hijacked a convoy delivering supplies to the rival Fatah-allied security forces, effectively destroying a short-lived truce.

An Egyptian mediator blamed <u>Hamas</u> and called for calm three days after he persuaded the warring factions to end weeks of clashes that killed dozens. However, the truce did not resolve underlying disputes that set off the conflict between the Islamic <u>Hamas</u>, which is running the Palestinian government, and President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah movement.

Both sides appeared willing to avoid a full-scale civil war, but they were just as adamant over keeping their own security forces on the streets -- a recipe for more clashes. The renewed violence also hurt chances for talks to form a joint government that might end punishing Western foreign aid sanctions.

Late yesterday, hundreds of armed Fatah members stormed a <u>Hamas</u> stronghold, the Islamic University in Gaza City. At least two people were wounded and flames were seen leaping from one of the university's buildings.

The trouble started yesterday morning with some gunfire, but an incident in the Bureij refugee camp in central Gaza set off clashes all over the impoverished seaside territory.

<u>Hamas</u> fighters ambushed a convoy guarded by the Fatah presidential guard and hijacked two trucks filled with tents, medical kits and toilets, security officials said. The United States and some Arab countries had pledged to give equipment and training to the security forces loyal to Abbas.

The attack sparked the new fighting, which killed six people in Bureij, including a security officer, hospital officials said.

Soon after, separate gun battles broke out in Gaza City and in northern Gaza outside a military intelligence post. Security officials said <u>Hamas</u> militants fired a rocket at the post and then sacked it, wounding five members of the security forces. At least two <u>Hamas</u> supporters were wounded, <u>Hamas</u> said. In all, hospital officials said 59 people were wounded in the clashes.

Gun battles rage across Gaza; Truce breaks between Hamas and Fatah leaving at least six people dead in its wake

Hamas militants fired mortar shells near Abbas' residence in Gaza City. Abbas was not in Gaza at the time.

"Fatah views with gravity the series of violations to the agreement, which has gone beyond the acceptable limits," Fatah said in a statement, calling on its followers to "act in self-defence."

Information Minister Youssef Rizka of <u>Hamas</u> called on Gazans to form a "human shield" between the factions to stop the fighting. <u>Hamas</u> spokesperson Abu Obeida fiercely denounced Fatah and warned Abbas to get his forces off the streets "before it is too late."

The mufti of Gaza called for a truce, saying Muslims shedding Muslim blood is "taboo." Another appeal came from the owner of a wedding hall, who said he had 450 **women** and children trapped by the gunfire.

ISRAELI FORCES KILL FOUR

Also yesterday, Israeli forces shot and killed four Palestinians in incidents in the West Bank including a militant trying to flee arrest, and two armed Palestinians.

Israeli troops also shot and killed a Palestinian teenager along Israel's West Bank separation barrier near the city of Ramallah.

Load-Date: February 2, 2007



<u>Fatah vows to wipe rival Hamas from the West Bank Hunt for militants raises</u> fears of a fresh wave of Palestinian suicide attacks against Israel

The Sunday Telegraph (LONDON)

June 24, 2007 Sunday

Copyright 2007 Telegraph Group Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; International; Pg. 26

Length: 1273 words

Byline: CHARLES LEVINSON in Nablus

Body

JUST TWO weeks ago, they were on the same uneasy side of the Palestinian fence: a butcher's son, who had spent nine years in an Israeli jail, and a mother of five children who, as deputy mayor of Nablus, supported the unity government formed in April.

But now Fayiz al Tirawi, the butcher and a militant Fatah leader, is out for revenge, and Khalood al Masry, a *Hamas* leader, is sleeping each night in a different safe house, fearful that she will be his victim.

Last week, Mr Tirawi's henchmen delivered a taste of what may be coming Mrs Masry's way. They set fire to the Jathoor Centre she founded in the middle of Nablus. For Mrs Masry it was merely a place for young <u>women</u> to acquire job skills and learn English. For Mr Tirawi it spewed poison, propagated fundamentalist Islam and taught hatred of Fatah. Now it is a charred shell and Mrs Masry has been warned not to return to work at Nablus's city hall.

It is just 12 days since <u>Hamas</u> fighters staged their putsch in Gaza, routing Fatah security forces and forcing the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, to declare an emergency, sack the <u>Hamas</u>-led unity government and appoint a new one without the Islamists.

Since then, the Fatah party has embarked on settling the score with its Islamist rivals in the West Bank, its commanders vowing to eradicate <u>Hamas</u>. Many fear that the showdown will further radicalise the Palestinian territories, and risks triggering a renewed wave of suicide bomb attacks against Israel. <u>Hamas</u> launched dozens of attacks against the Jewish state, killing hundreds of Israeli civilians, but has largely abided by a ceasefire for the past two years.

"It is extremely dangerous to corner <u>Hamas</u> like this," Mrs Masry, 38, warned angrily amid the ruins of the Jathoor Centre. "The Israeli occupation is pressing <u>Hamas</u> from one side and Fatah is pressuring it from the other."

<u>Hamas</u> would not sit on the sidelines, she added, languishing in Israeli prisons or confined to Gaza while Mr Abbas pressed ahead with threatened early elections, or resumed peace negotiations with Israel. "The point is coming when <u>Hamas</u> will say, 'Enough'," she said.

Asked if that would mean a resumption of attacks against Israel, she said simply: "The situation will not, cannot, continue this way."

Fatah vows to wipe rival Hamas from the West Bank Hunt for militants raises fears of a fresh wave of Palestinian suicide attacks against Israel

Although Fatah is the dominant force across much of the West Bank, <u>Hamas</u> still has strongholds - not least Nablus - where its candidates won enough votes 18 months ago to propel it to power.

In the past week, <u>Hamas</u>-controlled city councils, including that in Nablus, have been disbanded by decree of militant Fatah members. Hundreds of <u>Hamas</u> activists have been rounded up - some arrested by official Palestinian security services, others bundled off by shadowy militias. Masked gunmen kidnapped Ahmed al-Khaldi, the justice minister in the **Hamas**-dominated government, as he left a mosque after prayers in Nablus on Friday.

Also on Friday, Mr Abbas ordered a review of all private organisations and businesses in the Palestinian territories ahead of an even broader crackdown on <u>Hamas</u>-affiliated groups. Dozens of <u>Hamas</u>-run charities, businesses and political offices have been set on fire at night.

Meanwhile Gaza has become more isolated than ever, with Israel - which controls most of its border - unwilling to let its people flee the new, Islamist regime developing within.

But the West has seized on the chance to reward Mr Abbas for his tough line against <u>Hamas</u> in the West Bank. On Tuesday Ehud Olmert, the Israeli prime minister, met President George W Bush in Washington, and both men declared their backing for Mr Abbas as "the president of all the Palestinian people".

America had already announced that it was lifting its ban on millions of dollars in aid to the Palestinian Authority, in place since <u>Hamas</u> came to power, in an attempt to bolster Mr Abbas. "He is a reasonable voice among the extremists in your neighbourhood," Mr Bush told Mr Olmert.

The prime minister said of Mr Abbas, "I will make every possible effort to co-operate with him," making plain that he would judge his new government by the extent of its crackdown on *Hamas*.

Just how far Mr Olmert is willing to go may become clearer today, at the four-way summit being held at Sharm al Sheikh in Egypt, with Mr Abbas, King Abdullah of Jordan and the Egyptian president, Hosni Mubarak.

In an uncharacteristically strident speech last week, Mr Abbas condemned <u>Hamas</u> as "murderous terrorists" and "coup plotters" and urged a resumption of peace talks with Israel. He also vowed there would be no contacts with <u>Hamas</u>, a pledge which his newly appointed ministers say may be hard to uphold. "Fatah and <u>Hamas</u> must come together for the benefit of our people, or else we will be unable to run the hospitals, the schools or even issue drivers' licenses in the Gaza Strip," said the transport minister, Mashhour Abu Daka, an engineer with little experience of politics.

Isolating Gaza was likely to spawn further extremism in the Palestinian territories, he warned. "If we keep doing this, it will radicalise the West Bank even further. We are going to have to talk to <u>Hamas</u>, or else I fear there will be serious consequences."

Meanwhile, the mandate of the emergency government runs for just 30 days, and can be renewed only twice, for 90 days altogether. Then Mr Abbas would have to ask the Palestinian parliament - still dominated by <u>Hamas</u> - to approve his government.

Since most MPs would be certain to reject it, Mr Abbas may instead call early elections - spurred, perhaps, by a poll last week which showed that 73 per cent of Palestinians in the West Bank trusted him more than Ismail Haniyeh, the <u>Hamas</u> leader. Or, some suggest, he could be tempted into uncharted - and unconstitutional - territory and declare himself in charge of everything, as a kind of benevolent dictator in the West Bank.

Last week in Gaza, <u>Hamas</u> established its own parallel government, even as the new Palestinian Authority government in Ramallah vowed to continue to operate there. The two competing bodies will soon be attempting, simultaneously, to serve Gazans' daily needs. "The cabinet made it clear that our priority is to provide services to Gaza whatever the cost," Mr Abu Daka said. "You can imagine what a difficult situation I'm in. This is totally surreal."

Fatah vows to wipe rival Hamas from the West Bank Hunt for militants raises fears of a fresh wave of Palestinian suicide attacks against Israel

His ministry employees in Gaza have been ordered to remain loyal to the Abbas

government in Ramallah, but have also been told that they may follow the <u>Hamas</u> minister's orders if they feel their safety is in danger.

Mr Abu Daka said: "It doesn't look very encouraging, but when the president calls you and asks you for national service, what do you do?"

In the West Bank, Fatah's armed cadres from the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades have rallied to what they interpreted as Mr Abbas's battle cry - united for the first time in years after the shock of Fatah's collapse in Gaza, according to Mr Tirawi, the Al Aqsa militant leader in Nablus. His cousin is Tawfiq al Tirawi, the Palestinian intelligence chief, and his brother is an influential Fatah lawmaker, currently in an Israeli prison.

"We are working to eradicate <u>Hamas</u> from the West Bank," he added, an M16 rifle beside him in his brother's political headquarters. "We must totally wipe out these <u>Hamas</u> militants."

He has no regrets about the burning down of the Jathour Centre as part of that campaign. "It exists to deliver a poisonous message," he said.

Afterwards, his henchmen stormed into city hall, looking for Mrs Masry. Her colleagues told her to hide, but she confronted the gunmen instead. "Today you will leave safely," the militants told her. "Tomorrow you won't. This is your last day of work here."

Load-Date: June 24, 2007



Israel criticized for Hamas roundup; Palestinian cabinet minister, legislators, mayors among officials detained in move to curb rockets

Ottawa Citizen

May 25, 2007 Friday

Final Edition

Copyright 2007 Ottawa Citizen, a division of CanWest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A6

Length: 761 words

Byline: Adel Zaanoun, Agence France-Presse, with files from The Associated Press

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza - Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas called for a halt to rocket fire and a truce with Israel yesterday, after the Israeli army seized 33 senior <u>Hamas</u> figures -- including a cabinet minister -- in the latest crackdown against the Islamist group.

"We don't need these futile firings of rockets and they have to cease so that we can reach a reciprocal truce with the Israelis in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank," Mr. Abbas told reporters at a news conference with visiting EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana.

Asked if he believed Israel's arrests of the <u>Hamas</u> members were justified, Mr. Solana replied "No," and appealed for an end to Israeli air raids in Gaza, rocket fire and Palestinian infighting.

"The temperature has been going up too much and it's time to get the temperature down," he said shortly before meeting Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert in Jerusalem. "No violence is going to resolve any problems."

Washington also expressed concern about the detentions.

Yesterday, Israeli aircraft carried out four air raids on buildings of <u>Hamas</u>'s paramilitary force, wounding seven Palestinian passersby in Gaza City, while defiant Gaza militants fired eight rockets and a mortar shell into southern Israel during the day, causing some damage, the army said.

Just before midnight, an Israeli missile targeted a shack in the Shati refugee camp where Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh of <u>Hamas</u> lives, but no one was hurt, Palestinian security said. Mr. Haniyeh went to inspect the site, but guards pulled him away because aircraft were still in the sky, officials said. Israel's military said the structure was being used by **Hamas** and Haniyeh was not the target.

The 33 <u>Hamas</u> officials rounded up included Palestinian Education Minister Nasser Shaer, three lawmakers and at least seven mayors. They were seized in overnight raids centred on the northern West Bank city of Nablus.

Israeli Defence Minister Amir Peretz said the arrests in the West Bank were part of Israel's attempt to neutralize *Hamas* and lessen the bloodshed.

Israel criticized for Hamas roundup; Palestinian cabinet minister, legislators, mayors among officials detained in move to curb rockets

"Arrests are better than shooting," he told Israeli Army Radio. "The arrest of these <u>Hamas</u> leaders sends a message to the military organizations that we demand that this (rocket) firing stop."

But <u>Hamas</u> remained defiant. "We will chase the occupation soldiers and the settlers in every inch of our occupied land, and we announce that we give free hand to our cells to strike against the enemy in every place in Palestine" -- a term the Islamic group uses to include Israel.

The U.S. had voiced its concern to Israel over the arrests, State Department spokesman Tom Casey said, adding that the detentions "raise particular concerns."

"Certainly <u>Hamas</u> is a foreign terrorist organization engaged in terrorist attacks against Israel. But we have previously noted when these kinds of issues came up before, that the detention of elected members of the Palestinian government and legislature does raise particular concerns," he said.

France condemned the arrests, saying "they could jeopardize the future of the national unity government and the possibility of renewed negotiations between the parties."

The office of the Palestinian prime minister, Mr. Haniyeh, demanded the immediate release of the detainees and urged the United Nations and European Union to impose sanctions on Israel.

Palestinian Information Minister Mustafa Barghouti appealed for international intervention after what he said were "kidnappings ... a massacre of Palestinian democracy and an aggression against the Palestinian Authority and its institutions."

The Israeli air raids on <u>Hamas</u> sites have so far killed 13 civilians and 25 militants, but have failed to halt rocket fire, with nearly 130 crashing inside Israel over the past week and a half, killing one, wounding 16 and sending hundreds fleeing the town of Sderot that has borne the brunt of the barrage.

Last year, the army detained more than 60 <u>Hamas</u> officials, including four ministers, in a crackdown on the Islamists after their armed wing claimed joint responsibility for a deadly cross-border raid that seized an Israeli soldier near Gaza.

Thirty-nine lawmakers and two former ministers remain in custody from last year's crackdown. Mr. Shaer was detained last August during the sweep, but ordered released by a military judge a month later for lack of evidence.

Also among those rounded up yesterday were former cabinet minister Abdel Rahman Zeidan, legislators Hamed Bitawi and Daoud Abu Ser, the mayors of the towns of Nablus, Qalqiliya and Beita, and the head of the main Islamic charity in Nablus.

Graphic

Photo: Mohamed Azakir, Reuters; Palestinian <u>women</u> arrive at a Lebanese army checkpoint with their children after fleeing from the Nahr el-Bared refugee camp, where the Lebanese army has militants surrounded. Most of those who fled the camp packed into the nearby Beddawi refugee camp. The camp's six schools were overflowing with refugees, who said up to 50 people were sleeping in each classroom.;

Load-Date: May 25, 2007



<u>Defying Hamas, Abbas swears in new cabinet; Move opens up new paths for</u> peace, Israeli leader says

Ottawa Citizen

June 18, 2007 Monday

Final Edition

Copyright 2007 Ottawa Citizen, a division of CanWest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A1

Length: 1046 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher and Scott Wilson, CanWest News Service and The Washington Post; with files from Citizen

News Services

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

JERUSALEM - Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah responded yesterday to <u>Hamas</u>'s sudden victory on the battlefield in Gaza last week by swearing in a new cabinet that excluded anyone from <u>Hamas</u>'s parliamentary majority.

Saying <u>Hamas</u> had carried out a "military coup against the Palestinian legitimacy and its government," the president also issued a decree ordering <u>Hamas</u>'s armed wings to disarm, a move <u>Hamas</u> officials immediately condemned as illegal.

Hours later, Israel was attacked from Lebanon by Katyusha rockets, the first time since its bloody war with Hezbollah ended 10 months ago, Israeli military officials say they are investigating whether Hezbollah or Palestinians living in refugee camps in Leb-anon fired the 107mm rockets, which some officials said appeared to be cruder than the thousands Hezbollah fired into Israel during the war.

It was unclear whether the attack was connected to Mr. Abbas's decision earlier in the day, and Hezbollah denied carrying out the strike.

Two of the three rockets landed in an area where several thousand rockets launched by Hezbollah fell on the Jewish state during last summer's 34-day war, which resulted in the deaths of more than 1,000 people. A third rocket went down in Lebanon, while a fourth, which had a timer device, was found by Lebanese troops before it could be launched.

Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora, whose government already is reeling from several grave internal crises, accused those who carried out the rocket attacks of trying to destabilize his country.

A spokesman for the UN peacekeeping force in southern Lebanon condemned the attacks "as a serious violation" of last summer's ceasefire agreement.

Defying Hamas, Abbas swears in new cabinet; Move opens up new paths for peace, Israeli leader says

Israel would not respond for the time being to this unexpected provocation in the north -- which caused no casualties, but spread panic in the town of Kiryat Shmona -- according to officials travelling with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.

Mr. Olmert, who is in New York for discussions at the UN before he is to meet with U.S. President George W. Bush in Washington, last night signalled that a new Palestinian government, free of <u>Hamas</u>, could prove an opportunity to renew peace negotiations on the creation of a Palestinian state that have been stalled for nearly seven years.

"We will be ready to discuss with Abbas the political horizon for what will eventually become the basis for a permanent agreement between us and the Palestinians," Mr. Olmert said in a speech before the conference of presidents of major American Jewish organizations.

He said he was ready to renew regular contacts with the Palestinian president in order "to resolve the outstanding daily issues and move forward to finding ways to solve grander issues."

After speaking with Mr. Olmert at the United Nations yesterday, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon called "on all parties to exercise restraint" and said that the recent developments in Gaza created "broad humanitarian concerns."

By swearing in the 12-member emergency cabinet yesterday, Mr. Abbas has paved the way for an end to a western financial embargo imposed after <u>Hamas</u> -- which is listed as a terrorist group by Canada and other western nations and is dedicated to the destruction of Israel -- won parliamentary elections last year.

The restored funds will likely be used in part to pay for continued Israeli supply of fuel, water and electrical power to Gaza, a crowded strip of coastal territory where 1.5 million people live, many of them refugees who are dependent on aid.

Mr. Abbas and his new prime minister, Salam Fayyad, pledged yesterday not to abandon Gaza's residents. They said their government had a legal obligation to pay salaries to about 70,000 public employees in Gaza, including the police, many of whom were the targets of the *Hamas* takeover.

"You are in our hearts and at the top of our priorities and programs," Mr. Fayyad said of Palestinians in Gaza during a speech after he took the oath of office.

Israel closed border crossings to Gaza when factional fighting there intensified last week, with about 100 people killed, and the <u>Hamas</u> takeover has heightened concerns among residents that Israel will further isolate their territory. Many Gazans have begun stocking up on food, fuel and other staples.

An Israeli fuel company, Dor-Alon, which supplies all of Gaza's gas, said yesterday that it is cutting supplies because of the Palestinian Authority's inability to pay for the fuel.

However, Shlomo Dror, a spokesman for the Israeli Defence Ministry department that deals with the Palestinians, said that fuel to Gaza would continue and that the cost would be covered with the help of the expected foreign aid.

Saeb Erekat, an aide to Mr. Abbas and the chief Palestinian negotiator, said that he had spoken with the Israelis about ensuring a continued flow of vital supplies to Gaza. Israeli officials have said supplies would not be cut off, in order to avoid a humanitarian crisis. But Israel refuses to have contact with <u>Hamas</u>, and there are no mechanisms in place yet for the transfer of such aid.

Yesterday, about 300 Palestinians, many of them Fatah members and their families fleeing <u>Hamas</u> rule, gathered at the main Erez Crossing into Israel, seeking to reach the West Bank, but were refused entry. Only a handful were allowed in, and the Israelis fired warning shots to push the crowd back.

Israeli Channel 2 television showed <u>women</u> and children stranded in a concrete tunnel leading to the heavily secured crossing.

Defying Hamas, Abbas swears in new cabinet; Move opens up new paths for peace, Israeli leader says

"We're afraid <u>Hamas</u> will slaughter us," one woman said. There have been few killings since <u>Hamas</u> completed its takeover of Gaza, but many people from Fatah fear retribution.

The international community yesterday signalled its support for Mr. Abbas and its intention to isolate *Hamas*.

EU foreign ministers meeting in Luxembourg today are expected to offer political and financial support to the new Palestinian government, although it was unclear if the would authorize a resumption of direct aid to the Palestinian authority.

Foreign Affairs Minister Peter MacKay, said in a statement that the federal government will work with the new Palestinian cabinet.

Mr. MacKay added that Canada wants to support what he called "voices of moderation" within Palestinian society to help bring peace and stability to the region.

Load-Date: June 18, 2007



Hamas Fires Mortars After Palestinian Is Killed

The New York Times
June 4, 2007 Monday
Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2007 The New York Times Company

Section: Section A; Column 4; Foreign Desk; Pg. 6

Length: 951 words

Byline: By ISABEL KERSHNER; Taghreed El-Khodary contributed reporting from Gaza City.

Dateline: JERUSALEM, June 3

Body

The military wing of <u>Hamas</u> claimed responsibility for firing mortar shells at the Erez crossing on the Gaza-Israel border on Sunday, slightly wounding four Israeli soldiers, hours after Israeli forces shot and killed a Palestinian man in the West Bank city of Jenin.

An Israeli Army spokesman said that Palestinian gunmen had opened fire on the soldiers in Jenin, and that the man who was hit earlier was armed. Palestinian reports identified him as Muhammad Farahati, 22, a militant affiliated with both the pro-Fatah Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades militia and the group Islamic Jihad.

In a tactical shift, <u>Hamas</u> stopped firing Qassam rockets from Gaza into Israel a few days ago, according to a person close to the organization's military wing who asked not to be identified. He said <u>Hamas</u> was aiming its fire at the Gaza-Israel border and Israeli military posts, instead of at civilian centers like the Israeli border town of Sderot.

<u>Hamas</u> is demanding that any renewed truce with Israel must be applied simultaneously to the West Bank. The military wing said that Sunday's mortar shells had been a response to "Zionist aggression" against Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank.

On Saturday night, Israeli soldiers shot and killed another Palestinian man in the West Bank city of Nablus. The army spokesman said the man had been armed.

Hostilities between Gaza and Israel flared in mid-May after <u>Hamas</u>, the Islamist faction that dominates the Palestinian government, announced that it was resuming rocket fire against Israel after a six-month Iull. That was followed by two weeks of intense rocket fire and an Israeli air campaign against military compounds and posts in Gaza, mostly belonging to <u>Hamas</u>.

Sunday started out as the quietest day since the escalation began, with just the firing of the mortar shells, no rockets fired and no Israeli airstrikes by sundown. On Friday and Saturday, a total of nine rockets were launched by smaller Palestinian factions. At least five landed in Israeli territory, according to the army.

In mid-May, at the peak of the rocket fire, nearly 40 Qassams were launched in one day.

Hamas Fires Mortars After Palestinian Is Killed

At the opening of Sunday's cabinet meeting, the Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert, said, "With regard to what appears to be a reduction in the Qassam fire, I should like to clarify: We are not negotiating, nor do we undertake to change our modus operandi."

Mr. Olmert said security services would continue to act both in Gaza and in the West Bank. The military actions have "produced results," he said.

Saeb Erekat, the chief Palestinian negotiator and a close aide of President Mahmoud Abbas, of Fatah, said Israel's actions in the West Bank had been "undermining the chances" of reaching a new cease-fire. "We are asking for a mutual cessation of hostilities," he said.

Mr. Erekat also accused Israel of a "policy of political blindness," a reference to its forces killing or arresting a number of West Bank Palestinians affiliated with Fatah's military wing in recent days. On Tuesday, Israel arrested a Fatah lawmaker, Jamal Tirawi, from Nablus.

Separately, the Winograd Committee, which investigated the Israeli government's actions during last summer's war in Lebanon, released a censored version of the testimony of Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni.

The government-appointed committee published a partial report in late April accusing the political and military leadership of severe failures, after which Ms. Livni called on the prime minister to resign.

But Ms. Livni did not resign, arguing that she had come out of the report unscathed. As a result, an attempt by Kadima party colleagues to replace Mr. Olmert with Ms. Livni quickly fizzled out.

In her testimony, Ms. Livni said that on July 12, the day the war started, she thought that Israel had embarked on a military operation that would end the same night, or at the latest, by noon the next day. The war, which followed the seizure of two Israeli soldiers in a cross-border raid by Hezbollah, the Lebanese militant organization, lasted 34 days.

Ms. Livni told the Winograd panel that she had been pushing Mr. Olmert to focus on a diplomatic exit strategy from July 13 on, but that he told her to "calm down," put off meeting with her in private, and seemed inattentive when she spoke of the need for a diplomatic process in cabinet meetings. The war eventually ended with a cease-fire brokered by the United Nations.

Mr. Olmert has denied that Ms. Livni tried to bring the war to an early end. A censored version of his testimony was released in May. Threats to **Women** on TV Protested By The New York Times

GAZA CITY, June 3 -- About 50 employees of the official Palestinian Authority television station demonstrated in Gaza City on Sunday, protesting threats to its **female** anchors from a radical Islamic organization calling itself Swords of Truth.

The shadowy group issued a statement criticizing the <u>women</u> for wearing makeup and not wearing veils, as many religious Muslim <u>women</u> do. The organization said their behavior was immodest and was "destroying the Islamic culture."

Muhammad Daoudi, who is in charge of Palestinian Authority TV, said the protest was meant to send "a message of anger and condemnation." Almost 300 **women** and 350 men work for the station, he said.

Many of the <u>women</u> at the demonstration covered up with head scarves, contrary to their usual practice. The protesters marched to the office of President Abbas, which is next to the television building, and demanded his protection.

Swords of Truth has claimed responsibility for bombing dozens of Internet cafes, music stores and other symbols of Western-style entertainment in Gaza in recent months.

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photo: Israeli soldiers and police officers at the Erez crossing between Israel and Gaza after a mortar attack yesterday. (Photo by Gil Cohen Magen/Reuters)

Load-Date: June 4, 2007



Mecca talks 'last chance for peace': Palestinians tired of feud between Hamas, Fatah

Ottawa Citizen

February 6, 2007 Tuesday

Final Edition

Copyright 2007 Ottawa Citizen, a division of CanWest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A8

Length: 559 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, The Ottawa Citizen; with files from The Associated Press

Dateline: RAMALLAH, West Bank

Body

RAMALLAH, West Bank - On the eve of peace talks between <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah in Mecca, Palestinians from the relatively calm West Bank expressed anguish yesterday over the recent bloodshed in Gaza, and exasperation with their leaders for having allowed the violence to continue.

After two months of fighting in which more than 130 Palestinians have died in Gaza and hundreds have been wounded and kidnapped, <u>Hamas</u>'s exiled supreme leader, Khaled Mashaal, and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, Fatah's leader, are scheduled to meet today in the Saudi Arabian holy city for talks.

"Honestly, I wish they'd all go to hell," said Wahid Abu Assab, who sells pirated CDs and DVDs in Ramallah. "Only God can help the people of Gaza, not Abu Mazen (Mr. Abbas) or Mashaal. These people have been killing our country. It is as if they don't want is to have our own nation."

The almost daily television images of masked <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah gunmen shooting each other and torching and blowing things up in Gaza made Mr. Abu Assab so nervous he recently quadrupled his normal daily intake of cigarettes from 10 to 40.

"Look at this ashtray," he said. "I am upset because I know that everything that we are doing to ourselves helps Israel and the United States."

Diana Buttu, a Canadian-born Palestinian living in Ramallah, and a former legal adviser to Mr. Abbas, said every Palestinian understood the recent violence served Israel's interests, while badly damaging the reputations of the leaders of Fatah and *Hamas*.

"This battle is like two bald men fighting for a comb," said Ms. Buttu, who has a law degree from Queen's University and a PhD from Stanford University.

"They are not fighting for our national liberation or even for cleaner streets. In fact, it is not exactly clear what they are fighting for at all."

Mecca talks 'last chance for peace': Palestinians tired of feud between Hamas, Fatah

The most residents of Ramallah seemed to hoped for from the Mecca talks was a more durable ceasefire that might serve as a fresh starting point for contentious negotiations that began one year ago between <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah over how to forge a national unity government.

"I don't think they'll sign a real peace that includes a national unity government tomorrow," said Raed Jahama, a Palestinian who was born in Puerto Rico and returned from the U.S. two years ago to help his father sell <u>women</u>'s shoes. "At best, they may agree to stop shooting each other for a while.

"Still, I guess that would be progress."

Others see the meeting as a last chance for the Palestinians to avoid civil war.

"If this meeting fails, then no one will try to mediate again," warned Palestinian analyst Ali Jerbawi.

The meeting in Mecca, which follows failed talks led by Syria and Egypt, would mostly be about deciding which faction gets control of which ministries and what to do about the funding and composition of some government security forces, said Ms. Buttu.

They would avoid altogether what she called "the big elephant in the room" -- the belief by <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah that they were locked in an existential struggle that only one of them would survive.

"They have to get past this existential question and discuss ways that they can learn to live together, but they can't," Ms. Buttu said.

"Mashaal wants to show that even though he does not live in Palestine, he will always be a player here. Abbas will try not to recognize him.

"Mark my words, these talks will not be a turning point."

Load-Date: February 6, 2007