

Date and Time: Friday, May 3, 2024 4:06:00PM EEST

Job Number: 223445319

Documents (100)

1. [Under Siege, Life in Gaza Just Shrinks](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

2. [Israel braces for mass protest](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

3. [Israel leans toward accepting Gaza truce. Shlomit Katz, 75, killed by Kassam in Moshav Yesha](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

4. [Dutch FM to lobby for Israeli membership in EU](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

5. [Over a hundred Fatah fighters fled to the West Bank from Gaza last week MIDEAST: Gaza and West Bank in Muddied Separation](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

6. [Gazans break Egyptian blockade](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

7. [Egypt lets pilgrims enter Gaza Travelers bypass Israeli checkpoint](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

8. [Rain of missiles buries peace talk](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

9. [HOLY LAND HORROR 54 DIE AS ISRAELI TROOPS ACCUSED OF HOLOCAUST](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

10. [Israelis kill unarmed teenage militant](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

11. [Israeli blitz kills 61 - Land and sea attacks on Gaza bury peace process](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

12. [Missing Piece of Peace](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

13. [West Bank: Middle East: 'Almost every prisoner is told to get money or weapons'](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

14. [Picking Up Pieces, Gazans Debate Israel 's Incursion](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

15. [Hard-liners protesting Mideast conference](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type

Narrowed by

News

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

16. [Worlds apart in Hebron. A visit to the city that produced the Dimona suicide bombers provides little grounds for optimism](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

17. [Border barrier blasted Great escape](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

18. [Under Robe and Veil, Crossing Boundaries as Policewomen](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

19. [Palestinians breach border barricade](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

20. [Space](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

21. [*Israel agrees to free 150 Palestinians*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

22. [*ATTACKERS DRAWN To CITY STREETS*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

23. [*Innocents caught in the cross fire Gazans' plight works against peace efforts*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

24. [*IDF to discuss deployment of PA soldiers in Hebron, in bid to boost Mahmoud Abbas*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

25. [*My Say: A human rights crime in Gaza*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

26. [*A human rights crime in Gaza*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

27. [Gazans raze wall at Egypt border Tens of thousands then go shopping](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

28. [Violence erupts at Arafat rally](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

29. [PA claims Israel has no objections to Barghouti's release. Olmert, Abbas to meet today as Ramon Committee decides on 450 detainees to be traded for Schalit](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

30. [Ever-widening chasm between Israel , Palestinians](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

31. [Refugee was abandoned to Gaza clan warfare](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

32. [*Palestinian pilgrims set fire to temporary Egyptian camps*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

33. [*Israel on alert over Gaza border protest*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

34. [*Gaza residents breach wall, go shopping; An exodus into Egypt*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

35. [*The PR war: Stumbling around in the darkness*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

36. [*Gaza violence leaves 60 dead*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

37. [Gazans stock up on food, smokes Tens of thousands rush to purchase basic supplies in short supply due to Israeli blockade of territory](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

38. [Gaza station channels defiance Al-Aqsa TV has sparked the ire of Israel and debate in the US over declaring it a terrorist organisation, writes Tobias Buck](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

39. [CLASHES THREATEN MIDEAST PEACE TALKS](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

40. [Intelligent, politically skilled lady rises in Israel](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

41. [Palestinians halt Israel peace talks](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

42. [*The great escape - or perhaps it is just a gigantic shopping spree*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

43. [*Thousands of Palestinians cross into Egypt*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

44. [*World powers meet in Paris to bankroll Palestinian state*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

45. [*In Gaza, veiled face of order joins police*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

46. [*Adopt a few simple healthy habits to get most out of your life*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type

Narrowed by

News

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

47. [Israeli forces kill 60 in bloodiest day yet seen in Gaza](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

48. [Israel hits back, threatens more](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

49. [Mideast peace talks suspended; Israel says offensive will continue until missile attacks end](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

50. [Israel condemned for killing 61 in Gaza; Attack on Palestinians called 'excessive'](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

51. [NEWS IN BRIEF](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

52. [*Palestinians protest Israeli blockade in Gaza*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

53. [*World - Gazans storm Egypt border*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

54. [*Abbas halts talks; Israel to persist in offensive*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

55. [*Under siege and hopeless in Gaza*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

56. [*Gaza crisis spreads to Egyptian border*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

57. [*Whoever is to blame in this conflict, the children continue to suffer Letters*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

58. [*Militants and Israel trade fire*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

59. [*Gazans form human chain along Israeli border in protest at blockade*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

60. [*Guardian Weekly: Leading article: Gaza Punishing the people*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

61. [*Israel ships emergency supplies to Gaza; At least 10 hurt in border protest*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

62. [*Irish woman and daughter stranded in Gaza*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

63. [World Digest](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

64. [World](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

65. [Israeli strike kills 55 in Gaza, including numerous civilians](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

66. [Violence erupts in Gaza](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

67. [MOUNTAIN TRAGEDY](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type

Narrowed by

News

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

68. [*Amid Sorrow and Anger, Yeshiva's Dead Are Buried*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

69. [*The peace process and other delusions*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

70. [*The canard of 'disproportionate force'*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

71. [*PRE-DAWN RAID 70 killed in two days' fighting Missiles strike at Gaza*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

72. [*Gilad Schalit: Two years of captivity*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

73. [*Rice clings to peace hopes in Israel*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

74. [*Israel to free prisoners to Abbas*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

75. [*Israeli and Palestinian leaders in Annapolis , Maryland MIDEAST: High Stakes for Annapolis Peace Meet*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

76. [*Christian Bookstore Owner Was Tortured Before His Death*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

77. [*Israel Resumes Shipments of Fuel to Gaza, for Now*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

78. [*World to press for calm after PA freezes peace talks*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to
Sep 30, 2008

79. [*Sound of music inspiring gunmen; Military Band; 'We want to urge the soldiers and officers to push on'*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to
Sep 30, 2008

80. [*Abbas halts talks as Israeli attacks kill 70*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to
Sep 30, 2008

81. [*Israel hits new targets in Gaza Strip; Palestinian death toll grows to more than 100; criticism brushed off*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to
Sep 30, 2008

82. [*Israel buries its dead, and ponders Amid tears for 8 youths, an investigation and a 'deep breath'*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to
Sep 30, 2008

83. [*UN head deplores Israel 's 'excessive' force in Gaza raid Up to half the 60 Palestinians killed said to be civilians*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

84. [*Is this the beginning of a new intifada?*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

85. [*World Report*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

86. [*Boy killed by Israeli fire in West Bank, medics say*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

87. [*Tactics deny aid for Gaza ill*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

88. [*Gazans' health disputed World experts say Israel 's tight border keeps sick from care*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

89. [TVs by the truckload: An air of profiteering at Gaza border](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

90. [Israelis bury eight terror victims; On high alert Gunman transfixed by Gaza violence, his family says](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

91. [Abbas halts peace talks as Israeli attacks kill 70](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

92. [Facing criticism, Israel ships a week's fuel to Gaza](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

93. [Ain al-Hilweh children protest attacks on Gaza](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

94. [*Israeli troops kill 4 militants*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

95. [*The Palestinian gambit*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

96. [*Bitter complaints from a virtual dead duck. Why Condi's talking tough about construction in east Jerusalem - and why we should \(and shouldn't\) care*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

97. [*Leading article: Gaza : Punishing the people*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

98. [*No other country*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to Sep 30, 2008

99. [Egyptian troops toughen stance at Gaza border](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to
Sep 30, 2008

100. [More Business Than Pleasure for Hurried Palestinians](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2007 to
Sep 30, 2008

Under Siege, Life in Gaza Just Shrinks

The New York Times
November 18, 2007 Sunday
Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2007 The New York Times Company

Section: Section 4; Column 0; Week in Review Desk; Pg. 5; THE WORLD

Length: 534 words

Byline: By STEVEN ERLANGER

Body

IT'S a miserable time to be a Gazan.

Hopes were high in 2005, when Israel unilaterally withdrew its troops and 9,000 Jewish settlers, and the international community lined up to help the Palestinians make Gaza a model for their potential state.

But happy endings are rare in this part of the world. In the last year, life in Gaza has been plagued by criminal gangs as well as fighting among Palestinian groups. Some rocket barrages aimed at Israel fall on Gaza itself, and Israeli retaliation for the rest ranges from military strikes to economic quarantine.

Months of battling between the main political factions, Fatah and Hamas, culminated in a Gazan civil war in June, with 160 people killed and 800 wounded, many of them civilians. Hamas, which is classified as a terrorist group by Israel, the United States and the European Union, was the winner.

The struggle is hardly finished, with Fatah trying to consolidate in the West Bank and Hamas in Gaza. Just last week, a large Fatah demonstration on the third anniversary of Yasir Arafat's death ended in violence when Hamas police fired into a rock-throwing crowd and killed six people, while beating others.

Hamas is under siege, and with it, the people of Gaza.

It's not just that Hamas is shunned by the West and Israel, which has declared Gaza "a hostile entity" and is moving to restrict supplies of gasoline, diesel fuel and electricity. Gaza is also shunned by the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah, who is a ready accomplice in the effort to punish and pressure Hamas.

After the Israelis pulled out in 2005, Gazans complained that they lived in a big prison, since Israel still controlled their airspace, sea coasts and principal border crossings. Such claims had an element of propaganda, but now, with the crossing into Egypt for people also shut, by Egypt, the accusation is much closer to reality.

A trickle of the 1.5 million inhabitants of Gaza can now leave their tiny coastal strip for any reason whatsoever. The streets are ghostly, with little traffic, and the private economy is dying, lacking needed imports and unable to export.

Under Siege, Life in Gaza Just Shrinks

Gaza is a deeply conservative society, but **Hamas**'s growth has been reflected in the increasing number of **women** not only covering their hair, but also their faces. Israel says that it will ensure that no one starves in Gaza, and that the essentials of life will be provided.

But Israel also wants to see that **Hamas** suffers, by making Gazans suffer, to impress on them that the best path lies in accommodation and negotiation with Israel for a Palestinian state. Fatah backs that strategy, not the violent, religious and national struggle against Israel that **Hamas** advocates and practices.

Raji Sourani, director of Gaza's Palestinian Center for Human Rights, is himself stuck in Gaza. No friend to **Hamas**, he has a new metaphor.

"At least in prison, and I've been in prison, there are rules," he said. "But now we live in a kind of animal farm. We live in a pen, and they dump in food and medicine."

These photographs show today's diminished Gaza, more isolated and more religious, where people try, as they must, to go on with the everyday epics of ordinary life.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

ON EDGE A woman passes under the watchful eye of a member of **Hamas**'s security forces outside the Parliament building in Gaza City.

SCRIMPING: Majid Ajour used to sell pigeons for \$3 apiece. With the principal border crossings to Israel and Egypt closed, the price of imported feed has risen. Now he tries to sell his pigeons for nearly \$4 each.

EMPTY STREETS Gaza City can feel like a ghost town on a Friday morning, with its factories closed, jobs scarce and gas too expensive for many people to use.

SEEN LATELY: In an already deeply conservative society, the influence of **Hamas** is growing more visible: many Muslim **women** cover their faces now, not just their hair.

UNEMPLOYED: Hussein Abu Foul with his 4-month-old daughter, Sama, in the Jabaliya refugee camp. A construction worker, he can't find a job because cement can't be imported. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY RUTH FREMSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Load-Date: November 18, 2007

Israel braces for mass protest

Fiji Times (Australia)

February 26, 2008 Tuesday

1 Edition

Copyright 2008 Nationwide News Pty Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: WORLD; Pg. 19

Length: 504 words

Body

JERUSALEM, AP - Israel has killed two Hamas militants and vowed to prevent any attempt by Palestinians to break through the Gaza Strip's border with the Jewish state in defiance of an Israeli-led blockade.

A pro-Hamas group has said it will hold a peaceful protest in Gaza today in which it has estimated that 40,000 to 50,000 women and children will form a "human chain" stretching the length of the Hamas Islamist-run Gaza Strip.

Hamas blew open Gaza's southern border wall with Egypt last month.

Organisers of Monday's protest said they had no intention of breaching the border with Israel but an Israeli security source said the army was preparing for "all scenarios".

The breach of the Egyptian border at Rafah allowed hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to pour into Egypt to stock up on goods in short supply in the coastal enclave because of Israel's economic and military cordon.

Since then, Hamas officials have raised the possibility of organising similar breaches along the border with Israel.

"Israel will defend its territory and will stop any infiltration attempt into its sovereign borders," Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak and Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni said in a rare joint statement.

"Israel is acting to prevent an escalation but makes it clear that if it does happen the responsibility falls squarely on the shoulders of Hamas," the statement said.

Ahead of Monday's protest, the Israeli army put its paramilitary border police on standby and boosted surveillance along the Gaza frontier, security sources said. Hamas officials said two of its militants stationed near the border were killed in an Israeli air strike. Two others were wounded. The Israeli army confirmed the attack.

Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri stopped short of threatening to breach the border.

"Our people will not allow the continuation of this situation regardless of the results, and we will work to break the siege by all possible means," he said.

"We hold them (Israeli leaders) responsible for any harm to the participants in these peaceful demonstrations".

Israel braces for mass protest

Jamal al-Khudary, head of the Popular Anti-Siege Committee organising the demonstration, said: "We do not have intentions of approaching the fence, either in the north or the south. We hope all the participants will abide by the instructions and we will try to prevent any violations."

An Israeli security source said: "Obviously, if gunmen start shooting at the fence we will have to respond in kind and we are absolutely unwilling to countenance a situation where the fence is breached like it was at Rafah."

Israel's Channel Two television said the army had also deployed more artillery along the border with Gaza.

Israel stepped up its blockade of Gaza in June last year after **Hamas** routed Fatah forces loyal to secular President Mahmoud Abbas and seized control of the coastal territory, home to 1.5 million Palestinians. Israel said it tightened its cordon last month, limiting supplies of fuel and other supplies, in response to cross-border rocket fire by militants in Gaza.

Load-Date: February 25, 2008

End of Document

Israel leans toward accepting Gaza truce. Shlomit Katz, 75, killed by Kassam in Moshav Yesha

The Jerusalem Post
May 13, 2008 Tuesday

Copyright 2008 The Jerusalem Post All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 835 words

Byline: YAAKOV KATZ and HERB KEINON

Body

An elderly woman was killed by a Kassam rocket that scored a direct hit on a western Negev community Monday evening, hours after Israeli leaders said they were leaning toward accepting an Egyptian cease-fire deal with **Hamas**.

Shlomit Katz, 75 of Kibbutz Gvar'am, was killed while visiting Moshav Yesha in the Eshkol Regional Council. The deadly attack came four days after a mortar shell barrage killed Jimmy Kedoshim, 48, a father of four, as he stood in the yard of his house in Kibbutz Kfar Aza in the Negev.

Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for Monday's attack, after which certain defense officials warned against accepting the Egyptian-proposed cease-fire with **Hamas** and called for a military response to the continued rocket fire. A half-dozen rockets fell in the western Negev area Monday, including one that landed in Ashkelon.

Despite the escalation in violence, officials close to Defense Minister Ehud Barak said that Israel was leaning toward accepting Egyptian Intelligence chief Omar Suleiman's truce offer, which was presented to the defense minister during a breakfast meeting at Barak's Tel Aviv home earlier in the day. Israel plans to first gradually accept the offer and later turn it into a full-fledged cease-fire following Gilad Schalit's release.

Defense officials said that if the Egyptian-brokered ceasefire did not last, Israel would most likely embark on a large-scale operation in the Gaza Strip against **Hamas**.

"If the ceasefire doesn't work, our alternative to stopping **Hamas**'s attacks is by invading Gaza," a senior official said.

During their meetings with Suleiman, both Barak and Prime Minister Ehud Olmert stressed the cease-fire needed to include the release of Schalit as well as an end to all forms of attacks on Israel from the Gaza Strip and a cessation of **Hamas**'s arms build-up there. Suleiman told Barak that the acceptance of the deal would not bring Schalit's immediate release, but would expedite the process.

Barak also stressed that Israel would not continue to restrain itself from responding to the continuous missile fire from the Gaza Strip, and that Israel would be forced to take more stringent military steps if the attacks did not stop.

Israel leans toward accepting Gaza truce. Shlomit Katz, 75, killed by Kassam in Moshav Yesha

The defense minister also told Suleiman that Israel would demand assurances from Egypt that it would increase its efforts to curb weapons smuggling under the Philadelphi Corridor. Suleiman said that Egypt was making more efforts and hoped to receive US-made tunnel-detection systems in the coming weeks to add to those efforts.

Suleiman, according to officials in the Prime Minister's Office, said he would take those conditions back, discuss them with Hamas, and return with an answer. No time frame, however, was given. The officials said that Suleiman, who has been trying to broker a cease-fire in the Gaza Strip for weeks, did not come with any new proposal.

Olmert and Suleiman met for some 90 minutes in discussions that Olmert's office characterized as "good." The first stage of the deal calls for a cessation of IDF action, Hamas terror activity as well as the opening of the Israeli crossings into Gaza. At a later stage, the Rafah crossing is slated to be opened.

Sources in Olmert's office said that three weeks ago Olmert and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak scheduled a meeting in Sharm e-Sheikh sometime after the World Economic Forum meeting there this weekend. It is widely expected that when the two do meet, it would be to finalize the agreement. So far no date has been set.

Olmert's spokesman Mark Regev, meanwhile, denied that Suleiman's shuttle between meetings with Israeli officials and that Hamas officials represented an indirect form of negotiations.

"There are no negotiations, with Hamas," Regev insisted. "Israel and Egypt have a common interest in trying to maintain stability in the south. Israel cannot continue to tolerate the daily barrage of rockets, so either the attacks will cease or Israel will have to stop them. We don't have a great desire to escalate in the south, and if it is possible to achieve clam, that is obviously our preference, and the Egyptian's preference."

Government sources, meanwhile, said that Israel's insistence that Schalit be included in the deal - knowing Hamas would not agree - was a way to gracefully get out of an agreement that Israel is not enamored with. According to these sources, Israel is concerned that Hamas would use the cease fire to strengthen itself in Gaza, something Israel wants to prevent. According to the sources, conditioning the agreement on the release of Schalit is something the public would back.

Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, meanwhile, also told Suleiman that there would be no arrangements in Gaza as long as Schalit remained in captivity. She also stressed that there could not be quiet calm in the Gaza Strip until the arms smuggling and the Hamas weapons build-up ceased.

Suleiman also met Industry, Trade and Labor Minister Eli Yishai, from Shas, who has said he would be willing to meet with Hamas to secure Schalit's release.

Graphic

Photo: ASHKELON WOMEN react to a Kassam rocket hit on their city yesterday. (Credit: Tsafir Abayov/AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

Dutch FM to lobby for Israeli membership in EU

The Jerusalem Post

January 24, 2008 Thursday

Copyright 2008 The Jerusalem Post All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 3

Length: 293 words

Byline: GREER FAY CASHMAN

Body

Dutch Foreign Minister Maxime Jacques Marcel Verhagen has pledged to lobby the EU member states to admit Israel to its ranks.

Verhagen, who met on Tuesday with President Shimon Peres, said that it was very important to him that Israel become a member of the EU because Israel succeeds in maintaining democracy, stability and freedom under extremely difficult conditions.

Verhagen, who also visited Sderot on Tuesday, condemned the ongoing attacks from Gaza and said that no government in the world could accept a situation in which its citizens were being fired at all the time.

The **Hamas** leadership, he said, would be persona non grata in the international community for as long as it persisted with its policy of assault.

If **Hamas** wanted Israel to stop the reprisals against its attacks, said Peres, it must immediately cease firing rockets at Israel. It surely did not expect Israel to retaliate with flowers, he added.

Gazans would enjoy a more peaceful existence if **Hamas** put down its weapons and stopped taking orders from a leader in Syria whose main focus was to sabotage the peace process and thereby cause needless bloodshed, Peres said, referring to **Hamas** leader Khaled Mashaal.

With regard to the storming by Gazans of the Rafah border crossing with Egypt on Tuesday, Peres said **Hamas** was putting **women** and children on the front line to defend its policies with their bodies, and sometimes they paid with their lives for the Islamist organization's brutal and criminal actions.

This could have happened in Rafah, Peres said, but fortunately no one was killed. If such provocations continued, **Hamas** would become even more isolated, because the Egyptians were interested in maintaining regional stability and advancing the peace process, the president said.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

**Over a hundred Fatah fighters fled to the West Bank from Gaza last week;
MIDEAST: Gaza and West Bank in Muddled Separation**

IPS (Latin America)

August 14, 2008 Thursday

Copyright 2008 NoticiasFinancieras/Grupo de Diarios America All Rights Reserved

Length: 995 words

Byline: Mel Frykberg

Body

The Fatah men barely managed to escape the violence which broke out in the Sajaiyeh neighbourhood of Gaza City, leaving nearly a dozen Palestinians dead and over a hundred injured, including **women** and children.

Following several bomb explosions in Gaza city, which left five **Hamas** members and a young Palestinian girl dead, **Hamas** raided a heavily militarised stronghold belonging to one of the most powerful clans in Gaza, the Hilles, after accusing them of being behind the explosions.

The Hilles clan is loyal to Fatah, the military wing associated with Abbas's Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

During the raid the Hilles fought the invading forces with a large military cache at their disposal, including Kalashnikovs and rockets, in addition to booby-trapping the entrances to their homes with explosives and placing snipers on the roofs.

While to most Western observers the political infighting between **Hamas** and the PNA is merely a political power struggle, it is in fact far more complex than this.

Power struggles within the two organisations as different factions jockey for position, switching loyalties based on political expediency, and powerful clan struggles revolving around extortion and business racketeering as clan chieftains fight to retain their turf are all part of the murky political underworld in the Palestinian territories.

‘To the international supporters and the financial backers of Abbas, or Abu Mazen as he is better known, he is the good guy due to his moderation while **Hamas** are considered the bad guys because of being 'Islamic fundamentalists', Moshe Ma'oz, professor emeritus of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at Jerusalem's Hebrew University, and Senior Fellow at The Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace, told IPS.

This has led to the international community, and Israel in particular, turning a blind eye to the cronyism, corruption and human rights abuses committed by the PNA, while at the same time heavily censoring **Hamas** for any misdeed.

‘However, the behaviour of the PNA is not lost on the Palestinian population as the PNA continues to lose support. The PNA leadership is worried about **Hamas** taking over in the West Bank,’ said Mo'az.

Many Palestinians also believe that the PNA, in addition to being corrupt, has compromised too much with Israel in return for receiving too little as Israel continues to build illegal settlements on Palestinian land, and expropriate the majority of the West Bank's water resources, contrary to international law.

Over a hundred Fatah fighters fled to the West Bank from Gaza last week MIDEAST: Gaza and West Bank in Muddied Separation

A poll carried out in May by the Arab World for Research and Development (AWRAD), based in Ramallah in the central West Bank, showed that the number of Palestinians who approved of the performance of PNA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad's cabinet, had slumped significantly, while those disapproving of the cabinet's performance had risen dramatically.

Hamas's approval ratings on the other hand, under the leadership of de facto Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, have remained steady in Gaza while rising in the West Bank.

‘To a large degree **Hamas** has managed to establish law and order on the streets of Gaza and kidnappings have ceased,’ Mo'az told IPS. ‘They are regarded as clean politically not corrupt like Fatah.’

This poll, however, was taken before the latest outbreak of violence which saw Abbas pleading with the Israelis to allow the fleeing members of the Hilles clan to cross through the heavily fortified and militarised Erez border crossing from Gaza into Israel.

The men were stripped to their underwear, searched and interrogated by the Israelis before being brought into custody. This humiliation was captured by the international media and splashed across the pages of newspapers and TV screens across the world.

Abbas was then allegedly pressured by former Fatah strongman, Muhammed Dahlan, a favourite of the Israelis and of the U.S., who fled Gaza during the coup, not to let them in. Some were sent back to Gaza where they were promptly arrested by **Hamas**.

However, Abbas then back-flipped yet again and asked Israel to allow them in. Some were subsequently sent to Jericho near the Dead Sea after the PNA made it clear they were not welcome in Ramallah.

Hamas alleges that Dahlan, and a small corrupt Fatah faction, planned to overthrow **Hamas**'s democratically elected leadership, using arms and financial backing they had received from the CIA and Israel.

Further muddying the political waters are the myriad of powerful clans in Gaza who under the previous PNA leadership became both powerful and rich as they cornered specific business and black markets. In return they swore allegiance to the PNA.

The notorious Dugmush clan, who were responsible for the kidnapping of BBC reporter Alan Johnston, grew wealthy by trading in black market cigarettes and cement.

Under the guise of Islamic piety as a cover for their criminal activities, and purportedly operating for al-Qaeda, the Dugmushes and a number of other new fanatical Islamic organisations do not take kindly to being challenged.

They have repeatedly sought to embarrass the **Hamas** leadership by bombing beauty salons, Internet cafes and other establishments associated with Western 'decadence'.

So, the Islamic resistance group's leadership was well aware that challenging the more powerful clans, such as the Hilles, would result in bloodshed. But following the brazen bomb attacks in Gaza city, **Hamas** could no longer turn a blind eye.

However, despite the multi-faceted dimensions of the conflict, neither **Hamas** nor Fatah seem overly keen to attempt to bridge their political differences. It would, furthermore, appear that the possibility of a Palestinian state remains even more elusive under the current Palestinian leadership -- or some would argue lack of leadership. And Israel appears happy to play the sides off against one another as the divide and conquer strategy comes into full fruition. © 2008 NoticiasFinancieras - IPS - All rights reserved

Over a hundred Fatah fighters fled to the West Bank from Gaza last week MIDEAST: Gaza and West Bank in
Muddied Separation

End of Document

Gazans break Egyptian blockade

The Australian (Australia)
January 24, 2008 Thursday
3 - All-round Metro Edition

Copyright 2008 Nationwide News Pty Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: WORLD; Pg. 9

Length: 563 words

Byline: Correspondents in Rafah, Gaza Strip

Body

TENS of thousands of Gazans, trapped in their territory by a blockade, poured into Egypt to buy supplies yesterday after masked Palestinian gunmen blew holes in the border wall.

Egyptian guards and **Hamas** police took no action as Palestinians hurried over the border and began returning with food, cigarettes and fuel, although Egyptian security forces closed down all side roads in Rafah, the town that straddles the border, to control the flow.

Hamas security officials said about two-thirds of the 12km wall was demolished.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said last night that he had ordered his troops to allow Palestinians to cross into Egypt from the Gaza Strip because they were starving.

Speaking at the Cairo International Book Fair, Mr Mubarak said that when Palestinians began breaking through the Gaza-Egypt border at Rafah in force, he told his men to let them in to buy food before escorting them out. "I told them to let them come in and eat and buy food and then return them later as long as they were not carrying weapons," he said.

The chaotic scenes came on the sixth day of a complete closure of Gaza, imposed by Israel and backed by Egypt, in response to a spike in Gaza rocket attacks on Israeli border towns.

Hours earlier, gunfire erupted as a group of mostly **female** Gazan demonstrators, protesting the Israeli blockade, forced their way over the Egyptian border crossing. The **women** were detained by Egyptian troops but released after baton-wielding **Hamas** police broke up the protest.

Gaza's **Hamas** rulers have orchestrated daily demonstrations on the Gaza-Egypt border to pressure Egypt to open the passage. On Tuesday, Israel eased the closure slightly, transferring fuel to restart Gaza's only power plant, and also sent in some cooking gas, food and medicine.

Israel has pledged to continue limited shipments because of concerns that a humanitarian crisis could develop in the already impoverished coastal territory. But Gazans are still facing critical shortages of electricity, fuel and other supplies. The territory has been largely cut off from the world since June, when **Hamas** seized power in Gaza by force.

Gazans break Egyptian blockade

Before dawn yesterday, Palestinian gunmen began blowing holes in the border wall running along the Gaza-Egypt border. **Hamas** security quickly took control of the frontier, channelling traffic through two holes in the border.

Gazan Ibrahim Abu Taha, 45, a father of seven, was in the Egyptian section of Rafah with his two brothers and 700 shekels (\$219). ``We want to buy food, we want to buy rice and sugar, milk and wheat and some cheese." He said such basic foods were triple the price in Gaza.

Faced with a crippling Israeli blockade, **Hamas** appears to be applying pressure on Egypt, which has co-operated with Israel's sanctions by keeping the Rafah border closed. Scenes of privation in Gaza could force Egypt to ease the border closure, allowing the **Hamas** regime to relieve its isolation.

A **Hamas** security officer who identified himself as Abdel Rahman, 29, said he was out of Gaza for the first time. ``I can smell the freedom," he said. ``We need no border after today." He denied weapons were being smuggled in from Egypt.

``You can buy weapons in Gaza, guns and RPGs," he said, adding it was easier to find weapons in Gaza than cancer medicine or Coke. Weapons are generally brought into Gaza through tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border.

Load-Date: January 24, 2008

End of Document

Egypt lets pilgrims enter Gaza; Travelers bypass Israeli checkpoint

The International Herald Tribune

January 3, 2008 Thursday

Copyright 2008 International Herald Tribune All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 897 words

Byline: Isabel Kershner - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Taghreed El-Khodary contributed reporting from Gaza City.

*

Egypt allowed 2,000 Palestinian pilgrims who had been stranded for days in the Egyptian Sinai to cross back into the Gaza Strip on Wednesday, a decision that is expected to fuel Israeli tensions with Cairo over what Israel sees as lax security along the Gaza-Egypt border.

The **Hamas** rulers of Gaza celebrated the return of the pilgrims via the Rafah border crossing as a victory. The crossing, on Gaza's border with Egypt, has been officially closed since **Hamas** took over the strip in June, routing Fatah forces there.

The Palestinians had traveled to Saudi Arabia for the annual Muslim pilgrimage under the aegis of **Hamas**. Israel had demanded that they return via an Israeli-controlled crossing, Kerem Shalom, where they could undergo Israeli security checks before re-entering Gaza. **Hamas** had refused to send the pilgrims back through Kerem Shalom, saying that its supporters could be arrested by Israel.

Israeli officials suspect that some of the pilgrims brought back large sums of money and other contraband for **Hamas**, the Islamic group that Israel, like the United States and the European Union, defines as a terrorist organization.

An Israeli government official said: "If people are returning to Gaza without going through the required security procedures, then that would be contrary to the understandings reached." The official was speaking on condition of anonymity for reasons of diplomacy.

Another Israeli official said that the subject had been raised in a Dec. 26 meeting between the Israeli defense minister, Ehud Barak, and President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt in the Sinai resort of Sharm el Sheik. There it was decided that the pilgrims would return via Kerem Shalom, the official said Wednesday, adding: "There is likely some damage to security here."

The Barak-Mubarak meeting took place two days after the Israeli foreign minister, Tzipi Livni, told an Israeli parliamentary committee that the Egyptian effort to secure the border with Gaza was "terrible, problematic and damages the ability to make progress in the peace process."

Egypt lets pilgrims enter Gaza Travelers bypass Israeli checkpoint

Israeli security officials estimate that 80 tons of explosives have been smuggled into Gaza through tunnels under the Egyptian border since June.

Egyptian officials have furiously rejected the criticism and attacked efforts in the U.S. Congress to make part of U.S. military aid to Egypt conditional on its taking concrete steps to improve the situation.

In Gaza on Wednesday, the **Hamas**-run Al Aksa radio and television greeted the returning pilgrims with Palestinian wedding songs. Ismail Haniya, the **Hamas** leader in Gaza, praised Egypt, saying it had not surrendered to blackmail.

Um Muhammad Bayed, 45, a **Hamas** supporter who was among the returning pilgrims, said she had spent a day and a half stranded on a boat off the southern Sinai coast and three days in the north Sinai town of El Arish before reaching Gaza.

"The toughest thing was the uncertainty - not knowing when we were going to make it through," Bayed said in a telephone interview shortly after crossing the border.

Many of the returning Palestinians complained of harsh conditions and bitter cold in Sinai. Egypt had put them up in a sports stadium and provided food and medicine, the returnees said. But two of the pilgrims, both **women**, died of heart attacks during the wait in the desert town.

The Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah, was in Cairo to meet with Mubarak on Wednesday. Palestinians in Gaza attributed the timing of the pilgrims' return to an Egyptian desire for Abbas to receive some of the credit.

Palestinian officials said the Abbas-Mubarak meeting would focus on Israeli settlement building and coordinating positions for President George W. Bush's visit to the region, scheduled to start Jan. 9. But they said that Abbas, as the leader of all the Palestinians, would also press for the issue of the stranded pilgrims to be resolved.

In reality, though, the whole episode of the **Hamas**-sponsored pilgrimage from Gaza has been an embarrassing one for Abbas. The Abbas-led Authority, which governs from the West Bank, had organized its own official quota of Gaza pilgrims, who were to travel to Saudi Arabia and back through Israel.

When the 2,000 left unexpectedly through Rafah, under **Hamas** auspices and with Egyptian and Saudi cooperation, Palestinian officials in the West Bank said they felt they had been "stabbed in the back."

Ayman Shaheen, a political analyst at Al Azhar University in Gaza, which is affiliated with Fatah, tried to put a positive spin on the Wednesday events. He said that by delaying the pilgrims' return by several days, "Egypt has succeeded in sending a message to **Hamas** that the crossing is not under **Hamas** control."

After the reports of the pilgrims' suffering in El Arish, he said, Egypt was forced by popular pressure to allow them to cross into Gaza.

Six Palestinian militants were killed in Israeli ground and air strikes before dawn Wednesday in an area of Gaza close to the border fence, Palestinian medical officials and the Israeli Army said. An army spokeswoman said that the Palestinians had fired guns and antitank missiles at Israeli forces on a routine operation against rocket launchers in the area.

Hamas said in a statement that four of the dead were members of its armed wing and that two were members of the Popular Resistance Committees.

Load-Date: January 13, 2008

Rain of missiles buries peace talk

Herald Sun (Australia)

March 3, 2008 Monday

1 - FIRST Edition

Copyright 2008 Nationwide News Pty Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 27

Length: 500 words

Body

GAZA CITY -- An Israeli land and air blitz killed 61 Palestinians in the Hamas-held Gaza Strip yesterday, amid warnings the violence had buried the peace process.

It was the deadliest day since Israel's withdrawal from Gaza in September 2005, and one of the most lethal Israeli operations since the Palestinian uprising erupted in 2000.

Fifty-four Palestinians were killed in northern Gaza, and two others in an air strike in the south of the territory, ruled by the Islamic Hamas movement, medics said.

At least 13 civilians -- seven of them women and some children -- were among the dead, and more than 150 people were wounded, Muawiya Hassanein, head of Gaza emergency services, said.

Five members of the Hamas "police" were killed in an Israeli air strike in the Rafah sector as they took shelter in a mosque that was hit by a missile, witnesses and medical sources in southern Gaza said.

Two Israeli soldiers were also killed yesterday in Gaza and another seven wounded, including an officer, the army said as it battled to halt Palestinian rocket attacks on towns in southern Israel.

Senior Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erakat said the Middle East peace talks formally revived in November at a US conference had been buried under the rubble of the Israeli incursion.

"The negotiations are buried under the houses that were destroyed in Gaza," Mr Erakat said.

"The peace process has been destroyed because of the aggressions and crimes committed."

As his spokesman warned the operation would be open-ended, Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak said Hamas, which seized power in Gaza in June, bore full responsibility for the bloodshed.

"Hamas bears full responsibility and will pay the price," Mr Barak said.

"We are not happy civilians have been victims but the responsibility is on Hamas and its firing of rockets at Israel."

Israeli tanks supported by helicopters moved into northern Gaza just after midnight on Friday, and by nightfall troops had fought their way almost 3km inside the Strip, witnesses said.

Rain of missiles buries peace talk

Israel's public TV reported the army, which suffered its first deaths since the violence worsened on Wednesday, had deployed a regiment in Gaza, which would number about 2000 soldiers.

The urban battlefields were littered with debris as frightened Gazans hid inside their homes and imams read Koranic verses over mosque loudspeakers.

The latest operation raised the death toll to 91 since Wednesday.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, whose Fatah forces were driven out of Gaza when **Hamas** seized power, urged "international protection for the Palestinian people", in an appeal from the West Bank city of Ramallah.

Mr Abbas, warning that "innocent **women**, children and old people" were becoming targets, called for an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council to discuss the upsurge. The council was meeting last night.

In Damascus, exiled **Hamas** supremo Khaled Meshaal angrily accused Mr Abbas of providing Israel with "a cover, voluntarily or involuntarily", to carry out its assault.

Load-Date: March 2, 2008

HOLY LAND HORROR; 54 DIE AS ISRAELI TROOPS ACCUSED OF HOLOCAUST

Sunday Mail

March 2, 2008, Sunday

Copyright 2008 Reach PLC All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 6

Length: 392 words

Byline: By BRUCE WALKER

Body

A BABY was among 54 people slaughtered as Israeli troops turned heavy firepower on Palestinian militants yesterday.

At least 25 **Hamas** fighters died during the attack in retaliation against rocket squads bombarding Israel. The rest of the victims were civilians.

The onslaught was branded a "holocaust" and "genocide" by moderate Palestinian leaders.

Last night Israeli helicopters hit the HQ of **Hamas** Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh with three missiles.

The office was empty and there were thought to be no casualties.

The Middle East peace talks are now expected to collapse.

Yesterday's tragic toll made it the deadliest day in Gaza since hardliners **Hamas** seized control in June.

Another 200 people were wounded, 14 of them critically.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said: "The response to these rockets can't be that harsh and heinous. It is nowadays described as a holocaust."

The bloodshed began just before midnight on Friday in the northern town of Beit Hanoun, where a 13-month-old girl, Malak Karfaneh, was killed by shrapnel.

Hamas blamed Israel but residents said a militant rocket fell short and landed in the area of the baby's house.

Just before dawn yesterday in Jebaliya, northern Gaza, soldiers backed by tanks and aircraft clashed with militants.

Locals said Israeli tank shells struck two houses, killing two sisters in their early 20s - a claim denied by Israel.

Israeli military spokeswoman Major Avital Leibovich blamed the high civilian toll on **Hamas** using homes to store and produce projectiles.

She said: "We are not targeting homes and we have no intentions of targeting uninvolved civilians."

HOLY LAND HORROR 54 DIE AS ISRAELI TROOPS ACCUSED OF HOLOCAUST

About 80 Palestinians, half of them civilians, have been killed since fighting flared on Wednesday.

The violence has jeopardised US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's peacekeeping mission next week.

Chief Palestinian negotiator Ahmed Qureia said: "This is a massacre of civilians, women and children - genocide."

MAILFILE

January 2006 - Huge election victory in Gaza for Hamas.

June 2007 - Factional fighting puts Hamas fully in control in Gaza but Fatah rule West Bank.

July 4, 2007 - Hostage BBC man Alan Johnston released.

January 2008 - Israel cuts off power to 1.5 million in Gaza.

February 7, 2008 - Egypt closes Gaza border as residents flee.

February 28, 2008 - Israeli raids in response to rocket attacks.

SUNDAY EMAIL

reporters@sundaymail.co.uk

Graphic

Tragic: Medic rushes a baby to hospital in Gaza yesterday

Load-Date: March 2, 2008

Israelis kill unarmed teenage militant

Prince George Citizen (British Columbia)

July 11, 2008 Friday

Final Edition

Copyright 2008 Prince George Citizen All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 18

Length: 482 words

Byline: The Associated Press

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

Israeli troops shot and killed a teenage Palestinian militant along the country's border with Gaza on Thursday in the first deadly incident since the two sides reached a ceasefire last month.

A faction of the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades said the unarmed 18-year-old killed in Gaza was one of its members.

It vowed revenge and claimed responsibility for two rockets fired at southern Israel after the shooting. "We will not let this crime pass silently," the group said in a text message to reporters.

Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, which had previously violated the June 19 truce by firing rockets at Israel, did not say what the teen was doing along the border.

Gaza's **Hamas** administration said it considered the pre-dawn shooting a violation of the ceasefire, but did not vow revenge.

"The Palestinian factions show a great commitment to making this understanding successful, but the occupation must also be committed to their obligations," **Hamas** spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri said.

Al Aqsa said **Hamas** police arrested two militants who fired the two rockets Thursday.

An Israeli military spokesman said troops fired on the youth after he did not respond to warning shots and orders to stop. The soldiers thought he was armed but, after inspecting the body, found that he was not, the spokesman said.

The truce that took hold in Gaza last month was meant in its initial phase to halt rocket and mortar fire on southern Israel and to ease harsh Israeli economic sanctions imposed after **Hamas** wrested the territory from forces allied with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah movement.

But sporadic militant attacks have continued, and Israeli has responded by closing its crossings into the coastal strip that is home to 1.4 million Palestinians and keeping its blockade more or less intact.

The truce does not extend to the West Bank, which is controlled by Abbas, who currently is involved in peace talks with Israel.

Israelis kill unarmed teenage militant

In the West Bank, Israel pressed forward with a crackdown on facilities it says are linked to **Hamas**.

In the fourth day of operations in the city of Nablus, Israel closed a medical clinic and TV station, and raided a mosque, a newspaper and other offices.

In recent months, the Israeli military has been clamping down on **Hamas** operations in the West Bank in an effort to prevent weaken the group there.

Dozens of military jeeps and trucks entered Nablus before dawn Thursday, witnesses said. Troops raided a medical clinic, confiscating computers and documents, and a local TV station, newspaper, mosque and **women's** organization. Some of the offices were ordered closed, and troops also confiscated five school buses, they said.

The Israeli military confirmed an operation against **Hamas** in Nablus, but offered no details.

Palestinian Interior Minister Abdel Razek Yehiyeh said the Israeli raids were undermining the Palestinian government's efforts to establish law and order in the West Bank.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Associated Press; A Palestinian woman carries her child as she walks outside her family house, after it was destroyed by Israeli troops in the West Bank city of Hebron on Thursday. Israeli troops raided the southern West Bank city, arrested eight Palestinians affiliated with **Hamas** and demolished a house, witnesses said. ;

Load-Date: July 11, 2008

Israeli blitz kills 61 - Land and sea attacks on Gaza bury peace process

The Courier Mail (Australia)

March 3, 2008 Monday

1 - First with the news Edition

Copyright 2008 Nationwide News Pty Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: WORLD; Pg. 22

Length: 340 words

Byline: Sakher Abu El Oun IN GAZA CITY

Body

ISRAELI forces killed 61 Palestinians in a land and air blitz in the **Hamas**-held Gaza Strip yesterday, amid warnings that the violence had ``buried" the peace process.

It was the deadliest day since Israel's withdrawal from Gaza in September 2005 and one of the most lethal Israeli operations since the Palestinian uprising in 2000.

Fifty-four Palestinians were killed in northern Gaza and two others in an air strike in the south of the territory which is ruled by the Islamist movement **Hamas**, medics said.

At least 13 civilians, seven of them **women** and including children, were among the dead and more than 150 people were wounded, Gaza emergency services chief Muawiya Hassanein said.

Five members of the **Hamas** ``police" were killed in an Israeli air strike in the Rafah sector as they took shelter in a mosque that was hit by a missile, witnesses and medical sources in southern Gaza said.

Two Israeli soldiers were also killed yesterday in Gaza and another seven soldiers wounded, including one officer, the army said, as it battled to halt Palestinian rocket attacks on towns in southern Israel.

Senior Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erakat said the Middle East peace talks formally revived in November at a US conference had been ``buried" under the rubble of the Israeli incursion.

``The negotiations are buried under the houses that were destroyed in Gaza," Mr Erakat said. ``The peace process has been destroyed because of the aggressions and the crimes that have been committed."

As his spokesman warned that the operation would be open-ended, Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak said **Hamas**, which seized power in Gaza in June, bore ``full responsibility" for the bloodshed.

``**Hamas** bears full responsibility and will pay the price. We are not happy that civilians have been victims but the responsibility is on **Hamas** and its firing of rockets at Israel," Mr Barak said.

Israeli tanks supported by helicopters moved into northern Gaza just after midnight on Friday and by nightfall troops had fought their way nearly 3km inside the strip.

Israeli blitz kills 61 - Land and sea attacks on Gaza bury peace process

Load-Date: March 2, 2008

End of Document

Missing Piece of Peace

Korea Times

December 4, 2007 Tuesday

Copyright 2007 The Korea Times All Rights Reserved

Length: 1153 words

Body

By Bill Maxwell

St. Petersburg Times

The much-anticipated Middle East peace conference in Annapolis, Md., ended with some good news and bad news.

The good news: First, it was progress that the conference happened at all while President Bush is still in the White House. Second, Syria and nearly 50 other Arab governments, some with land disputes with Israel, attended the summit. Third, and most importantly, it produced an outline of broad aspirations for the region and a specific agreement between the Israelis and Palestinians to confer every two weeks to create a framework for a Palestinian state by the time Bush leaves office after the 2008 election.

Now, the bad news: As Bush and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas did photo ops, the deal-breaking fissures of the Palestinian question made the meeting a chimera. To be sure, the abysmal plight of the Palestinians has been the direct source of wars, battles and terrorist acts and reprisals since the Jewish state was founded on what was then-Palestinian land in 1948.

Some issues, such as the borders of an independent Palestine, Jerusalem as a shared capital, the right of return for Palestinian refugees and the cessation of settlement building and the dismantling of other settlements in the West Bank, are so rancorous that they spoiled expectations for Annapolis long before the White House finalized the invitation list.

The pall these issues cast over the event, according to the Economist magazine, scuttled Bush's major goal of having Olmert and Abbas communicate before coming to Annapolis and arrive with a "joint declaration" of a "vision" for a Palestinian state. Once in Annapolis, the two leaders would work out details.

Of course, nothing of the kind happened because Abbas lacks the courage to alter what the Economist refers to as the "Palestinians' mantra," its primary mandate being the establishment of a free state on the 1967 borders. Abbas did not place demands on Olmert because the resilient **Hamas** remains a powerful force in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

Abbas, Olmert, Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice encouraged a fantasy that an honest agreement can be reached without **Hamas**, which was not invited to Annapolis. Remember, **Hamas** won the Palestinian parliamentary elections in January, 2006. And remember that Bush insisted on the elections even as Arab leaders warned otherwise. Then, **Hamas** violently wrested control of the Gaza Strip from Abbas and his Fatah party in June. Abbas now controls the West Bank.

Missing Piece of Peace

America and Israel now face two ideologically and geographically separated Palestinian governments. How, then, can Israel and America and their allies earnestly speak of creating an independent Palestine that controls its own airspace and waters and security? What will we call the new nation? The State of Palestine in the West Bank?

The major strategy, of course, is to isolate Hamas, to make life so miserable for Gaza Strip residents, women and children included, that they will turn against their democratically elected government and support Fatah.

During the run-up to Annapolis, the Bush and Olmert administrations never mentioned Hamas in public. But the reality in Israel and the Palestinian territories is too deadly for pretense, ill-informed policies, silence and cowardice.

Yossi Beilin, an Israeli, is one of the rare politicians anywhere in the world with the courage to speak truthfully about the need to deal with Hamas. Because I will quote Beilin at length, I need to present his bona fides. First elected to the Knesset in 1988, he has served as Israel's deputy foreign minister, deputy finance minister, economic planning minister and minister of justice. Still a member of the Knesset and chairman of Israel's Meretz Party, he is a spokesman for Peace Now, a group seeking peace between the Israelis and Palestinians.

In an article for The Washington Post days before the Annapolis summit, Beilin acknowledged that Hamas' victories in the Gaza Strip were bad news for anyone, especially Israelis, who desires Israeli-Palestinian peace.

"But as Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization prepare to launch formal negotiations on final status ¹ for the first time in seven years ² Israel should seek to reach a cease-fire with Hamas as soon as possible. . . . In other words, precisely because Israel and the PLO are ready to sit down and talk, Hamas cannot be ignored. Unfortunately, a broad coalition has formed of those who believe that it not only should be ignored but also must be.

"Against such a broad coalition, it is hard for an Israeli to talk about engaging Hamas, let alone a cease-fire. But unlike many others, Israel cannot afford to pretend that Hamas does not exist. Hamas is our next-door neighbor, not that of Washington or Brussels or (with all due respect to Egypt's sensitivity to the dangers of fundamentalist fervor) Cairo."

In comments that have angered many Israelis and American Jews, Beilin said Israel has a duty to care about the welfare of Gaza Strip residents: "Israel also continues to share residual responsibility for the welfare of the 1.4-million Palestinian residents of the Gaza Strip, which Israel occupied for nearly 40 years. The fact, moreover, that Israel continues to exercise control over all but one of Gaza's entry and exit points, as well as over its airspace and sea territory, places additional responsibilities on it."

Beilin argues that Israel's old way of dealing with Hamas is foolhardy: "Given that the current policy of containment has not quelled the violence across its border, Israel should opt for another way. The only option that I see serving the cause of peace is to enter into a dialogue with Hamas through a third party in order to reach a cease-fire."

As to Israel's role in establishing a Palestinian state, Beilin observes: "If we are to arrive at a two-state solution, we must put an end to Israeli settlements and expansion in the West Bank. Every additional settlement makes the establishment of a viable Palestinian state more difficult."

After the Annapolis summit, Olmert huddled with Israeli reporters, revealing to them that deep down he understands the necessity of a viable Palestinian state.

"If the day comes when the two-state solution collapses, and we face a South African-style struggle for equal voting rights, then, as soon as that happens, the state of Israel is finished," he said. "The Jewish organizations, which are our power base in America, will be the first to come out against us because they say they cannot support a state that does not support democracy and equal voting rights for all its residents."

Olmert and policymakers in Israel and the United States need to begin to act pragmatically. Otherwise, the Israeli-Palestinian peace that everyone discusses will remain nothing more than rhetoric, and Israel's future will continue to be threatened.

Missing Piece of Peace

Load-Date: December 4, 2007

End of Document

West Bank: Middle East: 'Almost every prisoner is told to get money or weapons'

The Guardian - Final Edition

July 29, 2008 Tuesday

Copyright 2008 Guardian Newspapers Limited All Rights Reserved

the **guardian**

Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 13

Length: 905 words

Byline: Jonathan Steele, Nablus

Body

Mahdi Khanfar, a 35-year-old graduate in urban development, still trembles at the memory of his arrest by the Palestinian Authority's mukhabarat (intelligence service) in May. "The mukhabarat asked me about **Hamas** and weapons. They put me in a zinzana (a small windowless cell) at mukhabarat headquarters in Jenin and started hanging me with my hands tied behind my back.

"My toes were only just touching the floor. Sometimes they also tied one leg so I had only one foot on the ground. It lasted for five days. I've lost all feeling in my left hand," he told the Guardian last week.

One of several former detainees interviewed in Nablus and Jenin, he described what appeared to be a pattern in which **Hamas** sympathisers are often only released on production by their families of money or guns. The alleged abuse by PA forces appears to be aimed at convincing western donor governments, as well as Israel, that the authority is "clamping down on terror".

Khanfar's brother works in Qatar as news director of the Arab satellite TV station al-Jazeera. "They kept asking me about al-Jazeera broadcasts, which they didn't like. I said that's my brother's business. This is crazy. They contacted Hikmat, my other brother, in Jenin and told him that if he wanted to have me free he should bring a weapon. Hikmat contacted the International Committee of the Red Cross who sent a delegate to see me. My treatment improved slightly but I was held for several more days, until after 53 days I was released."

Fadel Morshed, 40, is a lawyer who has defended **Hamas** detainees. Arrested by the Jenin mukhabarat in January, he says he was kept for the first three days hanging with his hands behind his back. The torture, which creates massive pain without breaking any bones, is known as shabah . In a variant, Morshed was later tied to a stool fixed to the floor beneath the stairs so he had to crouch for hours at a time.

"They asked me why I defended **Hamas** people. I refused to answer and said that as a lawyer I was not required to discuss my clients with them," Morshed told the Guardian. "All the people arrested are moderates who favour unity and dialogue with Fatah. They were not part of **Hamas's** military wing." He was released after 45 days without explanation or charge but still has sores and swellings on his feet.

West Bank: Middle East: 'Almost every prisoner is told to get money or weapons'

Some victims have been arrested more than once. Sheikh Hamid Betawi is head of the Sharia Court of Palestine and a member of the Palestinian parliament, elected on the Hamas-supported list, Reform and Change. He described how his 30-year-old son, Naser, a shopkeeper and father of two, was held and tortured by the mukhabarat in Nablus from March to May this year.

For the first month the family were barred from visiting. "When his wife was let in, the mukhabarat told her to provide money or weapons. Almost every prisoner is told to get money or weapons. Many do. There are plenty of gun-traders," the sheikh said. She sold gold jewellery to raise the money to get him out, but a few weeks later he was arrested again.

"We're facing two occupations, an Israeli one and a Palestinian one," said Sheikh Betawi. "I spoke to Abu Mazen (Mahmoud Abbas) the other day about the attacks on Hamas but nothing has changed," he added. The sheikh is convinced that European donor governments as well as Lieutenant-General Keith Dayton, the US officer overseeing security sector reform for the Palestinian Authority, is aware of what's happening.

Jamal al Muhaisen, the governor of Nablus, an appointee of Abbas's Fatah party, admitted that detainees are routinely swapped for guns. "We only arrest people who may have weapons. If a person delivers a weapon, of course the next day we will release him," he said. He denied torture was a matter of policy. "We refuse to adopt harsh measures but sometimes people who work in prison commit mistakes and we're not happy. It happens in every country, including the United States."

Nablus has also seen almost nightly incursions by Israeli troops over the past few weeks, who have raided six mosques, closed three schools, a clinic, a TV station, a women's group and the charity, Attadamun, which helps orphaned children. The Israeli foreign ministry describes the army's actions, which have also hit hard in Hebron in recent months, as targeted at Hamas's "organisational infrastructure".

"The Hamas activity is carried out under the guise of charity, but the actual aim is the strengthening of the Hamas terror organisation and its grip on the population," a ministry statement said. Hamas wanted to gather strength in the West Bank so as to get control just as it did last year in Gaza, it added.

Up to 200 people have been arrested by the Israelis, according to Governor Muhaisen. But although Nablus's governor criticises the Israeli incursions, many in Nablus see Fatah's relationship with the Israelis as one of collusion more than competition. They point to a revolving door of back-to-back arrests, in which people detained by the Israelis are later held by the Palestinians, or vice versa.

Dr Mustafa Barghouti, the secretary-general of the Palestinian National Initiative and an independent MP who criticises both Fatah and Hamas, said: "Since Annapolis there have been 2,560 Israeli attacks on Palestinians, 90% of them in the West Bank. They've undermined the PA by their actions. They're trying to turn the PA into a security sub-agent like the Vichy government (in occupied France)."

Load-Date: July 29, 2008

Picking Up Pieces, Gazans Debate Israel's Incursion - Correction Appended

The New York Times
March 6, 2008 Thursday
Late Edition - Final

Correction Appended

Copyright 2008 The New York Times Company

Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 12

Length: 1602 words

Byline: By STEVEN ERLANGER

Dateline: JABALIYA, Gaza

Body

In a small shop by their rocketed, bullet-pocked apartment building, the Abed Rabo family argued raucously about the impact of the 48-hour Israeli military incursion, which killed nearly 100 Palestinians, including some neighbors.

"We all support resistance to the Israelis," said Hitam Abed Rabo, 33, a lawyer with the military court set up by **Hamas**, which she supports. "They talk about responding to rockets, but nothing justifies what the Israelis did here. They have to be confronted with strong resistance, so they don't come back."

Will firing rockets on Israeli towns bring independence and freedom? "Yes," she said. "Absolutely."

Ayash Abed Rabo, 34, her cousin, scoffed. "These rockets are a joke," he said. "We want to live. We want peace. I don't want Israel here, and I don't want resistance."

It was a conversation that, in various forms, was repeated across the Gaza Strip this week.

Israeli officials say the operation was meant to show **Hamas** -- the militant Islamist group in power here, which opposes peace with Israel -- the cost of continuing to fire rockets, especially the longer range ones, and to try to create further popular dissatisfaction with **Hamas**. Arguments persist over how many of the dead were truly uninvolved civilians, with Palestinian officials saying half or more than half, and Israel saying far less than half.

But the residents here were horrified by the numbers of civilians they believed had died, and even officials here of Fatah -- the more secular Palestinian party negotiating with Israel -- think the popular reaction has served to strengthen **Hamas** by turning it into the victim, at least in the short term.

Nabil Katari, 46, is a local organizer for the Fatah youth, and his brother is a prominent local member of **Hamas**. "I think Israel is strengthening **Hamas** by aiming at civilians," he said, a charge Israel vehemently denies. "People always sympathize with the fighters and the victims."

Picking Up Pieces, Gazans Debate Israel 's Incursion

Worse, he said, both Hamas and Israel are exaggerating the threat and the number of weapons here. "When we claim we have a lot and really don't have much compared to the Israelis, we serve their interests and let them justify hitting so hard," he said. "I feel something catastrophic coming."

The Abed Rabo family has traditional ties to Fatah, like many of those along Al Quds Street here in eastern Jabaliya, where the Israeli forces concentrated and where mourning tents now line the road.

Mr. Abed Rabo owns the shop, and he, like the other 60 people in the building, many of them relatives, were kept in a single room by Israeli soldiers during the incursion. Hitam went to march on Monday in the large Hamas demonstration celebrating the Israeli withdrawal, which Hamas called a victory. Ayash said: "That celebration was a lie. To celebrate what? More than 100 people killed? And only two Israelis were killed?"

Hitam broke in. "It was a celebration. We pushed them out. We aren't equal militarily, and two dead soldiers is a lot for them. And it was a celebration because our dead are martyrs and will go to paradise. They were strong and powerful."

There is anxiety in Gaza about Hamas, which has moved swiftly to consolidate its power and whose armed policemen and military men are visible in the streets. They provide order and have ended security chaos and much crime, but they are also an intimidating force, smoothly breaking up a Fatah rally called for Wednesday by changing its venue, turning back buses of supporters trying to reach Gaza City and putting hundreds of men, armed with guns and wooden sticks, along the streets.

Ayash Abed Rabo, the shop owner, said: "People are afraid to express themselves fully. We spoke to you, but someone will go to them and say that you were here and that this is what was said by whom. But I'm not afraid -- I haven't said anything that Mahmoud Abbas hasn't said, and he's the president."

Fawzi Barhoum, the Hamas spokesman, said in an interview that people were free to express themselves, and that the dead died honorably. "The number of martyrs is the price of convincing world opinion about the justice of the Palestinian cause," he said. "The celebration was in support of the martyrs and of resistance as a choice."

He insisted that Hamas was in control of Gaza and coordinated rocket firing with other groups, but a moment later said that Hamas would not stop other groups from firing rockets and resisting Israel in their own fashion. But he also said that the number of rockets fired depended on Hamas's calculation of the Palestinian interest at the time, and that Mr. Abbas's negotiations with Israel were futile and a form of collaboration. "The Hamas project is liberation, and Hamas believes that Israel only understands the language of force."

Mr. Barhoum, too, seemed to think that this incursion was a kind of advertisement for the future, and insisted that Israel would fail in any larger military operation, "which will just increase the popularity of Hamas."

The intense fighting here took place during the first two hours of the incursion Saturday just after midnight, when most of the fighters were killed. Most of the time Israeli soldiers took up positions, moved from house to house, looked for weapons, interrogated young people and arrested several dozen for further questioning inside Israel.

Tanks and armored bulldozers chopped up pavements and broke down walls, knocking down hundreds of yards of electricity and telephone cables, now being respliced. But the damage is relatively limited, and the incursion seems to have been a kind of exercise in how to take over a heavily populated area from which Hamas and other gunmen are fighting and firing rockets.

Residents say the Israeli soldiers were more anxious than during past incursions, and gruffer. At least four young men said independently that the soldiers used them as human shields. The young men were blindfolded and handcuffed, and then lined up, two or three at a time, in front of an Israeli soldier, they said, who guided them from behind as they moved down this street or entered another building. Sometimes, they said, a soldier used their shoulders as props for his M-16 rifle.

The young men -- Riad Abed Rabo, 26; his brother, Muhammad, 21; his cousin Majdi, also 21; and Hassan Abu Sabah, 32 -- all said that the Israelis picked them out from the rooms in which building residents were kept,

Picking Up Pieces, Gazans Debate Israel 's Incursion

searched them, handcuffed and blindfolded them, and used them as shields before letting them go seven to eight hours later. The use of civilians as shields has been banned by Israel's Supreme Court. A military spokesman said that some young men were cuffed, blindfolded and walked to an interrogation center, but denied that anyone was used as a human shield.

Some 50 yards down the street, next to a bullet-hole-pocked Internet cafe painted with the Microsoft Windows logo and the slogan, "Word without Borders," there was another mourning tent, the site of an extraordinary political and family drama.

The family of Muhammad Abu Shbak, 37, lives here. Mr. Abu Shbak is a cousin and was a bodyguard of an important Fatah general, Rashid Abu Shbak, an ally of Muhammad Dahlan and his successor as chief of preventive security. After numerous assassination attempts by Hamas and its allies, Rashid Abu Shbak fled Gaza for Egypt. Muhammad Abu Shbak fled to Ramallah, in the West Bank, when Hamas forces routed Fatah forces last June, and neither dared to return.

Mirvat Abu Shbak, 34, Muhammad's wife, stayed behind with their five children. The two eldest -- Jacqueline, 17, and Iyad, 16 -- were killed in the incursion, and Mirvat insists they were shot by an Israeli sniper.

"We were sleeping at midnight when there was a lot of shooting," she said, in a room of mourning women, sitting on floor cushions under a patterned nylon blanket. "An Israeli sniper took a position in the house next door, and he could see me, and me him," she said. "I was with all my kids. At 2 a.m., Iyad wanted to go to the bathroom, and when he got up they shot him in the chest, and I could feel the bullet pressing out his back," she said.

"Jacqueline had been sleeping, and woke up and said, 'My mother, Iyad is injured,' and she moved her head a little and she was shot in the mouth, and the bullet came out the back of her head." Mrs. Abu Shbak kept her composure, as her relatives patted her hand.

"There was blood everywhere, and I fell to the floor, and the sniper kept shooting, every 30 seconds, and I managed to help my children crawl out of the room."

Her husband, she thought, could never return. But with the help of the Hamas brother of Nabil Katari, the Fatah organizer, who arranged a safe passage for him, Mr. Abu Shbak arrived home Tuesday night.

On Wednesday, he, too, was at the mourning tent, with Khaled al-Batsh, the head of Islamic Jihad here, watching over him. "Now I'm back, I'm not going to leave," Mr. Abu Shbak said. "I think Hamas will be no problem. We are one people."

He spoke to Jacqueline on the phone 20 minutes before she died, he said. "She wanted to tell me her exam results -- she got 97 percent, this I remember, and Iyad told me, 'I miss you a lot, Dad.' " He seemed shaky and spoke quietly. "I give the blood of my children as a gift to national unity," he said. "All my interest now is unity. We have to end the division."

Mr. Katari, their neighbor, thinks unity is far away. "Hamas is very closed-minded," he said. "Abu Shbak wants to stay here, but he should probably take his family and go."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Correction

An article on Thursday about reaction among Gaza residents to a weekend military incursion by Israel misstated the death toll in some editions. The number of Palestinians killed in the weekend operation was nearly 100 -- not 126, which is the number of Palestinians killed in Gaza by Israeli military operations since an increase in the conflict began on Feb. 27. (A front-page Inside summary repeated the incorrect number.) Because of an editing error, the

Picking Up Pieces, Gazans Debate Israel 's Incursion

article also misstated a slogan painted on an Internet cafe. It was "Word Without Borders," not "World Without Borders."

Correction-Date: March 7, 2008

Graphic

PHOTOS: Mohammed Abed Rabo, right, and his mother, Aisha, at the family's shop in Jabaliya, after an Israeli incursion killed 126.

Mirvat Abu Shbak, in Jabaliya, said her two eldest children were killed by an Israeli sniper. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALI ALI/EUROPEAN PRESSPHOTO AGENCY, FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) MAP: The operation in Jabaliya was meant to deter rocket fire.

Load-Date: March 6, 2008

End of Document

Hard-liners protesting Mideast conference

Deseret Morning News (Salt Lake City)

November 28, 2007 Wednesday

Copyright 2007 The Deseret News Publishing Co.

Length: 921 words

Byline: Ibrahim Barzak Associated Press

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip -- Tens of thousands of Palestinians in the **Hamas**-ruled Gaza Strip demonstrated Tuesday against the Middle East peace conference in the United States, while the Islamic militant group's leader insisted it was "doomed to failure."

In the West Bank city of Hebron, Palestinian police loyal to President Mahmoud Abbas violently dispersed a demonstration against the peace conference, killing one protester, medical officials said.

Abbas is attending the Annapolis, Md., conference, and protesters filling a huge square in Gaza City called him a "collaborator" for participating and chanted "Death to America" and "Death to Israel."

Ismail Haniyeh, leader of the **Hamas** government in Gaza, expressed dismay over the participation of 16 Arab nations at the U.S. summit. They included Saudi Arabia and Syria, a key **Hamas** patron.

The Arab masses "will reject ... any concessions to the Zionist enemy," Haniyeh said. "We are sure that the Annapolis conference will not change the reality of history and geography," he added. "Any conference that goes beyond this reality is doomed to failure."

The rival government of Abbas in the West Bank banned protests against the peace conference to preserve "stability and security."

Enforcing the ban, police broke up small demonstrations throughout the Palestinian territory.

The Liberation Party, a tiny Islamic group, said Hisham Baradiyeh, a 36-year-old member, was shot in the chest. The group calls for the establishment of a pan-Muslim state through peaceful means.

Several people were seriously injured, medical officials said.

Palestinian Cabinet minister Ashraf Ajrami said there was a "plot to harm the standing" of Abbas' government while he is in the international limelight. He said the government "must investigate the events surrounding the incident" in which the protester died.

In other violence, Israeli troops fatally shot two **Hamas** militants in separate incidents early Tuesday in Gaza, the army and Islamic group said.

"Annapolis is a disaster for us," said Amina Hasanat, a 37-year-old mother of eight who demonstrated in Gaza City and predicted the conference would end in failure. "This will be an advantage for the resistance," she said.

Hard-liners protesting Mideast conference

Gaza's **Hamas** rulers have been staging daily demonstrations against the conference, restating their commitment to Israel's destruction and promising to reject any decisions that come out of Annapolis. The criticism has grown increasingly vitriolic, with one **Hamas** leader on Monday calling Abbas a "traitor."

Polls show a majority of both Palestinians and Israelis favor a negotiated settlement to the conflict. However, a majority on each side is also skeptical that the current peace push will bear fruit.

Hamas violently seized control of Gaza in June after routing forces loyal to Abbas, and his lack of control of Gaza has raised questions about his ability to carry out a future peace deal. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has said he will not implement a peace agreement without a halt to militant attacks from Gaza.

Speaking to reporters Monday, Olmert said the U.S.-backed "road map" peace plan calls on the Palestinians to disarm militants.

But Haniyeh insisted **Hamas** would not disarm.

"We will stand firmly in the face of policies that attack the will of our people, our factions and our weapons of resistance," Haniyeh said. "We reaffirm the legitimacy of resistance and support it as a natural right."

After Haniyeh's speech, the Gaza protest gained strength, beginning with several thousand pro-**Hamas** university students and quickly swelling to tens of thousands of people. Smaller militant groups, including Islamic Jihad, also took part.

"Today you are here to send a message to those who say the land of Palestine is not for sale," said Mahmoud Zahar, a fiery **Hamas** leader. "Whoever thinks we will recognize a Jewish state ... are deluding themselves. There will be no recognition of the state of Israel."

Despite the harsh language, the gathering was more subdued than past **Hamas** rallies. Many demonstrators milled about and appeared uninterested during the speeches.

Children played or enjoyed ice cream, and **women** chatted. Unlike other **Hamas** rallies, there were no public displays of weapons, although protest organizers tried to energize the crowd by playing recordings of gunfire.

In Ramallah, about 1,000 supporters waving their movement's black flag tried to march from a large mosque in the town's center, but were immediately surrounded by police, who began rapidly firing live ammunition over their heads to disperse them.

Many ran back into the mosque and were surrounded. Associated Press reporters saw police beating protesters with sticks in an attempt to disperse the protests. An ambulance rushed to the scene, siren wailing, but there were no immediate reports of injuries.

In Hebron, police and hundreds of protesters threw stones at each other, even as security men fired into the air. Around 50 protesters was arrested, officials said.

There were similar scenes of chaos in the northern West Bank towns of Nablus and Jenin. Police tried to prevent reporters from covering the protests, and seized the camera of one AP photographer.

There have also protests against the peace conference on the Israeli side. More than 20,000 Israelis gathered Monday at the Western Wall, the holiest site where Jews can pray, to oppose it.

Hard-line opposition leader and former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu denounced the conference on Monday, saying he sees it as the continuation of "one-sided concessions."

Hard-liners protesting Mideast conference

End of Document

Worlds apart in Hebron. A visit to the city that produced the Dimona suicide bombers provides little grounds for optimism

The Jerusalem Post

March 16, 2008 Sunday

Copyright 2008 The Jerusalem Post All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 1384 words

Byline: LEON OTU and JORG LUYKEN

Body

HEBRON - In the weeks after her son killed an elderly Israeli woman and wounded 38 others in the February 4 Dimona suicide bombing, Muhammad Hirbawi's mother turned her modest, second floor apartment in northwest Hebron into a makeshift public relations department, in tribute to her child.

At the front door, surrounded by her curious children, she received visitors by handing them **Hamas** flyers on which her son was pictured, smiling, beside his accomplice Shadi al-Zughayar, holding aloft a copy of the Koran.

Locals flocked to her home and that of Zughayar to pay their respects during the three days of mourning that followed their "martyrdom" in a bombing which killed Dr. Lyubov Razdolskya, 73, and left her husband of almost 50 years, Edward, critically wounded. He is now recovering.

The Dimona bombing was the first suicide attack to come from the West Bank since April 2006 and the first for which **Hamas** claimed responsibility since August 2004. Speaking soon after the bombing, Hebron locals, including one Fatah official, spoke of growing public anger at what they said was continued settlement expansion and IDF incursions into the Palestinian Authority controlled part of the town. Some implied this was a factor in the bombing. A February opinion poll conducted by the Ramallah-based Near East Consulting found 40 percent of the Hebron population saying they trust **Hamas**, a rise of 9% since August 2007.

In the immediate aftermath of the bombing, according to Fatah, the IDF ordered PA police to stay off the streets while they searched the Hirbawi household and arrested the bomber's father, Salim, and others. Dianne Roe, a member of the Christian Peacekeeping Team, a prominent NGO based in the town, said locals always dreaded to hear that suicide bombers had come from Hebron, since the IDF curfews that inevitably followed spelled restricted movement for days or weeks on end.

At the town's Fatah offices, a local leader, Kifa Ali- Weweh, did not condemn **Hamas** for the Dimona bombing, but instead extended an olive branch of reconciliation to the fundamentalists. Referring to a recent statement made by **Hamas** in Nablus, in which it expressed regret for the Gaza "coup" of June 2007, he said he hoped the Hebron faction of the movement would issue a similar text.

He also claimed that the IDF was undermining the PA's efforts to adequately police the city, saying that Israel was unwilling to share intelligence on crime and that IDF negligence had enabled criminals to take refuge in the IDF controlled part of town.

Worlds apart in Hebron. A visit to the city that produced the Dimona suicide bombers provides little grounds for optimism

At the same time, however, Weweh said that the suicide bombing should not be taken as an indicator of resurgent extremism among locals and opposition to negotiations with Israel. Rather, he maintained, Hebronites were prepared to wait and see what would come out of the closed-door Israeli-PA contacts.

Another influential local party figure, in the same office, was more strident. He said Israel was not giving the PA a genuine opportunity to impose control in the city.

"Hebron is under PA control in name only," he said. "Last month 60 people were arrested [by the Israelis], 11 of them were children. The people are not persuaded by the [peace] process. [There is] just meeting, talking, handshaking, [and] prestige in front of the world. [On] prisoners, check points, and the wall [the West Bank security barrier], Israel did not give us anything. You can't feel something has changed, you can't see something has changed."

The IDF rejected these assertions. According to an IDF spokesperson, "The activities of the Palestinian Police in Judea and Samaria are coordinated with the IDF. Generally, the IDF enables most of the Palestinian Police's requests regarding the enforcement of law and order in the majority of the Palestinian territories in Judea and Samaria." The spokesman added, however, that "There are incidents, during IDF operations, which require the Palestinian Police to halt or reduce operations in a certain area. This is in order to prevent unnecessary encounters."

Brig.-Gen (Ret.) Shlomo Brom, of Tel Aviv University's Institute for National Security Studies, elaborated that IDF arrest operations were ongoing in Hebron, because of the deep-rooted support for Hamas, based on kinship, among the people there, and their conservative, religious nature.

Underlining the point, Hamas won all nine seats in the Hebron district in the Palestinian legislative elections of January 2006. All nine of the elected parliamentarians are currently detained in Israeli jails. Explaining the Israeli strategy, Brom said: "Against Hamas [Israel] has never accepted a distinction between political and terrorist activities. According to the understanding of the intelligence services, Hamas's political infrastructure upholds and finances its terrorist operations." By way of example, Brom cited the recent closing down of Hamas charities in Hebron. These kinds of operations were going on before the Dimona bombing, he said. But Israel invariably stepped up such activity after a bombing in the area of the bombers' origin.

Relating to the complaints about the failure to remove checkpoints and release Palestinian prisoners, Brom said that Prime Minister Ehud Olmert had been unable to implement any confidence-building measures in the town since the Annapolis conference last November because, aside from security concerns, his hands were also tied by internal coalition pressures.

Brom disputed the notion that Israeli actions in the Hebron area had helped fuel the suicide bombing. "The occupational regime is easier in Hebron than in Nablus [where PA police deployment has been widely publicized]," he said, adding that freedom of movement in Hebron was less restricted.

Brom saw the fact that the Dimona bombers came from Hebron as an expression of solidarity with the Hamas regime in Gaza and also a matter of strategic convenience based on the fact that the security barrier is far from complete in the Hebron Hills area, and therefore crossing into Israel is far simpler than further north. The fact that there had only been one attack from Hebron in recent years, Brom said, was evidence of the relative success of the IDF's tactics.

At Hebron University, where recent student council elections have been closely run affairs, several lecturers and students said they had friends and relatives who were Hamas members and that Hamas should be tolerated. One senior lecturer spoke favorably of Hamas governance as being free of corruption, but also said she feared a Hamas takeover of the West Bank, and complete power over the Palestinian territories, would see those territories being isolated in the same way as Iran.

Worlds apart in Hebron. A visit to the city that produced the Dimona suicide bombers provides little grounds for optimism

This lecturer, who said she had moved into the city because IDF checkpoints had hindered her ability to get to work, said she still saw Fatah as representing the Palestinians' best hope for peace because it had the support of the world's power brokers.

Abayda, a **female** English student and supporter of Mustafa Barghouti, general secretary of the Palestinian National Initiative, described the Dimona bombers sympathetically as having being involved in "redemption operations." But she said her own "resistance" to occupation was that she continued to put up with checkpoints as an act of defiance, while other people had moved into the city.

Another lecturer, a Fatah member, said he was not surprised that the bombers had come from Hebron given Israeli settlement policies and what he termed the detention of students without fair trial for political activism. He doubted whether the PA could remain faithful to the negotiations.

Near East Consulting director Jamil Rabeh said Israeli military activity across the Palestinian territories always galvanized greater support for the Islamists, and that the escalated IDF activity in the area after the Dimona attack "could only lead to one or two [more] people [from the area] being psychologically ready to carry out [a suicide bombing]."

He also said, however, that in general, people did not support **Hamas** suicide bombings and cautioned that people's verbal frustration should not been taken as a sign that violence in the city was about to escalate.

"Generally, Palestinians strategically believe in peace and a peaceful coexistence with Israel which is mutually beneficial to both sides," he said.

Graphic

Photo: THE IDF disputes the claim that its actions in Hebron led those who perpetrated the Dimona suicide attack on February 4, who came from the city, to carry it out. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

Border barrier blasted Great escape

Herald Sun (Australia)

January 24, 2008 Thursday

1 - FIRST Edition

Copyright 2008 Nationwide News Pty Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 44

Length: 383 words

Body

GAZA CITY -- Thousands of desperate Palestinians poured into Egypt yesterday after militants set off at least 15 explosions along the walled-off border of the Gaza Strip.

The Gazans rushed to

buy food, fuel and other supplies that have become scarce because of a months-long Israeli blockade.

Israel has completely sealed off the Gaza Strip, with help from neighbour Egypt, to pressure **Hamas** to stop firing rockets into Israel.

Egyptian security forces did not intervene in the mass escape, but were on full alert after the bombings.

“Thousands of Palestinians have crossed into Egypt through the holes created by the explosions on the border. Although they have crossed illegally, it has not yet been decided how to deal with them,” an Egyptian security source said.

The forced entry came just hours after a tense stand-off at the closed Rafah border crossing, where gunfire erupted after a group of **Hamas** demonstrators forced their way across.

The Gazans, most of them **women**, were detained by Egyptian troops but released after the protest was dispersed by baton-wielding **Hamas**-run police. They had been protesting against the Israeli blockade of the impoverished territory, which was tightened last Thursday to a full-scale lockdown.

Israel has halted all fuel shipments and even the entry of humanitarian aid.

The lockdown came as Gaza was already reeling from restrictions Israel imposed after **Hamas** seized power seven months ago.

The **Hamas**-run government in Gaza has repeatedly called on Egypt to open its border to relieve the Israeli blockade.

On Tuesday, Israel allowed in shipments of cooking gas and fuel to power Gaza's sole power station, which ground to a halt on Sunday night, plunging much of Gaza City into darkness and prompting fears of a humanitarian crisis.

But the Palestinians and UN humanitarian workers have demanded a complete end to the siege.

Border barrier blasted Great escape

The UN Security Council held an emergency debate yesterday, requested by Arab and Islamic states, amid a growing international outcry over what the European Union termed the ``collective punishment" of Gaza's 1.5m residents.

But there was scepticism that the United States, a staunch ally of Israel, would accept a resolution sought by the 14 other council members calling for Israel to end the blockade and for **Hamas** to stop firing rockets.

Load-Date: January 23, 2008

End of Document

Under Robe and Veil, Crossing Boundaries as Policewomen

The New York Times

January 18, 2008 Friday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2008 The New York Times Company

Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 4; GAZA CITY JOURNAL

Length: 850 words

Byline: By TAGHREED EL-KHODARY

Dateline: GAZA CITY

Body

The policemen of Hamas now have company: since the Islamic group took over here last June it has been recruiting policewomen as well.

Since mid-August, 60 women have been accepted into the force. Unlike policemen, the women have not played any role in resisting the latest Israeli incursions, instead working mostly on cases that involve dealing with women, like drugs and prostitution, and helping out at police headquarters and the central jail.

Restoring internal security to the lawless Gaza Strip was one of the main challenges for Hamas upon taking over the area after a civil war with Fatah. The policewomen are one way Hamas has tried to fill the security gap.

Faced with diplomatic and internal isolation, Hamas has also struggled to recreate a criminal justice system, in part because the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah, is paying salaries to the old judges, prosecutors and police officers, mostly from Fatah, and telling them to stay at home. Hamas has named only four judges so far.

It is a paradox of Islamist societies that their deeply conservative restrictions on women and the mingling of the sexes necessarily create opportunities for women in certain areas, like sports, criminal justice and medicine.

But in Gaza, female empowerment and Hamas-style religious orthodoxy are not always an easy mix. Many religious women refuse to do police work because it involves working closely with men and requires working nights.

There are other uncertainties. For example, Rania, 26, the leader of the women's force, refused to give her full name during an interview. She felt that her future with the police was not yet assured, and that she might one day need to go back to her former career as a religious instructor in mosques. If so, her interlude as a policewoman may spoil her relations with her students, she said.

Like most of her female colleagues, Rania wears the niqab, a full veil that leaves only a slit for the eyes. A sign of modesty, it affords her a degree of anonymity as well.

One recruit, Fatma, 27, who preferred not to give her full name, wears only a head scarf, which leaves her face exposed. But she complained that it was hard to run in her long Islamic robe, known as a jilbab. She said that her bosses were thinking of designing a new uniform for easier movement. "They are talking about pants, and a jilbab that is open on both sides," she said.

Under Robe and Veil, Crossing Boundaries as Policewomen

Twenty of the **female** recruits have received training in interrogation techniques, and in shooting pistols and AK-47s, police officials said.

Though Gaza is generally conservative, growing economic hardship intensified by the isolation of the strip under **Hamas** leadership has pushed more **women** to leave the house for the working world. Since **Hamas** began recruiting **women** for the police through its television and radio stations, and calling on **women** in mosques to consider the job a religious duty, hundreds have applied.

They are often highly qualified, with more than two-thirds having studied civil and criminal law at Al Azhar University, the only institution here that teaches law. But nothing in school can quite prepare a young woman for a drug raid, said Fatma, who studied law at Al Azhar.

"The first time, it was scary," Fatma said. "We hadn't received any special training. But the second time was better."

When raiding the house of a suspected dealer, Fatma said, four policewomen are typically assigned to join 30 men. The policewomen search **female** suspects who may be hiding drugs on their bodies, and go into areas off limits for **Hamas** policemen, like family bedrooms.

Another recruit, Fida Abu Husain, 28, is single and lives with her family in the Jabaliya refugee camp, north of Gaza City. "I used to tell my family that my dream was to join Qassam," she said, referring to the **Hamas** military wing. "I'm not Qassam, but I'm in the police force. It's considered jihad," a holy mission, she said.

Ms. Husain works for Amin Nofal, general manager of the military court system. Mr. Nofal cannot see much of her behind her full veil, but says he identifies her by her voice and manner.

"Some **women** cover their beauty, and others hide their ugliness," he said, referring to the niqab. "It's fair. There are those who feel comfortable wearing it when dealing with men."

Rania had been working on the case of an unmarried **female** university student who had been photographed having sex. It was unclear whether she was engaged in prostitution, which is a crime. Either way, she had put herself in a compromising position that, in Rania's view, could harm the Palestinian cause. Drugs and prostitution lead to "collaboration with Israel," she said.

Rania took the pictures to the woman's family and told them of the student's "wrongdoing."

Maher al-Ramli, 45, the chief of the **Hamas** police, said that the police usually aimed for reconciliation, but Rania acknowledged that in cases of "family honor," the **women** often ended up dead at the hands of male relatives or were sometimes married off to those they had slept with or had been raped by.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

PHOTO: Two Palestinian policewomen for **Hamas** on duty in a Gaza jail, one standing and the other teaching the Koran to **female** inmates. (PHOTOGRAPH BY SHAWN BALDWIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Load-Date: January 19, 2008

Under Robe and Veil, Crossing Boundaries as Policewomen

End of Document

Palestinians breach border barricade

thespec.com

January 24, 2008 Thursday

Final Edition

Copyright 2008 Metroland Media Group Ltd All Rights Reserved

Section: CANADA/WORLD; Pg. A08

Length: 321 words

Byline: Hamilton Spectator wire services

Dateline: RAFAH, GAZA STRIP

Body

Tens of thousands of Palestinians streamed into southern Egypt yesterday after **Hamas** militants blew up parts of the fence dividing Egypt from the Gaza Strip, forcing an end to the closing of Gaza that had followed **Hamas**' takeover of the territory last summer.

On foot, bicycle, donkey cart and pickup truck, Gazans crossed the border for a buying spree of medicine, cement, sheep, Coca-Cola, gasoline, soap, Cleopatra and Malimbo cigarettes, satellite dishes and countless other supplies that have been cut off, especially in recent days during a complete blockade by Israel after rocket attacks from Gaza.

From the breach of the border wall before dawn until well into the evening, Palestinians crossed from Rafah in Gaza to Rafah in Egypt -- the city has been divided by the border since 1982, when Egypt accepted the return of Sinai from Israel but declined to take back the Gazan half of Rafah as well.

While the destruction of the fence was an act of defiance by **Hamas** against Israel, which wants Gaza isolated, and against Egypt, which sealed the border to keep Palestinians out, officials from both countries suggested that what happened here was not all bad.

"I told them: 'Let them come in to eat and buy food, then they go back, as long as they are not carrying weapons,'" President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt told reporters a day after his forces had pushed back protesting **women** from the Rafah crossing.

For their part, Israeli officials said that, if controlled, the border opening to Egypt might allow Israel to lock the door to a **Hamas**-run Gaza and let the Egyptians handle the poverty and problems of the 1.5-million Gazans.

The prospect of an open border with Egypt was seen as a victory for **Hamas** and another embarrassment for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who leads Fatah and is complicit in the closing of Gaza.

For more go to thespec.com See a slide show presentation

of the Gaza exodus on the multimedia player.

Graphic

Photo: Hatem Omar, the Associated Press , Palestinians stream into southern Egypt after **Hamas**, in an act of defiance toward Israel, blew up a portion of the wall separating the Gaza Strip from Egypt.

Load-Date: January 24, 2008

End of Document

Space

The Toronto Star
August 1, 2008 Friday

Copyright 2008 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: WORLD AND COMMENT; Pg. AA02

Length: 440 words

Body

Robot confirms presence of frozen water on Mars

The Phoenix spacecraft has tasted Martian water for the first time, U.S. scientists reported yesterday.

By melting icy soil in one of its lab instruments, the robot confirmed the presence of frozen water lurking below the Martian permafrost. Until now, evidence of ice in Mars' north pole region has been largely circumstantial.

In 2002, the orbiting Odyssey spacecraft spied what looked like a reservoir of buried ice. After Phoenix arrived, it found what looked like ice in a hard patch beneath its landing site and changes in a trench hinted some ice had turned to gas when exposed to the sun.

West Bank

Abbas orders release

of **Hamas** detainees

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas yesterday ordered his security forces to release all **Hamas** activists detained in recent days.

Abbas' Fatah security forces arrested about 200 **Hamas** members over the last week. That was a response to a roundup of Fatah members in the Gaza Strip after an explosion there killed five **Hamas** militants. The release of the **Hamas** detainees is seen as part of efforts by Abbas to cool the bitter rivalry between Fatah and **Hamas**.

Haiti

Political impasse ends

as new PM ratified

The Senate yesterday ratified President Rene Preval's third choice for prime minister, ending a more than three-month impasse brought about when the last government was dismissed over violent food price protests.

Twelve senators voted in favour of the nomination of economist Michele Pierre-Louis, a director of a foundation that provides libraries, youth education programs and **women's** networks in the impoverished Caribbean country. Lawmakers had rejected Preval's two previous nominations.

Space

Turkey

Party suspends bid to lift ban on Islamic scarves

The country's ruling party has suspended its bid to lift a decades-old ban on wearing Islamic headscarves in universities, a campaign that infuriated defenders of the country's secular principles and nearly sunk the government.

Deputy Prime Minister Cemil Cicek signalled yesterday the government would not push for a fresh round of legislation to lift the hijab ban, a day after the country's top court narrowly decided not to shut down the ruling party on grounds that it was trying to impose an Islamic regime.

Brazil

Dismembered teen found in suitcase

Police yesterday charged a Brazilian with killing and dismembering his British girlfriend, taking pictures of her body parts with his cell phone and stuffing her torso in a suitcase, which was found on a riverbank in the city of Goiana.

Mohamed D'Ali Carvalho Santos, 20, has been charged with the homicide of Cara Marie Burke, 17.

From the Star's wire services

Load-Date: August 1, 2008

End of Document

Israel agrees to free 150 Palestinians

Ottawa Citizen

August 7, 2008 Thursday

Final Edition

Copyright 2008 Ottawa Citizen, a division of CanWest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A8

Length: 555 words

Byline: Ron Bousso, Agence France-Presse and Reuters

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

JERUSALEM - Israel will release more than 150 Palestinian prisoners later this month as a goodwill gesture to President Mahmoud Abbas as part of U.S.-backed peace talks, officials said yesterday.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's spokesman, Mark Regev, said the move was requested by Mr. Abbas.

"We hope this gesture will help the peace process," Mr. Regev told reporters after the latest meeting between the two leaders.

Senior Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erakat said the meeting was "successful" and that Israel had agreed to release more than 150 prisoners.

"We agreed with the Israelis there will be a new batch of prisoners released on the 25th of August," Mr. Erakat told reporters after the meeting.

He declined to give names, but said Mr. Abbas urged Israel to release several prominent and long-serving prisoners, including Marwan Barghuti, a popular leader in Mr. Abbas's Fatah faction seen as a leading contender to succeed the Palestinian president.

Mr. Barghuti, a West Bank leader considered to have masterminded the second Palestinian uprising in 2000, was jailed in 2004 and is serving five life sentences for his role in deadly attacks.

Mr. Abbas also wants Israel to release prominent leaders from other factions, including parliament speaker Aziz Dweik from the Islamist **Hamas** movement, and Ahmed Saadat, the leader of the leftist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Mr. Erakat said.

There are currently more than 11,000 Palestinians jailed in Israel, including at least 85 **women** and children and 11 people who are seriously ill.

In July, the Lebanese Hezbollah militia celebrated what it called a major victory when it traded the bodies of two Israeli soldiers for five Lebanese prisoners and the remains of about 200 Lebanese and Palestinian fighters.

Israel agrees to free 150 Palestinians

Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip, has been trying to secure a similar deal to swap Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, seized in a deadly cross-border raid from the territory in June 2006, for hundreds of Palestinian prisoners.

Yesterday's decision drew swift criticism from Israel's right-wing opposition Likud party, which said it endangered efforts to free Staff Sgt. Shalit.

"(The decision) to liberate Palestinian terrorists without receiving anything in return is a mistake for security and efforts to liberate Gilad Shalit," Likud MP Gideon Saar said in a statement.

Yesterday's meeting was the first between the two leaders since Mr. Olmert's surprise announcement one week ago that he would step down as premier after a Kadima party primary on Sept. 17 amid corruption allegations.

His imminent departure has cast a shadow over the peace efforts relaunched in November, when both sides pledged to try to reach a full agreement by the end of 2008.

Meanwhile, Israel freed two senior **Hamas** officials detained in the occupied West Bank during a security sweep after Staff Sgt. Shalit's abduction, their families said yesterday.

They said Abli Yaish, the **Hamas** mayor of Nablus, and Issa al-Ja'abari, a **Hamas** representative in Hebron, returned home after being freed on bail from the Ofer detention centre.

Israel freed another prominent **Hamas** official on Sunday. Omar Abdel Razek was finance minister when Israel arrested him in June 2006.

Nablus businessman Ziad Anatawi also went free yesterday after spending two weeks in Israeli custody, his family said.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Nayef Hashlamoun, Reuters; Former **Hamas** minister Issa al-Ja'abari is fêted by relatives after he was released on bail from an Israeli prison in Hebron yesterday. ;

Load-Date: August 7, 2008

ATTACKERS DRAWN To CITY STREETS

The Toronto Star
July 3, 2008 Thursday

Copyright 2008 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: WORLD AND COMMENT; Pg. AA01

Length: 222 words

Body

A chronology of previous incidents in which Arabs killed Israelis in Jerusalem over the past five years:

May 18, 2003: Seven people are killed and 20 injured when a suicide bomb detonates on a bus in the French Hill district of Jerusalem. Another bomber strikes soon afterward at a nearby roadblock but kills only himself.

June 11, 2003: Seventeen die when a suicide bomber blows up a bus near an open-air market in central Jerusalem's Jaffa Rd. At least 100 are injured. **Hamas** claims responsibility.

Aug. 19, 2003: Twenty-three are killed by a suicide bomb that rips through a bus in West Jerusalem.

Sept. 9, 2003: Seven are killed and dozens wounded in a suicide bombing in a West Jerusalem cafe. **Hamas** claims responsibility.

Jan. 29, 2004: Ten are killed by a suicide bomb that blows up a bus near the office of then-PM Ariel Sharon. Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades and **Hamas** both claim responsibility.

Feb. 22, 2004: Eight are killed when a Palestinian suicide bomber blows himself up on an Israeli bus in Jerusalem, killing eight people.

Sept. 22, 2004: A **female** Palestinian suicide bomber blows herself up near a hitchhiking post in East Jerusalem, killing two Israeli border police.

March 6, 2008: A Palestinian gunman kills eight students and is shot dead at the Jewish Merkaz Harav religious college. **Hamas** officials claim responsibility..

Load-Date: July 3, 2008

Innocents caught in the cross fire; Gazans' plight works against peace efforts

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

May 8, 2008 Thursday

Main Edition

Copyright 2008 The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

**The Atlanta
Journal-Constitution**

Section: @ISSUE; Pg. 17A

Length: 739 words

Byline: JIMMY CARTER

For the Journal-Constitution

Body

The world is witnessing a terrible human rights crime in Gaza, where a million and a half human beings are being imprisoned with almost no access to the outside world by sea, air or land. An entire population is being brutally punished.

This gross mistreatment of the Palestinians in Gaza was escalated dramatically by Israel, with United States backing, after political candidates representing **Hamas** won a majority of seats in the Palestinian Authority parliament in 2006. The election was unanimously judged to be honest and fair by all international observers.

Israel and the U.S. refused to accept the right of Palestinians to form a unity government with **Hamas** and Fatah, and now, after internal strife, **Hamas** alone controls Gaza. Forty-one of the 43 victorious **Hamas** candidates who lived in the West Bank are now imprisoned by Israel, plus an additional 10 who assumed positions in the short-lived coalition cabinet.

Regardless of one's choice in the partisan struggle between Fatah and **Hamas** within occupied Palestine, we must remember that economic sanctions and restrictions in delivering water, food, electricity and fuel are causing extreme hardship among the innocent people in Gaza, about 1 million of whom are refugees.

Israeli bombs and missiles periodically strike the encapsulated area, causing high casualties among both militants and innocent **women** and children. Prior to the highly publicized killing of a woman and her four little children last week, this pattern was illustrated by a previous report from B'Tselem, the leading Israeli human rights organization: 106 Palestinians were killed between Feb. 27 and March 3. Fifty-four of them were civilians who didn't take part in the fighting, and 25 were under 18 years of age.

Innocents caught in the cross fire Gazans' plight works against peace efforts

On a recent trip through the Middle East, I attempted to gain a better understanding of the crisis. One of my visits was to Sderot, a community of about 20,000 in southern Israel that is frequently struck by rudimentary rockets fired from nearby Gaza. I condemned these attacks as abominable and an act of terrorism, since most of the 13 victims during the past seven years have been noncombatants.

Subsequently, I met with leaders of **Hamas**, both a delegation from Gaza and the top officials in Damascus, Syria. I made the same condemnation to them, and urged that they declare a unilateral ceasefire or orchestrate with Israel a mutual agreement to terminate all military action in and around Gaza for an extended period.

They responded that such previous action by them had not been reciprocated, and they reminded me that **Hamas** had previously insisted on a cease-fire throughout Palestine, including both Gaza and the West Bank, which Israel had refused.

Hamas then made a public proposal of a mutual cease-fire restricted to Gaza, which the Israelis considered and also rejected.

There are fervent arguments heard on both sides concerning blame for a lack of peace in the Holy Land.

Israel has occupied and colonized the Palestinian West Bank, which is approximately one-fourth (28.5 percent) the size of the nation of Israel as recognized by the international community.

Some Israeli religious factions claim a right to the land on both sides of the Jordan River, and others aver that their 205 settlements with some 500,000 people are necessary for "security."

All Arab nations have agreed to full recognition of Israel if it will comply with key United Nations resolutions. **Hamas** has agreed to accept any negotiated peace settlement between Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, provided it is approved in a referendum among the Palestinian people.

This holds promise of progress, but despite the brief fanfare and positive statements at the peace conference last November in Annapolis, Md., a retrogression has occurred in the process. Nine thousand new Israeli settlement housing units have been announced in Palestine, the number of roadblocks within the West Bank has increased and the stranglehold on Gaza has been tightened.

It is one thing for other leaders to defer to the U.S. on the crucial peace negotiations, but the world must not stand idle while innocent people are treated cruelly. It is time for strong voices in Europe, the U.S., Israel and elsewhere to speak out and condemn this human rights tragedy among the Palestinian people.

* Jimmy Carter, a former president of the United States, is founder of the Carter Center in Atlanta.

Graphic

Photo: Jimmy Carter, a former president of the United States, is founder of the Carter Center in Atlanta./ImageData* ImageData*

Graphic: TIM BRINTON / newsart.com/ImageData*

Load-Date: May 8, 2008

**IDF to discuss deployment of PA soldiers in Hebron, in bid to boost
Mahmoud Abbas**

The Jerusalem Post

September 21, 2008 Sunday

Copyright 2008 The Jerusalem Post All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 3

Length: 437 words

Byline: YAAKOV KATZ

Body

In an effort to bolster Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas as he nears the end of his presidential term, the IDF will meet this week with Palestinian security chiefs in the Hebron area to finalize plans for the deployment of 150 Palestinian Authority soldiers in the city.

Abbas is scheduled to finish his term as president on January 9, 2009 and in the absence of new elections - due to the **Hamas** takeover of the Gaza Strip - Abbas, according to the PA constitution, will be replaced by the speaker of the PA parliament, Abdel Aziz Dweik, a senior **Hamas** official currently in an Israeli prison.

Abbas, however, is not expected to step down from his post and is looking for ways to extend his term. The IDF and the PA are concerned that Abbas's refusal to hand over the reins could set off violent clashes in the West Bank between Fatah and **Hamas**.

As a result, OC Central Command Maj.-Gen. Gadi Shamni has agreed to allow a platoon of 150 Palestinian soldiers deploy in Hebron where they will be used by the PA to crack down on **Hamas** operatives and infrastructure in the city, known for its strong **Hamas** presence.

Defense Ministry officials had initially opposed the deployment in Hebron, out of fear that the presence of armed Palestinian soldiers would escalate tensions with the Jewish settlers in the city. Palestinian assurances that the soldiers will not patrol areas near the Jewish community paved the way for Shamni's approval.

Col. Udi Ben-Muha, commander of the Judean Brigade, which is responsible for security in Hebron, is expected to meet this week with local Palestinian security commanders to coordinate the planned deployment.

The request to deploy soldiers in Hebron was made by Palestinian Prime Minister Salaam Fayad and is based on the "Jenin model," under which Palestinian troops deployed in large numbers in the city earlier this year and the IDF scaled back its operations in the vicinity.

In addition, Israel eased travel restrictions in northern Samaria and has started allowing Israeli Arabs to visit Jenin in an effort to rehabilitate its weakened economy.

If the Jenin and Hebron programs continue to produce results, the Defense Ministry may expand the program to Tulkarm.

IDF to discuss deployment of PA soldiers in Hebron, in bid to boost Mahmoud Abbas

On Thursday, 500 PA soldiers crossed over the Allenby Bridge into Jordan for US-funded military training.

While officials in the IDF and the Shin Bet (Israel Security Agency) claimed that terrorists were still present in the city, the number of terror warnings in Jenin have dropped drastically in recent weeks and the officials admitted that the PA forces are doing a relatively effective job in cracking down on **Hamas** institutions.

Graphic

Photo: A **FEMALE** SOLDIER searches a Palestinian woman outside Hebron's Cave of the Patriarchs. (Credit: Nasser Shiyukhi/AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

End of Document

My Say: A human rights crime in Gaza

The Edge Malaysia

May 19, 2008

Copyright 2008 The Edge Communications Sdn. Bhd. All Rights Reserved

Length: 745 words

Byline: Jimmy Carter

Body

The world is witnessing a terrible human rights crime in Gaza, where 1.5 million human beings are being imprisoned with almost no access to the outside world by sea, air or land. An entire population is being brutally punished.

This gross mistreatment of the Palestinians in Gaza was escalated dramatically by Israel (which celebrated its 60th anniversary on May 14), and backed by the US, after political candidates representing Hamas won a majority in the Palestinian Authority parliament in 2006. The election was unanimously judged to be honest and fair by all international observers.

Israel and the US refused to accept the right of the Palestinians to form a coalition government with Hamas and Fatah and now, after internal strife, Hamas alone controls Gaza. Forty-one of the 43 victorious Hamas candidates who lived in the West Bank are now imprisoned by Israel, plus another 10 who assumed positions in the short-lived coalition cabinet.

Regardless of one's choice in the partisan struggle between Fatah and Hamas within occupied Palestine, we must remember that economic sanctions and restrictions in delivering water, food, electricity and fuel are causing extreme hardship among the innocent people in Gaza, about a million of whom are refugees.

Israeli bombs and missiles periodically strike the encapsulated area, causing high casualties among both militants and innocent women and children. Prior to the highly publicised killing of a woman and her four little children last month, this pattern was illustrated in a previous report from B'Tselem, the leading Israeli human rights organisation: 106 Palestinians were killed between Feb 27 and March 3. Fifty-four of them were civilians who had not taken part in the fighting and 25 were below 18 years of age.

On a recent trip through the Middle East, I attempted to gain a better understanding of the crisis. One of my visits was to Sderot, a community of about 20,000 in southern Israel that is frequently struck by rudimentary rockets fired from nearby Gaza. I condemned these attacks as abominable and an act of terrorism, since most of the 13 victims during the past seven years have been non-combatants.

Subsequently, I met with leaders of Hamas, both a delegation from Gaza and the top officials in Damascus, Syria. I made the same condemnation to them, and urged that they declare a unilateral ceasefire or orchestrate with Israel a mutual agreement to terminate all military action in and around Gaza for an extended period.

They responded that such previous action by them had not been reciprocated. They reminded me that Hamas had previously insisted on a ceasefire throughout Palestine, including both Gaza and the West Bank, which Israel had

My Say: A human rights crime in Gaza

refused. **Hamas** then made a public proposal of a mutual ceasefire restricted to Gaza, which the Israelis considered and also rejected.

There are fervent arguments heard on both sides concerning blame for the lack of peace in the Holy Land. Israel has occupied and colonised the Palestinian West Bank, which is about one-fourth the size of Israel, as recognised by the international community. Some Israeli religious factions claim a right to the land on both sides of the Jordan River, while others aver that their 205 settlements with some 500,000 people are necessary for "security".

All Arab nations have agreed to fully recognise Israel if it will comply with key United Nations resolutions. **Hamas** has agreed to accept any negotiated peace settlement between Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, provided it is approved in a referendum among the Palestinian people.

This holds promise of progress, but despite the brief fanfare and positive statements at the peace conference last November in Annapolis, Maryland, a regression has occurred in the process. Nine thousand new Israeli settlement housing units have been announced in Palestine, the number of roadblocks within the West Bank has increased and the stranglehold on Gaza has been tightened.

It is one thing for other leaders to defer to the US on the crucial peace negotiations, but the world must not stand idle while innocent people are treated cruelly. It is time for strong voices in Europe, the US, Israel and elsewhere to speak out and condemn this human rights tragedy among the Palestinian people. - Project Syndicate

Jimmy Carter, former US president, is the founder of The Carter Center, which promotes peace, health and human rights worldwide

Load-Date: May 22, 2008

End of Document

A human rights crime in Gaza

THE KOREA HERALD

May 9, 2008 Friday

Copyright 2008 The Korea Herald All Rights Reserved

Length: 759 words

Body

ATLANTA - The world is witnessing a terrible human rights crime in Gaza, where a million and a half human beings are being imprisoned with almost no access to the outside world by sea, air, or land. An entire population is being brutally punished.

This gross mistreatment of the Palestinians in Gaza was escalated dramatically by Israel, with United States backing, after political candidates representing Hamas won a majority of seats in the Palestinian Authority parliament in 2006. The election was unanimously judged to be honest and fair by all international observers.

Israel and the United States refused to accept the right of Palestinians to form a unity government with Hamas and Fatah and now, after internal strife, Hamas alone controls Gaza. Forty-one of the 43 victorious Hamas candidates who lived in the West Bank are now imprisoned by Israel, plus an additional 10 who assumed positions in the short-lived coalition cabinet.

Regardless of one's choice in the partisan struggle between Fatah and Hamas within occupied Palestine, we must remember that economic sanctions and restrictions in delivering water, food, electricity, and fuel are causing extreme hardship among the innocent people in Gaza, about 1 million of whom are refugees.

Israeli bombs and missiles periodically strike the encapsulated area, causing high casualties among both militants and innocent women and children. Prior to the highly publicized killing of a woman and her four little children last week, this pattern was illustrated by a previous report from B'Tselem, the leading Israeli human rights organization: 106 Palestinians were killed between Feb. 27 and March 3. Fifty-four of them were civilians who didn't take part in the fighting, and 25 were under 18 years of age.

On a recent trip through the Middle East, I attempted to gain a better understanding of the crisis. One of my visits was to Sderot, a community of about 20,000 in southern Israel that is frequently struck by rudimentary rockets fired from nearby Gaza. I condemned these attacks as abominable and an act of terrorism, since most of the thirteen victims during the past seven years have been non-combatants.

Subsequently, I met with leaders of Hamas, both a delegation from Gaza and the top officials in Damascus, Syria. I made the same condemnation to them, and urged that they declare a unilateral ceasefire or orchestrate with Israel a mutual agreement to terminate all military action in and around Gaza for an extended period.

They responded that such previous action by them had not been reciprocated, and they reminded me that Hamas had previously insisted on a ceasefire throughout Palestine including both Gaza and the West Bank, which Israel had refused. Hamas then made a public proposal of a mutual ceasefire restricted to Gaza, which the Israelis considered and also rejected.

A human rights crime in Gaza

There are fervent arguments heard on both sides concerning blame for a lack of peace in the Holy Land. Israel has occupied and colonized the Palestinian West Bank, which is approximately one-fourth (28.5 percent) the size of the nation of Israel as recognized by the international community. Some Israeli religious factions claim a right to the land on both sides of the Jordan River, and others aver that their 205 settlements with some 500,000 people are necessary for "security."

All Arab nations have agreed to full recognition of Israel if it will comply with key United Nations resolutions. **Hamas** has agreed to accept any negotiated peace settlement between Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, provided it is approved in a referendum among the Palestinian people.

This holds promise of progress, but despite the brief fanfare and positive statements at the peace conference last November in Annapolis, Maryland, a retrogression has occurred in the process. Nine thousand new Israeli settlement housing units have been announced in Palestine, the number of roadblocks within the West bank has increased, and the stranglehold on Gaza has been tightened.

It is one thing for other leaders to defer to the United States on the crucial peace negotiations, but the world must not stand idle while innocent people are treated cruelly. It is time for strong voices in Europe, the United States, Israel, and elsewhere to speak out and condemn this human rights tragedy among the Palestinian people.

Jimmy Carter, a former president of the United States, is founder of the Carter Center, promoting peace, health, and human rights worldwide. - Ed.

(Project Syndicate)

Load-Date: May 9, 2008

End of Document

Gazans raze wall at Egypt border; Tens of thousands then go shopping

The International Herald Tribune

January 24, 2008 Thursday

Copyright 2008 International Herald Tribune All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 1439 words

Byline: Steven Erlanger - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: RAFAH, Egypt

Body

Isabel Kershner contributed reporting from Jerusalem.

*

Tens of thousands of Gazans streamed into southern Egypt on Wednesday after Hamas militants blew up the border fence in numerous locations, trying to force an end to the closing of Gaza that followed Hamas's takeover of the territory in June.

On foot, bicycle, donkey cart and pickup truck, Gazans went on a buying spree of medicine, cement, Coca-Cola, gasoline, motor oil, diesel fuel, soap, Cleopatra and Malimbo cigarettes, satellite dishes and countless other supplies that have been cut off during days of blockade by Israel and are either unavailable or far more expensive in Gaza. Many people bought livestock: cows, sheep and goats.

From the breach of the border wall before dawn until well into the evening, Palestinians crossed from Rafah in Gaza to Rafah in Egypt - a city divided by the border after Israel returned Sinai to Egypt in 1979 and President Anwar Sadat refused an offer by Menachem Begin, then prime minister of Israel, to take back Gaza as well.

Relatives from both sides met, as did business partners in smuggling goods through the tunnels from Egypt to Gaza. For one day at least, and probably longer, no tunnels were necessary, and Egyptian businessmen brought goods to sell from the more distant town of El Arish to Rafah. Some enterprising Gazans ordered goods from Cairo in the morning and went across to Rafah to pick them up at noon.

Farid Abu Jabara, 45, who helps to run a Swedish foundation for Gaza's handicapped, picked up 50 air mattresses and their pumps he ordered at his own initiative from Cairo at 7 a.m.

Muhammad Mowab, 22, a student and barber, bought a cartload of cement for 20 shekels, or about \$5.30, a bag, compared with 300 shekels in Gaza, where Israel has banned the importation of cement except for specific humanitarian projects. "I've been waiting a year to get married, so I can build a house," he said, then laughed. "Now there are no more excuses."

Some Israeli officials suggested that the border opening to Egypt, if controlled, might be a positive outcome, allowing Israel to lock the door to a Hamas-run Gaza and let the Egyptians handle the poverty and problems of the 1.5 million people there.

Gazans raze wall at Egypt border Tens of thousands then go shopping

"This may be a blessing in disguise," a senior Israeli official said, refusing to use his name because his minister is away. "On the level of smuggling, weapons and so on, it makes no difference. But if it continues like this, it will ease tremendously the pressure on Israel on the humanitarian level. The humanitarian organizations will get off our backs. There won't be any shortages. So that is a good thing.

"We don't care if people buy food in Egypt. And terrorists come in anyway. Second, there's a notion that Barak believes in - and I think Sharon did too - of getting out of Gaza, and throwing away the keys," he said, referring to Defense Minister Ehud Barak and former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

Another Israeli official said of the border: "Instead of being unofficially open, it will now be officially open. We are starting talking about it. Some people in the Defense Ministry, Foreign Ministry and prime minister's office are very happy with this. They are saying, 'At last, the disengagement is beginning to work.' "

When news of the border breach occurred, Israel ordered a halt to delivery of the 2.2 million liters, or 580,000 gallons, of industrial diesel it promised this week to run Gaza's main power station, with only 250,000 liters delivered Wednesday after 750,000 on Tuesday, Palestinian officials said. Cooking gas was delivered, but regular diesel fuel was not.

Fatan Hessin, 45, met a childhood friend, Inshira Hamdal, for the first time in years. "A few months ago I thought I would never see her again," Hessin said. "We are so tired of this life in Gaza - closure, unemployment, poverty, violence."

She came to buy a large bag of flour - 250 shekels in Gaza and only 65 shekels in Egypt - and wished she had money to buy more.

"We thank **Hamas** for this," Hessin said, holding on to . Hamdal's hand. "I'm a Palestinian, not Fatah or **Hamas**. But I thank **Hamas**. This is the best thing they have done."

The prospect of an open border with Egypt was widely accepted as a victory for **Hamas** and another embarrassment for the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah, who is seen as a partner with Israel and the United States and complicit in the closing of the **Hamas**-run Gaza.

Mahmoud Zahar, a senior **Hamas** official in Gaza, refused in an interview to take direct responsibility for ordering the Egyptian border opened, but said: "We are creating facts. We have to try to change the situation, and now we await the results."

With the crossings to Israel closed and minimal goods coming in, Zahar said, "Rafah is our only lung. If Rafah remains shut, it means our acceptance to be strangled, our acceptance to die. We warned the Egyptians yesterday that people are hungry and dying."

Sometimes, he acknowledged, it's necessary to create a crisis to settle another one.

It was clear that **Hamas** decided to push the issue with Egypt.

Muhammad Mishlahad broke down nearly a half-mile of massive concrete blocks with his crane. "I got a call from **Hamas** at 6 a.m. and they said they had a job for me," Mishlahad said, nearly giddy with the thrill of the day. "They asked me to come and clear the barrier." Asked if he were afraid, he laughed and said: "Why should we be afraid? This is our state."

After pushing back protesting **women** from the Rafah crossing on Tuesday, President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt on Wednesday ordered his border police and troops to let the Gazans through to buy what they wanted.

"I told them: 'Let them come in to eat and buy food, then they go back, as long as they are not carrying weapons,' " he said at a Cairo book fair.

Gazans raze wall at Egypt border Tens of thousands then go shopping

Mubarak urged Fatah and Hamas to get together, saying: "If we speak to one Palestinian party we find the other party gets angry. If we ask them to negotiate without preconditions, some of them get angry. There are many problems between them but I do not want to get into the details."

In Gaza, Zahar and the Hamas prime minister, Ismail Haniya, called for an urgent meeting with Egypt to work out a new arrangement for Gaza's border crossings. Haniya suggested that Hamas would be prepared to cede some control to Abbas, saying: "We don't want to be the only ones in control of these matters."

Zahar, however, said that Hamas and Egypt should work out a border regime, because Hamas is the elected government of the Palestinian Authority.

"We don't want chaos on the border," he said. "We can patrol our side. We want to keep out criminals and drug traffickers."

But he emphasized that Hamas saw Gaza and the West Bank as a single state.

Abbas's appointed government in the West Bank denounced the Haniya suggestion. Ashraf Ajrami, a cabinet minister, said that Haniya was ignoring Abbas's demand that it return Gaza to his control. "Everything Haniya is saying is simply to exploit this situation to win political gains," he said.

Gazans of all classes walked into Egypt, their numbers limited only by the dire shortage of gasoline. Ala Shawa and his wife, Hana, walked through the dirt streets of the Egyptian side. "I'm bringing my wife to have a vacation," Shawa joked, after months of being unable to travel from Gaza.

His wife said, "I'm here to buy chocolate and Coke for my kids, who are at school. I want to bring my kids to the El Arish beach." Then she said: "This is the best thing Hamas has ever done."

Ahlan Ashour, 38, came with his wife to visit the Egyptian family, the Barhoums, who had put them up for 24 days during an earlier period when the crossing was shut. Mohsin Elloulou, his wife, said she was struck by how much poorer the Egyptians of Rafah are than the Gazans.

"At least our streets are paved," she said. The current lack of electricity and supplies is terrible, she said. "But materially, we're so much more advanced in Gaza." A driver here, she said, makes 5 shekels a day, and in normal times in Gaza, 100 shekels. "But nothing is normal now," she said.

Hanan Bissisou, 55, wore a sweater emblazoned, "Now or Never." He was buying cigarettes and a list of medications for his mother-in-law for her blood pressure and kidney problems. Top of the list were anti-acids, which are no longer available in Gaza.

Muhammad Abu Qassem, 23, has a place at Petra University in Jordan but was unable to get out of Gaza. He was woken by his father before dawn.

"He told me to go," Qassem said. He showed his visa, airline tickets and entrance certificate. "I hope they let me fly from Cairo," he said.

Load-Date: January 30, 2008

Violence erupts at Arafat rally

Windsor Star (Ontario)

November 13, 2007 Tuesday

Final Edition

Copyright 2007 Windsor Star, a division of CanWest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A11

Length: 558 words

Byline: The Los Angeles Times

Dateline: GAZA CITY

Body

GAZA CITY - A memorial rally for Yasser Arafat on Monday erupted in gunfire between **Hamas** forces and followers of the rival Fatah movement in the Gaza Strip, leaving at least six people dead and 30 injured.

It was the worst violence between the two Palestinian factions since **Hamas** routed Fatah in a military-style takeover of the coastal strip in June. The summertime clashes left Gaza under the sole control of **Hamas**, while the West Bank remains ruled by Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, of Fatah.

Since the takeover, **Hamas** has broken up previous rallies by its rival in Gaza, though with far less bloodshed. Monday's midday gathering was to mark the third anniversary of Arafat's death on Nov. 11, 2004, one of a series of remembrance ceremonies in the West Bank and Gaza for the former Fatah leader.

Gunfire broke out as tens of thousands of Fatah supporters, waving their faction's yellow flags and wearing Arafat-style checkered kaffiyehs, thronged a public square and streets around Al Azhar University, a Fatah stronghold in Gaza City.

Reports differed over how the violence started, with each faction blaming the other for firing first. The crowd dispersed soon after the incident and the confrontation appeared to be over.

The clashes seemed certain to widen the gulf between the rival groups. Abbas, who fired the **Hamas**-led government after the June fighting, has sought to isolate the Islamist group while he pursues peace talks with Israel.

Abbas has used the occasion of the anniversary of Arafat's death to renew calls for Palestinian statehood and a negotiated peace with Israel. The Palestinians and Israelis are to take part in a U.S.-sponsored peace conference, tentatively scheduled for later this month, aimed at kicking off full-scale negotiations.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said Monday that Israel was weighing the release of an undisclosed number of Palestinian prisoners as a gesture to Abbas. Israel freed more than 300 of an estimated 11,000 imprisoned Palestinians in similar releases earlier this year.

Olmert spokeswoman Miri Eisin said release of "a significant number" of Palestinian prisoners was under consideration. Israeli media reported that the number would be 300 to 400, but Eisin would not confirm a figure.

Violence erupts at Arafat rally

Any decision to release prisoners requires Cabinet approval.

Saeb Erakat, the chief Palestinian negotiator, said the Palestinians would welcome the release of any prisoners. "But we also want a written commitment to release all prisoners when we sign a peace treaty," he told Voice of Palestine radio.

Olmert has said the time is right for substantive talks with Abbas, whom he describes as a partner for peace. The leaders have met seven times since last December and are said to have established warm relations.

But negotiators for the two sides have yet to agree on the wording of a joint document to be presented at the conference as an outline for a final agreement.

The gathering is to take place in Annapolis, Md.

In other developments, Israeli forces in the West Bank arrested two more **Hamas** members of the Palestinian parliament.

The arrests of Mariam Saleh in Ramallah and Khaled Tafesh, from the Bethlehem area, brought to 44 the number of **Hamas** lawmakers jailed by Israel since mid-2006. All remain in custody. Saleh was the first **female** lawmaker from **Hamas** to be arrested by Israel.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Getty Images; ARAFAT REMEMBERED: Palestinian supporters of the Fatah movement wave their national flags and posters while they attend a rally to mark the death of Yasser Arafat on Monday in Gaza City, Gaza Strip. Gunfire killed at least six people during the clashes between the Palestinian police and Fatah supporters. ;

Load-Date: November 13, 2007

PA claims Israel has no objections to Barghouti's release. Olmert, Abbas to meet today as Ramon Committee decides on 450 detainees to be traded for Schalit

The Jerusalem Post
August 31, 2008 Sunday

Copyright 2008 The Jerusalem Post All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 761 words

Byline: KHALED ABU TOAMEH and MARK WEISS

Body

The Israeli government has informed the Palestinian Authority that it has no objections to the release of jailed Fatah operative Marwan Barghouti, a senior PA official in Ramallah said over the weekend.

The official told The Jerusalem Post that Barghouti and several other prominent security prisoners could be released in the coming days or weeks. Barghouti is serving five life sentences for the murders of four Israelis and a Greek monk.

But an official in Jerusalem said Saturday night that "the release of Marwan Barghouti is simply not on the table today." The official also said that last week's release of 198 Palestinian detainees freed "was not the first prisoner release and will not be the last."

The question of an additional prisoner release will be one of the items on the agenda at talks in Jerusalem on Sunday between Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

Olmert, who will be accompanied by Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, will stress Israel's desire to move forward with the Annapolis process with the aim of reaching a deal with the Palestinians before US President George W. Bush leaves office in January.

Also Sunday, Vice Premier Haim Ramon will convene a special ministerial committee to draw up a list of 450 security prisoners Israel is willing to release in an Egyptian-mediated prisoner swap with **Hamas** in return for kidnapped IDF soldier Gilad Schalit, who last week marked his third birthday in captivity in Gaza.

The London-based Asharq al-Awsat newspaper quoted **Hamas** sources on Saturday saying that the movement is now demanding more than 1,000 prisoners in return for Schalit.

According to the senior PA official who spoke to the Post, Israel has agreed in principle to free many security prisoners, including Barghouti and Fuad Shobaki, a PA general who was involved in the failed attempt to smuggle the Karin A weapons ship into the Gaza Strip nearly eight years ago.

The official added that Israel has also agreed to free Abdel Aziz Dweik, speaker of the **Hamas**-dominated Palestinian Legislative Council, who is reported to be in bad health.

PA claims Israel has no objections to Barghouti's release. Olmert, Abbas to meet today as Ramon Committee decides on 450 detainees to be traded for Schalit

The PA official said the release of Dweik and other **Hamas** officials, including ministers and legislators, would "further strengthen" the standing of Abbas and the PA leadership.

"It's better for all if Barghouti and the **Hamas** officials are released as a result of our efforts and not through a prisoner exchange with **Hamas**," the official told the Post. "**Hamas** is hoping to score points by releasing Fatah and **Hamas** prisoners in return for Gilad Schalit."

Abbas would demand in Sunday's talks with Olmert that Israel release hundreds of prisoners as a gesture on the eve of Ramadan, a source close to the PA president said.

Chief PA negotiator Saeb Erekat said Abbas would demand that Israel release all the sick prisoners, as well as the elderly, **females** and minors.

He confirmed that Abbas would also seek the release of Barghouti and some **Hamas** legislators. In addition, Abbas would demand that Israel release Ahmed Sadat, secretary- general of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, who is suspected of involvement in the murder of tourism minister Rehavam Ze'evi in 2001, he said.

Erekat said that the gap between Israel and the Palestinians remained as wide as ever, especially regarding the fundamental final-status issues.

He ruled out the possibility that the two sides would be able to reach an agreement before the Kadima primary on September 17.

"The gap between the Israeli and Palestinian positions still exists," he said. "This is especially true with regards to all the final-status issues: Jerusalem, borders, refugees, settlements, water and security. Therefore, I rule out the possibility that there would be an agreement or a written document this month."

Erekat added that as far as the Palestinians were concerned, "We are not in a bazaar or a market. We are talking about rights and we must ensure our rights in any agreement."

Erekat, who is expected to participate in the Olmert- Abbas talks along with Ahmed Qurei, head of the PA negotiating team, said the two sides would review the latest developments surrounding the peace negotiations and the implementation of the road map peace plan.

He said the Palestinians would demand that Israel start implementing the first phase of the plan, which calls for a halt in settlement construction and, according to Erekat, the West Bank security barrier, the reopening of closed PLO institutions in Jerusalem, removing IDF checkpoints and allowing Palestinian deportees to return to the West Bank.

Graphic

Photo: Marwan Barghouti (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

Ever-widening chasm between Israel, Palestinians

thespec.com

November 27, 2007 Tuesday

Final Edition

Copyright 2007 Metroland Media Group Ltd All Rights Reserved

Section: CANADA/WORLD; Pg. A11

Length: 582 words

Byline: Donald Macintyre, The Independent

Dateline: EREZ TERMINAL

Body

Big Israeli armoured bulldozers, guarded by a stationary escort of tanks and armoured personnel carriers half-hidden in the adjacent sandbanks, were operating all along the exposed walk south on the Palestinian side of the high-tech Erez terminal separating Gaza from Israel yesterday.

As the great of the Western and Arab worlds were gathering in Annapolis, this no-man's land crossed on foot by the small privileged minority of Palestinians allowed to enter and leave Israel since Hamas's enforced takeover in June, has been extended to almost three kilometres.

Yesterday, the road seemed like a metaphor for the ever-deepening isolation of Gaza. Much of it is now rutted by the bulldozers seemingly working to destroy the cover afforded to mortar and Qassam rocket-launching crews by the eerie, bombed-out wreckage of what was once a clatteringly busy Palestinian-Israeli industrial zone. The core of women from the nearby town of Beit Hanoun, brandishing familiar Palestinian flags, demonstrating against what is universally called here the "siege" of Gaza, had to do so separated even from the forbidding border fence by a two-kilometre wide sterile zone controlled by the Israeli military, their remote-controlled drones buzzing overhead.

Just 75 minutes later at least one militant was killed in the area in an aerial strike on what the military said was a cell launching mortars.

Another 15 minutes, and two more were killed by ground fire, this time, the military said, on a well-equipped Hamas unit trying to plant explosives by the vehicles.

The scene was a reminder that there may soon be a decision on whether to mount a full-scale military operation against Hamas inside Gaza -- one some Israeli commentators have speculated was merely being postponed until Annapolis was out of the way.

Otherwise, Gazans were struggling yesterday to identify their hopes and fears with an Annapolis conference at which their own de facto Hamas government is not represented and much of whose immediate focus is on alleviating conditions in the West Bank. "What did Oslo do for us?" asked Sami Ayub, 40. "After 15 years of negotiations what are they going to be able to do in Annapolis in a single day?"

Ever-widening chasm between Israel , Palestinians

Ayub was speaking at the Beit Lahiya cemetery, from where you could see the rising smoke and hear the thuds of perhaps four tank shells close to the northern border some two kilometres away, and where he and his four brothers have provided a full grave digging and tomb building service for the last bleakly busy seven years. But now, because of Israel's closure of the Karni cargo crossing he has finally run out of the cement he needs even to cover the graves properly. Ayub says that the desperate shortage of cement had already pushed the price of a sack up 200 per cent.

Ayub blames the **Hamas** takeover for the "siege," but adds that he feels "lost" between **Hamas** and the Ramallah-based government. "This has fallen on the head of the people," he said.

The unreal gulf between Gaza city and Annapolis was, if anything, heightened by the **Hamas**-promoted activists conference.

Hamas hardliner Mahmoud Zahar told the conference: "The Land of Palestine ... is purely owned by the Palestinians. No person ... has the right to give up one inch of it."

Across the road in Tareq Abu Dayeh's "Chairman Arafat" souvenir shop you could buy special mugs commemorating "The Annapolis Conference for Peace" inscribed with an instruction "in case of the conference's failure you are only asked to break this mug."

Graphic

Photo: Amir Cohen, Reuters , Heavy equipment is extending the no-man's land to almost three kilometres.

Load-Date: November 27, 2007

End of Document

Refugee was abandoned to Gaza clan warfare

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

August 5, 2008 Tuesday

First Edition

Copyright 2008 John Fairfax Publications Pty Ltd All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; Pg. 3

Length: 573 words

Byline: Paul McGeough Chief Herald Correspondent

Body

IT BEGAN with a mango three years ago. A member of Gaza's powerful Masri clan had stopped to buy fruit at a roadside stall in 2005, but the vendor did not have enough small change to break his 20 shekel note - equal to \$5.

The Masri man pulled a gun and killed the vendor, who was a member of the Abu Taha clan.

By the end of last year, the ensuing feud had claimed the lives of 29 people - 10 from neither clan. Sixty had been wounded and homes and businesses on both sides had been torched.

"We want to kill one more to be equal," a member of the Abu Taha clan told a researcher for International Crisis Group. But then the toll moved to 10 Abu Taha and 11 Masris dead - and the Masris vowed revenge.

This is the feud that is thought to have claimed the life last week of Akram al-Masri, 31, who was denied refugee status in Australia in 2002 and then deported.

There was no need for al-Masri to commit any particular offence to become an assassin's target in Gaza. His membership of the trouble-prone Masri clan was reason enough.

Tribal clans such as his are powerful players in the inter-factional cauldron of Gaza politics. The mango row was just one of hundreds of feuds caused by the slightest transgression.

In 2006 the Masris went to war with another clan because one of the Masris, while driving a donkey-cart, collided with a car driven by a member of the equally powerful Kafarneh clan.

Six people were killed as neighbours who had lived side-by-side for decades turned guns on each other in the name of clan honour. Houses were sand-bagged and women who had married across clan lines on both sides were locked up while hundreds of gunmen fought it out for two months.

"We fought the Kafarneh like they were the Israelis," a senior Masri man said at the time.

Under Yasser Arafat's rule, the Masri clan had control of the General Intelligence Department, or Mukhabarat, through the appointment of General Mohammed Masri.

Refugee was abandoned to Gaza clan warfare

Interclan rivalry over the appointment and the power and resources that flowed to the Masri clan as a result has been cited as a cause of the enmity between the Masris and Kafarnehs. Their ongoing feud prompted the Masris to erect a four-metre-high wall around their enclave in the southern Gaza town of Khan Younis.

But the clan is fighting on other fronts. It has vowed to inflict death on the Dughmush clan, which was responsible for the abduction last year of the BBC reporter Alan Johnston, and it has made threats against **Hamas** since the party took control of Gaza last June.

Many clans have struggled to come to terms with the new power structure in Gaza and **Hamas** is trying to bring them to heel.

"There are about 6000 men in the Masri family, and **Hamas** knows that if it enters the family quarter it would face a battle far worse than [any] it has already fought," a senior Masri figure has warned.

The Masri leadership refuses to co-operate with the new state of affairs. A clan leader said it needed to avenge the death of three of its fighters during the **Hamas** takeover, and said "the vendetta remains outstanding".

But allegiance is a murky issue in the new Gaza. Another member of the clan complained that some of his relatives had joined **Hamas** and refused to act by the traditional practice of family loyalty.

Focusing on one of his own brothers who had joined the Islamist movement, he said: "**Hamas** members are standing with the movement against their family - their loyalty is to their paymaster, **Hamas**."

Graphic

PHOTO: Akram al-Masri ... clan killing.

Load-Date: August 4, 2008

Palestinian pilgrims set fire to temporary Egyptian camps

Irish Examiner

January 1, 2008 Tuesday

Copyright 2008 Thomas Crosbie Media Ltd. All Rights Reserved

Irish Examiner.com
a Thomas Crosbie Holdings company

Section: WORLD

Length: 353 words

Body

The Palestinians arrived by bus at 11 temporary camps in the Sinai outside the Mediterranean coastal city of el-Arish on Sunday, but refused to occupy them, protesting against Egypt's attempts to have them return to Gaza through the Israeli-controlled Aouja border crossing.

The pilgrims shouted angry slogans against Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and his government for not allowing them to cross into Gaza through Rafah, where Israel has no control.

A large number of riot police responded by surrounding the pilgrims and securing the area, as firefighters attempted to put out the blaze. Several Palestinian women fainted from the fire's heavy black smoke and were taken to El-Arish hospital.

The pilgrims include at least 10 well-known figures from the radical Islamic group Hamas - including Khalil al-Haya, a leader of the group - who fear Israel will arrest them if they cross through Aouja.

Israel, in turn, fears that if the pilgrims are allowed to return to Gaza through Rafah Hamas militants might get through and sympathisers could smuggle cash to Hamas in Gaza.

The standoff is the latest outbreak of tensions over efforts by Egypt, Israel and the Palestinian authority to isolate the Gaza Strip since Hamas took over the tiny coastal strip in June.

Egypt has kept its Rafah border crossing with Gaza closed, a move seen as supporting Hamas's rival, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. But Egypt is also sensitive over criticism that it is helping worsen the humanitarian situation in impoverished Gaza.

At the same time, Egypt has come under increasing criticism from Israel, which accuses it of not doing enough to stop the smuggling of weapons and money through Sinai tunnels into Gaza.

The standoff over the pilgrims began on Saturday, when 3,060 Palestinians returning from in Saudi Arabia arrived by ferry at the Egyptian Red Sea port of Nuweiba in southern Sinai.

Palestinian pilgrims set fire to temporary Egyptian camps

Egypt transported 1,166 of the Palestinians to El-Arish on Sunday, but they launched a protest demanding to be allowed back to Gaza immediately. The nearly 1,900 Palestinians waiting in Nuweiba were also scheduled to be brought to el-Arish.

Load-Date: January 1, 2008

End of Document

Israel on alert over Gaza border protest

The Irish Times

February 25, 2008 Monday

Copyright 2008 The Irish Times All Rights Reserved

Section: WORLD; Other World Stories; Pg. 10

Length: 345 words

Body

MIDDLE EAST: ISRAEL PUT paramilitary police on standby and boosted surveillance along the Gaza border in case Palestinians try to break through into Israel as they did in Egypt last month, security sources said yesterday.

A pro-**Hamas** group said it would hold a peaceful protest today in which it estimated that 40,000 to 50,000 **women** and children would form a "human chain" stretching the length of the Gaza Strip. Organisers said they had no intention of breaching the border.

A spokeswoman for the Israeli Defence Forces said: "The IDF is preparing based on reports from the Palestinian media."

Israel became increasingly concerned after **Hamas** Islamists blew open Gaza's southern Rafah border wall with Egypt last month, and **Hamas** officials raised the possibility of similar breaches along the border with Israel.

Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians poured across the Rafah border breach into Egypt to stock up on goods in short supply in the coastal enclave because of an Israeli blockade.

The head of the Popular Anti-Siege Committee protest organisers, Jamal al-Khudary, said: "We do not have intentions of approaching the fence, either in the north or the south. We hope all the participants will abide by the instructions and we will try to prevent any violations."

Organisers said **Hamas**-controlled schools across Gaza would get time off to allow students to take part in the protest.

An Israeli security source said the army was preparing for all scenarios. "Obviously, if gunmen start shooting at the fence we will have to respond in kind and we are absolutely unwilling to countenance a situation where the fence is breached like it was at Rafah."

Israeli television said the army has also deployed more artillery along the border with Gaza.

Israel stepped up its blockade of Gaza in June after **Hamas** defeated Fatah forces loyal to President Mahmoud Abbas and seized control of the coastal territory, home to 1.5 million Palestinians.

Israel said it tightened its cordon last month in response to cross-border rocket fire by militants in Gaza.

- (Reuters)

Israel on alert over Gaza border protest

Load-Date: February 25, 2008

End of Document

Gaza residents breach wall, go shopping; An exodus into Egypt

The Record (Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario)

January 24, 2008 Thursday

Final Edition

Copyright 2008 Metroland Media Group Ltd All Rights Reserved

Section: FRONT; Pg. A1

Length: 1139 words

Byline: The Associated Press

Dateline: RAFAH, GAZA STRIP

Body

Palestinians and Egyptians were regrouping following a wild day when tens of thousands of Gazans raced across a once forbidding border for a brief taste of freedom, emptying stores and dragging purchases back home, where vital supplies were running low because of an Israeli blockade.

Surreal scenes played out again and again yesterday. An Egyptian policeman helped a Palestinian woman in a wheelchair over the last wall before Egyptian territory, just a day after Egyptian police there fired in the air to turn back crowds of Palestinians.

Egyptian security forces lined up on one side of the border and Hamas forces lined up on the other side. None of them interfered in any way, and it appeared Hamas militants actively participated in the border breach.

That breach, though likely temporary, seemed certain to strengthen Hamas in its showdown with Israel, the West and its Fatah rivals, relieving some of the pain of an international blockade of the Gaza Strip following Hamas' violent takeover of the coastal territory in June.

Official reaction to the day's events ranged from dismay to embarrassment to outright anger.

The United States expressed concern about the border breach. Israel demanded that Egypt take control of its border. Hamas called on its rivals to help come up with new arrangements for Gaza's crossings.

And Egypt's leader said he had no choice but to let in the beleaguered Palestinians.

For ordinary Gazans, it was a day of joy and plenty.

Osama Hassan, 25, said the border opening will enable him to marry his 17-year-old fiancée next week, because they were able to get items they need to set up a household. He bought a special mattress for his injured back and she assembled kitchen supplies.

Hassan said he belongs to Fatah, not Hamas, but still wants to "kiss the forehead" of Gaza's Hamas prime minister.

Gaza residents breach wall, go shopping; An exodus into Egypt

Hamas did not take responsibility for a series of explosions that destroyed the fence, but it seemed unlikely the systematic operation could have happened without its approval, if not active involvement. Residents said **Hamas**-linked militants cut through the metal wall with blowtorches a month ago, weakening the structure so that it could fall easily when the blasts went off.

The appearance of the fallen wall backed up that assertion. It was neatly sliced at knee-level, with the bottom section still standing and the rest toppled over.

Hamas police quickly took control of the shopping exodus, channelling the crowds through two sections of the frontier.

"Freedom is good. We need no border after today," said Mohammed Abu Ghazal, 29, an out-of-work Gazan.

Children bought soft drinks and chocolate, **women** scooped up cheese and cleaning products, and men stocked up on cigarettes -- all expensive or simply unavailable in Gaza because of Israel's shutdown of cargo crossings.

Other Palestinians staggered over toppled metal plates that once made up the border fence, carrying TV sets, cellphones, tires and plastic bottles filled with fuel. Some brought in goats and chickens.

Four Palestinians in wheelchairs were pushed over the border, where ambulances picked them up for treatment in Egypt. At one point, a dozen people crowded around a motorcycle to lift it over a low border wall in Egypt.

Shoppers depleted stores in the border town of Rafah, prompting Ashraf el-Sayyid, an Egyptian, to ride his motorbike into the Gaza Strip, going against both traffic and logic.

"I need to buy bread for my children," he said. "The Palestinians left us with nothing. It's true, they are dear to us, but today, they were like locusts."

Masked men used 17 explosive charges before dawn to tear down the border fence, erected in 2001 by Israel when it controlled Gaza.

After news of the breach spread, people across Gaza boarded buses and piled into rickety pickup trucks heading for Egypt. It was a rare chance to escape Gaza's isolation.

By nightfall, more than 1,000 Gazans reached El-Arish, an Egyptian town about 60 kilometres south of Rafah, walking the streets and shopping in stores that stayed open late.

Mohammed Alyan, an unemployed father of six sitting at a bus stop with six friends, complained that local Egyptian shopkeepers were rapidly raising prices. Egypt bused riot police into the area.

Egypt is in a bind over how to respond. It has largely kept its border with Gaza closed since the **Hamas** takeover amid concerns of a spillover of **Hamas**-style militancy into Egypt. But Egypt's government is also under popular pressure at home to help impoverished Gazans.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said he told his border officials to let the Palestinians cross because they were "starving" under the Israeli blockade. However, not only have there been no cases of starvation reported, but there are no claims of starvation from officials or aid workers, and none are visible to anyone who lives or works in Gaza.

There are acute shortages of fuel in Gaza, and supplies of fresh meat and produce are running low, which have raised the spectre of a humanitarian emergency.

"We are concerned about that situation and frankly I know the Egyptians are as well," U.S. State Department deputy spokesperson Tom Casey said.

White House press secretary Dana Perino said **Hamas** was to blame for the chaos in Gaza, and the instability was "very troubling" for Israel.

Gaza residents breach wall, go shopping; An exodus into Egypt

Constant targeting of Israel by militant rocket squads from Gaza "has caused Israel to implement the blockade," Perino said.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said he won't allow Gazans to live ordinary lives while Israelis next to Gaza are suffering from daily rocket attacks.

"We will not allow under any condition, or any situation, creation of a humanitarian crisis. We will not hit food supplies for children or medicines for the needy," he said.

But Olmert added: "Does anyone seriously think that our children will wet their beds at night in fear and be afraid to go out of the house and they (Gazans) will live in quiet normality?"

Israel, which withdrew its troops and settlers from Gaza in 2005, also expressed concern that militants and weapons might be entering Gaza, and said responsibility for restoring order lies with Egypt.

The chaotic scenes came almost a week after Israel imposed a tight closure on Gaza, backed by Egypt, in response to a spike in Gaza rocket attacks on Israeli towns. On Tuesday, Israel eased the blockade slightly, transferring fuel to restart Gaza's only power plant.

But true relief came with the toppling of the wall. Egyptian shopkeepers took advantage of the surge in customers, swiftly raising prices of milk, taxi rides and cigarettes. Shops quickly ran out of most of their goods.

Crowds waited along roads in Gaza City, trying to catch rides to the border. Taxi driver Mahmoud Abu Ouda made one trip to Rafah, but stopped because he had no more fuel.

"The city is empty of cabs. They are all in Rafah," he said.

Graphic

Photo: THE ASSOCIATED PRESS , Palestinians walk on a destroyed section of the border wall as they cross between the southern Gaza Strip and Egypt yesterday. Masked Palestinians blew holes into the wall, and thousands of Gazans trapped by a tight blockade poured into Egypt to buy food, fuel and other supplies that have become scarce.; Photo: THE ASSOCIATED PRESS , Palestinians sit yesterday on a destroyed section of the border wall between Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip, and Egypt.

Load-Date: January 24, 2008

The PR war: Stumbling around in the darkness

The Jerusalem Post

January 23, 2008 Wednesday

Copyright 2008 The Jerusalem Post All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 959 words

Byline: CALEV BEN-DAVID

Highlight: Analyze this...

Body

On Tuesday afternoon, CNN International broke into its regular programming to bring what anchor Jonathan Mann described as dramatic breaking news from the Gaza Strip.

The situation there was desperate, he informed viewers, as just a couple of days earlier supplies of food, medicine and electricity had run dry - all untrue, of course; it was helpfully corrected on-air just a moment later by correspondent Ben Wedeman.

But Wedeman did begin reporting on a near-riot situation at the Rafah crossing, where hundreds of Gazan women had marched to the border gate demanding to be let into Egypt. The Egyptian border guards fired at the crowd, there were casualties, and the situation was tense.

What happened next? Fortunately for those concerned about how media coverage of Gaza is affecting international public opinion of Israeli policies toward the Hamas terror regime, it was just at this moment that the Motion Picture Academy of Arts and Sciences decided to announce the nominees for next month's Oscar awards.

Naturally, CNN cut right away from Wedeman's report in Gaza, to bring live coverage of the announcement.

If one were an Arab conspiracy theorist, it might be tempting to view the timing as yet another sign that the Jews control Hollywood - especially since it turned out that the Israeli war film Beaufort ended up among the best foreign film nominees (maybe to make up for Paradise Now last year).

As for those viewers who waited until all the nominees were announced in the hope that CNN or BBC would then turn back to Gaza, just at that moment their attention was drawn away by the news that the US Federal Reserve had decided to make a major cut in the interest rates (and don't ask who controls the Federal Reserve).

Fortunately for those who wanted all-Gaza, all-the- time, there was still Al-Jazeera, which had been on the scene with live broadcasts and commentary from the very moment that Hamas had decided to cut the power in Gaza and send it into darkness on Sunday night.

Indeed, so ready was Al-Jazeera with live coverage of candle-bearing Palestinian children and immediate reaction from across the Arab world, that Israeli officials said Tuesday they strongly suspect the Arab news network had coordinated its coverage in advance with the Hamas leadership.

The PR war: Stumbling around in the darkness

"They were so prepared, it's hard to believe they didn't know this was going to happen," said the official. "Although it's already dark in Gaza by 6 p.m., they waited two hours to shut their generator down so that the lights going out in Gaza could be carried live on Al-Jazeera during prime-time viewing."

The charge of pre-coordination was strongly denied by Al-Jazeera bureau chief Walied al-Omary.

"Absolutely false," he said. "We are on the scene in Gaza, and all we are doing is reporting the reality as it happens. If politicians don't like the reality they see on their television screens, be it here in Israel or in the Arab states, then they blame Al-Jazeera."

Whatever the "reality" in Gaza, there is no question that Hamas was prepared to create a media-ready scenario of ordinary Palestinians suffering in darkness the moment Israel carried through on its long-stated warning that fuel supplies would be cut if the Kassam rockets continued to be fired at Sderot and other Israeli communities across the border.

As several Israeli officials pointed out after the fact, though, Hamas still had both sufficient fuel and enough electricity from Israel and Egypt to keep the Gaza lights burning.

Unfortunately, less prepared was the Israeli reaction, which was again hampered by a lack of government coordination.

As has happened too often in the past, the Defense Ministry failed to give advance warning to all the necessary governmental public advocacy offices (such as the Foreign Ministry) that the fuel supplies would be cut on Sunday.

According to sources in the ministry, when they then decided on Sunday to try to bring the foreign press into the Ashkelon (Rutenberg) Power Station so they could see with their own eyes that Israel was still supplying electricity to Gaza, they could not get permission in time from the Israel Electric Corporation.

Despite these setbacks, and some sharp criticism directed from former government spokesmen Rana'an Gissin and Zvi Mazel against current public advocacy efforts on the Gaza situation, much of the foreign media did not buy completely into Hamas's version of events.

The hardships of the people of Sderot, the medical care that many Gazan residents continue (even this week) to receive in Israeli hospitals, and Hamas's apparent manipulation of the Gaza power supply, were noted by major media outlets such as the BBC and The New York Times that have been harshly critical of Israeli policy toward Gaza during the past year.

These were the results, said one Israeli official, of improved efforts in the past year to better get out Israel's side of the story.

Besides which, says one veteran foreign journalist about the coverage, "If you don't see Israeli troops or tanks in Gaza, or Palestinians being killed, the story just doesn't have the same impact abroad."

The last few days again illustrated just how much of the current conflict with Palestinian extremists is an "information war" being fought on the battleground of the international media and other forums of global public opinion.

The goal of Hamas in turning the lights off in Gaza is to whip up the "Arab street" against Arab regimes prepared to recognize Israel, and to pressure other foreign governments to rescind their political and economic boycotts of Hamas.

And even though this particular Hamas production won't win any Academy Awards, rather than stumbling in the darkness Israel has to be better prepared next time the lights go out in Gaza.

Graphic

Photo: AL-JAZEERA was ready when **Hamas** decided to cut the power in Gaza. (Credit: AP/Hatem Moussa)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

End of Document

Gaza violence leaves 60 dead

Times Colonist (Victoria, British Columbia)

March 2, 2008 Sunday

Final Edition

Copyright 2008 Times Colonist, a division of Canwest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A14

Length: 388 words

Byline: Nidal al-Mughrabi, Reuters

Dateline: GAZA

Body

GAZA -- Israeli forces killed 60 people in the Gaza Strip yesterday, the bloodiest day for Palestinians since an uprising against Israeli occupation began in 2000.

Israel, which lost two soldiers, seemed ready to press home its fiercest assault since it pulled troops back to the borders of the coastal enclave in 2005. It blamed **Hamas** Islamist rocket fire on Israel for provoking four days of fighting, in which dozens of civilians have been among the 95 Palestinians killed.

The UN Security Council prepared to meet in New York, and a UN official in Gaza appealed for international action to end the "inhuman suffering" of its 1.5 million people.

A day after an Israeli official warned Gazans of a "shoah" -- which typically means holocaust -- Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, a sworn enemy of Gaza's **Hamas** rulers, called it "more than a holocaust."

Aides said it may wreck peace talks that were revived with U.S. backing after collapsing in 2000.

At least 30 of the dead were civilians, among them **women** and children, said Palestinian doctors working round the clock.

Two Israeli soldiers were also killed and seven wounded, the army said -- its first deaths in Gaza since October. Dozens of **Hamas** rockets hit Israeli border areas, wounding several people. An Israeli civilian was killed on Wednesday, the first since May.

Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak said Israel was "not happy" civilians were being hurt but blamed **Hamas** for firing rockets from built-up areas and said it would "pay the price."

More than 48 rockets and mortars landed yesterday.

One of the dead civilians was a mother who was preparing breakfast for her children when she was hit by gunfire, relatives and medical workers said. One missile slammed into a crowd of Palestinians, killing four civilians, medics said.

Gaza violence leaves 60 dead

In Damascus, exiled **Hamas** leader Khaled Meshaal said: "I say to the Zionist leaders, if they decided to raid Gaza, they will be fought not by dozens ... but ... by 1.5 million people."

A senior UN official in Gaza, John Ging, appealed to world leaders to interrupt their weekend to stop the fighting.

"Killing Palestinian **women** and children will not bring security to the people of Israel," he said, cautioning Israeli commanders about the risk of committing war crimes. He also said **Hamas's** rocket fire would not achieve Palestinians' goals.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Ammar Awad, Reuters; An Israeli man surveys damage at his house after a rocket fired by Palestinian militants in Gaza landed in the southern Israeli town of Sderot yesterday. ;

Colour Photo: Suhaib Salem, Reuters; A Palestinian man reacts after an Israeli missile strike on his house in Gaza yesterday. At least 30 of those killed in yesterday's violence were civilians, Palestinian doctors said. ;

Load-Date: March 2, 2008

Gazans stock up on food, smokes; Tens of thousands rush to purchase basic supplies in short supply due to Israeli blockade of territory

The Toronto Star

January 24, 2008 Thursday

Copyright 2008 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: WORLD AND COMMENT; Pg. AA01

Length: 382 words

Dateline: RAFAH, Egypt

Body

Osama Hassan can finally buy what he needs to wed his fiancée now that Palestinian militants blasted down the Gaza border wall yesterday, clearing the way for tens of thousands of locked-up Gazans to stock up in Egypt on basic supplies that are scarce or impossible to buy at home.

Hassan, 25, and his 17-year-old fiancée Sarah hit home supplies stores in the Egyptian border town of Rafah. He bought a special mattress for his injured back and she bought kitchen supplies.

The two had initially put off their wedding until July because they lacked the basics for setting up a household. After yesterday's shopping spree, they plan to wed next week.

Hassan, a former Fatah fighter, said he's grateful to rival **Hamas** for opening the border. "I'm Fatah, but today, I wish I could see (**Hamas** prime minister Ismail) Haniyeh and kiss his forehead, because without the gunmen doing this, we would have been stuck in the Gaza Strip," Hassan said.

Egyptian shopkeepers took advantage of the sudden surge in customers, swiftly raising prices of milk, taxi rides and cigarettes.

But the price increases didn't deter long-denied Gazans.

Children bought pop and chocolate, **women** scooped up cheese and cleaning products, and many men stocked up on cigarettes - all expensive, or simply unavailable in Gaza because of Israel's shutdown of cargo crossings in June, after the **Hamas** takeover.

Other Palestinians staggered into Gaza carrying televisions and some had new cellphones.

Crowds waited at roadsides in Gaza City, trying to catch rides to the border.

Even the sick had their day. Four Palestinians in wheelchairs were pushed to the Egyptian side, where ambulances picked them up to take them for treatment in Arish, a larger Egyptian town close to Gaza.

Egyptian police sat in armoured vehicles - watching but not disturbing the Gazans who poured across the border on foot, with donkey carts and motorcycles.

Hamas gunmen controlled the Gaza side of the border.

Gazans stock up on food, smokes Tens of thousands rush to purchase basic supplies in short supply due to Israeli blockade of territory

Hamas police stopped one man and confiscated seven handguns from him.

The shoppers depleted Rafah stores, prompting 32-year-old Ashraf el-Sayyid, an Egyptian, to ride his motorbike into the Gaza Strip.

"I need to buy bread for my children," he said. "The Palestinians left us with nothing. It's true, they are dear to us, but today they were like locusts."

Graphic

SUHAIB SALEM Reuters Palestinians from **Hamas**-controlled Gaza crossed the border into Egypt for a shopping spree yesterday after Palestinian gunmen blew up sections of the border wall. Abid Katib Getty Images Long-denied Palestinians race across the Gaza border to shop in Rafah, Egypt, yesterday. Abid Katib Getty Images Long-denied Palestinians race across the Gaza border to shop in Rafah, Egypt, yesterday.

Load-Date: January 24, 2008

Gaza station channels defiance; Al-Aqsa TV has sparked the ire of Israel and debate in the US over declaring it a terrorist organisation, writes Tobias Buck

Financial Times (London, England)

August 15, 2008 Friday

Europe Edition 1

Copyright 2008 The Financial Times Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: ARTS; Pg. 11

Length: 982 words

Body

It looks much like any other television studio around the world. In the control room, young producers stare intently at a bank of screens, occasionally fiddling with the dials on the vast console in front of them. In the studio a few steps down, visible through a long glass pane, the smartly dressed host is halfway through his chat show, politely quizzing his guests about the anniversary of a family tragedy.

It is breakfast television, **Hamas**- style. The time is shortly after 10am, and al-Aqsa TV is broadcasting its daily interview with a victim of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Today, it is the mother and brother of a "martyr", a **Hamas** militant killed by Israeli forces 20 years ago. On other days, the show portrays the family of a Palestinian held in an Israeli jail, or a refugee family that was expelled or fled from its home during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war.

Al-Aqsa TV forms something like the audiovisual arm of **Hamas**, a crucial complement to the Islamist group's political and military wing, its social institutions, schools and newspapers. Though the channel claims to be formally independent from **Hamas**, the ideological overlaps are clear, as is the strong presence of **Hamas** members and supporters among al-Aqsa's senior ranks. (The son of Ismail Haniyeh, the **Hamas** leader in the Gaza Strip, presents a popular weekly sports programme.)

Based in northern Gaza City, al-Aqsa broadcasts around the clock on its satellite and terrestrial channel. The latter is available to the 1.5m Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip, while the satellite programme can be watched throughout the Arab world, and, with a sufficiently large dish, even in Europe and the US.

Al-Aqsa executives say they do not know how many people tune into the channel every day, although according to a poll on a Gulf-based Islamist website, al-Aqsa's popularity was only trumped by al-Jazeera, the ubiquitous Arab news channel. What is beyond doubt, however, is that in the two years since it went on air, the station has grown sufficiently influential to spark the ire of Israel and the US.

The channel's critics have latched on to a string of controversial programmes, from a documentary questioning the holocaust to a children's programme in which a puppet stabbed to death a doll depicting George W. Bush, the US president. Following up on Israeli charges that al-Aqsa TV incites hatred, violence and anti-semitism, US lawmakers are debating a resolution urging the US administration to declare the channel a terrorist organisation.

Gaza station channels defiance Al-Aqsa TV has sparked the ire of Israel and debate in the US over declaring it a terrorist organisation, writes Tobias Buck

Samir Abu Mohsin, the deputy head of programming and at 36 the oldest and most experienced television executive at al-Aqsa, dismisses the efforts in Washington as "part of the siege imposed on the Palestinian people". With US forces facing a "crisis" in Iraq and Afghanistan, US politicians are now going after easier targets such as al-Aqsa TV, he said.

"We don't belong to Hamas," says Abu Mohsin, although he concedes that al-Aqsa TV is "close" to the group's ideology. "The aim of this television channel is to introduce the Palestinian cause to the public - and to broadcast the suffering of the Palestinian people," he adds.

That aim, along with the channel's role in spreading the Hamas message, has made al-Aqsa TV essential viewing for anyone keen to understand what is happening in the Gaza Strip and inside the Islamist group that controls the coastal territory. Whenever there is an Israeli incursion into Gaza, al-Aqsa is usually first with the news. Whoever wants to know the Hamas reaction to political events in Jerusalem, the West Bank or Damascus, will switch to the Gaza-based station.

Perhaps surprisingly for a channel with just 200 employees, al-Aqsa has the look of a professionally run, modern satellite station. The count-down to its hourly news bulletins consists of swirling graphics and thumping music that would not look out of place on Fox News. It has correspondents in most Arab countries and in Pakistan, although not much, to Abu Mohsin's regret, in Europe or the US.

The news programmes do not hide the channel's ideology: Israel's government and army are referred to as the "occupation government" and the "occupation army"; no matter what happens, the Hamas point of view will always be prominently represented.

The channel's commitment to Islamist values can also pose problems. When al-Aqsa broadcast live football matches during this year's European Championships on its terrestrial channel, it had to appoint a dedicated official charged with hastily cutting in full-screen adverts as soon as the camera panned on to the spectators. The risk of showing an uncovered, scantily dressed female football fan in the crowd was just too great.

But most of the controversy created by al-Aqsa has centred on its children's programmes. *Tomorrow's Pioneers*, a phone-in show moderated by a young girl and a changing cast of large, furry animal puppets, gained special notoriety. Young viewers call in and sing songs, often praising martyrdom and denouncing Israel and the Jews.

Abu Mohsin dismisses the criticism of al-Aqsa's children's programme, and even defends the Bush-stabbing puppet-show. "Every TV channel around the world uses cartoons to convey a message. The idea was exaggerated but it was an expression of the unfair and unjust treatment that Palestinian children receive by the American administration. Palestinian children are killed by American-made rockets and helicopters. And now the American administration is trying to punish us because of a cartoon."

Back in the studio, Mohammed Hamdan, a university student who works part-time as one of al-Aqsa's newsreaders, has finished his broadcast. Is he worried about the US threats? "It could be expected," he says, before adding proudly: "We are carrying the ideology of resistance."

This article is part of a series on TV around the world. For earlier pieces, visit www.ft.com/arts/tv

Load-Date: August 14, 2008

CLASHES THREATEN MIDEAST PEACE TALKS

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

January 18, 2008 Friday

SOONER EDITION

Copyright 2008 P.G. Publishing Co.

Section: WORLD; Pg. A-3

Length: 643 words

Byline: Ibrahim Barzak, The Associated Press

Body

Israel pummeled Gaza yesterday with air and ground fire as Palestinian rockets slammed into southern Israel, endangering recently restarted peace negotiations. The Israeli attacks killed a militant leader and one of his female relatives along with five others in Gaza.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert yesterday vowed to strike Palestinian militants "without compromise, without concessions and without mercy." His forces carried out stepped-up attacks, but Mr. Olmert gave no hint that a large-scale offensive was near.

Meanwhile, Israel yesterday successfully tested a new long-range missile, defense officials said, and reports indicate that it might be capable of being armed with nuclear warheads.

Israeli radio reported the ground-to-ground missile can carry conventional or non-conventional warheads. It named the missile "Jericho-3," meaning it would be an advanced version of the Jericho missiles already said by foreign intelligence agencies to be capable of delivering nuclear warheads.

Israel does not confirm or deny that it has nuclear weapons and has refused all comment on its missiles, even their name. Details of the missile tested yesterday were placed under strict military censorship.

Israel's main ballistic missile threat is from Iran, which has advanced missiles as well as a nuclear program that many in the West believe could produce weapons in the future. Iran often tests its long-range Shahab-3 missiles, which it says have the range to hit Israel and most of Europe.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad yesterday dismissed the Israeli test and said Israel would not dare attack Iran, according to video on Israeli TV stations.

The widening violence on the ground has clouded Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, resumed after a Mideast conference in November sponsored by President Bush. The spike in military action has drawn condemnations from moderate Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, Israel's partner in the effort.

Yesterday, Abbas spokesman Nabil Abu Rdeineh told The Associated Press that the violence is calling into question further talks. "No one can proceed with negotiations when the situation is like this," he said.

CLASHES THREATEN MIDEAST PEACE TALKS

Gaza militants, led by **Hamas**, fired dozens of rockets and mortars at Israeli towns, causing no serious injuries but further traumatizing residents who have been putting up with daily barrages for many months. One rocket slammed into the side of a house, slightly injuring two people, police said.

Israeli struck back at northern Gaza, targeting rocket squads and areas militants frequently use. A leader of the small **Hamas**-allied Popular Resistance Committees, Raad Abu al-Ful, and a woman relative were killed when a missile hit their vehicle, the faction said. Earlier, Palestinian officials said the relative was Mr. Ful's wife. The PRC pledged retaliation.

After nightfall, Israeli aircraft targeted a car in northern Gaza, killing three people -- a woman and her son on a donkey cart next to the car and an unidentified man, Palestinian hospital officials said. Israel's military said the airstrike was aimed at a rocket squad.

Israeli aircraft later fired missiles at a car south of Gaza City, killing two **Hamas** militants and wounding three others, **Hamas** officials said. The military had no immediate comment.

Direct **Hamas** involvement in the rocket attacks is a new development this week. Since June, when the Islamic militants overran Gaza, they had allowed other groups to freely fire rockets at Israel. That changed Tuesday, when Israel sent special forces into Gaza, setting off a daylong battle that was the biggest in months.

Thirty Palestinians, including a son of Gaza's **Hamas** strongman, Mahmoud Zahar, have been killed since the violence escalated Tuesday. Most were militants. **Hamas** and other groups have fired more than 150 rockets and mortars since Tuesday, according to the Israeli military.

Load-Date: January 19, 2008

End of Document

Intelligent, politically skilled lady rises in Israel

Canberra Times (Australia)

September 23, 2008 Tuesday

Final Edition

Copyright 2008 The Federal Capital Press of Australia PTY Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: A; Pg. 15

Length: 799 words

Byline: The Canberra Times

Body

As tipped by most of the polling, Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni won the Kadima party leadership primary last Wednesday, although very narrowly. She now succeeds Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert as the head of the largest party in Israel's parliament following Olmert's resignation as Kadima leader at the weekend.

Livni now has six weeks to form a governing coalition a task that could prove difficult or even impossible. If she does succeed in forming a government, Livni will join former Prime Minister Golda Meir as Israel's second **female** prime minister. If she does not, Israel will hold early elections, which Livni and Kadima might not win.

A lawyer by training, Livni represents a fresh and promising face in Israeli politics. Importantly, she is untainted by any hint of corruption and her integrity is viewed as an important asset. This should allow her the opportunity to turn the page on the political and personal scandals of the recent past and provide a new start for her government.

But don't confuse "fresh face" with inexperience. Originally elected as a member of the Likud party, Livni left Likud to become one of the founding members of the Kadima party in 2005 a party founded by former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon on the principle of "disengagement" from the Gaza Strip.

Livni first served as justice minister under Sharon, moving to her current portfolio as Foreign Minister during Israel's war with Hezbollah in 2006 is viewed more positively than that of Olmert or the defence brass.

Importantly, as Foreign Minister Livni also has been intimately involved in the negotiations with the Palestinians that followed the Annapolis peace conference last November. Indeed, Livni has led the talks with the Palestinian Authority for a "shelf agreement" between the two sides and all indications are that she plans to continue that process committed to a two-state resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

PA officials involved in the negotiations welcomed her victory, noting that "working with [her] will be much easier" and that Livni "knows her stuff".

But even with Livni continuing the negotiations she has been leading as Foreign Minister, there remain significant obstacles to the two parties reaching even a shelf agreement by the end of the year the original goal set-out at the Annapolis conference. The biggest of these obstacles are continued Palestinian violence and the fact that the Palestinian side remains completely fractured and dysfunctional. Despite Israeli and international efforts to bolster PA President Abbas and Fatah at the expense of **Hamas**, it is obvious that he currently does not have the capacity to make the compromises necessary to reach an agreement.

Intelligent, politically skilled lady rises in Israel

With **Hamas** in complete control of the Gaza Strip as it has been since it evicted Abbas and Fatah from the Strip in a violent coup in June 2007 it is equally clear that Abbas would not be able to implement an agreement even if one is reached.

Even Abbas' grip on the West Bank is shaky: **Hamas** could overrun Fatah there too if not for Israel's security presence. Given **Hamas'** response to previous Israeli territorial withdrawals specifically, more violence directed at Israeli civilians Israel is understandably wary about putting Jerusalem and Tel Aviv within range of rockets from **Hamas** or other terrorist groups, which would result from implementing further withdrawals from the West Bank.

Nor is the recent Israeli-**Hamas** cease-fire reassuring. It has been repeatedly violated by rocket attacks against Israel and **Hamas'** refusal to negotiate in good faith for the release of captured Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. Worse, **Hamas** made clear it views it only as a temporary measure to recuperate.

There also will be other issues competing for Livni's attention. On the security front, these include the looming and potentially existential threat posed by a nuclear-armed Iran and a Hezbollah which is fast becoming the dominant movement in Lebanon. Livni will also have to decide whether to continue the indirect negotiations with Syria, which seem to have stalled now that President Assad has somewhat shed his international pariah status.

On the domestic front, Livni will have to manage Israel's economy in a time of global financial crisis. She must also instil a renewed sense of integrity and incorruptibility to Israel's most serious political offices and will face calls for much needed yet difficult to enact reforms to the electoral system.

In her rapid rise to the top of Israeli politics, Livni has demonstrated a high degree of intelligence and political skills. As prime minister, she will need to call on both to successfully meet these and other challenges that Israel is sure to face.

Colin Rubenstein is the executive director of the Australia/Israel and Jewish Affairs Council.

Load-Date: September 22, 2008

Palestinians halt Israel peace talks

Charleston Gazette (West Virginia)

March 3, 2008, Monday

Copyright 2008 Charleston Newspapers

Section: NEWS; Pg. P1A

Length: 1172 words

Byline: Ibrahim Barzak and Josef Federman, The Associated Press

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip - The Palestinian president suspended peace talks Sunday as Israel brushed off international criticism and vowed to press ahead with its Gaza offensive until militants halt rocket attacks.

Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak said an even broader Gaza operation was possible, aimed at crushing militant rocket squads but also to "weaken the Hamas rule, in the right circumstances, even to bring it down."

The Palestinian death toll rose by 26, bringing the number killed to 114 since the latest bout of fighting erupted on Wednesday, according to Palestinian medical officials and militant groups. At least 54 Palestinians and two Israelis were killed on Saturday, the single deadliest day in more than seven years of fighting.

The Gaza onslaught has failed to protect southern Israel, where residents have faced repeated rocket attacks since 2001. Gaza militants fired more than 25 rockets at southern Israel Sunday, the military said, scoring direct hits on houses in the city of Ashkelon and the town of Sderot. Nine Israelis were injured, rescue services said.

Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said peace talks with Israel had been halted.

"For the time being, the negotiations are suspended because we have so many funerals," he said. It was unclear when the talks, relaunched last November at a U.S.-hosted summit, would resume.

The violence clouded an upcoming visit by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

The Israeli and Palestinian leaders have set a December target for concluding a final peace deal. But instead of promoting peace, Rice will likely spend her visit this week trying to put out the latest fire.

The Bush administration demanded a halt to the fighting.

"The violence needs to stop and the talks need to resume," Gordon Johndroe, a spokesman for the National Security Council, said in Texas.

In the early hours of today, Palestinians counted nine separate Israeli airstrikes all over Gaza, and five Hamas militants were killed. One attack was near the office of Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, who was not in the area at the time. The Israeli military said aircraft targeted weapons storage and manufacturing facilities.

Palestinians halt Israel peace talks

Before midnight, Israel had moved additional ground forces and armored vehicles into northern Gaza, widening its area of operation to about a mile, witnesses and Palestinian security officials said. Also, aircraft attacked two metal workshops in northern Gaza, wounding 10, they said.

The military said two weapons caches were hit and that the troop rotations were routine.

On Sunday, 11 Palestinians, including a 21-month-old girl, were killed, and 10 others died of earlier wounds or were found dead, Palestinian medical officials said.

Roughly half of those killed since Wednesday were civilians, medical officials said. On Saturday, Palestinian leaders called the killings "genocide" and a "holocaust."

"We are following the aggression against our people in Gaza," Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas told reporters.

He said he had contacted the U.N. Security Council, the EU and Arab leaders "to work to stop this aggression."

Abbas has wielded little influence in Gaza since Hamas vanquished his forces and took over last June. In a symbolic move, he donated blood for Gaza residents at his West Bank office.

The normally bustling streets of Gaza City were eerily empty. The sound of verses from the Muslim holy book, the Quran, sounding from mosque loudspeakers mingled with the roar of Israeli warplanes and unmanned drones in the sky.

Hundreds gathered outside Gaza hospitals waiting for bodies to be brought out of morgues for burial. Many, like schoolteacher Tawfek Shaban, a 44-year-old father of five, were holding small radios, listening to the news.

"Shame on the Arabs, shame on the Muslims, shame on humanity ... When will they act to stop Israel?" Shaban asked.

The reduced casualty count may have been the result of new measures imposed by Hamas. It told its fighters to use alleys for cover and avoid moving in large groups, ordered schools closed and set up roadblocks to keep civilians out of battle zones. In recent days, schoolchildren had left their studies to watch the fighting. The order forced children to stay at home.

The unrest spilled over to the West Bank, where Abbas and his Fatah faction run a rival government.

In the West Bank town of Hebron, a 14-year-old Palestinian boy was fatally shot in the chest during a protest against Israel, Palestinian medical officials said. It was the first death in the West Bank connected to the Gaza offensive.

An Israeli military spokesman said youths staged a "violent demonstration," throwing firebombs and putting soldiers at risk. Later about 2,000 angry Hamas supporters marched through the city streets, waving copies of the Quran and green Hamas flags. "Revenge. Revenge. Retaliate in Tel Aviv," the crowd chanted.

Schools and shops across the West Bank shut down to protest the operation in Gaza and there were demonstrations at traditional flashpoints like checkpoints, watchtowers and patrol routes.

In Ramallah, home to Abbas' government, club-wielding Palestinian security forces used tear gas and pushed back dozens of women demonstrating in support of Hamas. Security forces tried to stop TV crews filming and clubbed protesters, said Muhib Barghouthi, a photographer who was on scene.

The Gaza offensive also drew a chorus of international condemnation. The EU and U.N. chief Ban Ki-moon accused Israel of using excessive force. The U.N. Security Council urged Israelis and Palestinians "to immediately cease all acts of violence."

At the weekly meeting of his Cabinet, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert rejected the criticism.

Palestinians halt Israel peace talks

"Nothing will prevent us from continuing operations to protect our citizens," he said. "No one has the moral right to preach to Israel for taking the elementary step of self-defense."

Olmert, commenting on the suspension of talks, said "attacking Hamas strengthens the chance for peace."

"I'm sure that beyond certain statements, the Palestinian leadership, the one with whom we want to achieve peace, also understands that," he said.

Israel regularly clashes with Gaza rocket squads, but it intensified its operations last week after militants fired salvos into Ashkelon, a city of 120,000 11 miles north of Gaza. By targeting a center like Ashkelon, only 25 miles from the metropolis of Tel Aviv, Hamas raised the stakes and added pressure on Israeli leaders to respond.

In Sderot, the town nearest Gaza which has suffered most of the rocket attacks over the past seven years, daily life has become almost unbearable. The rockets have killed 13, wounded dozens and caused millions of dollars in damage.

Egypt has cooperated with an Israeli blockade of Hamas in Gaza, but opened its sealed border crossing with the territory Sunday to allow some of the Palestinian wounded access to medical care.

Egypt sent 27 ambulances to the Rafah crossing to transfer between 150 to 200 wounded, said Imad Kharboush, a medical official at a hospital in el-Arish, near the Israeli border.

Load-Date: March 5, 2008

The great escape - or perhaps it is just a gigantic shopping spree

The Times (London)

January 24, 2008, Thursday

Copyright 2008 Times Newspapers Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: OVERSEAS NEWS; Pg. 39

Length: 1085 words

Byline: James Hider in Rafah

Body

* 350,000 flood across breached border fence

* **Hamas** explosions open route into Egypt

It may have been the biggest shopping spree in history. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, running out of the bare necessities, swarmed out of Gaza into Egypt yesterday to buy everything they could lay their hands on after **Hamas** militants blew up a huge metal border wall.

Herding goats, sheep, heifers and camels, riding on donkey carts laden with sacks of cement, or festooned with cans of petrol strapped to their bodies, the people of Gaza spilt across the border after militants brought Israel's siege of the coastal territory to a halt, dismantling the 40ft-high (12m) barrier like a broken concertina.

Old **women** lugged heavy cans of olive oil and children stumbled under the weight of packs of powdered milk as the besieged masses rushed through the gaping breaches to stock up on the basics.

"This is a key victory for **Hamas**," crowed Abu Ayman, a grey-bearded Gaza farmer, as he and his son wrestled two calves across the border. He had just paid \$1,000 (£ 500) for the livestock on the Egyptian side of the border. "Before, we couldn't even find coffins to bury our dead," he said as people swarmed around him in both directions.

The tidal wave of humanity stampeded towards the border from across the Gaza Strip, almost emptying the northern cities of taxis, as news of the breach spread by radio, television and word of mouth. The United Nations estimated that 350,000 people, a quarter of Gaza's population, had crossed the border by mid-afternoon, with a steady tide still bustling across as night fell. They scrambled across the vast sheets of rusted, corrugated metal that had abruptly turned from imposing wall to giant bridge.

Prices of cigarettes, soap and cement, which had been spiralling out of control in Gaza during the Israeli blockade, plummeted, while on the Egyptian side of the border they rocketed as supplies ran out. By the end of the day many Palestinians were returning empty-handed after their fellow countrymen had stripped Egyptian stores of goods. Some Egyptians even hopped into Gaza to avoid their own inundated shops or to sell motorbikes - much sought after in fuel-starved Gaza.

"I need to buy bread for my children," said Ashraf el-Sayyid, an Egyptian biking into Gaza. "The Palestinians left us with nothing. It's true, they are dear to us, but today they were like locusts."

The great escape - or perhaps it is just a gigantic shopping spree

As the shops in the Egyptian side of Rafah ran out of goods, Palestinians commandeered taxis to take them deeper into Sinai to shop, many clambering on to the roofs of overcrowded cabs to make the trip to al-Arish, 25 miles (40km) away. Egyptian policemen in riot helmets and batons leant on their plastic shields, allowing the endless cavalcade to pass by unmolested, and leaving the work of marshalling the vast crowds to Hamas men with guns who operated openly a few feet away.

Hosni Mubarak, the Egyptian President, said that he had ordered his border guards to let the Palestinians cross because they were starving under the Israeli blockade, imposed as a means of pressuring Hamas into ending its daily rocket attacks on southern Israel. "I told them to let them come in and eat and buy food and then return them later as long as they were not carrying weapons," Mr Mubarak said.

Aid organisations had reported a looming humanitarian crisis, but there had been no reports of actual starvation in Gaza.

Hamas officials denied that they had played a role in destroying the massive fence, built by Israel years ago to seal the border and used as a shield from behind which the Israeli army would launch raids into Rafah to attack militants firing on their border positions. Now lorries full of Hamas gunmen patrolled where once Israeli tanks mustered for raids into the bullet-pocked streets of Rafah, a teeming, concrete shanty city of refugees and their descendants.

Few of the Gazans staggering across the border with bags of blankets and boxes of cigarettes and sweets believed Hamas's denial. A Palestinian security guard admitted that the Islamists had been cutting through the base of the metal wall with oxyacetylene torches for months, working in the daytime and behind screens to avoid attracting attention. "I've seen this happening over the past few months. It happened in the daytime but was covered up so that nobody would see," said a lieutenant with the Palestinian National Security, a Hamas-run military unit liaising with Egyptian forces and based in the narrow slice of land between the toppled wall and the Egyptian frontier.

Asked whether he had reported it to the Government, he said: "It was the Government that was doing this. Who would I report it to?" Seventeen explosions between midnight and 1am had brought down the sheared-off wall. The gates had been left intact to allow the passage of vehicles full of medical supplies or Hamas gunmen. "Last night we were told to keep away from the wall. We were ordered to stay away because they were going to break the blockade," he said.

The collapse of the wall was a serious blow to Israel, which withdrew from its border positions when it left Gaza in 2005. It fears that militants and weapons will be able to move freely into Gaza now that its blockade is hopelessly compromised. And it has provided Hamas - hitherto isolated politically and physically - with sudden political leverage, which its leader Ismail Haniya, the sacked Prime Minister, was quick to exploit.

He called for an urgent meeting with Egypt and the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah, which has been stonewalling him since his Islamist militiamen drove its Fatah forces out of Gaza in heavy fighting last summer.

A minister in the Ramallah Government denounced the call for talks. "Everything Haniya is saying is simply to exploit this situation to win political gains. It is a part of the problem, not the solution," said Ashraf Ajramim.

The vast majority of Palestinians were returning after their shopping. But a few younger men were unwilling to end their short burst of freedom. "I've been stuck in Gaza for a year and half, now the border is open," said one man in his early twenties. "Now I'm getting some fresh air, I don't want to go back to Gaza. I'm seriously thinking about staying."

*The Gaza escape in pictures timesonline.co.uk/world

Over the wall

40,000

live on Egyptian side of Rafah

The great escape - or perhaps it is just a gigantic shopping spree

150,000

on Gaza side

90

tunnels connecting the sides found in 2000-04, according to Israel

50p

pack of cigarettes on Egyptian side

£ 1

in Gaza

Sources: Human Rights Watch; Times archives

Load-Date: January 24, 2008

End of Document

Thousands of Palestinians cross into Egypt

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

January 24, 2008 Thursday

Copyright 2008 Woodward Communications, Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: A; Pg. 6

Length: 1757 words

Byline: The Associated Press

Body

RAFAH, Gaza Strip (AP) - The Palestinian woman in a wheelchair was stumped by a low wall in her path.

Like tens of thousands of Gazans, she was heading to Egypt after militants blew down the main border barrier. But the woman in her 50s was on her own, and there was no way she could get over the smaller hurdle, which others easily jumped.

A uniformed Egyptian police-man walked toward her, picked her up in her wheelchair and carried her across the obstacle to send her on her way. Only a day earlier, club-wielding Egyptian border guards had tried to beat back hundreds of **Hamas** supporters to prevent a border breach.

Surreal scenes played out Wednesday across the seven-mile border, as huge crowds of Gazans, cooped up for two years by Israel and Egypt, overran what was once a formidable barrier.

They came on foot, in cars and in donkey carts, flooding through a border barrier blown up by militants - puncturing a gaping hole in Israel's airtight closure of the Gaza Strip and giving a boost to **Hamas**.

In a shopping spree that was both festive and frenzied, Gazans cleared out stores in an Egyptian border town, buying up everything from TV sets to soft drinks to cigarettes.

As waves of people swarmed through the destroyed barrier - some estimated the crowd in the hundreds of thousands - Egyptian security forces lined up on one side of the border and **Hamas** forces lined up on the other side. None of them interfered in any way, and it appeared **Hamas** militants actively participated in the border breach.

That breach, though likely temporary, seemed certain to strengthen **Hamas** in its showdown with Israel, the West and its Fatah rivals - relieving some of the pain of an international blockade of the Gaza Strip following **Hamas**' violent takeover of the coastal territory in June.

It also raised Israeli fears of an influx of weapons and militants to Gaza and threatened to undermine crucial Egyptian participation in a Mideast peace push by President Bush.

Official reaction to the day's events ranged from dismay to embarrassment to outright anger.

The United States expressed concern about the border breach. Israel demanded that Egypt take control of its border. **Hamas** called on its rivals to help come up with new arrangements for Gaza's crossings.

Thousands of Palestinians cross into Egypt

Egypt's leader said he had no choice but to let in the beleaguered Palestinians. But Arab and U.S. officials in Washington said the Egyptian government assured the United States the border would be closed quickly.

For ordinary Gazans, it was a day of joy and plenty.

Osama Hassan, 25, said the border opening will enable him to marry his 17-year-old fiancée next week, because they were able to get items they need to set up a household. He bought a special mattress for his injured back and she assembled kitchen supplies.

Hassan said he belongs to Fatah, not Hamas, but still wants to "kiss the forehead" of Gaza's Hamas prime minister.

Hamas did not take responsibility for a series of explosions that destroyed the fence, but it seemed unlikely the systematic operation could have happened without its approval, if not active involvement. Residents said Hamas-linked militants cut through the metal wall with blow torches a month ago - weakening the structure so that it could fall easily when the blasts went off.

The appearance of the fallen wall backed up that assertion. It was neatly sliced at knee-level, with the bottom section still standing and the rest toppled over.

Hamas police quickly took control of the shopping exodus, channeling the crowds through two sections of the frontier.

"Freedom is good. We need no border after today," said Mohammed Abu Ghazal, a 29-year-old out-of-work Gazan.

Children bought soft drinks and chocolate, women scooped up cheese and cleaning products, and men stocked up on cigarettes - all expensive or simply unavailable in Gaza because of Israel's shutdown of cargo crossings.

Other Palestinians staggered over toppled metal plates that once made up the border fence, carrying TV sets, cell phones, tires and plastic bottles filled with fuel. Some brought in goats and chickens.

Four Palestinians in wheelchairs were pushed over the border, where ambulances picked them up for treatment in Egypt. At one point, a dozen people crowded around a motorcycle to lift it over a low border wall in Egypt.

Shoppers depleted stores in the border town of Rafah, prompting Ashraf el-Sayyid, an Egyptian, to ride his motorbike into the Gaza Strip - going against both traffic and logic.

"I need to buy bread for my children," he said. "The Palestinians left us with nothing. It's true, they are dear to us, but today, they were like locusts."

Masked gunmen used 17 explosive charges before dawn to tear down the border fence - erected in 2001 by Israel when it controlled Gaza.

After news of the breach spread, people across Gaza boarded buses and piled into rickety pickup trucks heading for Egypt. It was a rare chance to escape Gaza's isolation.

Moussa Zuroub, 28, carried his young daughter, Aseel, on his shoulders through the muddy streets of Rafah, which is divided by a wall into Egyptian and Gazan segments. "I'm coming just to break that ice - that all my life, I'd never left Gaza before," he said.

By nightfall, more than 1,000 Gazans reached El-Arish, an Egyptian town about 37 miles south of Rafah, walking the streets and shopping in stores that stayed open late.

Mohammed Alyan, an unemployed father of six sitting at a bus stop with six friends, complained that Egyptian shopkeepers were rapidly raising prices.

Thousands of Palestinians cross into Egypt

Egypt is in a bind over how to respond. It has largely kept its border with Gaza closed since the Hamas takeover amid concerns of a spillover of Hamas-style militancy into Egypt. But Egypt's government is also under popular pressure at home to help impoverished Gazans.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said he told his border officials to let the Palestinians cross because they were "starving" under the Israeli blockade. However, not only have there been no cases of starvation reported, but there are no claims of starvation from officials or aid workers, and none are visible to anyone who lives or works in Gaza.

There are acute shortages of fuel in Gaza, and supplies of fresh meat and produce are running low, which have raised the specter of a humanitarian emergency.

The supreme Hamas leader, Khaled Mashaal, said his group is willing to work with Egypt and Hamas' rival, moderate Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, on a shared border arrangement.

"We are concerned about that situation and frankly I know the Egyptians are as well," State Department deputy spokesman Tom Casey said.

David Welch, the assistant secretary of state for the Middle East, and U.S. diplomats in Cairo have talked to Egyptian authorities about the situation, Casey said. He said the Egyptians take border security seriously and that he has no indication the situation has affected Israeli-Palestinian relations for now.

An Arab diplomat in Washington said Egypt indicated to the U.S. that the flow of people would end by midday Thursday and pledged to rebuild the smashed barrier. A senior U.S. official, however, said Egypt was not specific on when the border would be closed but promised the situation would not continue for long.

"They will make an effort first to contain the crowd on their side of the border so they don't go anywhere, and then coax people back. We'll see tomorrow how that has worked," said the official, who like the Arab diplomat, insisted on not being quoted by name in return for describing the conversations between the two governments.

White House press secretary Dana Perino earlier blamed Hamas for the chaos in Gaza and called the instability "very troubling" for Israel.

Constant targeting of Israel by militant rocket squads in Gaza "has caused Israel to implement the blockade," Perino said. "Hamas is not in control of the situation, they are not governing well, and the people of the - the Palestinian people are starting to realize that they do have a choice."

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said he won't allow Gazans to live ordinary lives while Israelis next to Gaza are suffering from daily rocket attacks.

"We will not allow under any condition, or any situation, creation of a humanitarian crisis. We will not hit food supplies for children or medicines for the needy," he said.

But Olmert added: "Does anyone seriously think that our children will wet their beds at night in fear and be afraid to go out of the house and they (Gazans) will live in quiet normality?"

Israel, which withdrew its troops and settlers from Gaza in 2005, also expressed concern that militants and weapons might be entering Gaza, and said responsibility for restoring order lies with Egypt.

"We expect the Egyptians to solve the problem," said Foreign Ministry spokesman Arye Mekel. "Obviously we are worried about the situation. It could potentially allow anybody to enter."

But there was some indication the new situation along the border could suit Israel, which would prefer to have responsibility for the coastal territory moved elsewhere. One senior Israeli government official spoke positively about Egypt taking on that role.

Thousands of Palestinians cross into Egypt

Louise Arbour, the U.N. high commissioner for human rights, said in Geneva that the "level of desperation" among the Palestinians was made apparent by the breach, and that Israel must lift restrictions on delivery of humanitarian aid.

"The 1.4 million people of Gaza live under abhorrent conditions," she told the 47-member U.N. human rights council.

The chaotic scenes came almost a week after Israel imposed a tight closure on Gaza, backed by Egypt, in response to a spike in Gaza rocket attacks on Israeli towns. On Tuesday, Israel eased the blockade slightly, transferring fuel to restart Gaza's only power plant.

But true relief came with the toppling of the wall. Egyptian shopkeepers took advantage of the surge in customers, swiftly raising prices of milk, taxi rides and cigarettes. Shops quickly ran out of most of their goods.

In Gaza City, the price of cigarettes, which had skyrocketed during the closure, started to drop. Local money changers began charging extra to change Israeli shekels into dollars, as Gazans were using the U.S. currency in Egypt.

Crowds waited along roads in Gaza City, trying to catch rides to the border. Taxi driver Mahmoud Abu Ouda made one trip to Rafah, but stopped because he had no more fuel.

"The city is empty of cabs. They are all in Rafah," he said.

Associated Press writers Sarah El Deeb in Gaza City and Ashraf Sweilam in Rafa, Egypt, contributed to this report.

Load-Date: January 24, 2008

World powers meet in Paris to bankroll Palestinian state

The Daily Star (Lebanon)
December 17, 2007 Monday

Copyright 2007 The Daily Star - The Daily Star FZ LLC. Provided by Syndigate.info, an Albawaba.com company All Rights Reserved

THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Length: 1129 words

Byline: Daily Star Staff

Body

Major powers and key donors meet in Paris on Monday for a conference aimed at raising billions of dollars to help the emergence of a viable Palestinian state and give political impetus to the newly relaunched peace process with Israel. Ninety international delegations are expected at the one-day Conference of Donors.

Major powers and key donors meet in Paris on Monday for a conference aimed at raising billions of dollars to help the emergence of a viable Palestinian state and give political impetus to the newly relaunched peace process with Israel. Ninety international delegations are expected at the one-day Conference of Donors for a Palestinian State, the biggest of its kind since 1996, which aims to shore up the already shaky negotiations jumpstarted in the US city of Annapolis last month.

The donors conference comes amid an escalation of rhetoric and attacks between **Hamas** and Israel, and various Israeli incursions into the occupied West Bank.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who is already in Paris, is seeking \$5.6 billion spread over 2008 to 2010 for an ambitious development plan to underwrite a promised state and tackle economic hardship in the Palestinian territories.

The US is ready to pledge more than \$500 million, officials in Washington said, while the German government promised \$200 million by 2010.

Delegates gathering for the occasion include UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.

Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni will represent Israel, which is under pressure to lift restrictions on freedom of movement in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip to allow the Palestinian Authority's plan to take shape.

Livni and Abbas held a meeting in Paris Sunday afternoon.

Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, special peace envoy for the Middle East Quartet - the EU, Russia, the UN and the US - is co-chair of the event along with host country France, peace-broker Norway and the European Commission.

World powers meet in Paris to bankroll Palestinian state

French President Nicolas Sarkozy will open the proceedings, at Abbas' side, with a speech at 9:30 a.m. on Monday, before handing over to French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner for the rest of the day.

The Middle East Quartet is expected to meet on the sidelines of the conference, while several high-profile participants - including Ban, Abbas, Fayyad, Livni and Lavrov - were to have an informal dinner with Kouchner on Sunday evening.

At the US-sponsored meeting in Annapolis, Maryland last month, Israel and the Palestinians pledged to seek a peace deal by the end of next year, relaunching negotiations frozen for seven years.

Abbas has said he is confident Paris will clinch the necessary aid - 70 percent in budget support and 30 percent for development projects - sending a powerful signal of backing for the peace process.

"It is urgent to stabilize the Palestinian economy and implement measures on the ground that will improve the daily lives of Palestinians," said Sarkozy's spokesman David Martinon.

The Palestinian development plan has been drawn up by the occupied West Bank-based government of the economist Salam Fayyad, whom Abbas appointed prime minister when the Hamas seized control of the Gaza Strip in June.

Fayyad said his government had undertaken important economic reforms which should reassure donors that their money will not be wasted.

"The reforms are not abstract slogans but concrete actions which we have taken. I can say with certainty that Palestinian financial management is no longer a cause for concern," he said.

The Palestinians say the largest chunk of development aid would go to projects in education, health and women's rights.

Conference members are expected to urge Israel - which operates 550 checkpoints in the occupied West Bank - to gradually lift restrictions on movement between Palestinian towns and villages, while asking the Palestinians for a big push to improve security conditions.

Between 30 and 40 percent of projects would be in the Gaza Strip - with guarantees to ensure funds do not reach the Hamas militants in control of the territory, according to French and Palestinian sources.

Hamas, uninvited to Annapolis, has decried the US-led peace talks. And alongside an Israeli plan to construct 307 new homes in occupied East Jerusalem which under international law and previous agreements is illegal, the renewed violence between Hamas and the Israeli Army is seen as a primary impediment to the renewed process.

In what officials called a goodwill gesture to the Palestinian Authority, Israel on Sunday allowed 491 residents of the Gaza Strip to travel to Saudi Arabia for the hajj pilgrimage.

The pilgrims traveled across Israel by bus to the occupied West Bank town of Jericho from where they would go to Jordan's capital Amman to fly to Saudi Arabia.

Another group of roughly the same number of pilgrims depart Monday, according to Ashraf al-Ajrami, Palestinian minister for prisoners' affairs, who said the agreement called for 930 pilgrims in all to leave from the Gaza Strip.

The gesture, however, could hardly erase the mutual aggressions between Israel and Hamas in the last week.

Israeli forces arrested 25 Hamas members, including a member of Parliament, in early Sunday morning raids in Nablus, Palestinian officials said.

Those arrested included lawmaker Ahmad al-Haj Ali, as well as a former deputy Cabinet minister and two city council representatives, all Hamas members, Palestinian security officials said.

World powers meet in Paris to bankroll Palestinian state

The Israeli military said troops made overnight arrests in an operation targeting **Hamas** operatives in Nablus.

In addition, three members of the **Hamas** military wing were wounded in an Israeli air strike on the Gaza Strip early on Sunday, Palestinian medics said.

The three members of the Ezzedine Al-Qassam Brigades were hit in Gaza City by a missile fired from an Israeli aircraft, they said.

Also on Sunday, a rocket fired from Gaza hit a nearby Kibbutz, badly injuring an Israeli toddler. As international donors gather to bolster Abbas, **Hamas** has attempted to demonstrate its own strength, holding a mass rally on Saturday commemorating the movement's 20th anniversary. The rally's attendance was estimated at over 250,000.

Given the Palestinian divide, Israeli Primer Minister Ehud Olmert has raised certain security concerns regarding the donors conference.

For Israel, Olmert said, "the central issue ... is the Palestinian Authority's ability to deal as it should with the subject of security, to eradicate the terror organizations, and ensure there will not be terrorist activity against Israel."

In light of the attacks and residual animosities, a French diplomat said: "The two [sides] have to move forwards in tandem," though he said the funds would not be strictly tied to this condition. - ***Agencies***

Load-Date: October 22, 2008

In Gaza, veiled face of order joins police

The International Herald Tribune

January 19, 2008 Saturday

Copyright 2008 International Herald Tribune All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 993 words

Byline: Taghreed El-Khodary - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: GAZA CITY

Body

The policemen of **Hamas** now have company: Since the Islamic group took over here last June it has been recruiting policewomen as well.

Since mid-August, 60 **women** have been accepted into the force. Unlike policemen, the **women** have not played any role resisting the latest Israeli incursions, instead working mostly on gender-sensitive cases of drugs and prostitution and helping out at police headquarters and the central prison.

Restoring internal security to the Gaza Strip was one of the main challenges for **Hamas** after taking over the area following a violent struggle with Fatah. The policewomen are one way **Hamas** has tried to fill the security gap.

Faced with diplomatic and internal isolation, **Hamas** has also struggled to recreate a criminal justice system, in part because the president of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah, is paying salaries to the former judges, prosecutors and police, mostly from Fatah, and telling them to stay at home. **Hamas** has named only four judges so far, not enough to resume the work of civil courts.

It is a paradox of Islamist societies that their deeply conservative proscriptions against **women** and the mingling of the sexes necessarily create opportunities for **women** in certain areas, like sports, criminal justice and medicine.

But in Gaza, **female** empowerment and **Hamas**-style religious orthodoxy are not always an easy mix. Many religious **women** refuse to do police work because it involves working closely with men and necessarily entails working nights.

There are other uncertainties. For example, Rania, 26, the leader of the **women's** force, refused to give her full name during an interview. She felt that her future in the police was not yet assured and that she might one day need to go back to her former career as a religious instructor in the mosques. If so, her interlude as a policewoman might spoil her relations with her students, she said.

Like most of her **female** colleagues, Rania wears the niqab, a full veil that leaves only a slit for the eyes. A sign of ultramodesty, it affords her a degree of anonymity as well.

One recruit, Fatma, 27, wears only a head scarf, which leaves her face exposed. But she complained that it was difficult to run in her long Islamic robe, known as a jilbab. She said that her bosses were thinking of designing a new uniform for easier movement.

In Gaza, veiled face of order joins police

"They are talking about pants, and a jilbab that is open on both sides," she said.

Although Gaza is generally conservative, growing economic hardship intensified by the isolation of the strip under Hamas rule has pushed more women to leave the house for the working world. Since Hamas began recruiting women for the police through its television and radio stations, and calling on female worshippers in the mosques to consider it a religious duty, hundreds have applied.

They are often highly qualified, with more than two-thirds having studied civil and criminal law at Al-Azhar University, the only school here that teaches law. But nothing in school can quite prepare a young woman for a drug raid, said Fatma, who studied law at Al-Azhar.

"The first time it was scary," she said. "We hadn't received any special training. But the second time was better."

When raiding the house of a suspected drug dealer, Fatma says, four policewomen are typically assigned to join 30 men. The women search female suspects who may be hiding drugs on their bodies, and go into areas off-limits for Hamas policemen, like bedrooms.

Another recruit, Fida Abu Husain, 28, is single and lives with her family in the Jabaliya refugee camp, north of Gaza City.

"I used to tell my family that my dream was to join Qassam," she said, referring to the Hamas military wing. "I'm not Qassam, but I'm in the police force. It's considered jihad," a holy mission, she said.

Husain works for Amin Nofal, the general manager of the military court system. Nofal cannot see much of her behind her full veil, but says that he identifies her by her voice and manner.

"Some women cover their beauty and others hide their ugliness," he said, referring to the niqab. "It's fair. There are those who feel comfortable wearing it when dealing with men."

Rania had been working on the case of an unmarried female university student who had been photographed having sex. It was unclear whether she was engaged in prostitution, which is a crime. Either way, she had put herself in a compromising position that, in Rania's view, could harm the Palestinian cause. Drugs and prostitution lead to "collaboration with Israel," she said.

Rania took the pictures to the woman's family and told them of their daughter's "wrongdoing."

Maher al-Ramli, 45, the chief of the Hamas police, said that the police usually aim for reconciliation, but Rania acknowledged that in cases of "family honor," the women often end up dead at the hands of male relatives or are sometimes married off to those they slept with or were raped by.

"Women are the victims," said Zainab Ghonaimi, a women's rights activist in Gaza.

With Gaza's court system still barely functioning, justice has become mostly a family affair. As a result, Gaza's central prison serves in part as a kind of shelter for women at risk.

Recent inmates included a 15-year-old girl whose family said she had been raped by her 22-year-old cousin. Four female relatives were in the jail with her - endangered by accusations that they failed to promptly inform the head of the family of the rape and subsequent pregnancy - while the male cousin was free.

The 15-year-old gave birth to a baby girl after the rape, but her brother "threw away" the newborn, according to the women, and nobody knew where to find the baby. Her father had agreed to marry her to the cousin, but the cousin's father was objecting.

In a separate room, five women from a poor family in central Gaza were taking refuge. Accused by male cousins of prostitution, the five said their lives had been threatened. "We're protected here," one said.

In Gaza, veiled face of order joins police

Load-Date: January 27, 2008

End of Document

Adopt a few simple healthy habits to get most out of your life

USA TODAY

April 25, 2008 Friday

FINAL EDITION

Copyright 2008 Gannett Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 12A

Length: 534 words

Body

Adopt a few simple healthy habits to get most out of your life

USA TODAY's article "Life spans decline in some U.S. areas" highlights a scary fact: Despite all the money we spend on health care in the USA, some Americans are living shorter lives than just a decade ago, largely due to poor health behaviors and lifestyle choices (Life, Tuesday).

The good news is, it doesn't have to be this way. In many instances, deaths resulting from common chronic illnesses associated with poor health behaviors could be avoided.

According to estimates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 80% of cases of heart disease or stroke, 80% of cases of diabetes, and about 40% of cases of cancer could be prevented if Americans do three things:

*Stop smoking

*Exercise regularly

*Eat a balanced diet

As we discuss how to reform our health care system, we must acknowledge the importance of putting in place the right policies to help more Americans make better decisions about their health, and access the resources they need to get to stay healthy.

Ultimately, the health care system is meant to promote health.

Without policies that place a greater emphasis on preventing illness, Americans are bound to continue down this same path.

Kenneth E. Thorpe

Executive director

Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease

Atlanta

Adopt a few simple healthy habits to get most out of your life

Freedom for Kosovo

The possible refusal by the United Nations to recognize the independence of Kosovo is an insult not only to democracy but to the United States as well. As a permanent U.N. Security Council member, Russia plans to use its veto power to block Kosovo from joining ("Russia will not allow Kosovo to join U.N.," USATODAY.com, April 2).

The newly independent Kosovo suffered years of brutal abuse from both communist Yugoslavia as well as from the Serbian authorities during the Balkan wars.

Russia's veto might lead to aggression and terrorism, similar to what happened when the U.N. arms embargo against the Bosnians led to the deaths of many Bosnian Muslims.

Russia's failure to recognize Kosovo could encourage a worldwide militant Islamists' response. The United States should continue to use its diplomatic and economic power to encourage Russia to withhold its veto.

Kevin Beck

Las Vegas

Hamas talks amiss

Former president Jimmy Carter, arguably the worst commander in chief of the 20th century, is distinguishing himself as the worst ex-president ever. He met with the ringleader of the Arab terrorist gang **Hamas** on April 18 ("Carter meets exiled **Hamas** leaders in Syria," USATODAY.com, April 18).

Why would Carter be meeting with **Hamas** chief Khaled Mashaal, a deranged derelict who has the blood of Americans on his hands?

Was the purpose of the former president's trip to extract an apology for the thousands of missiles Mashaal's henchmen have fired at innocent men, **women** and children? What about an apology for perpetrating countless terrorist acts over the past several years, resulting in the killing of Americans?

I don't think so.

Carter thinks **Hamas** must be involved in talks to truly achieve peace among Israelis and Palestinians. But I think his decision was a poor one. No one can negotiate with terrorists.

Shame on Carter. Meeting with **Hamas** is a disgrace.

Douglas Miller

Miami Beach

Load-Date: April 25, 2008

Israeli forces kill 60 in bloodiest day yet seen in Gaza

Sunday Independent (Ireland)

March 2, 2008

Copyright 2008 Independent News and Media Ltd. All Rights Reserved

Independent.ie 

Section: WORLD NEWS; Middle East

Length: 661 words

Body

Israeli forces killed 60 people in the Gaza Strip yesterday, many of them children, in the bloodiest day for Palestinians since an uprising against Israeli occupation began in 2000.

Israel, which lost two soldiers, seemed ready to press home its fiercest assault since it pulled troops back to the borders of the coastal enclave in 2005.

It blamed **Hamas** Islamist rocket fire on Israel for provoking four days of fighting, in which dozens of civilians have been among the 95 Palestinians killed.

The UN Security Council prepared to meet in New York and a UN official in Gaza appealed for international action to end the "inhuman suffering" of its 1.5 million people.

A day after an Israeli official warned Gazans of a "shoah" -- which typically means holocaust -- Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, a sworn enemy of Gaza's **Hamas** rulers, called it "more than a holocaust".

Aides said it may wreck peace talks that were revived after collapsing in 2000.

At least 30 of the dead were civilians, among them **women** and children, said Palestinian doctors.

Two Israeli soldiers were also killed and seven wounded, the army said -- its first deaths in Gaza since October.

Dozens of **Hamas** rockets hit Israeli border areas, wounding several people. An Israeli civilian was killed on Wednesday, the first since May.

Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak said Israel was "not happy" civilians were being hurt but blamed **Hamas** for firing rockets from built-up areas and said it would "pay the price".

His deputy Matan Vilnai earlier said Gaza faced a "shoah" -- a holocaust or catastrophe. On Saturday, he said: "As long as events escalate the chances we will use greater force increase."

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice visits Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert this week.

Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat warned: "If Israeli aggression continues, it will bury the peace process."

Israeli forces kill 60 in bloodiest day yet seen in Gaza

A spokesman for Israel's chief negotiator said: "What Israel is doing in Gaza is fighting terror and it will be continued."

More than 48 rockets and mortars landed on Saturday.

Of the 60 killed, 30 were fighters, according to hospital staff and **Hamas**, which routed Mr Abbas's Western-backed forces in Gaza in June.

"Uncle, I don't want to die. I want my dad," a toddler screamed as doctors tried to treat burn wounds across her body in Gaza's main Shifa hospital.

The girl was injured in a house which the Israeli army said was used to store and make weapons.

One of the dead civilians was a mother who was preparing breakfast for her children when hit by gunfire, relatives and medical workers said. One missile slammed into a crowd of Palestinians, killing four civilians, medics said.

In Damascus, exiled **Hamas** leader Khaled Meshaal said: "I say to the Zionist leaders, if they decided to raid Gaza, they will be fought not by dozens. . . but by 1.5 million people."

A senior UN official in Gaza, John Ging, appealed to world leaders to interrupt their weekend to stop the fighting: "Killing Palestinian **women** and children will not bring security to the people of Israel," he said, cautioning Israeli commanders about the risk of committing war crimes.

He also said **Hamas**'s rocket fire would not achieve Palestinians' goals.

Palestinians said Israelis made their biggest and deepest incursion into Gaza in the 30 months since Israel pulled out settlers and troops after 38 years of occupation.

It has since imposed a blockade on Gaza's borders, drawing international complaints it is abusing its role as occupying power.

Daily rocket fire for months has put Mr Olmert under pressure from voters to act. But the government, chastened by a costly war against Hezbollah guerrillas in Lebanon in 2006, is wary of an outright invasion of the densely populated coastal region.

Mr Olmert's deputy, Vice Premier Haim Ramon, said: "We need to act with all our might, but without taking steps that will hurt us more than help us -- by which I mean reoccupying Gaza."

Load-Date: March 2, 2008

Israel hits back, threatens more

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

March 3, 2008 Monday

First Edition

Copyright 2008 John Fairfax Publications Pty Ltd All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; International News; Pg. 10

Length: 640 words

Byline: Ed O'Loughlin in Gaza with agencies

Body

THE United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, has condemned Israel's "disproportionate and excessive use of force" in a bloody raid into Gaza that has killed more than 60 Palestinians, as Israel vowed to press on with the offensive, threatening even stronger action.

Those killed in the crowded neighbourhood include numerous militants from **Hamas** and other groups, but up to half of them are reported to be civilians, including children.

"We sent this clear message to members of the Security Council ... and we simply said Israel cannot and does not intend to accept the situation," the Israeli Defence Minister, Ehud Barak said, referring to rocket fire from the **Hamas**-controlled Gaza Strip.

Mr Barak spoke to Israeli radio yesterday, after an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council called by Libya.

Mr Ban told Saturday's emergency meeting: "While recognising Israel's right to defend itself, I condemn the disproportionate and excessive use of force that has killed or injured so many civilians, including children".

The number of fatalities from Saturday's invasion and air strikes is thought to be the highest one-day death toll in more than seven years of conflict. Together with the deaths of two Israeli soldiers in action on Saturday and the killing of an Israeli civilian by Palestinian rocket fire last Wednesday, the weekend tank and air assault brings to about 100 the number of lives lost since Israel assassinated five **Hamas** leaders on Wednesday.

Saturday's dead included several **women** and children killed when Israeli heavy ordnance struck the homes where they were hiding.

The Israeli newspaper Haaretz reported that the ferocity of the onslaught on the Jabaliya refugee camp in north Gaza stemmed from an Israeli army doctrine of using massive firepower to extract troops killed or injured in combat - a rare occurrence in Gaza in recent years.

Despite the scale of the bloodshed, the Israeli Defence Force has stressed that its continuing operation in the Jabaliya district is not to be confused with the ground offensive that Israel says may be necessary to wipe out **Hamas** and end missile fire from Gaza at Israeli border communities.

Israel hits back, threatens more

The rockets fired included one that killed a 47 year-old Israeli civilian in the border town of Sderot and several longer-range missiles, which for the first time struck the centre of the coastal city of Ashkelon, greatly increasing the number of Israeli civilians now at risk from Gaza-based militants.

The killings have cast a familiar pall over the lacklustre peace talks being held between Israel and the Palestinian Authority chairman, Mahmoud Abbas.

The Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said: "If Israeli aggression continues, it will bury the peace process."

Mr Abbas's chief peace negotiator, Ahmed Qurie, called off a meeting scheduled for today with his Israeli counterpart, the Foreign Minister, Tzipi Livni, Israeli officials said.

But Mr Abbas, who echoed widespread Palestinian outrage at Israel's tactics by calling it "more than a holocaust", had taken no decision to abandon the peace process, aides said.

The US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, is due to arrive in the region again this week to push for further dialogue.

At the time of writing Israeli troops and tanks were still operating inside the Jabaliya refugee camp. Elsewhere in Gaza, aircraft attacked a number of police stations and government building, destroying the city-centre office of the **Hamas** Prime Minister, Ismail Haniyeh.

Hamas officials have said that their group, which seized control of the Gaza Strip from Mr Abbas's Fatah movement in June, would consider a ceasefire with Israel provided Israel also halted its operations in the Fatah-held West Bank and ended its crippling blockade of Gaza's 1.5 million people.

Israel says a ceasefire would simply allow the militants to rest and re-arm.

Graphic

TWO PHOTOS: Rockets in, rockets out ... a Gazan shouts after his house is hit by an Israeli missile. Inset: an Israeli woman from Sderot is a victim of **Hamas** rockets. Main photo: Reuters/Suhaib Salem

Load-Date: March 2, 2008

Mideast peace talks suspended; Israel says offensive will continue until missile attacks end

The Record (Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario)

March 3, 2008 Monday

Final Edition

Copyright 2008 Metroland Media Group Ltd All Rights Reserved

Section: FRONT; Pg. A4

Length: 660 words

Byline: The Associated Press

Dateline: GAZA CITY, GAZA STRIP

Body

The Palestinian president suspended peace talks yesterday as Israel brushed off international criticism and vowed to press ahead with its Gaza offensive until militants halt rocket attacks.

Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak said an even broader Gaza operation was possible, aimed at crushing militant rocket squads but also to "weaken the Hamas rule, in the right circumstances, even to bring it down."

The Palestinian death toll rose by 21, bringing the number killed to 109 since the latest bout of fighting erupted Wednesday, according to Palestinian medical officials and militant groups. At least 54 Palestinians and two Israelis were killed Saturday, the single deadliest day in more than seven years of fighting.

The Gaza onslaught has failed to protect southern Israel, where residents have faced repeated rocket attacks since 2001. Gaza militants fired more than 25 rockets at southern Israel yesterday. Nine Israelis were injured, rescue services said.

"For the time being, the negotiations (with Israel) are suspended because we have so many funerals," said Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat . It was unclear when the talks, relaunched last November at a U.S.-hosted summit, would resume.

The violence clouded an upcoming visit by U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. The Israeli and Palestinian leaders have set a December target for concluding a final peace deal. But instead of promoting peace, Rice will likely spend her visit this week trying to put out the latest fire.

Before dawn yesterday, Israeli aircraft sent missiles into the empty offices of Hamas prime minister, Ismail Haniyeh. No one was hurt, but the attack was seen as a tough message to the Hamas leadership, which has refused to halt rocket barrages at a growing swath of southern Israel.

After nightfall, Israeli aircraft struck targets around Gaza City's Shati refugee camp and at Jebaliya, further north, where a militant was killed and four were wounded, Palestinian security officials said.

Mideast peace talks suspended; Israel says offensive will continue until missile attacks end

Eleven Palestinians, including a 21-month-old girl, were killed yesterday, and 10 others died of earlier wounds or were found dead, Palestinian medical officials said. Roughly half of those killed since Wednesday were civilians, medical officials said.

"We are following the aggression against our people in Gaza," Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas told reporters. He said he had contacted the United Nations Security Council, the European Union and Arab leaders "to work to stop this aggression."

Abbas has wielded little influence in Gaza since **Hamas** vanquished his forces and took over last June.

The unrest spilled over to the West Bank, where Abbas and his Fatah faction run a rival government.

In the West Bank town of Hebron, a 14-year-old Palestinian boy was fatally shot during a protest against Israel, Palestinian medical officials said.

Later about 2,000 angry **Hamas** supporters marched through the city streets, waving copies of the Qur'an and green **Hamas** flags. "Revenge. Revenge. Retaliate in Tel Aviv," the crowd chanted.

Schools and shops across the West Bank shut down to protest the operation in Gaza and there were demonstrations at checkpoints, watchtowers and patrol routes.

In Ramallah, home to Abbas' government, club-wielding Palestinian security forces used tear gas and pushed back dozens of **women** demonstrating in support of **Hamas**. Security forces tried to stop TV crews filming and clubbed protesters, said photographer Muhib Barghouthi.

The offensive also drew a chorus of international condemnation. The EU and UN chief Ban Ki-Moon accused Israel of using excessive force. The UN Security Council urged Israelis and Palestinians "to immediately cease all acts of violence."

At the weekly meeting of his cabinet, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert rejected the criticism.

"Nothing will prevent us from continuing operations to protect our citizens," he said. "No one has the moral right to preach to Israel for taking the elementary step of self-defence."

Graphic

Photo: THE ASSOCIATED PRESS , Palestinian relatives mourn yesterday during the funeral of four members of the Atallah family, killed in an Israeli missile strike Saturday, in Gaza City. Israeli aircraft sent missiles into the office of the prime minister of Gaza before dawn yesterday, as part of an offensive that has killed nearly 70 Palestinians in two days of fighting.

Load-Date: March 3, 2008

Israel condemned for killing 61 in Gaza; Attack on Palestinians called 'excessive'

The Vancouver Province (British Columbia)

March 2, 2008 Sunday

Final Edition

Copyright 2008 The Vancouver Province, a division of CanWest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A27

Length: 412 words

Byline: Reuters, L.A. Times

Dateline: UNITED NATIONS

Body

UNITED NATIONS -- UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon yesterday condemned Israel for using "excessive" force in the Gaza Strip and demanded a halt to its offensive after troops killed 61 people on the bloodiest day for Palestinians since the 1980s.

Addressing an emergency session of the Security Council in New York after four days of fighting in which 96 Palestinians, many of them civilians, have been killed, he also called on Gaza's Islamist militants to stop firing rockets.

Israel, which lost two soldiers, seemed ready to press home its fiercest air and ground assault since it pulled troops back to the borders of the coastal enclave in 2005.

A senior UN official in Gaza, John Ging, appealed to world leaders to stop the fighting.

"Killing Palestinian women and children will not bring security to the people of Israel," he said.

He also said the Islamist militant group Hamas's rocket fire would not achieve Palestinians' goals.

At least 30 of the dead were civilians, among them women and children, Palestinian doctors who worked around the clock said.

One of the dead civilians was a mother who was preparing breakfast for her children when she was hit by gunfire, relatives said.

At least 30 gunmen were killed, medics and Hamas said.

Forty-eight rockets hit Israel, wounding several people. An Israeli civilian was killed on Wednesday, the first since May.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, a sworn enemy of Hamas, which took control of Gaza from his forces in June, called the attack "more than a holocaust."

Israel condemned for killing 61 in Gaza; Attack on Palestinians called 'excessive'

He could have been echoing remarks by Matan Vilnai, Israel's deputy defence minister, who invoked the holocaust on Friday when warning of an impending Israeli move into Gaza.

By allowing constant rocket barrages from Gaza on nearby Israeli cities, he said, the Palestinians were "bringing upon themselves a greater shoah [usually translated as holocaust], because we will use all our strength in every way we deem appropriate, whether in airstrikes or on the ground."

Senior **Hamas** leader Khaled Mashaal accused Israel of "implementing a real holocaust against the Palestinian people for the past 60 years. What is happening today in Gaza is a new holocaust."

Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak said Israel was "not happy" civilians were being hurt but blamed **Hamas** for firing rockets from built-up areas and said it would "pay the price."

Aides to Abbas said fighting could wreck peace talks with Israel that were revived with U.S. backing after collapsing in 2000.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Reuters; A wounded girl is carried away after an Israeli missile attack destroyed a house in Gaza yesterday. ;

Load-Date: March 2, 2008

NEWS IN BRIEF

Hobart Mercury (Australia)

July 29, 2008 Tuesday

1 - Edition

Copyright 2008 Nationwide News Pty Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: WORLD; Pg. 12

Length: 346 words

Body

Iraqi pilgrims killed

THREE suicide bombers, believed to be women, and a roadside bomb struck Shi'ite pilgrims taking part in a massive religious procession in Baghdad yesterday, killing at least 28 people and injuring 85. The attacks occurred in quick succession as tens of thousands of worshippers streamed to a shrine in northern Baghdad to mark the death of an eighth century saint.

Hamas men seized

FATAH forces loyal to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas arrested more than 50 Hamas members in Nablus in the West Bank yesterday after the Islamist movement rounded up hundreds of its rivals in the Gaza Strip. Hamas had blamed Fatah for a beachside Gaza bombing on Friday that killed five senior Hamas militants and a girl.

Indon terror plot

INDONESIAN terror suspects executed a Christian teacher and were planning to assassinate an American language teacher on Sumatra before their arrest this month, anti-terrorism officials and the suspects' lawyer said. The 10 alleged militants also said they were plotting to attack the Supreme Court to avenge the upcoming executions of the Bali nightclub bombers.

Missiles hit school

MISSILES hit a religious school in South Waziristan, just inside Pakistan's border with Afghanistan, yesterday, killing six people. There was no claim of responsibility, but the incident followed a series of strikes from unmanned US aircraft against militant leaders.

Cruise ships collide

TWO cruise ships with hundreds of people on board collided in Greece's main port of Piraeus yesterday, causing damage but no injuries. The Malta-flagged Zenith, carrying 1819 passengers, hit the Greek-flagged Aegean Pearl, with 504 passengers, as the Zenith attempted to tie up in the port.

Yosemite fire threat

NEWS IN BRIEF

A BUSHFIRE near Yosemite National Park in California claimed 12 homes and prompted hundreds of evacuations, as thousands of firefighters struggled to keep it from engulfing nearby towns.

Blaze destroys pier

A FIRE has destroyed a historic seaside pier in Weston-super-Mare, western England. The Grand Pier, built in 1904, was listed as a historic monument.

Load-Date: July 28, 2008

End of Document

Palestinians protest Israeli blockade in Gaza

Ottawa Citizen

February 26, 2008 Tuesday

Final Edition

Copyright 2008 Ottawa Citizen, a division of CanWest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A7

Length: 741 words

Byline: Rushdi abu Alouf and Richard Boudreaux, The Los Angeles Times

Dateline: BEIT HANOUN, Gaza Strip

Body

BEIT HANOUN, Gaza Strip - As Israelis watched nervously from across the border, Palestinians in the Gaza Strip staged parallel protests yesterday against the Jewish state, placing a few thousand placard-waving demonstrators along the main highway and firing five rockets into Israel.

One of the rockets injured 10-year-old Yossi Haimov in the town of Sderot as an air-raid siren sent him and his eight-year-old sister rushing for cover against a wall. He underwent surgery for severe shrapnel wounds in his right shoulder.

Israel had braced for a day of trouble. Incoming rocket fire is a near-daily occurrence in Sderot and other communities near Gaza, but after a civic group linked to **Hamas** called for a human chain of 40,000 people along the strip's 40-kilometre length, the army sent troops to prevent a mass storming of the border.

Thousands of Israeli troops and police were deployed along the border fence and were backed, according to Israeli media reports, by an artillery battery and a team of snipers.

Turnout for the 21/2-hour demonstration, a protest against Israel's blockade of the coastal enclave, fell far below expectations.

As the crowd dispersed, about 200 people tried to march to the border, but **Hamas** police turned most back. About 40 teenage boys believed to have been throwing rocks were arrested by Israeli border guards.

Palestinian organizers, attributing the low turnout to bad weather, said there would be larger demonstrations to press for an end to what they call the siege of Gaza's 1.5 million residents.

Israel imposed its blockade after **Hamas** violently took control of Gaza in June, ending a power-sharing arrangement with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah forces. Israel and the United States consider **Hamas** a terrorist group. Its followers have killed hundreds of Israelis in suicide bombings and other attacks.

Stepped-up rocket fire from Gaza last month prompted a tightening of sanctions, causing chronic shortages of vital supplies of food, medical supplies, fuel and electricity. This week, Gaza hospitals reported running low on gasoline for ambulances.

Palestinians protest Israeli blockade in Gaza

Hamas's response to the tighter restrictions alarmed Israeli leaders: Militants used explosives last month to knock down part of the wall along Gaza's border with Egypt, enabling hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to pour across and buy scarce goods.

That border was resealed after 12 days, but the militant Islamic group had shown a capacity to undermine the blockade and, possibly, to breach Israel's border defences.

Predictions had reached a point of hysteria on Israel's airwaves in the run-up to yesterday's demonstration. Effie Eitam, an ultranationalist member of the Israeli parliament, told Israel Radio: "The mob will stream into our territory. ... It will be the end of the state of Israel."

Palestinian organizers said that was never the intention. They ordered demonstrators to stay a distance of at least 1,100 metres from the border.

"This is a peaceful event aimed to send a message to the world that the people of Gaza want to live in freedom," said Jamal Khoudary, an independent Palestinian lawmaker who is close to **Hamas** and whose Popular Committee Against the Siege staged the protest.

Placards held aloft at the demonstration read: "End the siege of Gaza now" and "Your siege will not break our will." Some bore photographs of Gazans who recently died in hospitals, reportedly for lack of medicine.

"They call us terrorists because we use rockets to resist the occupation," said Kalid Mahmoud, a 15-year-old demonstrator, noting the frequent Israeli incursions that have killed civilians along with targeted militants. "Every day, Israel is killing our **women** and children."

Instead of a continuous chain, the demonstrators gathered in five locations along Gaza's north-south highway. About 3,000 made up the largest group, at the northern end in Beit Hanoun. Reuters news agency estimated 4,500 showed up in all.

Yesterday's late-morning rocket barrage started just as the demonstrators were gathering. One rocket landed near a high school in Sderot. The Popular Resistance Committees, a militant group close to **Hamas**, claimed responsibility.

Israeli airstrikes killed three **Hamas** militants in Gaza before dawn yesterday. A fourth militant, belonging to the Popular Resistance Committees, was found dead during the day near the southern border town of Rafah. The group said he was killed in a shootout with Israeli soldiers.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Suhaib Salem, Reuters; Palestinian **women** form a human chain protest yesterday, calling for an end to the Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip. Israel threatened to use deadly force should a march by thousands of Palestinians turn into an attempt to surge across the border into Israeli territory. ;

Load-Date: February 26, 2008

World - Gazans storm Egypt border

Morning Star

January 23, 2008 Wednesday

Copyright 2008 People's Press Printing Society Ltd All Rights Reserved

Length: 443 words

Body

Hundreds of Palestinian protesters briefly broke through the Egypt-Gaza border terminal on Tuesday, pushing back Egyptian riot police who fired in the air to try to contain the crowd.

Ten Egyptian police and about 60 protesters were hurt in the melee, in which protesters hurled stones and Palestinian militiamen fired briefly in the air.

The confrontation occurred at the end of a **Hamas**-organised protest by several thousand **women** calling for a lifting of the Gaza blockade, which was imposed by Israel last week.

The protesters hurled insults at Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

"Hosni Mubarak, you are a coward. You are an agent for the Americans," they chanted. "Gaza **women** will not be humiliated."

Israel delivered fuel for Gaza's power plant, partially lifting the blockade, after Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak decided on Monday night to let in limited fuel and medicine shipments.

Tanker lorries pumped 700,000 litres of fuel to the other side, enough to provide electricity to Gaza City for two days.

Other lorries delivered cooking gas and a shipment of medicine.

The crisis erupted last week, when Israel reacted to an upsurge in rocket fire against Israeli border towns by sealing the territory and cutting off fuel supplies.

Gaza's power plant shut down, cutting off electricity to about one-third of Gaza's residents, and international aid groups warned that they would have to suspend food distribution to hundreds of thousands of people by the end of the week for lack of lorry fuel.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said on Tuesday that the US administration has spoken to Israeli officials "about the importance of not allowing a humanitarian crisis to unfold."

Israeli officials were receptive, she said, adding that she blamed **Hamas** for the crisis.

In the West Bank, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas rejected calls for his government to pull out of peace talks with Israel.

"Halting contacts with Israel is useless," Mr Abbas said. "On the contrary, we should intensify our contacts and our meetings to stop the suffering of our people."

World - Gazans storm Egypt border

He also offered to have his government take control of the Palestinian side of Gaza's border crossings.

Israel's refusal to deal with **Hamas** officials contributed to its decision to severely curb the flow of people and goods in and out of Gaza after **Hamas** won legislative elections in 2006.

Despite the limited resumption of fuel shipments, guerillas in Gaza fired six rockets towards Israel on Tuesday.

Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri dismissed the resumption of shipments.

"This does not mean the end of the siege on Gaza," he said, vowing that the Islamist group would fight on "until we break the siege."

Load-Date: January 23, 2008

End of Document

Abbas halts talks; Israel to persist in offensive

Deseret Morning News (Salt Lake City)

March 3, 2008 Monday

Copyright 2008 The Deseret News Publishing Co.

Length: 1185 words

Byline: Ibrahim Barzak and Josef Federman Associated Press

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip -- Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas suspended peace talks Sunday as Israel brushed off international criticism and vowed to press ahead with its Gaza offensive until militants halt rocket attacks.

Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak said an even broader Gaza operation was possible, aimed at crushing militant rocket squads but also to "weaken the Hamas rule, in the right circumstances, even to bring it down."

The Palestinian death toll rose by 26, bringing the number killed to 114 since the latest bout of fighting erupted on Wednesday, according to Palestinian medical officials and militant groups. At least 54 Palestinians and two Israelis were killed on Saturday, the single deadliest day in more than seven years of fighting.

The Gaza onslaught has failed to protect southern Israel, where residents have faced repeated rocket attacks since 2001. Gaza militants fired more than 25 rockets at southern Israel Sunday, the military said, scoring direct hits on houses in the city of Ashkelon and the town of Sderot. Nine Israelis were injured, rescue services said.

Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said peace talks with Israel had been halted.

"For the time being, the negotiations are suspended because we have so many funerals," he said. It was unclear when the talks, relaunched last November at a U.S.-hosted summit, would resume.

The violence clouded an upcoming visit by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

The Israeli and Palestinian leaders have set a December target for concluding a final peace deal. But instead of promoting peace, Rice will likely spend her visit this week trying to put out the latest fire.

The Bush administration demanded a halt to the fighting.

"The violence needs to stop and the talks need to resume," Gordon Johndroe, a spokesman for the National Security Council, said in Texas.

In the early hours of Monday, Palestinians counted nine separate Israeli airstrikes all over Gaza, and five Hamas militants were killed. One attack was near the office of Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, who was not in the area at the time. The Israeli military said aircraft targeted weapons storage and manufacturing facilities.

Before midnight, Israel had moved additional ground forces and armored vehicles into northern Gaza, widening its area of operation to about a mile, witnesses and Palestinian security officials said. Also, aircraft attacked two metal workshops in northern Gaza, wounding 10, they said.

Abbas halts talks; Israel to persist in offensive

The military said two weapons caches were hit and that the troop rotations were routine.

On Sunday, 11 Palestinians, including a 21-month-old girl, were killed, and 10 others died of earlier wounds or were found dead, Palestinian medical officials said.

Roughly half of those killed since Wednesday were civilians, medical officials said. On Saturday, Palestinian leaders called the killings "genocide" and a "holocaust."

"We are following the aggression against our people in Gaza," Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas told reporters. He said he had contacted the U.N. Security Council, the EU and Arab leaders "to work to stop this aggression."

Abbas has wielded little influence in Gaza since Hamas vanquished his forces and took over last June. In a symbolic move, he donated blood for Gaza residents at his West Bank office.

The normally bustling streets of Gaza City were eerily empty. The sound of verses from the Muslim holy book, the Quran, sounding from mosque loudspeakers mingled with the roar of Israeli warplanes and unmanned drones in the sky.

Hundreds gathered outside Gaza hospitals waiting for bodies to be brought out of morgues for burial. Many, like schoolteacher Tawfek Shaban, a 44-year-old father of five, were holding small radios, listening to the news.

"Shame on the Arabs, shame on the Muslims, shame on humanity ... When will they act to stop Israel?" Shaban asked.

The reduced casualty count may have been the result of new measures imposed by Hamas. It told its fighters to use alleys for cover and avoid moving in large groups, ordered schools closed and set up roadblocks to keep civilians out of battle zones. In recent days, schoolchildren had left their studies to watch the fighting. The order forced children to stay at home.

The unrest spilled over to the West Bank, where Abbas and his Fatah faction run a rival government.

In the West Bank town of Hebron, a 14-year-old Palestinian boy was fatally shot in the chest during a protest against Israel, Palestinian medical officials said. It was the first death in the West Bank connected to the Gaza offensive.

An Israeli military spokesman said youths staged a "violent demonstration," throwing firebombs and putting soldiers at risk. Later about 2,000 angry Hamas supporters marched through the city streets, waving copies of the Quran and green Hamas flags. "Revenge. Revenge. Retaliate in Tel Aviv," the crowd chanted.

Schools and shops across the West Bank shut down to protest the operation in Gaza and there were demonstrations at traditional flashpoints like checkpoints, watchtowers and patrol routes.

In Ramallah, home to Abbas' government, club-wielding Palestinian security forces used tear gas and pushed back dozens of women demonstrating in support of Hamas. Security forces tried to stop TV crews filming and clubbed protesters, said Muhib Barghouthi, a photographer who was on scene.

The Gaza offensive also drew a chorus of international condemnation. The EU and U.N. chief Ban Ki-moon accused Israel of using excessive force. The U.N. Security Council urged Israelis and Palestinians "to immediately cease all acts of violence."

At the weekly meeting of his Cabinet, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert rejected the criticism.

"Nothing will prevent us from continuing operations to protect our citizens," he said. "No one has the moral right to preach to Israel for taking the elementary step of self-defense."

Olmert, commenting on the suspension of talks, said "attacking Hamas strengthens the chance for peace."

Abbas halts talks; Israel to persist in offensive

"I'm sure that beyond certain statements, the Palestinian leadership, the one with whom we want to achieve peace, also understands that," he said.

Israel regularly clashes with Gaza rocket squads, but it intensified its operations last week after militants fired salvos into Ashkelon, a city of 120,000 11 miles north of Gaza. By targeting a center like Ashkelon, only 25 miles from the metropolis of Tel Aviv, **Hamas** raised the stakes and added pressure on Israeli leaders to respond.

In Sderot, the town nearest Gaza which has suffered most of the rocket attacks over the past seven years, daily life has become almost unbearable. The rockets have killed 13, wounded dozens and caused millions of dollars in damage.

Egypt has cooperated with an Israeli blockade of **Hamas** in Gaza, but opened its sealed border crossing with the territory Sunday to allow some of the Palestinian wounded access to medical care.

Egypt sent 27 ambulances to the Rafah crossing to transfer between 150 to 200 wounded, said Imad Kharboush, a medical official at a hospital in el-Arish, near the Israeli border.

Associated Press Writer Josef Federman reported from Jerusalem.

Load-Date: March 3, 2008

Under siege and hopeless in Gaza

The New Zealand Herald
September 27, 2008 Saturday

Copyright 2008 The New Zealand Herald All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; World

Length: 1694 words

Body

Ez Eldin Abu Sereai is sitting up in bed, gasping for breath. The 19-year-old's eyes are closed and he leans forward clutching a cushion.

His head is tipped backwards and he makes a rasping noise as his body rocks back and forward.

"Can you hear me, Ez?" Dr Fawzi Nabulsy says, trying to get a response from his patient. Ez's eyelids flicker for a second but no words come.

His mouth is wide open beneath an oxygen mask but he is barely conscious. Dr Nabulsy, a consultant in charge of the intensive care unit at Al Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, explains that Ez is suffering from renal failure and that his lungs are congested. "He needs dialysis or his chances of survival are not good. We cannot treat him here properly."

Later, we drive to the Rantissi Paediatric Hospital for Children, a facility with acute shortages of drugs and equipment. Atif Zourep has heart disease and we are told by staff that this 3-month-old Palestinian baby will die unless he is given permission for treatment in Israel. Consent, they say, could take anything from one week to two months, if a travel permit is granted at all.

Here, in Gaza, politics are being played with people's lives. According to medical staff, more than 200 people have died because of an Israeli economic blockade imposed since 2006.

The policy has impacted everywhere but effects have been felt most at Gaza's 13 hospitals where ambulances stand stationary and some operations are cancelled.

Staff claim that cancer patients have died because of a shortage of drugs for chemotherapy and because travel permits to leave Gaza for treatment have been refused.

It's a man-made humanitarian crisis that Nobel peace laureate Desmond Tutu recently described as an "abomination".

"My message to the international community," he added, "is that our silence and complicity, shames us all."

On 7 June 2007, a battle erupted in the Gaza Strip. A conflict fought between the political factions ***Hamas*** and Fatah, it pitched Palestinian against Palestinian to wrest control of probably the world's most volatile strip of coastal territory. Gaza, a densely populated sliver of land that is home to 1.5 million Palestinians, had been simmering with

Under siege and hopeless in Gaza

tension since the Islamist organisation, **Hamas**, won an astonishing victory in the January, 2006, parliamentary elections to usurp the ruling party Fatah.

Hamas - a legitimate resistance opposing a brutal military occupation to its supporters, but a group branded terrorists by opponents - said the election win was the people of Gaza's response to years of corruption by Fatah.

Hamas' success provided a political earthquake, but its ascendancy to power was anathema to many nations, not least Israel and the United States, which boycotted the Government and supported Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and his Fatah faction with a view to ostracising the new regime.

But in a defeat for American interests in the Middle East, **Hamas** took control of Gaza in just over a week last summer to pre-empt a Fatah coup. During eight days of fighting the International Committee of the Red Cross estimated that more than 118 people were killed and 550 more injured.

The outcome was Israel's worst nightmare. **Hamas** - democratically elected and with the long-term aim of establishing an Islamic state in historic Palestine - was now in control of the Gaza Strip. Israel's response was swift and an economic blockade was tightened in an attempt to weaken and isolate its nemesis. One year on, and the pillars of Gaza's economy are crumbling, the effects of the blockade having proved catastrophic for the population. According to the United Nations, the unemployment rate in Gaza now stands at 45 per cent, one of the highest in the world. Moreover, it is claimed that people are dying unnecessarily. Cut off by land, sea and air, with no reliable power and little water, Gaza, according to its inhabitants, is being slowly strangled to death.

Driving through the Gaza Strip, it is clear this land is in economic meltdown. In many areas rubbish is piled high at the sides of roads due to collections being stopped, and the streets are largely deserted of cars. The odd donkey plods along pulling a cart, and the occasional melon stall is open, but bored men sit around on chairs on corners drinking tea and coffee for hours. Gaza, in many areas, has an empty feeling.

According to Oxfam, 150,000 workers have been laid off since the blockade began and 80 per cent of households now depend on food aid. One third of the population only has access to water for three to four hours every five days and meat is so scarce that rabbits are being smuggled in through tunnels at the Egyptian border.

In the Jabalia refugee camp, one of the poorest areas of Gaza, we meet 68-year-old Fatima Abu Jalhom and her family. There are 14 people living in three rooms and they survive on aid from the UN.

"We rarely get meat and things are getting worse," Fatima says wearily.

The fishing industry is one area of industry that is suffering terribly as Israel has imposed a six-mile limit for fishermen, as opposed to the 20 nautical miles set by the 1993 Oslo Accords. Israel says the limit is vital to stop weapons being smuggled into Gaza, but the fishermen claim it is a deliberate attempt to destroy their livelihoods.

Those who are ill suffer most and applications for medical help in Israel - funded by the Palestinian Authority - have increased sharply since the siege began jumping from about 600 a month at the beginning of 2007 to about 1000 a month by the end of the year. The Israeli human rights organisation, Physicians for Human Rights, says in a report that Israel's secret police are pressuring Palestinians in Gaza to spy on their community in exchange for urgent medical treatment.

For its part, Israel strenuously denies that it is involved in collective punishment against the people of Gaza and says the sole purpose of the blockade is to stop rockets being fired from Gaza into border towns such as Sderot.

Lior Ben Dor, a spokesman for the Israeli Embassy in London says that since September 2000, **Hamas** has perpetrated 425 terrorist attacks in which 377 Israelis have died and 2076 people have been wounded. These included 52 suicide attacks, in which 288 Israelis were murdered.

Despite a ceasefire being in place since June 19, 2008, 11 rockets and 15 mortars have been fired at Israel and between January and June 2008, 1075 rockets and more than 1204 mortar bombs have been fired at Israel from the Gaza Strip.

Under siege and hopeless in Gaza

As a result of this, Israel says, it is faced with a dilemma in that it must protect its civilians from rockets while not being disproportionate with retaliation.

Sderot is said to be a town that never sleeps out of fear. A study last October of families living there reveals an epidemic of stress.

Twenty-eight per cent of adults suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, while 57 per cent of children endure nightmares and other sleeping disorders. 92 per cent have experienced a rocket falling nearby, 56 per cent have experienced shrapnel hitting their home, and 65 per cent know someone who has been injured.

Dr Ronny Berger, who conducted the study for the Israel Trauma Centre for the Victims of Terror and War, says the statistics fail to show the true extent of the damage.

"Kids wake up in the middle of the night because of sirens and can't be calmed down," he says.

"The only Israeli soldier in Gaza today is Gilad Shalit, who was taken hostage two years ago," Ben Dor says, adding that the humanitarian problems in Gaza are the sole responsibility of Hamas, and nothing to do with Israel, which completely disengaged from the Strip three years ago.

"Israel has been supplying fuel, food, medical supplies and other humanitarian assistance in spite of incessant attacks carried out by Hamas and other organisations on the border crossings.

"It is apparent that Hamas is targeting the crossings in order to prevent the transfer of humanitarian aid to the civilian population, thus cynically depriving its own population and causing an artificial crisis in the Gaza Strip.

"Recent reports indicate that Hamas is allocating these supplies for its own use, thus deepening the deprivation of the public. Clearly, Hamas wants to create a crisis in order that international pressure will be placed on Israel," Ben Dor adds.

IT'S an impossible situation. Most people in Gaza tell us that Israel's siege is only entrenching attitudes and building more support for a military response. And these include children who grow up to believe they must fight Israel because of the suffering they endure.

On our way to interview a fighter with the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas's military wing, we are joined in the car by the son of our driver. Majed, 14, is wearing a dark blue balaclava and a white scarf which shows an image of Yasser Arafat. The logo on his T-shirt shows a grenade, two M16 rifles and the Al Aqsa Mosque's Dome on the Rock.

We alight the car and are taken to a room to have five minutes with an armed man who is about to begin a night-shift patrolling the town of Beit Hanoun. His head is swathed in a keffiyah and he fidgets while holding a Kalashnikov rifle.

"You've to hurry," says the translator.

"Will the current ceasefire hold?" I ask.

"I can never see any peace with Israel. They are our enemies," he says.

"Are Jewish women and children legitimate targets?"

He shakes his head vigorously and wags his finger at me. "No, no, no. Only the Israeli soldiers who attack us. We are not terrorists. We are only defending ourselves," he says.

"Why not stop the rocket attacks?"

Under siege and hopeless in Gaza

"We have stopped in the past few weeks but nothing changes for us in Gaza. We have home-made rockets and they have jet fighters, apache helicopters and tanks. No one cares about a Palestinian death. Why are Israeli lives worth more in the eyes of the world?"

"But is the human suffering worth it?"

"If they keep hitting us, we'll keep hitting them."

Human rights groups such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have criticised both the Israeli Defence Force and **Hamas** for their roles in this crisis, but as the blockade continues, time is running out for patients such as Ez and Atif.

Load-Date: September 26, 2008

End of Document

Gaza crisis spreads to Egyptian border

Irish Examiner

January 23, 2008 Wednesday

Copyright 2008 Thomas Crosbie Media Ltd. All Rights Reserved

Irish Examiner.com
a Thomas Crosbie Holdings company

Section: WORLD

Length: 434 words

Body

Ten Egyptian police and about 60 protesters were hurt as protesters hurled stones at the Egyptians and Palestinian gunmen fired briefly in the air. Hundreds of protesters briefly broke through the border terminal, pushing back helmeted Egyptian riot police who fired in the air to try to contain the crowd.

Since **Hamas** violently took over Gaza in June, Egypt has joined Israel in severely restricting access to Gaza, largely keeping its border terminal closed out of concern about a spillover of **Hamas**-style militancy into its territory.

"Hosni Mubarak you are a coward, you are an agent for the Americans," chanted protesters, insulting the Egyptian president: "Gaza **women** will not be humiliated." The clash came at the end of a protest by several thousand **women** carrying **Hamas** flags and calling for a lifting of the closure of Gaza by Israel last week in retaliation for increasing rocket attacks on border communities by Palestinian militants.

Despite Israel's easing of the restrictions, the militants fired 11 rockets toward Israel yesterday.

The closure cut off fuel supplies and **Hamas** shut down the Gaza Strip's only power plant on Sunday, cutting off electricity to about one-third of the territory's 1.5 million residents. Electricity was restored to much of Gaza City by evening.

Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak decided on Monday to allow limited shipments of fuel and medicine to ease hardship after condemnation from humanitarian groups. But at the same time, Mr Barak warned he was prepared to hit Gaza hard to restore calm in Israeli towns.

International aid groups warned they may have to suspend food distribution to hundreds of thousands of people by the end of the week because they lack truck fuel.

The sanctions have deepened hardship for Gazans, already largely cut off from the world, since the Islamic militant group **Hamas** seized control of the territory from the rival Fatah faction in June. Gas stations remained closed yesterday and hospitals kept running on generators during extensive power outages, but operations were largely unaffected. Most bakeries had shut down and long lines formed at those that remained open. A shipment of cooking gas sent in by Israel yesterday sold out in an hour.

Gaza crisis spreads to Egyptian border

Electricity in Gaza City was gradually coming back yesterday, after Israel sent in 185,000 gallons (about 700,000 litres) of fuel, enough to run Gaza's power plant for two days.

In all, fuel for a week's worth of operations was to be delivered through to tomorrow. Israel and Egypt also supply electricity directly to other areas of Gaza, and power was not disrupted there in recent days.

Load-Date: January 23, 2008

End of Document

Whoever is to blame in this conflict, the children continue to suffer; Letters

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

March 8, 2008 Saturday

First Edition

Copyright 2008 John Fairfax Publications Pty Ltd All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; Letters; Pg. 38

Length: 460 words

Body

The silence, Amin Saikal ("Deafening silence speaks for itself", March 7), comes from the Palestinian leadership and international non-government organisations which refuse to apportion any blame for the humanitarian crisis in Gaza on **Hamas**.

If **Hamas** didn't use women and children as shields; private homes, hospitals and highly populated areas as launch pads for missile attacks; and aid convoys as couriers of weapons-building materials, then the people of Gaza would have a much better quality of life. If **Hamas** didn't refuse a two-state solution, the people of Gaza would have a much better future.

Mordechai Sher Rose Bay

Amin Saikal skews history when he writes "the Israeli governments since 2001 have not shown any serious commitment to a peaceful settlement". This is the same period in which Israel offered a Palestinian state made up of 97 per cent of the West Bank and 100 per cent of Gaza, leading to a campaign of violence orchestrated by terrorist groups, including **Hamas**. With **Hamas** in power in Gaza, there is no prospective partner for peace; there is no one to make any kind of peaceful commitment to.

David Grunstein Bondi

Vic Alhadeff ("Israel's patience is running out") is doing his best to portray Israel as the victim - 1200 missiles fired at Sderot in nine weeks, two Israeli deaths and several civilian injuries. Since last Wednesday more than 126 Palestinians - including at least 22 children - have been killed and more than 400 injured, many critically. He says the children of Sderot are traumatised by the rockets. Does he think the children of Gaza aren't traumatised by the missiles, shelling and tank fire? As in Lebanon, this is a disproportionate use of force.

John Francis Noraville

Vic Alhadeff says Israel's patience is running out and an invasion looms over Gaza. How does he expect the Palestinians to feel after more than 60 years under a brutal Israeli occupation, missile strikes, settlement expansion in the West Bank, humiliating checkpoints, untold civilian deaths, promises of peace that never eventuate, a "separation wall" cutting further into the West Bank and in a total blockade of Gaza? Out of patience, I suspect.

Gehad Saleh Minto

Whoever is to blame in this conflict, the children continue to suffer Letters

It's a poignant example of the different approaches to the Middle East conflict. Amin Saikal goes to the heart of the problem, the issue of Palestinian and Israeli suffering in the face of American partiality. A credible negotiator cannot condone the violence of one party and condemn the violence of another. In contrast, Vic Alhadeff takes no contextual account of Palestinian suffering over decades of occupation but instead sees only a military solution to unjust circumstances. That approach won't and never has worked, as current events clearly indicate.

Alexander Lane Thornleigh

Load-Date: March 7, 2008

End of Document

Militants and Israel trade fire

The Bismarck Tribune

January 18, 2008 Friday

Copyright 2008 The Bismarck Tribune, a division of Lee Enterprises All Rights Reserved

Section: WIRE; Pg. 2A

Length: 380 words

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP) - Israel pummeled Gaza Thursday with air and ground fire as Palestinian rockets slammed into southern Israel, endangering recently restarted peace negotiations.

The Israeli attacks killed a militant leader and one of his female relatives along with five others in Gaza.

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert vowed to strike Palestinian militants "without compromise, without concessions and without mercy." His forces carried out stepped-up attacks, but Olmert gave no hint that a large-scale offensive was near.

The widening violence has clouded Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, resumed after a Mideast conference in November sponsored by President Bush. The spike in violence has drawn condemnations from moderate Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, Israel's partner in the peace negotiations.

On Thursday, Abbas spokesman Nabil Abu Rdeineh told The Associated Press that the violence is calling into question further talks.

"No one can proceed with negotiations when the situation is like this," he said.

Gaza militants, led by Hamas, fired dozens of rockets and mortars at Israeli towns, causing no serious injuries but further traumatizing residents who have been putting up with daily barrages for many months. One rocket slammed into the side of a house, slightly injuring two people, police said.

Israeli struck back at northern Gaza, targeting rocket squads and areas militants frequently use. A leader of the small Hamas-allied Popular Resistance Committees, Raad Abu al-Ful, and a woman relative were killed when a missile hit their vehicle, the faction said. Earlier, Palestinian officials said the relative was al-Ful's wife.

The PRC pledged retaliation.

"Sooner or later, (we) will, by God, avenge every drop of bloodshed, and the response will be equal to the crime," the group said in a statement.

After nightfall, Israeli aircraft targeted a car in northern Gaza, killing three people - a woman and her son on a donkey cart next to the vehicle and an unidentified man, Palestinian hospital officials said. The Israeli military said the airstrike was aimed at a rocket squad.

Israeli aircraft later fired missiles at a car south of Gaza City, killing two Hamas militants and wounding three others, Hamas officials said. The military had no immediate comment.

Militants and Israel trade fire

Load-Date: January 18, 2008

End of Document

Gazans form human chain along Israeli border in protest at blockade

Guardian.com

February 25, 2008

Copyright 2008 Guardian Unlimited (© Guardian Newspapers Limited) All rights reserved

theguardian

Length: 573 words

Highlight: Protest aimed at ending Gaza Strip blockade by Israel, which sends troops to quell fears of mass exodus similar to last month's Gaza-Egypt border breach

Body

Palestinians today formed a human chain in protest at Israel's blockade of Gaza as Israel deployed thousands of troops and police officers along the border.

About 5,000 people, many of them women, schoolchildren and university students, joined the chain outside the town of Beit Hanoun, about four miles from the border.

The crowd hoisted banners in English and Arabic, saying "End the siege of Gaza now", and "Your siege will not break our will".

One of the organisers, an independent MP, Jamal al-Khoudary, said the protesters did not plan violent action. "This is a peaceful event aimed to send a message to the world that the people of Gaza want to live in freedom," he said.

Organisers had hoped to form a chain running the length of the 25-mile Gaza strip, but turnout was well below expectations.

After the protest some 2,000 Hamas loyalists marched to a checkpoint several kilometres away from Erez. However, Hamas police blocked the main road leading to the Erez checkpoint and called on loyalists to obey the law.

Hamas organised the event to protest at chronic shortages of vital supplies in Gaza because of Israeli restrictions. The group said the event would be peaceful and marchers would not reach the border.

Israel took no chances and deployed troops and police to prevent any repeat of scenes that occurred recently at the Gaza-Egypt border.

"I hope that, ultimately, they understand that we are deployed and ready, that this will not be a repeat of what happened in the Philadelphi Corridor (Egypt border) a few weeks back," the deputy defence minister, Matan Vilnai, told Israel Radio.

Hamas blew open Gaza's border wall with Egypt last month, allowing hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to cross into Egypt and stock up with food, petrol and other basic necessities. But Israel voiced fears the flood of

Gazans form human chain along Israeli border in protest at blockade

people included Islamist militants intent on carrying out attacks, and Egyptian security forces rounded up hundreds of suspects.

"We don't plan to fool around in this regard," Vilnai said. "We will use measures in the way we deem necessary to prevent people breaking into the state of Israel's territory."

Israeli radio and TV stations devoted their morning news coverage to the event, warning of a mass exodus of Gazans.

"It's absolutely clear that among them will be people with explosive charges, there will be those among them who will be ready at any moment to blow up the border fence," an ultra-nationalist MP, Effie Eitam, told Israel Radio, reflecting a widespread sense of alarm. "Suddenly there will be a big hole in the fence somewhere, there will be explosions, injured soldiers and the mob will stream into our territory. If that happens it will be the end of the state of Israel."

Last month, Israel tightened the blockade on Gaza, home to 1.5 million Palestinians, limiting supplies of fuel and other goods in response to cross-border rocket fire by militants.

Militants say the attacks are in response to Israeli raids and would stop if Israel lifted Gaza's blockade. **Hamas** is treated as a political pariah by Israel and the west for not recognising Israel. It has, however, offered Israel a conditional, long-term ceasefire.

Some Palestinians have advocated a strategy of non-violent resistance to Israel similar to the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, and the worldwide impact of Gazans rushing into Egypt appears to have prompted **Hamas** to try and replicate such tactics on Gaza's border with Israel.

Load-Date: February 25, 2008

Guardian Weekly: Leading article: Gaza Punishing the people

Guardian Weekly

March 7, 2008 Friday

Copyright 2008 Guardian Newspapers Limited All Rights Reserved

TheGuardianWeekly

Section: Pg. 20

Length: 470 words

Body

Four months have passed since the peace meeting in Annapolis, and the smouldering fire of the Israel-Palestine conflict has once again combusted. More than 110 Palestinians have died in fighting after Israel launched an offensive to stop the firing of Qassam rockets. Half the casualties of Israel's onslaught are civilian, including women, children and a 21-month-old baby. Ehud Barak, Israel's defence minister, has said an even broader offensive is on the cards to crush the rocket squads - and maybe even bring down Hamas's rule.

Already critically weakened in the eyes of his people for his policy of engagement with Israel, the Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas suspended peace negotiations last Sunday, but stopped short of declaring the process dead.

It has been said often enough that a peace settlement is impossible while Gaza is being ignored. But if any sequence of events demonstrated the utter futility of Israel, backed by the international community, trying to negotiate over the heads of half of the Palestinian people, it is what happened last weekend. Things were bad enough already.

The independent Palestinian parliamentarian Mustafa Barghouti had counted 177 Palestinian deaths since Annapolis. Most were in Gaza, but there were also now more checkpoints in the West Bank than there had been before the November conference. While 788 Palestinians had been set free in a confidence-building measure, 1,152 had been newly arrested. In the same period there were four Israeli deaths.

Israel acknowledges military action on its own will not stop the rockets. For that you need a ceasefire, and for that you need negotiations with Hamas, which the Israeli leadership (although not the people) refuses to contemplate. So Israel is left with only military options - reoccupying parts of Gaza or assassinating Hamas's leaders. Both have been tried in the past, and both have failed.

Hamas, on the other hand, is gaining in at least one of its objectives: to be considered the lead movement of the Palestinian resistance. It still has no answer to the economic blockade. It may have acquired longer-range missiles but it is a long way from establishing with its enemy the balance of deterrence which Hizbullah has established in South Lebanon.

Guardian Weekly: Leading article: Gaza Punishing the people

The unstoppable cycle of assassinations and Qassams constitutes a form of collective punishment in which civilians on both sides bear the brunt. Israeli suggestions that targeted assassinations would reduce the number of civilians killed have been exposed as threadbare. A major military operation is leading to more civilian deaths, not fewer.

Israel does not have a clear military strategy in Gaza. No matter how many **Hamas** leaders are killed, it will never be able to wipe the Strip clean of the movement. But Israel still possesses the means to negotiate a ceasefire.

Load-Date: March 6, 2008

End of Document

Israel ships emergency supplies to Gaza; At least 10 hurt in border protest

Ottawa Citizen

January 23, 2008 Wednesday

Final Edition

Copyright 2008 Ottawa Citizen, a division of CanWest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A6

Length: 454 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, The Ottawa Citizen

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

JERUSALEM - Israel yesterday made its first fuel, food and medical deliveries to Gaza since last week, as Egyptian troops used gunfire and water cannons to quell a demonstration on its border with the Palestinian territory, where hundreds of women demanded entry to purchase goods denied to them by the Israeli blockade.

At least 10 people were injured, including an Egyptian soldier who was shot during the protest, which was caused by Egypt's refusal to open the Rafah crossing.

Israeli tanker trucks and a pipeline began to pump the first of more than two million litres of fuel into Gaza at dawn yesterday.

Hours later, several trucks loaded with emergency medical supplies and wheat and rice from the UN's World Food Program moved across the Kerem Shalom crossing, sealed last Thursday by Israel in retaliation for hundreds of rockets fired into the Jewish state.

Yesterday's limited imports, which included enough fuel to supply Gaza's only power plant for several days, arrived as five more rockets were fired into Israel and snipers fired shots into border kibbutzes from the coastal enclave.

Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal said yesterday in Damascus that the rocket attacks would continue.

"Let Israel stop its aggression and its occupation of Palestinian land and the resistance, including rockets, will stop," Mr. Meshaal told Reuters. "If the Zionists make an offer, we will study it. Our cause is based on steadfastness and patience. The enemy will not break us."

Israel relented on the Gaza blockade after warnings of a looming humanitarian crisis in Gaza from Arab states and many allies, including the United States, and threats from the Palestinian Authority to abandon peace talks.

Because of U.S. and French objections, the UN Security Council was not expected to adopt a Libyan motion condemning Israel for the blockade.

While supportive of Israel because of the "intolerable" rocket attacks that it had been suffering from Gaza, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said "nobody wants innocent Gazans to suffer" and that she had spoken with Israel "about the importance of not allowing a humanitarian crisis to unfold there."

Israel ships emergency supplies to Gaza; At least 10 hurt in border protest

Criticism of Israel was one-sided and wrongheaded because it did not take into account that tens of thousands of Israelis lived in fear because of the daily rocket attacks from Gaza, Israeli President Shimon Peres said.

"The UN must ask **Hamas** why it is firing on children and **women** in Israel," Mr. Peres was quoted as saying by the popular Ynetnews website.

"We have no interest in seeing Gaza's residents suffer. They are not our enemies, but Gaza's residents must complain to **Hamas**. They are the only ones who can bring down **Hamas** and they must demand that **Hamas** stop firing on Israel."

Load-Date: January 23, 2008

End of Document

Irish woman and daughter stranded in Gaza

The Irish Times

February 7, 2008 Thursday

Copyright 2008 The Irish Times All Rights Reserved

Section: IRELAND; Other Stories; Pg. 6

Length: 332 words

Byline: Lorna Siggins, Western Correspondent

Body

A Galway woman and her daughter caught last night on the Egyptian-Gaza border have appealed for Irish diplomatic intervention to secure their safe exit from Gaza.

Treasa Ní Cheannabháin (56), her daughter Naisrin Elsafty (19) and her Egyptian niece Seham Elhotty (26) were refused entry into Egypt yesterday after they undertook a relief mission on behalf of their charity to Gaza.

The trio were sheltering last night in the home of a Palestinian television crew, as hostilities continued between Israeli armed forces and members of **Hamas**.

Earlier this week an Israel air strike on a **Hamas** security compound killed seven men, while two other members of **Hamas** were shot dead by Israel soldiers near the Egyptian border. Ms Ní Cheannabháin, who is from Barna, Co Galway, and is married to an Egyptian doctor, said that she and her daughter and niece had travelled into the Palestinian territory illicitly by taxi late last week, after they were refused entry by the Egyptian authorities.

The trio dressed in full-length niqabs for the journey, and were stopped twice in attempted robberies during the trip.

The **women** were carrying EUR 7,700, which was collected by the Galway-Palestinian Children's Fund for relief in Gaza.

The money had been raised through sale of a CD, entitled **An Phailistín**, written by Ms Ní Cheannabháin and Donal Lunny and recorded with her daughter, Róisín Elsafty and Sharon Shannon.

Ms Ní Cheannabháin said they had been able to distribute the funds and had visited a number of orphanages and hospitals where basic medical services couldn't be provided due to lack of equipment. They also met members of the **Hamas** government.

Ms Ní Cheannabháin said that when they had tried to leave earlier this week through the Egyptian-Gaza border at Salah-a-Din, they had been refused entry.

The **women** have made contact with the Egyptian embassy in Dublin and with the Irish embassy in Cairo, but have also appealed to Minister for Foreign Affairs Dermot Ahern to intervene

Irish woman and daughter stranded in Gaza

Load-Date: February 7, 2008

End of Document

World Digest

The Toronto Star
July 9, 2008 Wednesday

Copyright 2008 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: WORLD AND COMMENT; Pg. AA02

Length: 398 words

Body

West Bank

Israelis shut Nablus mall after linking it to **Hamas**

Israeli troops stormed the shopping mall in Nablus yesterday and ordered it to close, saying the popular facility is linked to the militant Islamic **Hamas**.

The overnight move was the latest in a widening crackdown on the militant Islamic group in the West Bank, even as Israel observes a ceasefire with the **Hamas** regime in the Gaza Strip.

Hamas condemned the Nablus operation as "provocative."

Mexico

Police chief, prosecutor resign after botched raid

Mexico City's police chief, Joel Ortega, top prosecutor, Attorney General Rodolfo Felix, have resigned after a botched disco raid killed 12 people last month, Mayor Marcelo Ebrard said yesterday.

Guillermo Zayas, the senior police officer in charge of the raid, has been blamed for the deaths and is in jail accused of homicide. Eighteen police agents and the disco's owner are also in jail awaiting trial.

Switzerland

National referendum set

on banning of minarets

A nationwide referendum will be held on whether to ban the construction of minarets where Muslims traditionally issue the call to prayer, officials said yesterday.

Swiss nationalists have collected enough signatures to force a vote on the ban, the Interior Ministry said. No date for the referendum has been set.

Iraq

Security deal linked

to pullout timetable

The government won't accept a security deal with the United States unless it contains specific dates for the withdrawal of U.S.-led forces, National Security Adviser Mouwaffak al-Rubaie said yesterday.

U.S. officials had no immediate reaction to al-Rubaie's statement.

Vatican

Church of England denounced over bishops

The Vatican has denounced the Church of England ruling body's decision to back women becoming bishops.

It's "a further obstacle for the reconciliation between the Catholic Church and the Church of England," said Cardinal Walter Kasper, head of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity.

Sweden

Human foot in shoe washes up on beach

Police say they have found a sock-covered human foot inside a shoe, which washed up on a beach near one of the country's most popular southern tourist resorts.

Forensic experts checking the foot, found in Tylosand, against a national registry of missing people.

Several running shoes containing human feet have been found on island shorelines along British Columbia's Georgia Strait.

From the Star's wire services

Load-Date: July 9, 2008

World

The Toronto Star
April 26, 2008 Saturday

Copyright 2008 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: WORLD AND COMMENT; Pg. AA02

Length: 366 words

Body

Syria

Damascus scoffs at U.S. nuclear reactor claim

Syria is scoffing at U.S. claims it was building a nuclear reactor at a site attacked by Israel warplanes seven months ago.

Syria's ambassador to the United States said yesterday the CIA fabricated pictures allegedly taken inside the secret reactor. Imad Mostapha also predicted that in the coming weeks the U.S. story about the site will "implode from within."

Top U.S. intelligence officials said in Washington on Thursday that the U.S. became aware North Korea was helping Syria with a nuclear project in 2003.

Middle East

Israel snubs **Hamas** offer of 6-month Gaza truce

Israel dismissed yesterday a **Hamas** proposal for a six-month Gaza Strip truce during which an embargo on the territory would be lifted, saying the Palestinian Islamists wanted to prepare for more fighting rather than peace.

The **Hamas** offer, issued Thursday after talks with Egyptian mediators, departed from previous demands by the group that any ceasefire apply simultaneously in Gaza and the occupied West Bank - the territories where Palestinians want statehood. **Hamas** said Egypt would raise the truce idea with Israel next week and it expected a more binding Israeli decision then.

United States

Swimmer, 66, dies in California shark attack

A shark believed to be a great white killed a 66-year-old swimmer with a single, giant bite across both legs yesterday as the man trained with a group of triathletes, authorities and witnesses said.

Dave Martin, a retired veterinarian from Solana Beach, was attacked at San Diego County's Tide Beach around 7 a.m., authorities said. Martin was taken to a lifeguard station for emergency treatment but was pronounced dead at the scene, according to a statement on the Solana Beach city website.

World

Brazil

Police kill 11 in raid

on Rio de Janeiro slum

Police killed at least 11 people in a raid yesterday in the Cidade de Deus (City of God) slum, made famous in a hit film of the same name about Rio drug gangs.

Law enforcement officials said 10 of the people killed were suspected drug traffickers and one was a woman who lived in the area. Two women were also wounded in the shootout between police and the suspected traffickers.

From Star wire services

Load-Date: April 26, 2008

End of Document

Israeli strike kills 55 in Gaza, including numerous civilians

Charleston Gazette (West Virginia)

March 2, 2008, Sunday

Copyright 2008 Charleston Newspapers

Section: NEWS; Pg. P1A

Length: 1481 words

Byline: Ibrahim Barzak, The Associated Press

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip - It was the middle of the night when the battle between Israeli forces and Palestinian militants reached Tareq Dardouna's house in northern Gaza.

Tending to four wounded people as children cried and screamed, he told of a relative who was killed.

"His body is still on the ground," Dardouna said in a telephone interview. "Ambulances tried to come, but they came under fire ... We are in a real war."

At least 54 Palestinians, about half of them civilians, were killed Saturday in the deadliest day in Gaza since the current round of fighting erupted in 2000.

Israeli forces went on the offensive to try to stop daily rocket barrages that have reached closer to its populated heartland than ever before. Two Israel soldiers were killed and seven were wounded in the clashes, the military said.

Many of the civilians were caught in crossfires, like those in Dardouna's neighborhood, but Palestinians charged the Israelis were firing indiscriminately, labeling the offensive with emotionally charged terms - "genocide" and "holocaust."

The swelling violence came amid Israeli threats to launch a broad invasion of Gaza, and threatened to swallow up Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's peacekeeping mission to the region next week.

In Washington, National Security Council spokesman Gordon Johndroe expressed regret for loss of civilian life on both sides but put most of the blame on the Palestinians.

"There is a clear distinction between terrorist rocket attacks that target civilians and action in self-defense," he said in a statement.

The U.N. Security Council met Saturday night behind closed doors in emergency session at the request of the Palestinians and their Arab supporters.

Early Sunday, Israeli aircraft destroyed the office building in Gaza City used by **Hamas** Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, witnesses said. Five people were lightly wounded in the raid.

Israeli strike kills 55 in Gaza, including numerous civilians

While expressing regret for civilian casualties, Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak blamed "**Hamas** and those firing rockets at Israel," the statement said, pledging to continue the offensive to protect Israeli towns and cities.

On Friday, Israeli Deputy Defense Minister Matan Vilnai renewed a threat to invade Gaza to crush militant rocket squads that attack southern Israel daily.

At least two dozen Palestinian civilians, including a baby, were among those killed, and militants said 25 fighters died. Health officials said about 200 people were wounded, 14 of them critically.

The overall death toll was the highest in a single day since the current round of violence erupted in September 2000. The highest previous death toll was 38 on March 8, 2002.

The intense fighting Saturday pushed the Palestinian death toll to more than 80 since fighting flared Wednesday. About half of those were civilians.

Palestinian fighters kept up a steady stream of rocket and mortar attacks on Israeli targets, firing around 50 on Saturday alone in defiance of the Israeli assault. Six Israelis were injured by rockets that reached as far as Ashkelon, a coastal city 11 miles north of Gaza.

The Israeli military said one of its airstrikes on northern Gaza targeted a parked truck loaded with 160 rockets.

On Thursday, militants raised the stakes by firing Iranian-made rockets into Ashkelon, striking closer to Israel's heartland than ever before and putting more Israelis at risk. Palestinian rocket fire earlier in the week also killed an Israeli man.

Shortly before midnight Friday in the northern town of Beit Hanoun, a 13-month-old girl was killed by shrapnel. **Hamas** blamed Israel, but residents said a militant rocket fell short and landed near the baby's house. The day's violence snowballed from that point on.

Before dawn Saturday, the battleground shifted to the town of Jebaliya and its nearby refugee camp, a center of militant activity in northern Gaza.

Soldiers backed by tanks and aircraft conducted house-to-house searches and took up positions on rooftops as they clashed with militants detonating land mines and firing heavy machine guns, assault rifles and mortar rounds.

A wounded man and boy lay in a gutter near a dead man. Ambulance workers took away the dead man as a youth appealed to paramedics to treat the wounded.

"Take them, they are still alive," he pleaded. Another man urged the wounded to "bear witness," or proclaim their Muslim faith before they die. The two began reciting a Muslim prayer near a boy whose lower body was ripped by shrapnel.

Two sisters and another civilian were killed by tank shells that struck two houses in separate attacks in Jebaliya, Palestinian officials said.

At one of the damaged houses, paramedics rushed an unmoving woman lying on a stretcher, her face covered with a cloth, out of a room clouded with dust.

By evening, more than 40 Palestinians and two Israeli soldiers had been killed in the Jebaliya fighting.

All but the most critically injured were sent home from Shifa Hospital, Gaza's largest. Beds crammed hospital corridors, and the intensive care unit was overflowing, a doctor at the hospital said. The doctors union urged its members to cancel leaves and appealed for blood donations.

The U.N. shuttered 37 schools it runs in northern Gaza because of the fighting, affecting some 40,000 students said Christopher Gunness, a U.N. official. A three-day strike was declared in Gaza, and publicly run schools and universities were closed.

Israeli strike kills 55 in Gaza, including numerous civilians

Mosques across northern Gaza and **Hamas**-affiliated radio appealed to civilians to stay home. **Hamas** closed off roads to evacuate security compounds and to keep residents away from potential airstrike targets. They also turned off street lights, apparently so militants wouldn't be seen from the air.

Chief Palestinian negotiator Ahmed Qureia said Palestinian leaders including Abbas recommended suspending peace talks at a meeting Saturday in the West Bank town of Ramallah.

"I think it will be suspended," Qureia said. "What is happening in Gaza is a massacre of civilians, **women** and children, a collective killing, genocide," Qureia added. "We can't bear what the Israelis are doing, and what the Israelis are doing doesn't lead the peace process any credibility."

Hamas remained defiant and vowed to retaliate.

In Syria, exiled **Hamas** leader Khaled Mashaal described Israeli attacks against civilians in Gaza as "the real Holocaust."

"If (Israeli officials) decided stupidly to invade Gaza, we will fight them with God's help," Mashaal told reporters from his base in Damascus. "We will fight them like lions."

Mashaal blamed the rival Fatah, headed by Abbas, for helping along Israel's attacks.

"I accuse the president of the Palestinian Authority of providing coverage of this holocaust in Gaza," Mashaal said. **Hamas** has said Abbas' condemnation of rocket fire has given a pretext to Israel's assault on Gaza.

Israeli officials met Saturday to discuss the Gaza violence and its implications for peacemaking. Foreign Ministry spokesman Arye Mekel said talks didn't preclude fighting. Talks are "based on the understanding that when advancing the peace process with pragmatic (Palestinian) sources, Israel will continue to fight terror that hurts its people," he said.

Vice Premier Haim Ramon told Channel 2 TV that Israel should fight in Gaza, but not reoccupy it. Israel pulled its troops and settlers out of the tiny seaside territory in late 2005, but militants proceeded to fire rockets from the abandoned territory at Israeli communities.

Hamas, which is sworn to Israel's destruction, took control of Gaza by force from the rival Fatah in June.

Israeli government spokesman David Baker said Israel was "compelled to continue to take these defensive measures" to protect more than 200,000 Israelis living under the threat of Palestinian rocket barrages.

Militants "hide behind their own civilians, using them as human shields, while actively targeting Israeli population centers," Baker said. "They bear the responsibility for the results."

Israeli military spokeswoman Maj. Avital Leibovich called Saturday's action a "pinpoint operation" provoked by the rocket attack on Ashkelon earlier in the week. She blamed the high civilian toll on **Hamas**' practice of using homes to store and produce projectiles.

"We are not targeting homes and we have no intentions of targeting uninvolved civilians," she said. "We will target launchers and **Hamas** militants, and bunkers."

Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, which had been in a deep freeze for seven years, resumed in November at a U.S.-sponsored conference. At the gathering, the two sides pledged to try to reach an accord by the end of this year. In recent weeks, negotiators have met almost daily.

But even when violence is at a lower level, Abbas' efforts are compromised by the fact that he only rules the West Bank, while Gaza is controlled by **Hamas**. And Israel's fragile government would be hard pressed to make concessions to the Palestinians while Gaza militants pummel southern Israel.

Israeli strike kills 55 in Gaza, including numerous civilians

Load-Date: March 3, 2008

End of Document

Violence erupts in Gaza

The Bismarck Tribune

March 2, 2008 Sunday

Copyright 2008 The Bismarck Tribune, a division of Lee Enterprises All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 1A

Length: 1548 words

Byline: IBRAHIM BARZAK Associated Press Writer

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip - Israeli troops turned heavy firepower on rocket squads bombarding southern Israel on Saturday, killing 54 Palestinians in the deadliest day in Gaza since the current round of fighting erupted in 2000.

Two Israeli soldiers were killed and seven were wounded in the clashes, the military said.

The violence took a heavy toll on Gaza civilians. Moderate Palestinian leaders called the killings a "genocide" and threatened to call off peace talks.

"The response to these rockets can't be that harsh and heinous," said Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. "It is nowadays described as a holocaust."

The spasm of violence came days before Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was to arrive in the region to nudge Israel and Palestinians closer to a peace accord. But the rising tensions threatened to mar her visit.

In Washington, National Security Council spokesman Gordon Johndroe expressed regret for loss of civilian life on both sides but put most of the blame on the Palestinians.

"There is a clear distinction between terrorist rocket attacks that target civilians and action in self-defense," he said in a statement.

The U.N. Security Council met Saturday night behind closed doors in emergency session at the request of the Palestinians and their Arab supporters.

"We want a condemnation of the killings and we want also a call for a cease-fire by the Security Council," said the Arab League's U.N. observer, Yahya Mahmassani. "What's happening now is jeopardizing the peace process."

Such resolutions have failed repeatedly in the past because of U.S. and European objections that they are not balanced in their condemnation.

Early today, Israeli aircraft destroyed the office building in Gaza City used by **Hamas** Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, witnesses said. Five people were lightly wounded in the raid.

At least two dozen Palestinian civilians, including a baby, were among those killed Saturday, and militants said 25 fighters died. Health officials said about 200 people were wounded, 14 of them critically.

Violence erupts in Gaza

The overall death toll was the highest in a single day since the current round of violence erupted in September 2000. The highest previous death toll was 38 on March 8, 2002.

The intense fighting pushed the Palestinian death toll to more than 80 since fighting flared Wednesday. About half of those were civilians.

While expressing regret for civilian casualties, Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak blamed "**Hamas** and those firing rockets at Israel," his office said in a statement, pledging to continue the offensive to protect Israeli towns and cities.

On Friday, Israeli Deputy Defense Minister Matan Vilnai renewed a threat to invade Gaza to crush militant rocket squads that attack southern Israel daily.

Palestinian fighters kept up a steady stream of rocket and mortar attacks on Israeli targets, firing around 50 on Saturday alone in defiance of the Israeli assault. Six Israelis were injured by rockets that reached as far as Ashkelon, a coastal city 11 miles north of Gaza.

The Israeli military said one of its airstrikes on northern Gaza targeted a parked truck loaded with 160 rockets.

On Thursday, militants raised the stakes by firing Iranian-made rockets into Ashkelon, striking closer to Israel's heartland than ever before and putting more Israelis at risk. Palestinian rocket fire earlier in the week also killed an Israeli man.

Shortly before midnight Friday in the northern town of Beit Hanoun, a 13-month-old girl was killed by shrapnel. **Hamas** blamed Israel, but residents said a militant rocket fell short and landed near the baby's house. The day's violence snowballed from that point on.

Before dawn Saturday, the battleground shifted to the town of Jebaliya and its nearby refugee camp, a center of militant activity in northern Gaza.

Soldiers backed by tanks and aircraft conducted house-to-house searches and took up positions on rooftops as they clashed with militants detonating land mines and firing heavy machine guns, assault rifles and mortar rounds.

A wounded man and boy lay in a gutter near a dead man. Ambulance workers took away the dead man as a youth appealed to paramedics to treat the wounded.

"Take them, they are still alive," he pleaded. Another man urged the wounded to "bear witness," or proclaim their Muslim faith before they die.

The two began reciting a Muslim prayer near a boy whose lower body was ripped by shrapnel.

Tareq Dardouna, a Jebaliya resident, said a relative was killed outside his home in the crossfire that began at 3 a.m.

"His body is still on the ground," Dardouna said in a telephone interview from his home, where he was tending to four wounded people amid screaming children. "Ambulances tried to come, but they came under fire. ... We are in a real war."

Two sisters and another civilian were killed by tank shells that struck two houses in separate attacks in Jebaliya, Palestinian officials said.

At one of the damaged houses, paramedics rushed an unmoving woman lying on a stretcher, her face covered with a cloth, out of a room clouded with dust.

By evening, more than 40 Palestinians and two Israeli soldiers had been killed in the Jebaliya fighting.

Violence erupts in Gaza

All but the most critically injured were sent home from Shifa Hospital, Gaza's largest. Beds crammed hospital corridors, and the intensive care unit was overflowing, a doctor at the hospital said. The doctors union urged its members to cancel leaves and appealed for blood donations.

The U.N. shuttered 37 schools it runs in northern Gaza because of the fighting, affecting some 40,000 students said Christopher Gunness, a U.N. official. A three-day strike was declared in Gaza, and publicly run schools and universities were closed.

Mosques across northern Gaza and Hamas-affiliated radio appealed to civilians to stay home. Hamas closed off roads to evacuate security compounds and to keep residents away from potential airstrike targets. They also turned off street lights, apparently so militants wouldn't be seen from the air.

Chief Palestinian negotiator Ahmed Qureia said Palestinian leaders including Abbas recommended suspending peace talks at a meeting Saturday in the West Bank town of Ramallah.

"I think it will be suspended," Qureia said. "What is happening in Gaza is a massacre of civilians, women and children, a collective killing, genocide," Qureia added. "We can't bear what the Israelis are doing, and what the Israelis are doing doesn't led the peace process any credibility."

Hamas remained defiant and vowed to retaliate.

In Syria, exiled Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal described Israeli attacks against civilians in Gaza as "the real Holocaust."

"If (Israeli officials) decided stupidly to invade Gaza, we will fight them with God's help," Mashaal told reporters from his base in Damascus. "We will fight them like lions."

Mashaal blamed the rival Fatah, headed by Abbas, for helping along Israel's attacks.

"I accuse the president of the Palestinian Authority of providing coverage of this holocaust in Gaza," Mashaal said. Hamas has said Abbas' condemnation of rocket fire has given a pretext to Israel's assault on Gaza.

Israeli officials met Saturday to discuss the Gaza violence and its implications for peacemaking. Foreign Ministry spokesman Arye Mekel said talks didn't preclude fighting. Talks are "based on the understanding that when advancing the peace process with pragmatic (Palestinian) sources, Israel will continue to fight terror that hurts its people," he said.

Vice Premier Haim Ramon told Channel 2 TV that Israel should fight in Gaza, but not reoccupy it. Israel pulled its troops and settlers out of the tiny seaside territory in late 2005, but militants proceeded to fire rockets from the abandoned territory at Israeli communities.

Hamas, which is sworn to Israel's destruction, took control of Gaza by force from the rival Fatah in June.

Israeli government spokesman David Baker said Israel was "compelled to continue to take these defensive measures" to protect more than 200,000 Israelis living under the threat of Palestinian rocket barrages.

Militants "hide behind their own civilians, using them as human shields, while actively targeting Israeli population centers," Baker said. "They bear the responsibility for the results."

Israeli military spokeswoman Maj. Avital Leibovich called Saturday's action a "pinpoint operation" provoked by the rocket attack on Ashkelon earlier in the week. She blamed the high civilian toll on Hamas' practice of using homes to store and produce projectiles.

"We are not targeting homes and we have no intentions of targeting uninvolved civilians," she said. "We will target launchers and Hamas militants, and bunkers."

Violence erupts in Gaza

Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, which had been in a deep freeze for seven years, resumed in November at a U.S.-sponsored conference. At the gathering, the two sides pledged to try to reach an accord by the end of this year. In recent weeks, negotiators have met almost daily.

But even when violence is at a lower level, Abbas' efforts are compromised by the fact that he only rules the West Bank, while Gaza is controlled by **Hamas**. And Israel's fragile government would be hard pressed to make concessions to the Palestinians while Gaza militants pummel southern Israel.

Associated Press Writer Edith M. Lederer at the United Nations contributed to this report.

Load-Date: March 3, 2008

End of Document

MOUNTAIN TRAGEDY

The Journal (Newcastle, UK)

August 4, 2008 Monday

Copyright 2008 Reach PLC All Rights Reserved

Section: Pg. 14

Length: 254 words

Body

Nine die on K-2

AT least nine mountaineers are feared to have died on the world's second-highest mountain, K-2, including at least six who were struck by an avalanche as they were descending from the summit, officials said yesterday.

Three other climbers reportedly died in separate incidents over the weekend on K-2 in northern Pakistan, which is regarded as more difficult to climb than Mount Everest, the world's highest peak.

WOMEN

More homeless

THE last five years have seen a sharp increase in women falling into homelessness or living in temporary accommodation, according to figures released today.

Some 144,000 women have appeared on council waiting lists in England and Wales this year, a 43% rise from the 80,000 recorded in 2003, according to data provided by 248 councils in response to freedom of information requests.

WAR ON TERROR

Al Qaida losses

AL Qaida posted a statement on the internet yesterday saying four of its Afghanistan commanders have been killed, including an explosives expert wanted by the US.

Washington had posted a \$5m (£2.5m) reward for Abu Khabab al-Masri. He is accused of training terrorists to use poisons and explosives.

MIDDLE EAST

Hamas killings

MOST of the 180 Fatah supporters who fled into Israel from a deadly Hamas crackdown over the weekend will be sent back into the Gaza Strip today, Israeli and Palestinian officials said.

MOUNTAIN TRAGEDY

The men, members of a heavily armed Gaza clan linked to Fatah, escaped to Israel on Saturday after a **Hamas** raid on their stronghold left 11 dead and 90 wounded.

Load-Date: August 4, 2008

End of Document

Amid Sorrow and Anger, Yeshiva's Dead Are Buried

The New York Times

March 8, 2008 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2008 The New York Times Company

Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 8

Length: 1051 words

Byline: By ISABEL KERSHNER and STEVEN ERLANGER; Isabel Kershner reported from Kfar Etzion, West Bank, and Steven Erlanger from Jerusalem. Rina Castelnovo contributed reporting from Jerusalem, and Taghreed El-Khodary from Gaza.

Dateline: KFAR ETZION, West Bank

Body

They carried the body of Avraham David Moses, 16 years old, on a stretcher down the slope of the vibrant green cemetery here, shaded by tall pines, overlooking a valley, in utter silence.

The boy was wrapped in a black-and-white prayer shawl, and as the pallbearers slipped him into the grave on Friday, the long silence was broken by quiet weeping and occasional sobs.

Men recited psalms, and Naftali Moses, the boy's father, his garments torn in grief, said the Hebrew prayer for the dead, his voice breaking, before moving back up the slope to the parking lot, through a somber line of mourners, men on one side, women on the other.

The boy's stepmother, Leah, described Avraham David, as he was known, as "a really good kid -- he would come home and unload the dishwasher without being asked." If the adults started gossiping at the table, she said, he would recite mishnayot, or oral teachings. "He was just an incredible blessing," she said.

Avraham David was one of eight seminary students killed Thursday night in an act of terrorism, shot by a Palestinian from East Jerusalem who sprayed them with hundreds of rounds of automatic weapons fire before being killed himself. Ten other students were wounded, three of them seriously.

It was unclear what group, if any, was responsible for the massacre. The radical Islamic Hamas movement praised the deed on Thursday but did not claim it.

On Friday an anonymous caller claiming to be from Hamas took responsibility in a phone call to Reuters and said that details would come later. But Fawzi Barhoum, a senior Hamas spokesman in Gaza, said that no claim was official unless made in a written statement signed by the military wing of Hamas. The family of the gunman, identified as Ala Abu Dhaim, 25, said he had been intensely religious, but did not belong to any militant group.

Mark Regev, spokesman for Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, said Israel would act after proper investigation and deliberation, and he condemned those, like Hamas, who celebrated the killings with parades in Gaza. "That Hamas calls this a heroic act, and praises it, this exposes them for what they are," he said.

Amid Sorrow and Anger, Yeshiva's Dead Are Buried

The young men died as they were studying in the library of the Mercaz Harav yeshiva in Jerusalem, a major center for the religious Zionist movement that supports Israeli settlement in the West Bank -- settlements like this one, which Israel intends to keep in any future peace treaty.

The dead, most of them 15 or 16, with the oldest 26, were all buried Friday, in separate funerals drawing thousands of weeping and angry Israelis.

The funeral processions began together earlier on Friday at the yeshiva itself, where thousands of people, many of them in the traditional black clothing of the ultra-Orthodox or wearing knitted skullcaps, characteristic of more modern religious Zionists, lined the streets. In the large courtyard, where the blood had been washed away, eight benches were marked with the names of the dead, and one wall of the yeshiva was covered with large posters listing them.

As each body was brought forward to rest on its bench, the crowds outside the gates parted to let the pallbearers pass, with cries and screams from relatives and friends.

In every corner, students hugged and cried, and many went to see and touch the closed library door, shattered by bullets. In his eulogy, the yeshiva's chief rabbi, Yaakov Shapira, said that the gunman had made targets of "everyone living in the holy city of Jerusalem" and criticized the Olmert government for its willingness to negotiate the return of some occupied land to the Palestinians.

"The time has come for all of us to understand that an external struggle is raging, and an internal struggle, and everyone believes the hour has come for us to have a good leadership, a stronger leadership, a more believing leadership," he said.

Weeping, Rabbi Shapira said, "The murderers are the Amalek of our day, coming to remind us that Amalek has not disappeared, just changed its appearance." The Amalekites were indigenous nomads who attacked the Israelites on their flight from Egypt, and were annihilated by King David. "God asked Abraham to sacrifice his only son," the rabbi said. "We had to sacrifice eight."

The ceremony ended as it began, with the procession of bodies taken out of the gates, one by one, for their separate burials.

The Israeli government declared a high alert on Friday and barred Palestinians in the West Bank from traveling to Jerusalem over the weekend, deploying thousands of police officers and limiting the numbers of Muslims allowed to pray at the Al Aksa Mosque in Jerusalem.

The killer was a Palestinian with permanent residency in Jerusalem. His home in the Jebel Mukaber neighborhood of East Jerusalem was adorned Friday with the flags of **Hamas**, Islamic Jihad and Hezbollah. According to his family, he was a driver for a private company that had made deliveries to the yeshiva, but the police would not confirm that.

His family said that although he had been intensely religious, he was not a member of any militant group, and he had planned on marrying this summer. But he had been transfixed by the bloodshed in Gaza, where 126 Palestinians died from Wednesday through Monday, his sister, Iman Abu Dhaim, told The Associated Press. Several of his relatives were detained for questioning.

The Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah, condemned the killing of civilians by both sides, and Israel said it would continue peace talks with him. Mr. Abbas had suspended such talks after the Gaza deaths.

Mr. Regev urged Mr. Abbas to do more to stop terrorism. "They have clear obligations to act against terror cells," he said. "While we understand that they have limitations on their capabilities today, we believe that they could be doing much more."

A senior Israeli official who spoke anonymously because of the delicacy of the issue said many details about the killing were unclear and no major decisions had been made. Mr. Olmert, Defense Minister Ehud Barak and Foreign

Amid Sorrow and Anger, Yeshiva's Dead Are Buried

Minister Tzipi Livni "understand that there is no quick fix for Hamas, that this will take time, and the goal is to continually apply pressure on the Hamas leadership -- economic, military, diplomatic and political," the official said.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

PHOTO: Thousands of Israelis attended the funeral procession on Friday for the eight yeshiva students who were killed in Jerusalem.(PHOTOGRAPH BY RINA CASTELNUOVO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Load-Date: March 8, 2008

End of Document

The peace process and other delusions

University Wire

March 6, 2008 Thursday

Copyright 2008 FSView & Florida Flambeau via U-Wire

Section: COLUMN

Length: 786 words

Byline: By Samuel Berkowitz, FSView & Florida Flambeau; **SOURCE:** Florida State U.

Dateline: TALLAHASSEE, Fla.

Body

"I maintain that Oslo was not given even a day's grace. Immediately, even before the ink was dry, the one side planned jihad and the brainwashing for jihad, while the other planned settlements. Therefore, I don't think Oslo failed, because Oslo was never tried."

Israeli writer Amos Oz made that statement in 2003, and today it seems as true as ever.

A dozen long-range **Hamas** rockets screeched into Ashkelon over the weekend, one of the largest cities in southern Israel and home to about 120,000 people, 11 miles north of Gaza.

According to the Associated Press, "Israeli officials assume that new and improved rockets, along with Iranian-trained rocket-launchers, were smuggled into Gaza when its border with Egypt was breached in January, bringing Ashkelon into its range."

No other country on the planet would tolerate the carnage and disrespect that Israel has. Well, maybe Britain, once they're done mulling over whether to incorporate Sharia law into their legal system.

Time after time, the Israelis make concessions, respond to the murder of civilians with a fraction of the warranted intensity, a few meetings take place, and the cycle begins anew.

Ibrahim Barzak wrote: "Vice Premier Haim Ramon said Israel should consider returning fire at the rocket launchers, even if it means shelling populated areas. 'In the end, this will save lives on both sides,' he said, since Palestinian civilians would either force the rocket squads from their neighborhoods or flee themselves. He told Israel Radio early Monday that 'no reasonable country' would object to Israeli efforts to defend itself."

Unfortunately, we don't quite live in a world of "reasonable countries." We live in a world in which terrorists are characterized by guilty white liberals as "freedom fighters," and their medieval, backward credos accorded equal respect to those of the civilized world; a world in which retaliation by the Israeli Defense Force is painted as horrific regardless of the atrocities that brought it on.

On March 3, the Jerusalem Post wrote, "The **Hamas** gunmen were using many American-made arms seized from the Fatah-controlled Palestinian Authority security forces in June. **Hamas** says it captured thousands of M-16 and Kalashnikov rifles and large supplies of ammunition during its weeklong conquest of Gaza. **Hamas** is also believed to have acquired weapons capable of penetrating armor and stockpiles of rocket-propelled grenades. A senior

The peace process and other delusions

Hamas official said Sunday that his movement had smuggled hundreds of rockets and mortars and tons of explosives into the Gaza Strip from Egypt in the past few months."

All the while, the Iranian leadership shrieks for Israel's destruction out of one side of its mouth and whines at the imposition of any limitations on its nuclear program out the other. How many more decades of extremist-Muslim-coddling lunacy should Israel abide before truly defending itself with terminal intensity?

Here are a few tidbits from the **Hamas** charter worth consideration by anyone who fails to see the necessity of maximum force. "Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it. ... The Islamic Resistance Movement believes that the land of Palestine is an Islamic Waqf consecrated for future Moslem generations until Judgement Day. It, or any part of it, should not be squandered. It, or any part of it, should not be given up ... There is no solution for the Palestinian question except through Jihad. Initiatives, proposals and international conferences are all a waste of time and vain endeavors."

Not-so-roughly translated, it means: Hi! We want to destroy you, and we actually find all your negotiations and settlement deals and land concessions and hesitation to kill civilians cute as a button. So, if all you darn Jews could just step aside while we turn Israel into a third-world dung heap, rape the **women** and kill the men, and then kill the **women**, that would be super!

Unfortunately, the enemies faced not only by Israel but the entire Western world do not respect anything short of swift and blinding violence. Until all of those responsible for the ceaseless brutality toward and destruction of civilians in the name of Islam -- a religion that is constantly hailed as one of peace -- are vanquished like the hoard of cockroaches that they are, there will be no peace in the Middle East.

Israeli children have the right to go to school without fear of being immolated by incendiary devices. It is incumbent not only upon Israel and its allies but peaceful Muslims everywhere to make **Hamas** and other such groups understand that the choice before them is this: Disarm, or be vaporized.

(C) 2008 FSView & Florida Flambeau via U-WIRE

Load-Date: March 6, 2008

The canard of 'disproportionate force'

The Jerusalem Post

March 6, 2008 Thursday

Copyright 2008 The Jerusalem Post All Rights Reserved

Section: OPINION; Pg. 16

Length: 1098 words

Byline: EVELYN GORDON

Highlight: Hamas needs civilian casualties to fuel Palestinian and international anger at Israel. So rather than barring civilians from its launch zones, it welcomes them. CIVIL FIGHTS

Body

International denunciations of Israel came thick and fast this week. The EU's rotating president, Slovenia, condemned the "disproportionate use of force by the Israeli Defense Forces against the Palestinian population in Gaza." UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon slammed Israel's "excessive and disproportionate" response to Palestinian rocket attacks. Even the US State Department urged Israel to "exercise caution to avoid the loss of innocent life," which is merely a milder version of the same premise: that Israel is to blame for all Palestinian civilian casualties, either because it uses "disproportionate force" or because it exercises insufficient "caution." Yet media reports on the fighting in Gaza reveal that in fact, the blame frequently lies with Palestinian behavior.

Take, for example, an Israeli air strike that killed two Palestinian teenagers last Wednesday. According to The New York Times, "witnesses in Gaza told the Palestinian news media that the civilians were hit while standing at a launching site watching Hamas militants firing rockets." There can be no more justified military activity than targeting terrorists in the very act of firing rockets at civilians. If that is "disproportionate," all military activity is. Moreover, since Hamas eschews uniforms, the IDF has no way to distinguish rocket crews from civilians who are cheering them on. Thus any civilian who rubbernecks at a rocket launch is clearly and deliberately putting himself in danger - which in itself should absolve Israel of responsibility.

BUT MORE importantly, for that very reason, most armed forces do not allow civilians in firing zones. The IDF, for instance, generally declares active combat areas "closed military zones" from which Israeli civilians are legally barred, and it enforces such orders. Other Western armies do the same.

But Hamas needs civilian casualties to fuel Palestinian and international anger at Israel. So rather than barring civilians from its launch zones, it welcomes them. And if they do not volunteer for the victim's role, it co-opts them - as happened last weekend: "Palestinian gunmen took up positions in homes while the civilians were still inside," Haaretz reported.

Firing back at people who are shooting at you is also clearly legitimate military activity; no law of war obligates soldiers to let themselves be mown down without a fight just because there are civilians nearby. Moreover, soldiers have no way of knowing whether the civilians have fled or are still inside a house; all they can be certain of is the presence of gunmen.

The canard of 'disproportionate force'

Under such circumstances, civilian casualties are inevitable. But those casualties are not caused by "disproportionate force" or insufficient "caution"; they are the direct result of Hamas's decision to use civilian homes, with the people still inside, as bases for targeting Israeli soldiers.

Moreover, civilians are not always innocent. Those whose homes were invaded by Hamas were presumably unwilling hostages. But some Palestinians voluntarily serve as "human shields" for terrorists - and by actively aiding and abetting terror, they turn themselves into combatants.

In one widely publicized case in November 2006, for instance, the IDF, seeking to avoid civilian casualties, announced two planned air strikes 30 minutes in advance to enable civilians to leave. Instead, Hamas used the loudspeakers of local mosques to urge civilians to flood the area and serve as human shields. Hundreds did so, and the IDF - precisely because Israel tries to avoid civilian casualties - consequently aborted the strikes. Yet these civilians were hardly "innocent": They deliberately intervened in an armed conflict on the terrorists' behalf.

What is most noteworthy about such incidents, however, is what they say about the Palestinian claim - mindlessly parroted by the international community - that the IDF fires indiscriminately, without regard for civilians. In fact, Hamas summoned civilian reinforcements precisely because it knew a civilian presence would prevent the air strikes. And the civilians came for the same reason - not because they sought death, but because they knew the IDF would not shoot them.

IN ANOTHER incident that same month, hundreds of Palestinian women purposely entered a combat zone to shield gunmen besieged by IDF soldiers. Again, they were deliberately abetting combatants. And again, they knew they could do so safely, because the IDF would not shoot them. And indeed, the soldiers held their fire as the wanted men escaped by mingling with the crowd.

In July 2006, The New York Times described another Gaza battle as follows: "[Israeli] soldiers fired at groups of armed Palestinians who fought in the streets, sometimes surrounded by curious and excited children." Why any parent would let his children outside during a gunfight is a mystery. But unless these parents were deliberately sacrificing their children for propaganda purposes, such behavior demonstrates a truly extraordinary faith in the IDF's efforts to avoid harming civilians.

Contrast this with Palestinians' behavior when the combatants are not Israelis. During last May's Hamas-Fatah infighting, for instance, the Times reported: "The streets of Gaza City were empty except for the gunmen, with shops shuttered and residents remaining indoors, usually in interior rooms farthest from the windows." No "curious and excited" children surrounding the gunmen in these battles: Gazan parents who trusted the IDF with their children's lives evidently placed no similar reliance on Palestinian forces.

THE MEDIA reports above, and numerous others like them, make three things clear: (1) Palestinians know full well that Israel strives to avoid civilian casualties; indeed, as their behavior demonstrates, they count on this. (2) Palestinian civilians frequently deliberately put themselves in the line of fire - either to help the combatants, or, like those "excited children," merely to cheer them on. (3) Palestinian terror groups deliberately foster casualties among their own civilians: Not only do they not discourage civilians from entering combat zones; they force them to do so - for instance, by invading civilian homes - when there are no volunteers.

In short, Palestinian civilian casualties usually result not from "disproportionate force" or "insufficient caution" by the IDF, but from Palestinian behavior, on the part of both civilians and terrorists.

But of course, realizing this would require actually reading reports of the fighting. It is much easier just to skim the headlines and issue stock condemnations of Israel.

Graphic

The canard of 'disproportionate force'

Photo: A PALESTINIAN boy walks by a burning tire during clashes with the IDF troops in Bethlehem on Tuesday.
(Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

End of Document

PRE-DAWN RAID 70 killed in two days' fighting Missiles strike at Gaza

The Advertiser (Australia)

March 3, 2008 Monday

2 - Metro Edition

Copyright 2008 Nationwide News Pty Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: FOREIGN; Pg. 26

Length: 370 words

Byline: IBRAHIM BARZAK, GAZA CITY

Body

ISRAELI aircraft sent missiles slamming into the office of the prime minister of Hamas-ruled Gaza before dawn yesterday, pressing forward with an offensive that has killed nearly 70 Palestinians in two days of fighting.

A 21-month-old baby was among the dead in new fighting.

Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh's office was empty at the time of yesterday's airstrike, but the raid was seen as a tough message to the Hamas leadership, which Israel holds responsible for the repeated rocket barrages launched from Gaza.

A total of 54 Palestinians, roughly half of them civilians, were killed in fighting on Saturday, the highest single-day death toll in more than seven years of violence. Two Israeli soldiers also were killed.

Responding to the bloodletting, the moderate Palestinian leadership based in the West Bank suspended U.S.-sponsored peace talks with Israel. The bloodshed also drew condemnation from the international community, including U.N. chief Ban Ki-Moon, who accused Israel of the "disproportionate and excessive use of force".

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert on Sunday rejected the international criticism and vowed to continue the Gaza offensive. "With all due respect, nothing will prevent us from continuing operations to protect our citizens," he told his Cabinet.

Olmert's defence minister, Ehud Barak, said an even broader Gaza operation was on the cards, aimed at crushing militant rocket squads but also to "weaken the Hamas rule, in the right circumstances, even to bring it down."

Israel regularly clashes with Gaza rocket squads, but intensified its operations after militants fired salvos last week into Ashkelon, a city of 120,000. By targeting Ashkelon, Hamas raised the stakes in the confrontation and added pressure on Israeli leaders to exact a high price for the increasing sense of insecurity felt in southern Israel.

Haniyeh's office was just one of about a dozen targets Israeli aircraft and ground troops struck before dawn. Overnight, a 14-year-old Palestinian girl and five militants died of their wounds, and four Palestinians were killed in Israeli raids, including the 21-month-old baby girl, who died from shrapnel wounds. The bodies of two women also were unearthed in the rubble.

PRE-DAWN RAID 70 killed in two days' fighting Missiles strike at Gaza

Load-Date: March 2, 2008

End of Document

Gilad Schalit: Two years of captivity

The Jerusalem Post
June 26, 2008 Thursday

Copyright 2008 The Jerusalem Post All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 411 words

Byline: Meira Faratci

Body

- * June 25, 2006 - Gilad Schalit is kidnapped by Palestinians who attack an IDF post on the Gaza border by entering through an underground tunnel near the Kerem Shalom crossing. Of the five soldiers with Schalit, two are killed and three are wounded.
- * June 28, 2006 - In an attempt to rescue Schalit, IDF troops enter Khan Yunis. The next day, OC Southern Command Maj.-Gen. Yoav Galant confirms that Schalit is being held captive in Gaza, his specific location unknown.
- * July 1, 2006 - The BBC reports that Palestinian doctors have treated Schalit for wounds to his hand and shoulder. Government authorities warn that the Palestinians will suffer severe consequences if Schalit is harmed. Schalit's captors issue a demand for the release of 1,000 Palestinian prisoners and the end of Israeli intervention in Gaza. Two days later, the demand is followed by a 24- hour ultimatum that Israel rejects.
- * September 15, 2006 - Aviva and Noam Schalit receive a letter from their son, confirmed to be in his handwriting - the first tangible sign of life from Gilad.
- * November 25, 2006- **Hamas** leader Khaled Mashaal confirms that Schalit is alive and well.
- * January 4, 2007- **Hamas** offers to give Israel a videotape of Schalit if Israel releases all Palestinian **women** and children prisoners. Israel rejects the offer, and Schalit's father agrees: "I want my son back, not a video or a letter."
- * June 25, 2007 - **Hamas** releases an audiotape recording of Schalit's voice. In the recording, the soldier says his health is deteriorating and requests that the government do whatever is needed, including the release of Palestinian prisoners, to bring him back to Israel as soon as possible. Schalit's parents claim that the voice in the recording is their son's, but it seems as though the text was dictated to him.
- * February 4, 2008 - The Schalit family receives a second letter from Gilad.
- * April 13, 2008 - Noam Schalit meets with former US president Jimmy Carter before his visit with Mashaal, in the hope that Carter's representation of not being biased toward Israel will be beneficial in negotiations for Gilad's release.
- * June 9, 2008 - The Schalit family receives a third letter, with the handwriting confirmed to be that of Gilad.

Gilad Schalit: Two years of captivity

* June 23, 2008 - The Schalit family files an appeal to the High Court of Justice after an agreement to reopen Gaza crossings and a cease-fire with **Hamas** fails to include prisoner exchanges that would bring Gilad back home. The appeal is dismissed.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

End of Document

Rice clings to peace hopes in Israel

The Australian (Australia)

March 5, 2008 Wednesday

1 - All-round Country Edition

Copyright 2008 Nationwide News Pty Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: WORLD; Pg. 12

Length: 521 words

Byline: Martin Chulov Middle East correspondent

Body

CONDOLEEEZZA Rice has refused to concede the ailing peace process is over, claiming Israel and the Palestinians can still make bold steps towards a treaty by the time George W. Bush leaves office as US President.

Ahead of her return last night to Israel, the US Secretary of State was more guarded in her optimism than during her previous attempts to shepherd both sides towards a deal, declining to recommit to a White House deadline of January next year.

Dr Rice arrived in Jerusalem as parts of Gaza were still smouldering after a five-day Israeli incursion that claimed more than 100 Palestinian lives. The rocket fire that Israel said had prompted the deadliest clash between its armed forces and militants in more than eight years had slowed last night.

However, **Hamas** vowed to fire more of its new long-range rockets towards Israeli cities to avenge the loss of its members. In a surprise move, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas offered to mediate between Israel and **Hamas** to prevent them from returning to the brink of full-scale war.

Mr Abbas, who rules the West Bank while **Hamas** leads a separate administration in Gaza, had earlier disavowed all contact with the militant group after it ousted his party from a fledgling power-sharing government last June.

Mr Abbas had described **Hamas** members as traitors and accused them of plotting to kill his party members. He also last week accused the group of harbouring al-Qa'ida-linked terrorists, who had slipped into Gaza during the breach of the Egyptian border wall in January, or who had emerged as home-grown loyalists of Osama bin Laden.

Before her arrival in Israel, Dr Rice stopped in Egypt in a bid to resecure Gaza's border with Egypt and improve aid supplies to Gaza, which had been crippled by an international boycott led by the US and Israel. During the Israeli incursion, several Palestinian ambulances were pulled out of action because they had run out of fuel. Gas and fuel supplies are desperately low throughout Gaza and many basic goods and medical supplies are scarce.

Israel insists the two-week breach of its border with Egypt led to a flood of weapons and money entering Gaza. It also says weapons continue to be smuggled through tunnels under its southern border.

Protesters in the West Bank administrative capital of Ramallah yesterday hurled stones and burned effigies of Mr Abbas, accusing him of being an Israeli collaborator.

Rice clings to peace hopes in Israel

Mr Abbas angered **Hamas** and other Gaza-based militant factions by accusing them of being ``stupid" for giving Israel a pretext to invade by incessantly firing rockets at Israeli towns.

Many Palestinians were incensed by weekend images of dead **women** and children in Gaza. Israel insists the large majority of the more than 100 people killed were militants.

The Israeli army has completed its withdrawal from Gaza, but has pledged to return at any time.

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert is under intense pressure from within his country to reoccupy land Israel left in August 2005.

One Palestinian was killed by an airstrike and another wounded early yesterday, minutes after they had fired a Qassam rocket at Sderot from a northern town.

Load-Date: March 4, 2008

End of Document

Israel to free prisoners to Abbas

The Gazette (Montreal)
August 7, 2008 Thursday
Final Edition

Copyright 2008 The Gazette, a division of CanWest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A16

Length: 294 words

Byline: Reuters

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert agreed yesterday to the release of 120 to 150 Palestinian prisoners this month as a gesture to President Mahmoud Abbas, Palestinian officials said.

The meeting between the two leaders was the first since Olmert, dogged by a corruption scandal, threw peace talks into turmoil by announcing that he would resign as prime minister once his centrist Kadima party chooses a new leader in September.

Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said Abbas wanted the prisoner release, slated for Aug. 25, to include long-serving inmates, women and children as well as political leaders, a reference to uprising leader Marwan Barghouthi, who is seen as a possible successor as president.

Israeli sources said releasing Barghouthi was an option but stressed that no decisions had been made.

The Hamas group, which controls the Gaza Strip, included Barghouthi, Hamas leaders and hundreds of other prisoners on its list of Palestinians it wants freed in exchange for Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, captured by Gaza militants in a cross-border raid two years ago.

Some Israeli officials see the release of Barghouthi to Abbas as preferable to freeing him to Hamas as part of a deal over Shalit that Egypt is trying to help broker.

Israeli Lt.-Col. Omri Borberg has been demoted but will not face a jail term for ordering that a bound and blindfolded Palestinian be shot with a rubber-coated bullet, military sources said yesterday.

An Israeli Arab was indicted yesterday on charges of joining Hezbollah while he studied medicine in Germany and agreeing to spy on the Jewish state for the Lebanese guerrilla group. The Shin Bet counter-espionage agency said Khaled Kashkush, 29, confessed to having received \$20,150 from a Hezbollah recruiter he met in Frankfurt.

Load-Date: September 4, 2008

Israeli and Palestinian leaders in Annapolis, Maryland; MIDEAST: High Stakes for Annapolis Peace Meet

IPS (Latin America)

November 7, 2007 Wednesday

Copyright 2007 NoticiasFinancieras/Grupo de Diarios America All Rights Reserved

Length: 1154 words

Byline: Khody Akhavi

Body

But many critics fear that the hastily thrown-together meeting has greater inherent risks than the participants are willing to acknowledge.

'The failure of this gathering, which will be the last effort of [the Bush] administration on this issue, will have serious consequences,' said Rita Hauser, the former head of Bush's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board and the current chair of the International Peace Academy, at a think-tank conference about the upcoming meetings.

Citing the start of heavy violence associated with the Second Intifada -- touched off after the failure of then-president Bill Clinton's 2000 Camp David summit -- many fear that the collapse of the talks, or even frustration with a mere token gesture towards some progress towards peace, will reignite large-scale violence both between Israel and Palestine and within the two warring factions that split the two Palestinian territories.

Rice twice referred to the upcoming negotiations as a 'launch pad' for future negotiations in her press appearance with Mahmoud Abbas in the centre of power in the West Bank on Monday morning.

'They will define whatever happens in Annapolis -- a photo-op, statement, or kisses on both cheeks -- a success,' said Hauser. 'We in the real world will know it is a failure.'

The tentative scheduling of the conference -- planned for late November, though increasingly looking like early December, with Rice only committing to having the talks by the end of 2007 -- is emblematic of the criticisms that it is poorly organised and bound to fail.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Abbas -- also known as Abu Mazan -- will both attend the meeting, which is aimed at hashing out some of the preliminary details of agreements working towards a Palestinian state.

But both sides have already expressed concerns about the specifics of any agreement. Last week, Palestinian negotiators stated that they were seeking a timeline for the establishment of a Palestinian state, with a specific plan of implementation towards that end. That announcement prompted a response from Israeli officials that they would conduct negotiations behind closed doors and not in the press.

Israel is reported to be seeking only a vague statement that shows a joint desire of taking the initial steps towards establishing a process, rather than making concrete commitments on any of the issues that have thus far held up talks and the 'final status' agreement that would shore up the existence of a Palestinian State.

Israeli and Palestinian leaders in Annapolis , Maryland MIDEAST: High Stakes for Annapolis Peace Meet

Some analysts thought that negotiations would fail before they started when Olmert announced publicly last week that he has prostate cancer, but Olmert has reportedly spoken to both Rice and Abbas and assured them that he plans to attend the Annapolis conference before undergoing surgery.

‘Nothing will happen now between the two parties,’ Hauser said about the lack of broad-based participation in the conference by neighbouring Arab countries with considerable interest in the negotiations. ‘You have to engage the bigger picture.’

Not one of neighbouring Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt are scheduled to attend the conference. Jordan, Syria and Lebanon host a combined 2.5 million Palestinian refugees for which the ‘right-of-return’ to a future Palestinian state has been a major point of contention between the two central negotiating parties.

‘You can't disaggregate these problems anymore,’ said Hauser, also citing the recent mysterious Israel Defence Forces incursion into Syria and last summer's war between Israel and the Lebanese Hezbollah faction.

Another notable player that was not invited by the U.S. is the Islamic movement Hamas. Deemed a terrorist organisation by the U.S. and others, the group's political wing gained power in January 2006 elections, but took up arms against Abbas' Fatah faction after a period of heightened tensions culminated in failure to reach an agreement for shared power.

The resulting conflict between the two factions culminated in June when Hamas used force to seize control of the Gaza Strip, effectively dividing the Palestinian Authority in two, with Hamas controlling Gaza and Fatah the West Bank.

Keeping Hamas away from the table only to have the talks fail could result in increased support for Hamas, as Abbas' conciliatory theme will have again failed to bear any significant fruit.

‘If it collapses, the biggest loser will be Abu Mazan and Fatah,’ said Paul Scham, an adjunct scholar at the Middle East Institute in Washington and the former director of research at the Truman Institute for Peace at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. ‘They put forward a moderate agenda to gain concessions from Israel and the U.S. Hamas can then say that Israel is not going to give anything up through negotiations.’

Scham was cautious to say that Hamas is still ‘bottled up in Gaza’, and that a failure to hash out many of the specifics of a final status will not necessarily result in killing, observing that the situation is vastly different from 2000.

A group of women from both Israel and Palestine who had gathered at the Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars, a Washington policy think tank, for a meeting about the upcoming summit also refrained from criticising the negotiations before they see what the results are.

This group and Scham both feel that although Olmert and Abbas are too politically weak to make serious concessions, and Bush is entering the lame duck stage of his presidency, there can still be a positive outcome based on the rekindling of a peace process that has been largely stalled for the past seven years.

‘It is easy to be cynical and say it's not going to work,’ said Palestinian women's activist Maha Abu-Dayyeh Shamas, ‘There are great risks, but there are also opportunities.’

Shamas lamented the international community's isolation of Hamas and said, ‘Hamas is starting to have a split in their ranks -- the pragmatists versus the ideologues.’ This split could prompt Hamas to acknowledge Israel and open the door to negotiations.

Asked by IPS if she felt that it could be beneficial to wait to organise a conference at a later time when some of the shortcomings of Annapolis can be better dealt with, she said, ‘I am losing my society. Any colonial group in control will first break down the social connections. These are classic colonial tactics. We can't sit on the sideline anymore. If the talks collapse we have to go back to square one.’

Israeli and Palestinian leaders in Annapolis , Maryland MIDEAST: High Stakes for Annapolis Peace Meet

“We are looking at a one or one-and-a-half year window before the two-state solution falls by the wayside,” said Naomi Chazan, an Israeli professor and former deputy speaker of the Knesset. “This is not a time for pessimist or optimist. This is not a time to wallow in disbelief. This is a time to suspend disbelief.” © 2007 NoticiasFinancieras - IPS - All rights reserved

Load-Date: November 7, 2007

End of Document

Christian Bookstore Owner Was Tortured Before His Death

New York Sun (Archive)

October 11, 2007 Thursday

Copyright 2007 The New York Sun, Two SL, LLC All Rights Reserved

Section: FOREIGN; Pg. 7

Length: 656 words

Byline: AARON KLEIN -, Special to the Sun

Body

The owner of a Christian bookstore in the Gaza Strip who was found dead this weekend was publicly beaten by Islamic gunmen accusing him of spreading Christianity, witnesses and Palestinian Arab security officials said.

The body of Rami Ayyad, director of Gaza's only Christian bookstore, was found Sunday riddled with gunshot and stab wounds. He had been abducted the night before as he closed his shop, a local Christian group said.

Gaza-based Islamic groups had accused Ayyad, a Baptist, of engaging in missionary activity. His bookstore was firebombed in April, and since then Ayyad had told relatives he was receiving death threats from Islamists.

The day before his abduction, Ayyad said he was being followed by a car with no license plates.

Witnesses and security officials associated with Hamas's so-called Executive Force told The New York Sun that Ayyad was publicly beaten a few blocks from his store before being shot to death.

The witnesses said they saw three armed men, two of them wearing masks, beat Ayyad repeatedly with clubs and the butts of their guns while accusing him of attempting to spread Christianity in Gaza. The witnesses said that after the three men beat Ayyad, they all shot him.

Hamas security sources said Ayyad's body showed signs of torture. He leaves a pregnant wife and two young children. No group has taken responsibility for the attack.

Sheik Abu Saqer, the leader of an Islamic outreach movement that said recently it formed a military wing to enforce Muslim law in Gaza, Jihadia Salafiya, told the Sun that though his group "didn't carry out the Ayyad attack," all Christians engaging in missionary activity in Gaza would be "dealt with harshly."

Sheik Saqer's group was accused of firebombing Ayyad's bookstore in April. Jihadia Salafiya also is suspected of firebombing of Internet cafes and an attack in May on a U.N. school in Gaza after it allowed boys and girls to participate in the same sporting event.

In June, Hamas seized control of Gaza from Fatah - the party of the Palestinian Authority president, Mahmoud Abbas - amid widespread fears that hard-line Islamic rule would be imposed in the territory and life for Christians there would deteriorate.

About 3,000 Christians live in Gaza, which has a population of more than 1 million.

Christian Bookstore Owner Was Tortured Before His Death

Now that **Hamas** is in power, Sheik Saqer said, Christians can continue to live safely in Gaza only if they accept Islamic law, including a ban on alcohol and on **women** appearing in public without proper head coverings.

Since June, "the situation has changed 180 degrees in Gaza," he said. "Jihadia Salafiya and other Islamic movements will ensure Christian schools and institutions show publicly what they are teaching to be sure they are not carrying out missionary activity. No more alcohol on the streets. All **women**, including non-Muslims, need to understand they must be covered at all times while in public."

"Also, the activities of Internet cafes, pool halls, and bars must be stopped," he added. "If it goes on, we'll attack these things very harshly."

Sheik Saqer said Gaza Christian community's leadership was "proselytizing and trying to convert Muslims with funding from American evangelicals."

"This missionary activity is endangering the entire Christian community in Gaza," he said. There is "no need" for Christians in Gaza to maintain a large number of institutions in the territory, he added. **Hamas** "must work to impose an Islamic rule or it will lose the authority it has and the will of the people."

The head of **Hamas** in Gaza and a former Palestinian Arab foreign minister, Mahmoud al-Zahar, responded to fears that the group could impose hard-line Islamic rule by saying: "I hardly understand the point of view of the West concerning these issues. The West brought all this freedom to its people, but it is that freedom that has brought about the death of morality in the West. It's what led to phenomena like homosexuality, homelessness and AIDS."

Load-Date: October 11, 2007

Israel Resumes Shipments of Fuel to Gaza, for Now

The New York Times

January 23, 2008 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2008 The New York Times Company

Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 3

Length: 927 words

Byline: By STEVEN ERLANGER

Dateline: GAZA

Body

After widespread criticism of its decision to cut off supplies of industrial diesel oil required to run a power station that serves Gaza City and its hospitals, Israel resumed fuel shipments on Tuesday on what it said would be a temporary basis.

The European Union, which pays for the fuel, called the cutoff "collective punishment," but Israeli officials said they were simply trying to convince Gazans of the need to stop militants from firing rockets into Israeli towns and farms.

On Tuesday, Israel pumped in about 750,000 liters of industrial diesel, part of the 2.2 million liters it said it would provide for one week only to Gaza's main power station, which had shut down after its tanks ran dry.

On Tuesday afternoon, the plant started one of its three turbines, bringing power to parts of Gaza City that had been dark or running on generators. Rafiq Maliha, the project manager for the station, said the 2.2 million liters would be enough to produce up to 55 megawatts of electricity from the plant, which has a capacity of 80 megawatts with normal fuel supplies.

"But what do I do next week?" Mr. Maliha asked. "I have no reserves, so how can I plan? This power plant has nothing to do with the conflict and should be outside it." He and Suheil Skeik, manager of the Gaza Electrical Distribution Company, also criticized Israel for not allowing the regular importation of spare parts for a system that is rapidly wearing down.

Mr. Skeik said it was impossible for his company to separate electrical power to hospitals from the surrounding neighborhood. Even before the fuel halt, he said, there were rolling power cuts in Gaza of six hours or more.

Israel provides over 60 percent of Gaza's power directly, and the Israeli Supreme Court has prevented the state from cutting that supply. But the court did not stop Israel from cutting off fuel supplies, including gasoline. Egypt provides 7 percent of Gaza's power, but only to the south.

Israel also provided 200,000 liters of regular diesel, with another 250,000 liters expected Wednesday; that fuel will be used for generators, especially at water-pumping plants, sewage-treatment facilities and hospitals like Al Shifa,

Israel Resumes Shipments of Fuel to Gaza, for Now

Gaza's largest, which functioned Tuesday on diesel provided to it on Monday by the World Bank, the Red Cross and the United Nations.

Dr. Raed al-Arini said the hospital used 5,000 liters a day to run two generators to power dialysis machines, incubators with 30 children, the intensive-care unit of 15 patients and operating rooms. "It was a miracle when we got 10,000 liters yesterday," he said. "Otherwise we would have had to shut down at noon."

But Gaza's oil companies refused Tuesday to deliver the diesel provided by Israel, saying there was no fuel for them to operate their stations, which are empty. Mahmoud Khozendar, who helps run a family firm and leads the dealers' association, said there was also little gasoline in Gaza.

Israel has refused to supply gasoline, with Prime Minister Ehud Olmert telling his Kadima Party on Monday, "As far as I'm concerned, the residents of Gaza can walk if they don't have gasoline for their cars, because they have a murderous terrorist regime that won't let people in the south of Israel live in safety."

Israeli officials have made it clear, as one senior official said, that as long as rockets are hitting Israel, "the people of Gaza will be uncomfortable and know that life is not normal." Israel, however, will not allow a "humanitarian crisis," Mr. Olmert has said. About 13 Qassam rockets landed in Israel on Tuesday, the Israeli Army said, but did no damage.

Israeli officials said they were also worried about pressure on them to reopen the goods crossings into Gaza, especially because of American support for a plan for the Palestinian government in the West Bank to run the crossings. Israel says the **Hamas** government in Gaza would control the crossings regardless.

To drive home their desire to open the Rafah crossing into Egypt, which has also been shut since **Hamas** took over Gaza in a short war with Fatah last June, **Hamas** supporters organized a protest in Rafah on Tuesday. Dozens of protesters, many of them **women**, tried to push through the crossing into Egypt in two waves and were forced back by Egyptian police officers and soldiers, sometimes using a water cannon and shooting into the air.

One Egyptian policeman was reported to have been shot and seriously wounded in the melee and nine people were hurt, mostly by stones. Earlier, about 50 **women** broke through to the Egyptian side, but were sent back to Gaza. Egyptian security sources told Reuters that **Hamas** security men had crossed into Egypt with Egypt's consent to take several hundred Palestinians back to Gaza.

Early Wednesday, Palestinians set off a series of explosions and blew up a section of the concrete border wall between the Gaza Strip and Egypt, residents of Rafah told Reuters and Agence France-Presse.

Hamas has demanded that Egypt open Rafah for people and goods, but the Egyptians have largely refused. Israel and the United States have urged Cairo not to make life easier on **Hamas** by opening Rafah, and both countries have criticized Egypt for not doing enough to stop the smuggling of arms, munitions and goods through tunnels into Gaza.

John Ging, the Gaza director of operations for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, said the Israelis deserved protection from rocket attacks but called the Israeli cutoff of goods and fuel "collective punishment" and "counterproductive."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

Israel Resumes Shipments of Fuel to Gaza, for Now

PHOTOS: Dozens of **Hamas** protesters seeking the reopening of the Rafah border crossing tried to push through it into Egypt on Tuesday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ABID KATIB/GETTY IMAGES)

The Egyptian police drove protesters back into Gaza with a water cannon. **Hamas** has demanded that Egypt open the border. (PHOTOGRAPH BY IBRAHEEM ABU MUSTAFA/REUTERS)

Load-Date: January 23, 2008

End of Document

World to press for calm after PA freezes peace talks

The Jerusalem Post
March 2, 2008 Sunday

Copyright 2008 The Jerusalem Post All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 858 words

Byline: HERB KEINON, AP contributed to this report.

Body

Israel's intensified offensive in the Gaza Strip is likely to continue for at least another day, after which the international community will likely step in and persuade **Hamas** to stop its rocket attacks, senior government officials said Saturday night.

"Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has called the situation in the south 'war,'" Olmert's spokesman Mark Regev said. "We have to make sure the terrorists understand that the path of violence will in the end hurt them more significantly and acutely than it will hurt us."

The comments came after a day of intense fighting in which two IDF soldiers and around 50 Palestinians were killed.

The international steps to calm the situation are expected to begin on Sunday, with the arrival in the region of EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana. US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is scheduled to arrive on Tuesday.

Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, meanwhile, said Israeli would not be deterred by a Palestinian Authority decision to call off the ongoing diplomatic negotiations with Israel as a result of the situation in the Gaza Strip.

"Even if the Palestinians suspend talks, it won't influence in any way the decisions or operations Israel needs to take in Gaza and elsewhere to protect its citizens. This condition formed the basis of talks with the moderate elements in Palestinian Authority from the beginning," she said in a statement.

Chief PA negotiator Ahmed Qurei said Palestinian leaders, including PA President Mahmoud Abbas, recommended suspending peace talks at a meeting Saturday in Ramallah.

"I think it will be suspended," Qurei said. "What is happening in Gaza is a massacre of civilians, **women** and children, a collective killing, genocide. We can't bear what the Israelis are doing, and what the Israelis are doing doesn't lend the peace process any credibility."

Despite these comments, Regev said, "Israel remains committed to the goal of trying to reach an agreement by the end of the year." Nevertheless, he said, "what is going on in Gaza is a very serious problem."

A senior government source said that suspending the talks was one of **Hamas**'s aims.

"There is no doubt that one of the group's goals is to torpedo the Annapolis process," the official said. "We agreed that the negotiations would continue without any connection to what was taking place on the ground, and despite

World to press for calm after PA freezes peace talks

the continued rocket attacks, we continued the talks without let-up. The decision to stop the talks plays into the hands of **Hamas**, which wants to torpedo the process that determined that the negotiations would take place even in parallel to the rocket attacks."

Livni spoke Saturday with Rice and Slovenian Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel, whose country holds the rotating EU presidency, and said Israel was acting to protect its citizens.

One senior government official explained Israel's actions as an attempt to reverse the trend of recent weeks and put **Hamas** on the defensive, allowing Israel to dictate the rhythm and flow of events in the South.

"We have different options available to us, and we have to make sure that the terrorists understand that they will be defeated," he said.

The official said Israel had to be careful not to adopt strategies that played into **Hamas**'s hands. Although he did not spell out which strategies would do so, there is concern in Jerusalem that an all-out ground invasion is something that **Hamas** has prepared for and is expecting.

"We need to keep the pressure up on them, and make sure they realize they will continue to pay a price," the official said.

The government will hear security briefings on the situation in the South at its weekly cabinet meeting on Sunday, but no emergency security cabinet meeting has been scheduled for the day, though one dealing more in depth with Gaza may be convened later in the week.

Foreign Minister Director-General Aaron Abramovich convened an emergency meeting of the ministry's senior staff on Saturday night to map out strategy to combat the diplomatic and public relations fallout from the day's fighting.

Among the points that Israel's diplomats abroad will stress are that **Hamas**'s stepped-up rocket attacks were a response in part to its failure to carry off a mass protest march on the border crossings earlier in the week, something that was widely interpreted as a failure.

In addition, Israel's overseas envoys have been directed to emphasize that the Palestinians are endangering their own people by firing missiles from populated areas.

Governments around the world were slow to react to the fighting, largely because it took place over the weekend. Quartet envoy Tony Blair, however, issued a statement condemning the rocket attacks on Israel, but calling on Israel to avoid causing Palestinian civilian casualties.

"The loss of civilian life including children is absolutely tragic," Blair said. "The rocket attacks which resulted in the death of an innocent Israeli and injuries to many more must cease, and are utterly to be condemned. But it is vital that in action against them, everything possible is done to avoid the loss of innocent Palestinian life, so that there are not even more victims of the situation created in Gaza."

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

Sound of music inspiring gunmen; Military Band; 'We want to urge the soldiers and officers to push on'

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

November 3, 2007 Saturday

All But Ontario Edition

Copyright 2007 National Post All Rights Reserved

Section: WORLD; Pg. A15

Length: 383 words

Byline: Tim Butcher, The Daily Telegraph

Dateline: GAZA

Body

GAZA - **Hamas** gunmen have launched a new weapon in their struggle with Israel: a troupe of honey-voiced singers known as Protectors of the Homeland.

Wearing crisply pressed fatigues in urban camouflage blue, the six band members gather each day to practise in an old office in the Gaza City police headquarters.

The small room throbbed with energy as their dusty 12-track amplifier screeched with feedback before being tamed by an engineer.

To the accompaniment of a backing track from a laptop computer, the men then started polishing their routine of songs, almost all of which have strong Islamic and militaristic content and titles like Change and Reform. Such uplifting lyrics as "By the shrouds of the dead we are inspired" are typical.

"It is our job to inspire the foot soldiers," said Major Hosam Abu Abdu, a 40-yearold former police officer who now fronts the band.

"We want to urge the soldiers and officers to push on, to make the effort needed in the struggle to end the occupation [of Palestinian land by Israel]."

Formed in the summer as part of the arts department of **Hamas**'s domestic security service, the Executive Force, the group has performed for police units around Gaza City.

But Major Abu Abdu, who also uses his fine voice to call the faithful to prayer at a mosque, outlined ambitious plans for Protectors of the Homeland -- to produce their first recordings for distribution, to build a theatre in Gaza City and even to start public dancing.

As they are an Islamic group, the plans do not involve **women** and the band leader looked slightly shocked when asked if any of the activities might be unisex.

"Not possible," he said. All the band members said the work beat their regular duties, which included, back in June, helping **Hamas** in its bloody and ultimately successful battle with the Fatah faction for control of the Gaza Strip.

Sound of music inspiring gunmen; Military Band; 'We want to urge the soldiers and officers to push on'

Music has always played a large role in the culture of Hamas, with songs praising the group and its leaders, including the wheelchair-bound Sheik Ahmed Yassin who was killed by the Israelis in 2004.

As well as motivating serving members, the group also performs in prisons to try to reeducate criminals.

"There is a strong psychological effect in music and we use it to try to improve the spirit of those who have committed crimes," Maj. Abu Abdu said.

Load-Date: November 5, 2007

End of Document

Abbas halts talks as Israeli attacks kill 70

Financial Times (London, England)

March 3, 2008 Monday

USA Edition 2

Copyright 2008 The Financial Times Limited

Section: WORLD NEWS; Pg. 6

Length: 460 words

Byline: By TOBIAS BUCK and HARVEY MORRIS

Body

At least 70 Palestinians were killed and hundreds wounded in the Gaza Strip over the weekend, as Israel continued its biggest offensive in years against **Hamas**, the Islamist group that controls the territory.

Two Israeli soldiers were killed in gun battles with Palestinian militants on Saturday, confirming Israeli concerns over the risk of launching a full-scale ground offensive or invasion. **Hamas** and other militant groups also kept up the intense bombardment of nearby Israeli towns with rockets and mortars.

The bloody escalation spread yesterday to Palestinian cities in the West Bank, as thousands protested against the attacks on Gaza and repeatedly clashed with Israeli forces. A 14-year-old boy was shot dead in the West Bank city of Hebron, after demonstrators hurled stones at Israeli troops.

Shops and offices, including the Palestinian Stock Exchange, were closed yesterday in a show of mourning and to protest against the attacks.

Responding to mounting public pressure, Mahmoud Abbas, the president of the Palestinian Authority, suspended peace talks with Israel. The move is a blow to the US-sponsored effort to reach a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians by the end of the year, though Israeli officials voiced hope the breakdown would be only temporary.

Ahmed Qureia, the chief Palestinian negotiator, denounced Israel's attacks as "a massacre of civilians, **women** and children, a collective killing", adding that "what the Israelis are doing doesn't lend the peace process any credibility".

The Israeli incursions are aimed primarily at stopping **Hamas** and other militant groups from firing rockets on Israeli towns close to the strip. The barrage had been largely confined to the small town of Sderot until last week but has been extended to Ashkelon, a city of 110,000 that lacks the shelters and reinforcements to withstand rocket attacks.

The targeting of Ashkelon has reinforced Israeli perceptions that it has to deal decisively with the threat posed by **Hamas**, regarded as a terrorist organisation by Israel, the US and most European countries, but seen by many Palestinians as a resistance movement. But Israel faces mounting international pressure over its attacks on Gaza and, in particular, the high rate of civilian casualties. Several children were among the victims of the weekend fighting, including a 21-month-old girl.

Abbas halts talks as Israeli attacks kill 70

Both the European Union and the United Nations criticised what they said was Israel's use of "disproportionate" and "excessive" force, drawing an immediate rebuke from Ehud Olmert, Israel's prime minister: "Israel is defending its residents . . . and, with all due respect, nothing will prevent it from protecting them - and no one has the right to preach to us over actions that are in self-defence."

Load-Date: March 2, 2008

End of Document

Israel hits new targets in Gaza Strip; Palestinian death toll grows to more than 100; criticism brushed off

Edmonton Journal (Alberta)

March 3, 2008 Monday

Early Edition

Copyright 2008 Edmonton Journal, a division of Canwest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A4

Length: 582 words

Byline: Reuters and Canwest News Service

Dateline: GAZA

Body

Israeli aircraft struck new targets in the Gaza Strip today, killing two militants, after the government vowed to press an offensive despite global appeals to end the violence.

More than 100 Palestinians, many of them civilians, have been killed since Israel launched the offensive when an Israeli civilian was killed by a rocket fired from Gaza on Wednesday.

Four workshops and an office used by **Hamas** were blasted overnight, said officials of the Palestinian Islamist movement, which seized control of Gaza last June by routing Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas's forces. Two groups of fighters from militant organizations were also struck by missiles. In each attack, one man was killed and several wounded, medics and **Hamas** officials said.

"There were a number of aerial attacks on weapons manufacturing facilities," an Israeli army spokesman said.

Israel says it is targeting sites where **Hamas** and its allies make, store and fire the rockets which have disrupted life in Israeli border towns over the past year and more.

The killing of the Israeli by a rocket on Wednesday was the first since May.

A total of 107 people have been killed since Wednesday. Among these have been up to 60 civilians, including **women** and children, provoking an outcry from Palestinians and fellow Arabs and condemnation at the United Nations and elsewhere. Abbas said Sunday he was suspending peace talks with Israel.

Washington promptly urged an end to violence and a resumption of the negotiations launched recently under the sponsorship of President George W. Bush.

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is due to arrive for previously scheduled talks with Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert on Tuesday. But, after 25 more rockets landed Sunday, Israel said it would continue its offensive.

"We're encouraging Israel to exercise caution to avoid the loss of innocent life," said a U.S. State Department spokesman after Rice spoke to Abbas, who has vowed not to resume negotiations until Israel halts its offensive.

Israel hits new targets in Gaza Strip; Palestinian death toll grows to more than 100; criticism brushed off

Bush, among Israel's staunchest allies during his presidency, has pledged to try and forge a deal on Palestinian statehood before he steps down in January. His spokesman said: "The violence needs to stop and the talks need to resume."

But Defence Minister Ehud Barak made clear the offensive would go on: "It is time for action. The operation continues. Hamas is responsible and will pay the price. ... We will deploy force to change the situation -- and we will change it."

Canada admonished Israel and condemned Hamas and other groups for unprovoked attacks.

But a strongly worded diplomatic caution from Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Bernier, who said Canada is concerned about the Israeli measures in retaliation -- including military operations which impact civilians -- drew a sharp response.

Israeli Ambassador Alan Baker rejected the public scolding from Canada as "irresponsible allegations and insinuations" and said the use of such force is necessary.

Bernier said Canada deplored the loss of life and suffering on both sides of the dispute, but he urged Israel to consider the impact of its response.

In response, Baker said, "Israel rejects the irresponsible allegations and insinuations as if its response to these barrages is excessive. Israel is duty-bound to protect its citizens and will do so as it considers necessary to put an end to the bombings."

On Saturday, 61 people, including 30 civilians, were killed in the bloodiest day for Palestinians since their 1980s uprising.

Graphic

Photo: Getty Images; Palestinian fighters take up position during an Israeli offensive east of Jabalia refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip on Sunday. ;

Load-Date: March 3, 2008

Israel buries its dead, and ponders; Amid tears for 8 youths, an investigation and a 'deep breath'

The International Herald Tribune

March 8, 2008 Saturday

Copyright 2008 International Herald Tribune All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 1081 words

Byline: Steven Erlanger and Isabel Kershner - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: KFAR ETZION, West Bank

Body

Steven Erlanger reported from Jerusalem and Isabel Kershner from Kfar Etzion. Rina Castelnuevo contributed reporting from Jerusalem and Taghreed El-Khodary from Gaza.

*

They carried the body of Avraham David Moses, 16 years old, on a small stretcher down the slope of the vibrant green cemetery here, shaded by tall pines, overlooking a valley, in utter silence.

The boy was wrapped in a black-and-white prayer shawl, and as the pallbearers slipped him into the grave Friday, the long silence was broken by quiet weeping and occasional sobs.

Men recited psalms, and Naftali Moses, the boy's father, his garments torn in grief, said the Hebrew prayer for the dead, his voice breaking, before moving back up the slope to the parking lot, through a somber line of mourners, men on one side, **women** on the other.

His stepmother, Leah, described Avraham David, as he was known, as "a really good kid - he would come home and unload the dishwasher without being asked." And if the adults started gossiping at the table, she said, he would start reciting mishnayot, or oral teachings. "He was just an incredible blessing," she said.

Avraham David was one of eight yeshiva, or Jewish religious school, students slain Thursday night, killed by a Palestinian living in east Jerusalem, who sprayed them with hundreds of rounds of automatic weapons fire before being killed himself. Ten other students were wounded, three of them seriously.

It was unclear which group was responsible for the massacre. The radical Islamic **Hamas** movement, which praised the deed on Thursday, claimed responsibility on Friday in an anonymous phone call to the Reuters news agency and said that details would come later. But Fawzi Barhoum, a senior **Hamas** spokesman in Gaza, said that no claim would be official unless made in a written statement signed by the military wing of **Hamas**.

Mark Regev, spokesman for Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, said that the government would act after proper investigation and deliberation, and he condemned those, like **Hamas**, who celebrated the slayings with parades in Gaza. "That **Hamas** calls this a heroic act, and praises it. This exposes them for what they are," he said.

Israel buries its dead, and ponders Amid tears for 8 youths, an investigation and a 'deep breath'

The young men were killed as they were studying in the library of the Mercaz Harav yeshiva in Jerusalem, a major center for the national religious movement that provides the backbone of Israeli settlement in the West Bank - settlements like this one, which Israel intends to keep in any future peace treaty.

The young men, most of them 15 or 16, with the oldest 26, were buried Friday, in separate funerals that drew thousands of weeping and angry Israelis.

The funeral processions began together at the yeshiva itself, where thousands of people, many of them in the black clothing of the ultra-Orthodox or wearing knitted yarmulkas, lined the streets. In the large courtyard, where the blood had been washed away, eight benches were marked with the names of the dead and one wall of the yeshiva was covered with large posters listing them.

As each body was brought forward to rest on its bench, the crowds outside the gates parted to let the pallbearers pass, with cries and screams from relatives and friends.

In every corner, students hugged and cried, and many went to see and touch the closed library door, shattered with bullets. In his eulogy, the yeshiva's chief rabbi, Yaakov Shapira, said that the gunman had targeted "everyone living in the holy city of Jerusalem" and criticized the Olmert government for its willingness to negotiate the return of some occupied land to the Palestinians.

"The time has come for all of us to understand that an external struggle is raging, and an internal struggle, and everyone believes the hour has come for us to have a good leadership, a stronger leadership, a more believing leadership," the rabbi said.

Weeping, Shapira said, "the murderers are the Amalek of our day, coming to remind us that Amalek has not disappeared, just changed its appearance." The Amalekites were indigenous nomads who attacked the Israelites on their flight from Egypt, and they were annihilated by King David.

"God asked Abraham to sacrifice his only son," the rabbi said. "We had to sacrifice eight."

The ceremony ended as it began, with the procession of bodies taken out of the gates, one by one, for their separate burials.

The Israeli government declared a high alert on Friday and closed off the West Bank for the weekend, deploying thousands of police officers and limiting the number of Muslims allowed to pray at Al Aksa Mosque.

The killer, identified as Ala Abu Dhaim, 25, was a Palestinian Jerusalemite with permanent residency in the city. His home in the Jebel Mukaber neighborhood of East Jerusalem was adorned on Friday with the flags of Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah and other religious groups. He was said to have worked as a driver for a private company that had made deliveries to the yeshiva, but the police would not confirm that.

His family said he was intensely religious but not a member of any militant group, planned on marrying this summer, but had been transfixed by the bloodshed in Gaza, where 126 Palestinians died from last Wednesday through Monday, his sister, Iman Abu Dhaim, told The Associated Press. "He told me he wasn't able to sleep because of the grief," she said. Several of his relatives were detained for questioning.

The Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah, condemned the killing of civilians by both sides, and Israel said it would continue to talk peace with him.

Regev urged Abbas to do more to stop terrorism. "They have clear obligations to act against terror cells," he said. "While we understand that they have limitations on their capabilities today, we believe that they could be doing much more, and it is incumbent upon them to do so."

A senior Israeli official said that many details about the killing were unclear and no big decisions had been made. "When things like this happen, there's an immediate desire to do something," the official said. "But we learned under Ariel Sharon that it's better to take a deep breath."

Israel buries its dead, and ponders Amid tears for 8 youths, an investigation and a 'deep breath'

The three key members of the security cabinet - Olmert, Defense Minister Ehud Barak and Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni - "would meet and think and calculate and respond," the official said. "These three understand that there is no quick fix for **Hamas**, that this will take time, and the goal is to continually apply pressure on the **Hamas** leadership - economic, military, diplomatic and political."

Load-Date: March 18, 2008

End of Document

**UN head deplores Israel's 'excessive' force in Gaza raid; Up to half the 60
Palestinians killed said to be civilians**

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

March 3, 2008 Monday

First Edition

Copyright 2008 The Age Company Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; International News; Pg. 10

Length: 558 words

Byline: Ed O'Loughlin, Gaza with Reuters

Body

UNITED Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has condemned Israel's "disproportionate and excessive use of force" in a bloody raid into a crowded Gaza neighbourhood that has killed more than 60 Palestinians.

Those killed include numerous militants from **Hamas** and other groups, but up to half of them are reported to be civilians, including at least seven **women** and six children.

"While recognising Israel's right to defend itself, I condemn the disproportionate and excessive use of force that has killed and injured so many civilians, including children," Mr Ban told an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council called by Libya.

The number of fatalities from Saturday's invasion and air strikes is thought to be the highest one-day death toll in more than seven years of conflict.

Together with the deaths of two Israeli soldiers in action on Saturday and the killing of an Israeli civilian by Palestinian rocket fire last Wednesday, the weekend tank and air assault brings to about 100 the number of lives lost since Israel assassinated five **Hamas** militant leaders on Wednesday. The Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz said the ferocity of the onslaught on the Jabaliya refugee camp in north Gaza stemmed from an Israeli army doctrine of using massive firepower to extract troops killed or injured in combat, a rare occurrence in Gaza in recent years.

Despite the scale of the bloodshed, the Israel Defence Forces stressed that its ongoing operation in Gaza City's Jabaliya district is not to be confused with the major ground offensive which Israel says may be necessary to wipe out **Hamas** militancy and end missile fire from Gaza at Israeli border towns.

Israeli Vice-Premier Haim Ramon said: "We need to act with all our might, but without taking steps that will hurt us more than help us - by which I mean reoccupying Gaza."

But the country's Defence Minister Ehud Barak said Israel needed to "prepare for escalation". "This is not the broad ground operation, but whoever says there will not be a big ground operation speaks on his own behalf," he added.

On Saturday, the number of Palestinian missiles fired increased again, to about 40, having dropped to nine on Friday, the day before the operation was launched. At least 50 missiles were fired on Wednesday by **Hamas** and allied militants in what **Hamas** said was retaliation for the air strike that killed its five members in southern Gaza.

UN head deplores Israel 's 'excessive' force in Gaza raid Up to half the 60 Palestinians killed said to be civilians

The rockets fired included one that killed a 47-year-old Israeli civilian in the border town of Sderot and several longer-range missiles that, for the first time, struck the centre of the major coastal city of Ashkelon, greatly increasing the number of Israeli civilians now at risk.

The killings have cast a pall over the lacklustre peace talks being held between Israel and the emergency regime of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is due to arrive in the region again this week to push for more talks, but the deaths of so many civilians in Gaza will make it difficult for Mr Abbas' team to sit down with their Israeli counterparts.

Chief Palestinian peace negotiator Ahmed Qurie called off a meeting scheduled for today with his Israeli counterpart, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni. But Mr Abbas, who called Israel's attacks "more than a holocaust", had taken no decision to abandon talks, aides said. -- With REUTERS

Graphic

PHOTO: Mourners carry the body of a Palestinian man during his funeral in the Jabaliya refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip. PICTURE: AFP

Load-Date: March 2, 2008

End of Document

Is this the beginning of a new intifada?

The Irish Times

March 10, 2008 Monday

Copyright 2008 The Irish Times All Rights Reserved

Section: WORLD; Other World Stories; Pg. 10

Length: 639 words

Byline: MICHAEL JANSEN

Body

MIDDLE EAST: A third bloody Palestinian uprising may have begun long before last week's seminary massacre.

PALESTINIAN AND Israeli analysts have been predicting for several years that a third intifada is about to erupt because of the deteriorating conditions for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.

Some Israeli analysts argue that last week's murder by a Palestinian of eight students at a Jewish seminary in Jerusalem launched a third intifada. However, the first and second intifadas, or popular risings, were sparked by Israeli actions against Palestinians rather than Palestinian attacks on Israelis.

The first erupted on December 8th, 1987, when an Israeli lorry ploughed into Palestinian workers in Gaza, killing four; the second on September 29th, 2000, when Israeli troops killed four Palestinian youths during protests at a visit Ariel Sharon made to the mosque compound on Jerusalem's acropolis.

Palestinians cite as proof of a new intifada the killing by Israel of 110 Palestinians during attacks on Gaza between February 28th and March 2nd. Among the victims were 51 civilians, including 25 children, two infants, six women and a paramedic. One Israeli civilian and four soldiers died in this bout of violence blamed by Israel on the firing of rockets into its towns by Hamas and its allies. Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum suggested that Palestinians are now engaged in an "intifada of the rocket". Stones were the weapons of the first intifada, guns and bombs of the second, which has not yet been declared over.

However, Sam Bahour, a Palestinian businessman with US citizenship who lives and works in the West Bank, argued in an article published in February 2006, that the third intifada, the "intifada of the ballot box", began when Hamas ousted Fatah from power in the January 2006 election. He said the vote reflected popular discontent against "a failed peace process, a road map that led to a separation wall, and a corrupt government".

Instead of accepting a democratically elected Hamas government, Israel besieged and blockaded Gaza while the US and EU isolated and boycotted the Palestinian Authority until Mahmoud Abbas, the president and head of Fatah, broke with Hamas last summer. Thus, the third intifada became a rising not only against Israel but also against the US, EU and Fatah.

Jaber Wishah, of the Gaza-based Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, agrees. "Palestinians have had a very bitter experience over our choice in the 2006 election. [The international community] did not respect the result. I ran for election and lost but I respect the result. This election was a golden chance to make Palestinians think

Is this the beginning of a new intifada?

moderately and modernly. The opposite is coming. Now we will have more extremism and more violence." He says al-Qaeda does not have a presence in Gaza so far, "[but] it could come at any moment. The incubator of extremism and violence is the occupation."

Although Israeli analysts claim that Palestinians are too war weary and hemmed in to engage in further conflict, Wishah lists several elements which could produce an explosion. Israeli defence minister Ehud Barak is seeking a "legal umbrella" for operations in heavily populated civilian areas during a Gaza offensive in the coming months. The Palestinians are divided and weak, the region is unstable, the US gives "blind support to Israel, and the EU ignores Israel's violations of the fourth Geneva Convention and international law.

Palestinians are being "cooked in a pressure cooker with Israel in control of the fire. [But] when things calm down either side can raise the level of violence". He does not believe the new intifada will be confined to Gaza. "They cannot successfully split Gaza from the West Bank. Palestinians live in total ambiguity and total uncertainty: this is more dangerous than danger itself."

Load-Date: March 10, 2008

End of Document

World Report

Windsor Star (Ontario)

June 19, 2008 Thursday

Final Edition

Copyright 2008 Windsor Star, a division of CanWest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. B2; World Report

Length: 799 words

Byline: Compiled from Star News Services

Body

EXAMS REVEAL TORTURE OF U.S.-HELD DETAINEES

WASHINGTON - Medical examinations of 11 former terrorism suspects held by U.S. troops found proof of physical and psychological torture resulting in long-term damage, a human rights advocacy group said on Wednesday.

Mistreatment cited by the men included beatings and other physical and sexual abuse, isolation, forced nakedness and being forced into painful stress positions with hands and feet bound.

"The evaluations provide evidence of violation of criminal laws prohibiting torture and of the commission of war crimes by U.S. personnel," said the report by the Cambridge, Mass.-based Physicians for Human Rights.

BOTH SIDES LACK FAITH IN ISRAEL-HAMAS CEASEFIRE

GAZA CITY, Gaza - As the clock ticked down Wednesday to an Egyptian-brokered temporary ceasefire between Hamas and Israel that was set to begin at dawn today, more than 50 mortars and Qassam rockets screamed towards Israel from this Palestinian enclave on the Mediterranean.

"No peace today," was an Israeli border guard's terse comment moments after an Israeli air attack Wednesday on a rocket launching team.

Israel Prime Minister Ehud Olmert also cast doubt on the durability of the ceasefire shortly after his government publicly agreed Wednesday that it was prepared to stop military operations in Gaza and gradually lift a strict economic embargo of the Palestinian coastal strip in return for an end to attacks from the Palestinian territory by Hamas and other armed Islamist factions.

"We have no illusions," Olmert said. "The calm is temporary and may be very short. Hamas has not changed its skin. These are bloodthirsty and despicable terrorists who even today are doing all they can to harm Israeli civilians."

Hamas was equally skeptical of Israeli intentions on Wednesday.

"If the occupiers are committed to the calm there will be calm. If they are not, we will defend ourselves," Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum said in an interview at his office near the centre of the tumbledown Gazan capital.

World Report

Israel's Olmert has also been on a multi-pronged peace offensive. The Israeli media said Wednesday that his coalition government was prepared to discuss several crucial issues with Lebanon including a prisoner swap with Hezbollah and the return to Lebanon of a small piece of farmland occupied by Israel.

U.S. BLAMES SHIITE GROUP FOR DEADLY BAGHDAD BOMB

BAGHDAD - U.S. forces on Wednesday blamed a rogue Shiite militia group seeking to stir up sectarian violence for a devastating truck bombing that killed 63 people in Baghdad.

The U.S. military said intelligence information showed Tuesday's attack in a predominantly Shiite district, the deadliest in the Iraqi capital in more than three months, was carried out by a "special groups cell."

That is military jargon for rogue elements of Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr's Mehdi Army. The U.S. military says the special groups receive weapons, training and funding from neighbouring Iran, a charge Tehran denies.

Iraqi police said another 75 people were wounded in the bombing in a crowded market area of northwestern Baghdad. Four children and five women were among the dead.

The blast in the al-Hurriya neighbourhood set three buildings ablaze and destroyed a marketplace, police said.

The U.S. military said it believed the bombers used a truck packed with 90 to 135 kg of explosives.

MBEKI MEETS MUGABE IN BID TO QUELL VIOLENCE

HARARE - South African President Thabo Mbeki on Wednesday made fresh efforts to mediate in Zimbabwe's crisis ahead of next week's run-off, as global outrage grew over mounting violence in the country.

Mbeki met Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe late Wednesday after holding talks with opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai earlier in the day, while UN chief Ban Ki-moon expressed "profound alarm" over conditions before the June 27 presidential vote.

"The current violence, intimidation and arrest of opposition leaders are not conducive to credible elections," spokeswoman Michele Montas quoted Ban as saying.

MARK THATCHER PART OF COUP PLOT, COURT TOLD

MALABO - The son of former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was a leader of a 2004 coup plot in oil-rich Equatorial Guinea that was backed by Spain and South Africa, a British mercenary told a court on Wednesday.

Former special forces officer Simon Mann testified that Mark Thatcher was "not just an investor" in the plot to oust Equatorial Guinea President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, who has ruled the West African state since 1979.

Mann, one of the defendants in the coup trial, identified Thatcher as one of a five-man group headed by London-based Lebanese millionaire Eli Calil, whom he said masterminded and bankrolled the conspiracy.

"He (Thatcher) came on board completely and became part of the management team," Mann told the court in the island capital.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Getty Images; PIGGERIES ASSAILED: Environmental activists demonstrate at the entrance of a congress about piggeries on Wednesday in Arnhem, the Netherlands, to protest against plans for huge sties for thousands of pigs. ;

Load-Date: June 19, 2008

End of Document

Boy killed by Israeli fire in West Bank, medics say

Deseret Morning News (Salt Lake City)

July 30, 2008 Wednesday

Copyright 2008 The Deseret News Publishing Co.

Length: 775 words

Byline: Daa Hadid Associated Press

Body

RAMALLAH, West Bank -- Israeli gunfire killed a 10-year-old Palestinian boy Tuesday during a confrontation between troops and stone-throwers in a West Bank village, medics and witnesses said.

The Israeli military said it would conduct an investigation.

The boy, Ahmed Moussa, was killed in the West Bank village of Naalin, site of frequent demonstrations against Israel's separation barrier, which threatens to swallow up hundreds of acres of Naalin's olive groves.

The boy was killed by a shot to the forehead, according to medics and an Associated Press reporter who saw his body at Ramallah Hospital.

The Naalin demonstrations frequently develop into confrontations between stone-throwing youths and Israeli troops firing tear gas and rubber-coated bullets.

On Tuesday, Israeli forces erected a makeshift fence to prevent protesters from reaching bulldozers clearing land for the barrier, and young men and boys gathered nearby, said Farah Khawaja, a protest organizer.

Israeli troops fired tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse demonstrators trying to scale the fence. By late afternoon, the clashes had subsided, but several teenage boys remained in the area and kept throwing stones, Khawaja said.

He said soldiers fired more tear gas and then live bullets.

Moussa was struck in the forehead, with a large exit wound in the back of the head. Mohammed Nafa, one of the demonstrators, said he and others carried the boy to an ambulance, cupping his head with a baseball cap.

At a hospital in the nearby town of Ramallah, the boy's family waited at the morgue. Mourners gathered around the boy's father, who leaned against a wall. A paramedic who had driven the body sat on stairs and wept.

"We told him not to go down (to the protests), but he wouldn't listen," the boy's aunt, Khadija Moussa, said in a telephone interview.

Moussa is the first fatality in months of Naalin protests.

The military said it would conduct "a thorough examination with the forces in the region" and consult with Palestinian medical personnel.

Boy killed by Israeli fire in West Bank, medics say

Also Tuesday, an Israeli battalion commander was placed on 10 days of leave for his alleged role in the shooting of a bound, blindfolded Naalin protester on July 7.

The investigation into that incident continues, the army said Tuesday, referring to the shooting as "grave."

The incident was captured in footage taken by a Naalin resident and was distributed by the Israeli human rights group B'tselem.

The footage shows an Israeli soldier slowly taking aim and firing at the feet of the protester, as an Israeli officer holds the bound man's arm. The protester was lightly injured.

In the northern West Bank city of Nablus, meanwhile, a well-known dissident was released a day after sweeping detention raids by security forces loyal to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

Abdel Sattar Qassem, a political science professor and frequent government critic, said he was not interrogated but saw other detainees who appeared to have been beaten in the Nablus lockup.

Since the weekend, Abbas' forces have arrested dozens of suspected supporters of the Islamic militant **Hamas**. The move came in apparent retaliation for a similar roundup of Abbas loyalists in **Hamas**-ruled Gaza. That sweep followed a bombing that killed five **Hamas** activists in Gaza.

The mutual detention raids came as two human rights groups reported widespread mistreatment in Palestinian lockups in the West Bank and Gaza.

Qassem said he spent a night at Nablus' Jneid Prison with some 60 other detainees. He said he saw a **Hamas** member of the Nablus city council with his clothes ripped, and said other detainees bore signs of beatings.

At a nearby hospital, a medical official said a 21-year-old son of a leading **Hamas** activist was admitted after being severely beaten.

The doctor who examined the young man said he had a black eye, and bruises around his neck, back and head. The doctor refused to give his name for fear of retribution.

Also Tuesday, in the southern West Bank city of Hebron, Palestinian Authority forces broke up a protest held by the Liberation Party, an Islamic group that calls for the establishment of a pan-Muslim state.

Hundreds of **women** in headscarves and robes marched down a main street alongside a few dozen men. They waved their party's black flag and shouted slogans against the Abbas government.

"Authority of Spies!" the crowd chanted, "Infidels!"

Security forces fired in the air and arrested some of the men.

The Liberation Party frequently denounces the West Bank's moderate leadership as infidels, but unlike **Hamas** espouses nonviolent change.

Associated Press writers Ali Daraghmeh in Nablus and Nasser Shiyoukhi in Hebron contributed to this report.

Load-Date: July 30, 2008

Tactics deny aid for Gaza ill

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

October 22, 2007 Monday

First Edition

Copyright 2007 The Age Company Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; International News; Pg. 10

Length: 284 words

Byline: Ed O'Loughlin, Jerusalem

Body

ISRAELI agents are arbitrarily citing security concerns to prevent seriously ill Gaza civilians from obtaining medical treatment in Israel, according to rights groups.

An Israeli newspaper has also reported this month that some civilians were denied passage after they refused to become collaborators.

New York-based Human Rights Watch says at least three seriously ill Palestinians have died since June after they were turned back at Erez, the crossing between Gaza and Israel, for unspecified security reasons.

The three were refused permission to leave Gaza at the last minute, despite having cleared their passage with the security forces in advance and having scheduled appointments for life-saving treatments at Israeli medical centres.

The Israeli branch of Physicians for Human Rights says that since June it has intervened in the cases of 138 seriously ill men, women and children who were turned back at Erez for security reasons.

In 52 of the cases the security objections were withdrawn, sometimes after Physicians for Human Rights threatened court proceedings against security services.

Human Rights Watch puts the interrogation and blocking of gravely ill Palestinians in the context of Israel's blockade of Gaza, which intensified after militant group Hamas took control in June.

"Israel is punishing sick civilians as a way to hurt Hamas, and that's legally and morally wrong," the director of Human Rights Watch's Middle East division, Sarah Leah Whitson, said.

A spokesman for the Israeli Foreign Ministry said the fault was with Hamas, which was preventing Israel from opening its crossings with Gaza. Israel was going "out of its way" to allow people seeking treatment to get through, he said.

Load-Date: October 21, 2007

Gazans' health disputed; World experts say Israel's tight border keeps sick from care

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

September 7, 2008 Sunday

Main Edition

Copyright 2008 The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

**The Atlanta
Journal-Constitution**

Section: NEWS; Pg. 1C

Length: 946 words

Byline: ROBERT W. GEE

Cox Washington Bureau

Body

Gaza City --- Fifty-one Palestinians from the Gaza Strip have died during the past 11 months while waiting for permits to enter Israel for medical treatment or after having been denied permission to enter, according to the World Health Organization.

The Palestinian Health Ministry in Gaza, which compiles such figures separately, says 245 people have died since June last year from factors relating to the partial closure of Gaza's only two access points to the outside world, land crossings into Israel and Egypt.

Since Israel signed a truce in June with Hamas, the militant group that rules Gaza, it has lessened restrictions on the transfer of goods into Gaza, at the same time allowing fewer patients, some facing life-threatening illnesses, to cross into Israel for treatment.

It is impossible to know how many of those might have been successfully treated and how many might have died regardless of access to better health care, said Tony Laurance, acting head of the World Health Organization's offices in the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

He called rising numbers of Palestinians denied access to medical care "a grave concern."

A spokesman for the Israeli Defense Ministry said all Palestinians seeking permits to enter Israel for any reason are approved or denied based on security checks.

"In our mind, we're facilitating 100 percent solutions for all the medical needs," said Maj. Peter Lerner of the ministry office that coordinates government activities in the Palestinian territories.

Gazans' health disputed World experts say Israel 's tight border keeps sick from care

In the first six months of this year, 3,520 Palestinians were granted permission to enter Israel for medical treatment, or nearly 57 percent of those who applied. Before Hamas seized control of Gaza in June last year, that figure was near 90 percent, according to the WHO.

"The security threat and the assessment of the security problems from Gaza, they dictate exactly who can come and go," Lerner said. "And the threat is serious and tangible. It's not in theory."

Last year, two Palestinian women who requested entry with forged medical documents told Israeli interrogators that they planned to blow themselves up at hospitals in Tel Aviv and Netanya, Lerner said.

About 800 Palestinians with a variety of illnesses and diseases --- including cancer, heart disease and complications from bullet wounds and other trauma that cannot be properly treated in the Gaza Strip --- have been referred to hospitals in Israel, Jordan or the West Bank but have not been able to reach them, according to Palestinian health officials and outside aid groups. Some have been waiting more than a year.

Those who can't leave face even more difficulty receiving adequate care in Gaza because of a walkout by medical staff at state-run hospitals and clinics throughout the territory. The Medical Workers' Union, dominated by moderate Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah movement, called the strike about two weeks ago to demand that Hamas reinstate workers Fatah says have been fired for their political loyalties. The union said Hamas police have forced some essential staff to report to duty under the threat of arrest.

With almost half of Gaza's thousands of medical personnel on strike, working doctors and nurses are putting in 12-hour to 24-hour shifts and running on skeleton staff. Many clinics are closed.

Jamal Doghmosh, 54, who suffers from heart disease, was allowed to exit Gaza in August last year to be treated in Tel Aviv for an irregular heartbeat. Upon being discharged from the hospital, doctors recommended further treatment, but Israeli authorities have repeatedly rejected his requests to re-enter Israel. On Monday, Israel rejected his second request to travel to Jordan for treatment.

Lerner said he wasn't familiar with Doghmosh's case.

Doghmosh is awaiting surgery to place a new pacemaker that cannot be performed in Gaza. He complains of shortness of breath and says he has trouble walking up and down the stairs at his home.

Yaakov Henkin, a senior cardiologist at Soroka Hospital in Beersheva, Israel, wrote in an assessment included in Doghmosh's requests to enter Israel that "denial of this treatment may endanger his life."

In a security interview at the Erez crossing terminal, Doghmosh's interrogators asked him to explain the fact that his son works in the Hamas-run police force in Gaza City, he said. He said his son was not a member of Hamas, but merely an employee.

"What else can anybody do?" he said, referring to the scant job opportunities in the impoverished territory.

The interrogators further asked Doghmosh to provide information on Hamas operatives plotting attacks on Israel, he said. He denied having any connection to militants and refused to cooperate.

"I told them I am a sick man," he said. "I will be suspected, someone my age collecting information. ... You are asking me to commit suicide."

In a report, "Holding Health to Ransom," issued last month, Physicians for Human Rights-Israel found more than 30 cases of Israeli security agents trying to coerce Palestinians into working as collaborators as a condition for permission to exit Gaza for medical treatment. Physicians for Human Rights-Israel provides health care for Palestinians and advocates on their behalf.

Mark Regev, a spokesman for Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, who also speaks for the Israel Security Agency, disputed the report's conclusions.

Gazans' health disputed World experts say Israel 's tight border keeps sick from care

"In no way whatsoever is working for Israeli intelligence a prerequisite for being allowed to come into Israel for medical treatment," Regev said.

But when asked directly, he did not confirm or deny that officials ask patients to provide information unrelated to their own security background check.

The Associated Press contributed to this article.

Graphic

Photo: Jamal Doghmosh, 54, of Gaza City has been denied entry into Israel for surgery unavailable in Gaza./ImageData* ImageData*

Photo: KHALIL HAMRA / Associated PressA Palestinian woman sits by a hospital bed at the Shifa hospital in Gaza City on Wednesday. The World Health Organization says dozens of Palestinians requiring medical treatment unavailable in Gaza died after being denied entry into Israel for care./ImageData*

Load-Date: September 7, 2008

TVs by the truckload: An air of profiteering at Gaza border

The International Herald Tribune

January 25, 2008 Friday

Copyright 2008 International Herald Tribune All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 3

Length: 615 words

Byline: Steven Erlanger - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: RAFAH, Egypt

Body

Tens of thousands more Palestinians flooded across the breached border crossing from Gaza into northern Egypt on Thursday, and Egyptian merchants greeted them with even more and heavier goods than on Wednesday, when **Hamas** militants blew up part of the barrier.

Credible numbers were hard to come by, but estimates ranged from more than 100,000 to 400,000 - vast, given Gaza's total population of 1.5 million. Whatever the number, the ad hoc border bazaar and the crowds jamming it seemed to have at least tripled in size, and took on less of an air of holiday and more of commercial profiteering.

Egyptian soldiers and police officers were present in greater numbers, and, unlike Wednesday, there were Palestinians on Thursday with the beards and weapons of **Hamas** fighters. All watched but did not hinder the furious trading, which expanded from carloads and cartloads of medicine, food, cigarettes and livestock to include truckloads of cement, television sets, camels, packing boxes of cigarettes, fuel for private cars and many other goods. Some **women** from Gaza, clad in black niqab head scarves that allow only a slit for eyes, clasped giant bags of potato chips.

Exchange rates and prices were up, as were the amounts being purchased, with clear intent to resell in Gaza. So intense was the trading that even some Palestinians grew worried that there would be a backlash from impoverished Egyptians of Rafah.

"This is not so good for the Palestinian people," said Ahmed Shawa, a Gaza engineer who crossed into Rafah on Thursday. "Prices are becoming very high, while people in Egyptian Rafah don't have bread. If I go to your country and buy everything and you don't have bread, you're going to hate me."

The destruction of the fence was an act of defiance by **Hamas** against Israel, which closed all the Gaza border crossings a week ago after a barrage of missiles from Gaza into Israel, as well as against Egypt, which sealed the border to keep out Palestinians.

But Hosni Mubarak, the Egyptian president, made it clear that he would allow Gazans to cross unimpeded. On Wednesday, he said, he told the border forces, "Let them come in to eat and buy food, then they go back, as long as they are not carrying weapons." It was unclear how long the traffic would be allowed, but it served purposes beyond restocking Gaza. On the Egyptian side, the opening eased domestic and Arab pressure, while on the Israeli side, it offered a possible route to separation from Gaza.

TVs by the truckload: An air of profiteering at Gaza border

The deputy defense minister of Israel, Matan Vilnai, said Thursday that Israel wanted to wash its hands of Gaza by ceding the supply of electricity, water and medicine to others. "We need to understand that when Gaza is open to the other side, we lose responsibility for it," he said. "So we want to disconnect from it."

Israeli officials have suggested that the border opening to Egypt might allow Israel to lock the door to a **Hamas**-run Gaza and let the Egyptians handle the poverty, militancy and other problems there.

But external pressure for an improvement in the situation for Gaza continued Thursday. Mahmoud Zahar, a senior **Hamas** official in Gaza, refused during an interview Wednesday to take direct responsibility for ordering the Egyptian border to be opened. But he said: "We are creating facts. We have to try to change the situation, and now we await the results."

With the crossings to Israel closed and minimal goods coming in, Zahar said: "Rafah is our only lung. If Rafah remains shut, it means our acceptance to be strangled, our acceptance to die. We warned the Egyptians yesterday that people are hungry and dying." Sometimes, he said, it was necessary to create a crisis to settle another one.

Load-Date: January 29, 2008

End of Document

Israelis bury eight terror victims; On high alert Gunman transfixed by Gaza violence, his family says

The Gazette (Montreal)

March 8, 2008 Saturday

Final Edition

Copyright 2008 The Gazette, a division of CanWest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A3

Length: 865 words

Byline: ISABEL KERSHNER AND STEVEN ERLANGER, New York Times

Dateline: KFAR ETZION, West Bank

Body

They carried the body of Avraham David Moses, 16 years old, on a stretcher down the slope of the vibrant green cemetery here, shaded by tall pines, overlooking a valley, in utter silence.

The boy was wrapped in a black-and-white prayer shawl, and as the pallbearers slipped him into the grave yesterday, the long silence was broken by quiet weeping and occasional sobs.

Men recited psalms, and Naftali Moses, the boy's father, his garments torn in grief, said the Hebrew prayer for the dead, his voice breaking, before moving back up the slope to the parking lot, through a sombre line of mourners, men on one side, **women** on the other.

The boy's stepmother, Leah, described Avraham David, as he was known, as "a really good kid - he would come home and unload the dishwasher without being asked." And if the adults started gossiping at the table, she said, he would start reciting mishnayot, or oral teachings. "He was just an incredible blessing," she said.

Avraham David Moses was one of eight seminary students killed Thursday night in an act of terrorism, shot by a Palestinian from East Jerusalem who sprayed them with hundreds of rounds of automatic weapons fire before being killed himself. Ten other students were wounded, three of them seriously.

A 14-year-old Israeli-Canadian youth is one of the three students in critical condition. "We've discovered that one of the three critically wounded in hospital has Canadian citizenship, a kid that was born in Israel, but one of his parents is Canadian and he has dual citizenship. His family is from Toronto," Alan Baker, the Israeli ambassador to Canada, confirmed yesterday.

Nadav Samuels was born and raised in a suburb of Jerusalem. His father, Noah Samuels, is from Toronto, but moved to Israel with his British wife before their children were born.

It was unclear what group, if any, was responsible for the massacre. On Thursday, **Hamas**, the radical Islamic movement, praised the deed but did not claim responsibility for it. Yesterday, an anonymous caller claiming to be from **Hamas** took responsibility in a phone call to Reuters and said details would come later. But Fawzi Barhoum, a

Israelis bury eight terror victims; On high alert Gunman transfixed by Gaza violence, his family says

senior **Hamas** spokesperson in Gaza, said no claim of responsibility was official unless made in a written statement from the military wing of **Hamas**.

The gunman's family said he was intensely religious, but did not belong to any militant group.

Mark Regev, spokesperson for Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, said the government would act after proper investigation and deliberation, and he condemned those, like **Hamas**, who celebrated the killings with parades in Gaza. "That **Hamas** calls this a heroic act, and praises it, this exposes them for what they are," he said.

The young men died as they were studying in the library of the Mercaz Harav yeshiva in Jerusalem, a major centre for the religious Zionist movement that supports Israeli settlement in the West Bank.

The dead, most of them 15 or 16, with the oldest 26, were all buried yesterday, in separate funerals drawing thousands of weeping and angry Israelis.

The funeral processions began together earlier yesterday at the yeshiva itself, where thousands of people - many of them in the traditional black clothing of the ultra-Orthodox or wearing knitted skullcaps, characteristic of more modern religious Zionists - lined the streets.

In the large courtyard, where the blood had been washed away, eight benches were marked with the names of the dead, and one wall of the yeshiva was covered with large posters listing them.

As each body was brought forward to rest on its bench, the crowds outside the gates parted to let the pallbearers pass, with cries and screams from relatives and friends.

In every corner, students hugged and cried, and many went to see and touch the closed library door, shattered with bullets.

The ceremony ended as it began, with the procession of bodies taken out of the gates, one by one, for their separate burials.

The Israeli government declared a high alert yesterday and barred Palestinians in the West Bank from travelling to Jerusalem over the weekend, deploying thousands of police officers and limiting the numbers of Muslims allowed to pray at the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.

The killer, identified as Ala Abu Dhaim, 25, was a Palestinian with permanent residency in Jerusalem.

His home in the Jebel Mukaber neighbourhood of East Jerusalem was adorned yesterday with the flags of **Hamas**, Islamic Jihad and Hezbollah. According to his family, he worked as a driver for a private company that had done deliveries to the yeshiva, but the police would not confirm that.

His family said that although he had been intensely religious, he was not a member of any militant group, and he had planned on marrying this summer. But he had been transfixed by the bloodshed in Gaza, where 126 Palestinians died from Wednesday through Monday, his sister, Iman Abu Dhaim, told the Associated Press. "He told me he was not able to sleep because of the grief," she said.

The Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah, condemned the killing of civilians by both sides, and Israel said it would continue peace talks with him. Abbas had suspended such talks after the deaths in Gaza.

Graphic

Israelis bury eight terror victims; On high alert Gunman transfixed by Gaza violence, his family says

Colour Photo: BRIAN HENDLER GETTY IMAGES; A family member ritually tears his shirt as a sign of mourning during the funeral service for eight religious Jewish students at the Mercaz Harav yeshiva in Jerusalem. The funeral processions began at the yeshiva itself, where thousands of people lined the streets. ;

Colour Photo: REUTERS; Israelis mourn at burial service for Avraham David Moses, 16, in Kfar Etzion. ;

Load-Date: May 29, 2008

End of Document

Abbas halts peace talks as Israeli attacks kill 70

Financial Times (London, England)

March 3, 2008 Monday

London Edition 1

Copyright 2008 The Financial Times Limited

Section: WORLD NEWS; Pg. 7

Length: 486 words

Byline: By TOBIAS BUCK and HARVEY MORRIS

Body

At least 70 Palestinians were killed and hundreds wounded in the Gaza Strip over the weekend, as Israel continued its biggest offensive in years against **Hamas**, the Islamist group that controls the territory.

Two Israeli soldiers were killed in gun battles with Palestinian militants on Saturday, confirming Israeli concerns over the risk of launching a full-scale ground offensive or invasion. **Hamas** and other militant groups also kept up the intense bombardment of nearby Israeli towns with rockets and mortars.

The bloody escalation spread yesterday to Palestinian cities in the West Bank, as thousands protested against the attacks on Gaza and repeatedly clashed with Israeli forces. A 14-year-old boy was shot dead in the West Bank city of Hebron, after demonstrators hurled stones at Israeli troops.

Shops and offices, including the Palestinian Stock Exchange, were closed yesterday in a show of mourning and to protest against the attacks.

Responding to mounting public pressure, Mahmoud Abbas, the president of the Palestinian Authority, suspended peace talks with Israel. The move is a blow to the US-sponsored effort to reach a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians by the end of the year, though Israeli officials voiced hope the break-down would be only temporary.

Ahmed Qureia, the chief Palestinian negotiator, denounced Israel's attacks as "a massacre of civilians, **women** and children, a collective killing", adding that "what the Israelis are doing doesn't lend the peace process any credibility".

The Israeli incursions are aimed primarily at stopping **Hamas** and other militant groups from firing rockets on Israeli towns close to the strip. The barrage had been largely confined to the small town of Sderot until last week but has been extended to Ashkelon, a city of 110,000 that lacks the shelters and reinforcements to withstand rocket attacks.

The targeting of Ashkelon has reinforced Israeli perceptions that it has to deal decisively with the threat posed by **Hamas**, regarded as a terrorist organisation by Israel, the US and most European countries, but seen by many Palestinians as a resistance movement. But Israel faces mounting international pressure over its attacks on Gaza and, in particular, the high rate of civilian casualties. Several children were among the victims of the weekend fighting, including a 21-month-old girl.

Abbas halts peace talks as Israeli attacks kill 70

Both the European Union and the United Nations criticised what they said was Israel's use of "disproportionate" and "excessive" force, drawing an immediate rebuke from Ehud Olmert, Israel's prime minister. "Israel is defending its residents . . . and with all due respect, nothing will prevent it from protecting them - and no one has the right to preach to us over actions that are in self-defence," he said.

Egypt yesterday opened its previously sealed border with Gaza to allow the evacuation of Palestinians wounded in the fighting.

www.ft.com/arabisrael

Load-Date: March 2, 2008

End of Document

Facing criticism, Israel ships a week's fuel to Gaza

Yukon News (Yukon)

January 25, 2008 Friday

Final Edition

Copyright 2008 Yukon News All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 20

Length: 905 words

Byline: Steven Erlanger, New York Times Service

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

After widespread criticism of its decision to cut off supplies of industrial diesel oil required to run a power station that serves Gaza City and its hospitals, Israel resumed fuel shipments on Tuesday on what it said would be a temporary basis.

The European Union, which pays for the fuel, called the cutoff "collective punishment," but Israeli officials said they were simply trying to convince Gazans of the need to stop militants from firing rockets into Israeli towns and farms.

On Tuesday, Israel pumped in about 750,000 litres of industrial diesel, part of the 2.2 million litres it said it would provide for one week only to Gaza's main power station, which had shut down after its tanks ran dry.

On Tuesday afternoon, the plant started one of its three turbines, bringing power to parts of Gaza City that had been dark or running on generators. Rafiq Maliha, the project manager for the station, said the 2.2 million litres would be enough to produce up to 55 megawatts of electricity from the plant, which has a capacity of 80 megawatts with normal fuel supplies.

"But what do I do next week?" Maliha asked. "I have no reserves, so how can I plan? This power plant has nothing to do with the conflict and should be outside it."

He and Suheil Sheik, manager of the Gaza Electrical Distribution Co., also criticized Israel for not allowing the regular importation of spare parts for a system that is rapidly wearing down.

Sheik said it was impossible for his company to separate electrical power to hospitals from the surrounding neighbourhood. Even before the fuel halt, he said, there were rolling power cuts in Gaza of six hours or more.

Israel provides more than 60 per cent of Gaza's power directly, and the Israeli Supreme Court has prevented the state from cutting that supply.

But the court did not prevent Israel from cutting off fuel supplies, including gasoline. Egypt provides seven per cent of Gaza's power, but only to the south.

The power station, a third owned by an American company, was bombed by Israel in the summer of 2006 after the capture of an Israeli soldier by Hamas.

Facing criticism, Israel ships a week's fuel to Gaza

Israel also provided 200,000 liters of regular diesel, with another 250,000 liters expected Wednesday; that fuel will be used for generators, especially at water-pumping plants, sewage-treatment facilities and hospitals like Al Shifa, Gaza's largest, which functioned Tuesday on diesel provided to it on Monday by the World Bank, the Red Cross and the United Nations.

Dr. Raed al-Arini said the hospital used 5,000 litres a day to run two generators to power dialysis machines, incubators with 30 children, the intensive-care unit of 15 patients and operating rooms.

"It was a miracle when we got 10,000 liters yesterday," he said. "Otherwise we would have had to shut down at noon."

But Gaza's oil companies refused Tuesday to deliver the diesel provided by Israel, saying that there was no fuel for them to operate their stations, which are empty. Mahmoud Khozendar, who helps run a family firm and leads the dealers' association, said that there was also little gasoline in Gaza.

Israel has refused to supply gasoline, with Prime Minister Ehud Olmert telling his Kadima Party on Monday, "As far as I'm concerned, the residents of Gaza can walk if they don't have gasoline for their cars, because they have a murderous terrorist regime that won't let people in the south of Israel live in safety."

Israeli officials have made it clear, as one senior official said, that as long as rockets are hitting Israel, "the people of Gaza will be uncomfortable and know that life is not normal."

Israel, however, will not allow a "humanitarian crisis," Olmert has said.

About 13 Qassam rockets landed in Israel on Tuesday, the Israeli army said, but did no damage.

Israeli officials said they were also worried about pressure on them to reopen the goods crossings into Gaza, especially because of American support for a plan for the Palestinian government in the West Bank to run the crossings. Israel says the **Hamas** government in Gaza would control the crossings regardless.

To drive home their desire to open the Rafah crossing into Egypt, which has also been shut since **Hamas** took over Gaza in a short war with Fatah last June, **Hamas** supporters organized a protest in Rafah on Tuesday.

Dozens of protesters, many of them **women**, tried to push through the crossing into Egypt in two waves and were forced back by Egyptian police officers and soldiers, sometimes using a water cannon and shooting into the air.

One Egyptian policeman was reported to have been shot and seriously wounded in the melee and nine people were hurt, mostly by stones.

Earlier, about 50 **women** broke through to the Egyptian side, but were sent back to Gaza. Egyptian security sources told Reuters that **Hamas** security men had crossed into Egypt with Egypt's consent to take several hundred Palestinians back to Gaza.

Hamas has demanded that Egypt open Rafah for people and goods, but the Egyptians have largely refused. Israel and the United States have urged Cairo not to make life easier on **Hamas** by opening Rafah, and both countries have criticized Egypt for not doing enough to stop the smuggling of arms, munitions and goods through tunnels into Gaza.

John Ging, the Gaza director of operations for the UN Relief and Works Agency, said the Israelis deserved protection from rocket attacks but called the Israeli cutoff of goods and fuel "collective punishment" and "counterproductive."

Graphic

Facing criticism, Israel ships a week's fuel to Gaza

Photo: Shawn Baldwin, The New York Times; BLACKOUT... Palestinians warm themselves by a fire during a power outage in Gaza City on Tuesday. ;

Load-Date: January 28, 2008

End of Document

Ain al-Hilweh children protest attacks on Gaza

The Daily Star (Lebanon)

March 6, 2008 Thursday

Copyright 2008 The Daily Star - The Daily Star FZ LLC. Provided by Syndigate.info, an Albawaba.com company All Rights Reserved

THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Length: 333 words

Byline: Mohammed Zaatari

Body

Hundreds of children from across Lebanon took part in a protest at the Ain al-Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp on Wednesday against Israel's deadly military attacks in Gaza. Israel's "incursions" into **Hamas**-controlled Gaza have killed more than 120 Palestinians in the past week, over half of whom were civilians.

SIDON: Hundreds of children from across Lebanon took part in a protest at the Ain al-Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp on Wednesday against Israel's deadly military attacks in Gaza.

Israel's "incursions" into **Hamas**-controlled Gaza have killed more than 120 Palestinians in the past week, over half of whom were civilians. Poor governance, the increasing isolation of **Hamas** and Palestinian in-fighting have worsened the humanitarian situation of Palestinians in Gaza, and this has set off a series of protests in Lebanon and elsewhere.

The protest was marked by singing of revolutionary songs and poetry recitals praising the glory of Palestine, but stronger messages were also sent to Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.

"We have united as children, now take us as an example and symbol," said one placard. One sign directed toward feuding Palestinian factions said: "We ask of you unity, which is the key to victory."

Many other banners "from the children of Ain al-Hilweh to the children of Gaza" expressed frustration with Palestinian wrangling and stated defiance of the Israeli presence in Gaza.

Concluding remarks were given at the end of the protests by Amal Shahabi, an academic counselor from the Hoda Shaalan Kindergarten. She laid responsibility at the feet of various Arab states, the Arab League and several local and international agencies for failing to immediately halt the "massacre of Palestinians" occurring in Gaza.

"The **women**, children and elderly of Gaza are being targeted, are witnessing the destruction of their houses and are being targeted at home, at school and at hospitals," Shahabi added. "No massacres will deter the Palestinians from asserting our right of return."

Load-Date: October 22, 2008

Ain al-Hilweh children protest attacks on Gaza

End of Document

Israeli troops kill 4 militants

Deseret Morning News (Salt Lake City)

March 13, 2008 Thursday

Copyright 2008 The Deseret News Publishing Co.

Length: 811 words

Byline: Isabel Kershner and Taghreed el-Khodary New York Times News Service

Body

JERUSALEM -- Israeli undercover troops killed four Palestinian militants in the West Bank city of Bethlehem on Wednesday, shattering a five-day lull in violence and threatening Egyptian efforts to mediate a cease-fire.

Among the four were two men who had been wanted by the Israelis for years: Muhammad Shehada of Islamic Jihad and Ahmed Balboul, a senior figure in Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades, a militia affiliated with Fatah, the mainstream party headed by President Mahmoud Abbas.

The four were killed while riding together in a car in central Bethlehem, Israeli army and Palestinian officials said. The army officials said that three rifles were found in the car, and that all four had been involved in attacks against Israeli civilians. Shehada, they said, headed a network that was in direct contact with Islamic Jihad headquarters in Syria.

In an interview with The New York Times last July, Balboul said that he was hoping to work out an amnesty deal for himself with the Israelis. "Our intentions are turned toward negotiation," he said, having come to a meeting in Bethlehem's Manger Square unarmed.

A Fatah spokesman in Bethlehem, Hassan Abed Rabbo, said Wednesday that the Palestinian Authority had requested amnesty for Balboul but that the request was refused. Abed Rabbo said that as an Aksa Brigades leader, Balboul was not involved in any joint activity with Islamic Jihad.

The other two in the car belonged to Islamic Jihad, according to Israeli army and Palestinian officials.

The raid came hours after Ismail Haniya, the leader of the **Hamas** administration in Gaza, laid out the conditions for a temporary cease-fire with Israel, including a cessation of all Israeli military operations in the West Bank.

The terms were the same as those offered by other Palestinian officials and Egyptian mediators in recent days: an Israeli commitment to a "comprehensive" truce including an end to "all acts of aggression" against the Palestinians; an end to "assassinations, killings and raids"; and the lifting of the months-long embargo on the Gaza Strip by reopening the border crossings.

Hamas, the Islamic militant group, controls Gaza only. But Haniya said the truce should also apply to the West Bank, where the Israeli army and the forces of Abbas hold sway. "We will not abandon you, our people in the West Bank," Haniya said, adding, "aggression against you is aggression against us."

An Islamic Jihad leader in Gaza, Khaled al-Batsh, said in an interview this week that his group had accepted an Egyptian request for a temporary calm in order to create conditions for a broader truce involving the West Bank and

Israeli troops kill 4 militants

Gaza. He said the success of the lull was "in the hands of the Israelis. If they attack," he said, the military wing of Islamic Jihad "will have to respond."

Speaking before thousands of students, male and female, at the Islamic University in Gaza City on Wednesday, Haniya began by calling the recent round of hostilities between Israel and the militants in Gaza a "heroic" episode. With barrages of Qassam rockets being fired at Israel from Gaza in late February and early March, Israel mounted an air and ground campaign in Gaza that left more than 120 Palestinians, including many civilians, dead. Two Israeli soldiers died in the fighting, and one Israeli civilian was killed by the rocket fire.

Haniya said that the Israeli military assault had "failed" and that Israel had found itself "confronting a generation" that is "in love with martyrdom" as the Israelis are "in love with life."

Said Siam, a senior Hamas official in Gaza, was by Haniya's side. Siam oversees the Hamas forces in Gaza and the military wing, known as the Qassam Brigades, and his presence was meant to indicate that all branches of Hamas would support a truce.

A senior Israeli Defense Ministry official was in Cairo, Egypt, for talks on Sunday, but Israeli leaders have denied engaging in negotiations for a truce. They said that if Hamas stopped all the rocket fire and if the weapons smuggling into Gaza ceased, Israel would have no reason to attack, but they insisted that the army retained full freedom to act there.

There has been a marked decline in Palestinian rocket fire and no Israeli army strikes in Gaza since the weekend. One mortar shell was fired from Gaza on Wednesday, an Army spokeswoman said.

Israel has refused Palestinian demands to stop operations in the West Bank in the past. Early Wednesday, another senior militant from Islamic Jihad was killed by Israeli fire in a village near Jenin, in the northern West Bank. Military officials said that forces had come to arrest the man, Saleh Amar Saleh Karkoor, 26, but that he refused to surrender. They said that Karkoor was jailed in Israel from 2002 to 2006 after confessing, among other things, to recruiting suicide bombers. Islamic Jihad issued a statement after the dawn attack threatening revenge.

Load-Date: March 13, 2008

The Palestinian gambit

The Jerusalem Post

July 11, 2008 Friday

Copyright 2008 The Jerusalem Post All Rights Reserved

Section: BOOKS; Pg. 29

Length: 466 words

Byline: JONATHAN SCHANZER

Highlight: The writer, a former US Treasury intelligence analyst, is director of policy for the Jewish Policy Center and author of the forthcoming book *Hamas* vs Fatah: The Struggle for Palestine (Palgrave, November 2008).

Body

Palestinians Between Nationalism and Islam By Raphael Israeli Vallentine Mitchell 320 pages; \$35

The Palestinians are at war. But their war is not only against Israel. The two most prominent Palestinian factions, *Hamas* and Fatah, continue to battle on the streets of Gaza and the West Bank.

But the war does not end there. There is also a war for the soul of the Palestinian people, notes the prolific Hebrew University Prof. Raphael Israeli, in his newest book, *Palestinians Between Nationalism and Islam*.

Unfortunately, the Islamists are winning. They are exhorted to violence by the bulk of the Muslim world, which is steeped in the muck of radical Islam and the ossified ideas of authoritarian rule.

Only very slowly have moderates emerged from the shadows in Tunisia, Qatar, Iran and elsewhere to challenge this culture of violence. In some cases, these moderates are imprisoned for their courage. The courage of outspoken Palestinians, such as Nabil Amr, can result in life-threatening injury (he was shot by gunmen in Ramallah in 2004), or even death (many Palestinians have been summarily killed on charges of "collaboration").

The result is that the violence continues. "Islamikaze" violence, as Israeli terms it, is a virus that spreads quickly throughout the Muslim world. However, criticism is slowly seeping in, and challenging a system of ideas that the West hopes is doomed to fail.

Drawing from previously published essays, Israeli's book explores the dueling rhetoric between *Hamas* and Fatah leaders in the Palestinian territories. Even before the collapse of the Oslo peace process, the language of Islamism had become a tool to garner support on the Palestinian street. Indeed, Yasser Arafat found that even while he negotiated peace with Israel, he needed to wield the vitriolic language of his Islamist foes as a means to maintain legitimacy in a violent culture, thus blurring the line between state and religion in the still-forming Palestinian identity. Even Palestinian women have wielded this rhetoric in their bid to play a role in the "liberation of Palestine."

The author, a noted expert on the disaffected yet demographically significant Arab Israelis, observes that this population of some one million is undergoing a similar process. Their citizenship in the Jewish state makes their struggle even more complex.

Israeli explores several ways in which the Palestinians have failed to advance toward statehood, and still other roads this embattled people may yet take.

The Palestinian gambit

Notably, he states that "exactly as there are many Arab settlements within Israel proper, there is no reason that Jewish settlements cannot exist within the densely populated Arab areas." Such compromises will not be made, however, so long as the intransigent language of Islamism dominates the public square.

Graphic

Photo: Israeli's book examines the dueling rhetoric between **Hamas** and Fatah leaders. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

End of Document

Bitter complaints from a virtual dead duck. Why Condi's talking tough about construction in east Jerusalem - and why we should (and shouldn't) care

The Jerusalem Post
June 16, 2008 Monday

Copyright 2008 The Jerusalem Post All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 3

Length: 1140 words

Byline: CALEV BEN-DAVID

Highlight: Analyze this...

Body

Vice presidential rumors swirled around US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Special Envoy for Mideast Security, General James Jones, as they met to confer last week.

Several media outlets pegged James as a one of the contenders being weighed by Barack Obama's vice president search team, despite the fact that Jones is virtually unknown to the general public. The ex-Marines Corps and NATO forces commander is apparently seen as the type of seasoned military figure that can bring needed experience and gravitas in security affairs to the Democrats in their electoral contest against celebrated war hero, John McCain.

Rice's name has also been brought up in speculation over who will fill the Republican VP slot, and as a relatively young, **female** African-American, she clearly also brings qualities that would help balance the GOP's ticket. But the musing has not been grounded in fact, and is unlikely to ever be given McCain's efforts to distance himself from the manner in which the Bush administration has handled some major foreign policy issues.

Rice herself has spoken on occasion of her desire to return to the academic life she previously enjoyed as a professor and provost at Stanford University before joining the Bush administration. If so - if her day as an influential Washington player is virtually done with - that makes her in political terms not just a lame duck serving out the final half-year of her time in office, but a virtual dead duck in the influence she can wield over US policy toward Israel beyond that period.

Perhaps that accounts for the sanguine reaction here to Rice's latest public complaints over the government's plans, announced last week, to build 1,300 new homes over the 1967 border in the east Jerusalem neighborhood of Ramat Shlomo. Rice commented to journalists that, "Unfortunately, there have been a few [building plans], whether I'm coming or not" - and with a reportedly annoyed tone added, "Look, it's a problem, and it's a problem that we're going to address with the Israelis." This is the type of reaction that at other times would have generated such headlines as "New crisis brewing in US-Israel relations." But not now, and not when the comments are coming from Rice.

She is not the first secretary of state, even one from a US administration in its final year in power, that suddenly turned tough on Israel in regards to settlement plans or other matters. But Henry Kissinger and James Baker, to name two, had the advantage of neither the Israelis, nor themselves, knowing at the time that they were, in fact, lame ducks.

Bitter complaints from a virtual dead duck. Why Condi's talking tough about construction in east Jerusalem - and why we should (and shouldn't) care

It also helped that they had the full backing and interest of their bosses when they tried to lay down the law on Jerusalem. But George W. Bush has never strongly echoed Rice's rhetoric on the settlement construction, especially in regards Jerusalem.

When asked specifically about this issue at his press conference in Paris on Saturday with French president Nicholas Sarkozy, Bush responded: "The Palestinians are discouraged by the settlement activity; all the more reason to get the borders clearly defined as quickly as possible" - a very different reaction from Rice's clear condemnation of the building.

Still, the rhetoric of any US secretary of state has diplomatic weight, even from one with both feet halfway out the door. Rice set the bar in confronting Israel about its building over the Green Line while Baker went much further in linking the issue directly to US financial aid to Israel. Her specific disapproval of construction that is still within the Jerusalem municipal borders, and not within an entirely new neighborhood such as with Har Homa a decade ago, is a development with some worrying precedents for this government (and its successors).

As former US Middle East envoy Aaron David Miller has written: "It was Baker who told [George H. W.] Bush he'd 'f--ed up' when he talked about opposing settlements in East Jerusalem and thereby gave [former prime minister Yitzhak] Shamir more ammo in internal Israeli deliberations to defeat the American [peace] initiative in 1990."

Rice is clearly speaking out against the latest building plans in east Jerusalem in order to placate the Palestinians, and keep the current negotiations on track. But why has she become so focused and determined on the Israeli-Palestinian issue in her last months in office, so much so that she feels that even this step is necessary?

A possible answer is offered in an essay by Rice that appears in the latest issue of the periodical Foreign Affairs, titled "Rethinking the National Interest: American Realism for a New World."

Clearly intended as a legacy-mending personal manifesto, summing up and justifying her years as a senior architect of US foreign policy, it includes this telling passage in the section dealing with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: "When Hamas won elections in the Palestinian territories, it was widely seen as a failure of policy. But although this victory most certainly complicated affairs in the broader Middle East, in another way it helped to clarify matters. Hamas had significant power before those elections - largely the power to destroy. After the elections, Hamas also had to face real accountability for its use of power for the first time. This has enabled the Palestinian people, and the international community, to hold Hamas to the same basic standards of responsibility to which all governments should be held. Through its continued unwillingness to behave like a responsible regime rather than a violent movement, Hamas has demonstrated that it is wholly incapable of governing... If there can be a legitimate, effective, and democratic alternative to Hamas (something that Fatah has not yet been), people will likely choose it. This would especially be true if the Palestinians could live a normal life within their own state."

So there it is. The decision by the Bush administration to pressure Israel into allowing Hamas to participate in the 2006 elections was not a "failure of policy," because it revealed that the radical Islamic group is "wholly incapable of governing," and the Palestinians therefore will surely "choose" otherwise once they have their own state.

Except of course, according to most reports, a year after Hamas has taken power in Gaza it is governing just fine - not as a democracy, of course, but as a ruthless Islamic dictatorship with no intention of ever giving the people under its rule the freedom to choose differently.

So whatever the legacy of the policies she promoted elsewhere, it is likely too late for Rice to reverse the consequences of those policies she promoted in this corner of the world. Nor, in pursuit of that aim, to prevent Israel from pursuing the same construction policy in Jerusalem that has guided all its governments, including this one, since 1967.

Bitter complaints from a virtual dead duck. Why Condi's talking tough about construction in east Jerusalem - and why we should (and shouldn't) care

Graphic

Photo: US SECRETARY of State Condoleezza Rice is greeted by PA Prime Minister Salaam Fayad at his Ramallah office yesterday. (Credit: Alaa Badarneh/AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

End of Document

Leading article: Gaza: Punishing the people

The Guardian - Final Edition

March 3, 2008 Monday

Copyright 2008 Guardian Newspapers Limited All Rights Reserved

theguardian

Section: GUARDIAN LEADER PAGES; Pg. 32

Length: 655 words

Body

Four months have passed since the peace meeting in Annapolis, and the smouldering fire of the Israel-Palestine conflict has once again combusted. Up to 70 Palestinians have died in two days of fighting, after Israel launched an offensive - involving ground troops, air strikes and shelling - to stop the firing of Qassam rockets. Half the casualties of Israel's onslaught are civilian, including women, children and a 21-month-old baby. Yesterday Ehud Barak, Israel's defence minister, said an even broader offensive was on the cards to crush the rocket squads - and maybe even bring down Hamas's rule.

Already critically weakened in the eyes of his people for his policy of engagement with Israel, the Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas suspended peace negotiations yesterday, but stopped short of declaring the process dead. He declared Sunday a day of mourning and gave blood at his West Bank office. These gestures cut little ice even in the West Bank where Fatah's writ still runs. A violent demonstration broke out in Hebron, where a 14-year-old Palestinian was shot dead by Israeli soldiers. This raises the real possibility of anti-Fatah unrest spreading beyond Gaza.

It has been said often enough that a peace settlement is impossible while Gaza is being ignored. But if any sequence of events demonstrated the utter futility of Israel, backed by the international community, trying to negotiate over the heads of half of the Palestinian people, it is what has happened in the last 48 hours. Things were bad enough already. The independent Palestinian parliamentarian Mustafa Barghouti had counted 177 Palestinian deaths since Annapolis. Most were in Gaza, but there were also now more checkpoints in the West Bank than there had been before the November conference. While 788 Palestinians had been set free in a confidence-building measure, 1,152 had been newly arrested. In the same period there were four Israeli deaths.

Israel acknowledges military action on its own will not stop the rockets. For that you need a ceasefire, and for that you need negotiations with Hamas, which the Israeli leadership (though not the people) refuses to contemplate. So Israel is left with only military options - reoccupying parts of Gaza or assassinating Hamas's leaders. Both have been tried in the past, and both have failed.

Hamas, on the other hand, is gaining in at least one of its objectives: to be considered the lead movement of the Palestinian resistance. It still has no answer to the economic blockade. It may have acquired longer-range missiles but it is a long way from establishing with its enemy the balance of deterrence which Hizbullah has established in South Lebanon.

Leading article: Gaza : Punishing the people

The unstoppable cycle of assassinations and Qassams constitutes a form of collective punishment in which civilians on both sides bear the brunt. Israeli suggestions that targeted assassinations would reduce the number of civilians killed have been exposed as threadbare. A major military operation is leading to more civilian deaths, not fewer. Haim Ramon, the vice-premier, was quite straightforward about it. He said yesterday: "If the Palestinians in Gaza are paying the price we are very sorry, but it is the responsibility of the leaders they elected." But there is another casualty which even he should care about: the two-state solution. It is already withering in the minds of the diaspora, and it could soon die inside Palestine itself. Israel is losing the Palestinian generation that is ready to accept it. The younger generation are moving towards a one-state solution. Once that is the demand, security fence or no security fence, the conflict will flare into civil war. Israel does not have a clear military strategy in Gaza. No matter how many ***Hamas*** leaders are killed, it will never be able to wipe the Strip clean of the movement. But Israel still possesses the means to negotiate a ceasefire. It should seize it before it is too late.

Load-Date: March 3, 2008

End of Document

No other country

The Jerusalem Post

March 11, 2008 Tuesday

Copyright 2008 The Jerusalem Post All Rights Reserved

Section: OPINION; Pg. 16

Length: 1155 words

Byline: LIAT COLLINS

Highlight: Here is my home. The question is: How to protect it? First published in the International Edition of March 7, 2008.

Body

Recently I found myself humming a version of the popular Israeli song which starts: "Ein li eretz aheret, gam im admati bo'eret," "I have no other country, even if the ground is burning."

I'm not sure whether I had picked it up because the radio - covering what has become known as "The War in the South" to distinguish it from any other war - had been playing it. Maybe it was just dredged up from my subconsciousness where it lives most of the time since lyricist Ehud Manor and musician-performer Corinne Allal released it in 1986.

To relieve tension, I tried playing around with the words: replacing the "even if the ground is burning" to "even if the sun is scorching" or, warming to my theme, "even if people are annoying."

You can't, of course, really improve an Ehud Manor song, although you might argue over which version - Allal's, Gali Atari's or their duet - is best.

Voted more than once as Israel's most popular song, "I have no other country," has a message that still rings true.

While masked militants were shouting "in blood and fire we'll free Palestine," across what to all intents and purposes serves as a border, I returned to Manor's lyrics:

Just a word in Hebrew

pierces my veins and my soul -

With a painful body, with a hungry heart,

Here is my home.

THE SONG is more a social history than just another hit. Manor wrote it as a tribute to his brother, Yehuda, who fell in the War of Attrition in 1968.

He gave the song to Allal to write the music in 1982 - at a time the country was suffering from what was to become known as the First Lebanon War. When it was released in 1986 it was initially considered an anti-war anthem, expressing despair at the relentless deaths of soldiers. Gradually it came to be adopted across the political

No other country

spectrum, some emphasizing the helplessness, some stressing the hope, all realizing the infallible truth: We have no other country. Or as the song puts it: Kan hu beiti, "Here is my home."

No wonder it remains relevant through wars and intifadas.

What is true on a national level also holds on a local level. I once asked my friend why she remains in Sderot where the Kassams dictate the rhythm of her life, and she replied: "Because if I move, the missiles will follow me." It wasn't that she felt personally targeted by Hamas and Fatah firing out of Gaza, she just assumed that if the population flees instead of standing fast, the terrorists will be encouraged to reach out ever further.

Her answer came back to me as the Mediterranean resort of Ashkelon and the usually pastoral villages and communities nearby came under fire - not quite out of the blue (few did not expect it to happen) but certainly a devastating bolt nonetheless.

IT REVERBERATED like the sound of a gunshot after the shooting of the yeshiva students in Jerusalem.

So if this is home, and moving is not in the equation, the question is how to protect it. And here the answer, like the meaning of Manor's lyrics, is open to interpretation, particularly between the Left and the Right.

The country is, if not burning, certainly uncomfortably hot at the moment. How do we stop flames from leaping up? And how do we do this without getting burned in the world press and diplomatic arena?

As the rocket fire died down to "just" a few missiles a day, Israel allowed Palestinian cargo to leave Gaza and permitted "humanitarian aid" to enter. According to news reports, hidden in containers marked "oil" was a quantity of chemicals which could potentially be used in terror attacks. Obviously not everybody wants to stop fanning the flames of war.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice paid a visit to Jerusalem with a message from the Palestinians - not those in Gaza, mind you, the Palestinian leadership based in Ramallah. Rice promised that the PA is willing to renew talks with Israel. Although talking peace with Mahmoud Abbas at the moment is probably about as effective as me humming a song in response to The Situation. While the South is under fire from the Gaza Strip, despite the complete removal of all the Jewish communities there two years ago, and a terrorist whom someone armed - (Hamas? Hizbullah?) - can go on a killing spree in Jerusalem, it seems to be a strange time to talk about more compromises.

Operation Hot Winter, the IDF's initial ground response to the Gaza rockets, predictably cost the lives of Israeli soldiers. And - as the world's press and politicians keep reminding us using that wonderfully tricky phrase "proportionate response" - there were also Palestinian civilian casualties along with the hits on those firing the rockets.

Well, what did they expect? If Hamas uses its civilian population - women and children first - as human shields and fodder for eager foreign news footage, it is obvious they are going to get hurt no matter how hard Israel tries to avoid it. So the question becomes whose innocent kids do you want to protect most.

The unequivocal answer for those of us who have, as Manor put it, "Hebrew piercing our veins and souls," is those in our own home. In Sderot, in Ashkelon; in the North still under the threat of Katyushas; and everywhere in between. Because, if we don't succeed in stopping the rockets and attacks, their range will surely continue to increase. And let us remember that Hamas, unlike the IDF, is specifically targeting the civilian population. The Israelis who are getting hurt are not launching rockets. They are people like my friend and her family trying to get on with their everyday lives: mothers who surrealistically worry about their kids getting hit by a car as they cross the road - or getting hit by a missile. Or youngsters celebrating the new month ahead of Purim in a Jerusalem yeshiva.

Israel is not carrying out a scorched-earth policy. It is trying to avoid being engulfed by flames. Instead of putting pressure on Egypt to stop the weapons flow into Gaza, and backing Israel's right to respond to the attacks, the EU and UN are actually helping Hamas - albeit unwittingly - by focusing on Gazan casualties of Israel's response.

No other country

If we had Canada as a neighbor, we wouldn't be at war either. We wouldn't have to find a way to respond to an ongoing missile and terror onslaught on our cities and towns.

Curiously enough, as soon as Israel started hitting back, the number of rocket attacks dropped and **Hamas** started hinting that it might accept a tahadiye, a cease- fire or truce. Israel, on the other hand, doesn't want a temporary cease-fire: It wants peace.

It's up to **Hamas** to decide whether it also wants peace or if it just wants a time-out from the hostilities in order to stock up on more weapons (and improve its world standing).

In the meantime, Israelis Left, Right and Center can carry on singing in unison, if not in harmony: "Ein li eretz aheret... " - "I have no other country..." It contains a message for **Hamas** and Hizbullah: "Kan hu beiti," here is my home, or as they say in Arabic: "Hon beiti." Learn to live with it.

Graphic

Photo: TAKING IN the enormity of the terrorist attack last Thursday night in Jerusalem. (Credit: Ariel Jerozolimski)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

Egyptian troops toughen stance at Gaza border

Guardian.com

January 25, 2008

Copyright 2008 Guardian Unlimited (© Guardian Newspapers Limited) All rights reserved

theguardian

Length: 494 words

Highlight: Egyptian troops continue to reassert control of border with Gaza by using water cannon and laying down barbed wire to block Palestinians

Body

Egyptian troops today continued to reassert control of the border with Gaza by using water cannon and laying down barbed wire to block Palestinians from leaving the territory.

Scuffles broke out between Gazans and Egyptians, witnesses said. Stones were thrown at the Egyptian forces, who responded by beating Palestinians with clubs and firing shots in the air.

Dozens of **Hamas** militants dressed in black stood on the Gaza side of the border, in front of the fallen wall at Rafah, checking people's bags and packages for weapons, drugs and other prohibited items as they re-entered Gaza.

Palestinians were still getting through to Egypt at other parts of the border wall, where Egyptian troops were making no effort to stop them.

The border breach, which has allowed tens of thousands of Palestinians to pour into Egypt, has boosted the popularity of **Hamas** Islamists, who claim they successfully penetrated the internationally supported Israeli blockade that has led to severe economic hardship.

Both Egypt and Israel restricted the movement of people and goods in and out of Gaza after **Hamas** won parliamentary elections in 2006. Gaza's economic squeeze was further tightened when **Hamas** seized control of the area by force last June.

Israel occupied Gaza in 1967 but pulled troops and settlers out in 2005, although it still controls the strip's northern and eastern borders, airspace and coastal waters. It says it imposed the blockade as a response to militant rocket fire into southern Israel.

Israel's deputy defence minister, Matan Vilnai, yesterday raised the prospect of completely severing Israel's ties with the small strip of crowded Palestinian land.

However, his boss Ehud Barak, the defence minister, told the Associated Press at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, that he did not want to "go too far in my interpretation of this".

Egyptian troops toughen stance at Gaza border

Egypt angrily rejected Israel's ideas and said it would not change border arrangements. "The border will go back as normal," said an Egyptian foreign ministry spokesman, Hossam Zaki. "The current situation is only an exception, and for temporary reasons."

Earlier, two separate Israeli air strikes on cars killed at least four Palestinian militants in Rafah, Gaza security officials and medical staff said.

In the West Bank, Jewish settlers shot dead two Palestinians and gunmen killed an Israeli border policeman in two separate incidents last night in areas that have been relatively calm for months.

A police spokesman said Palestinian gunmen shot an Israeli paramilitary border policeman and seriously wounded a **female** colleague at the Shuafat refugee camp in the West Bank, near Jerusalem.

The Israeli was the first fatality in the occupied West Bank since Palestinian gunmen shot and killed two off-duty soldiers near the city of Hebron last month.

In a second incident, Jewish settlers overpowered and shot dead two Palestinians who infiltrated the settlement of Kfar Etzion, near Bethlehem, an army spokeswoman said.

Load-Date: January 25, 2008

More Business Than Pleasure for Hurried Palestinians

The New York Times

January 25, 2008 Friday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2008 The New York Times Company

Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 8

Length: 500 words

Byline: By STEVEN ERLANGER

Dateline: RAFAH, Egypt

Body

There was less joy than frenzy on Thursday at this border crossing, as Gazans and Gaza businessmen hurried to stock up while they still could.

The Egyptians would not allow cars or trucks in from Gaza, only carts drawn by animals, so the area between the Gaza fence and the Egyptian border, known as the Philadelphi route -- which had been so carefully patrolled by the Israeli Army before it withdrew -- became an informal parking lot. There were traffic jams under the broken, bent metal and concrete barriers, and food stalls dotted the area, selling hard candy, sugared doughnuts, beans and nuts.

Boys carried on their shoulders large boxes of cartons of cigarettes to be resold by the businessmen who sent them to Egypt. Carts were loaded with bags of cement, Chinese-made generators, foam mattresses and Nautica-brand televisions. Women in black niqabs, long cloaks and scarves showing only their eyes, carried large, colorful bags of potato chips and Egyptian-made snack cakes.

And many Gazans simply wanted to buy fresh milk and feta cheese and fill canisters with diesel fuel, gasoline, motor oil and cooking oil. Some bought the cement needed to make concrete for sealing the graves of their loved ones, which they have had to try to protect with paving stones, metal and boards.

Egyptian businessmen sharply raised prices on Thursday, with a generator selling in Cairo for \$300 being sold here for \$600, said Tawfiq Nofal, a businessman who complained that transport companies were also raising their prices to bring goods to Rafah. "People are buying, but not as we expected," he said. "Our largest aim now is the Palestinian businessmen."

A little over four gallons of diesel fuel costs almost \$19, compared with just under \$15 a long walk away in El Arish, complained one man, Hamid Kahlout. "Of course they're exploiting us," he said. "Everyone is playing with us." Some Egyptians complained that the local market was nearly empty.

The call to prayer was ignored as the shopping and gawking continued. Azza Kamel and her cousins were thrilled, going to the wedding of a relative who was engaged a year ago to a man from Egyptian Rafah. The wedding had to wait for the crossing to open; now it was suddenly on. Ms. Kamel said she and her family support Fatah, which

More Business Than Pleasure for Hurried Palestinians

Hamas routed from Gaza last year. But they are grateful to **Hamas** for this chance. "Fatah still exists," she said. "But **Hamas** has eaten everything."

Muhammad Gaber, director of patient services at the European Gaza Hospital in Rafah, said he thought the border might stay open another five days or so, to provide "temporary relief" to Gazans. "After that, the Egyptians will have to work with **Hamas** or maybe the European Union to reorganize the crossing," he said. But politically, "Mubarak can't put Gazans back into the same prison," he added, referring to the Egyptian president, Hosni Mubarak.

"The situation has changed," he said. "The pressure on Gaza from Israel has to be lifted."

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Load-Date: January 25, 2008

End of Document