

Date and Time: Friday, May 3, 2024 4:14:00PM EEST

Job Number: 223445884

Documents (100)

1. [*Israel returns fire on Hamas*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

2. [*The recklessness of Hamas*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

3. [*Hamas prompted Israeli attacks*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

4. [*Column: Hamas attacks provoked response*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

5. [*Israel blasts Hamas*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

6. [*HAMAS BETRAYS THE PALESTINIANS*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

7. [*Hamas 20,000 men under arms*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

8. [*Israel plays into hands of Hamas*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

9. [*The Problems Posed By Hamas*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

10. [*Hamas missiles barrage Israel*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

11. [End to strikes in Hamas' hands](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

12. [Israel rejects Hamas truce](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

13. [ISRAEL, HAMAS BOTH WRONG IN COMPETING PATHOLOGIES](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

14. [Hamas is staging Gaza blackouts, Ramallah officials say](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

15. [Hamas threatens to kill Israeli leaders](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

16. [Column: Hamas, Israel share blame in Gaza conflict](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

17. [Hamas official: Israeli assault 'a holocaust'](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

18. [Military sources say Hamas chief of staff may have been killed. Hamas hit hard but still believed to be capable of firing barrages](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

19. [Deadly gamble in Hamas rout](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

20. [Truce with Israel leaves Hamas playing matchmaker](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

21. [Death toll hits 925 amid new clash with Hamas](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

22. [Defiant Hamas strikes at Israel](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

23. [West Bank residents angry at Hamas too](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

24. [Israeli assault targets symbols of Hamas power](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

25. [Neither Hamas nor Israel will win with violence](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

26. [U.S. blames Hamas; calls for cease fire](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

27. [*Inadvertent martyrs to the cause of Hamas*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

28. [*Israel strikes hit Gaza 155 dead as Hamas targets razed*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

29. [*In Gaza, Hamas plays role of matchmaker*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

30. [*Hamas strikes back amid devastating air attacks*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

31. [*Blame Hamas, not Israel , for civilian casualties*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

32. [*Hamas ends six month truce 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, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

33. [*Hamas leader killed as second week of bombing begins*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

34. [*MORE THAN 225 DIE IN GAZA AS ISRAEL STRIKES AT HAMAS*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

35. [*Fed up Israel targets Hamas symbols in Gaza air assaults*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

36. [*Israeli defence chief declares all-out war against Hamas*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type

Narrowed by

News

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

37. [*SPARE A THOUGHT FOR THE VIOLENCE OF HAMAS*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

38. [*ISRAELI TANKS SPLIT GAZA. HAMAS NEEDS A REAL & SERIOUS LESSON - PERES*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

39. [*Israeli assault on Hamas kills more than 200*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

40. [*Coherent arguments demanded to explain horrifying Hamas objectives*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

41. [*For War Widows, Hamas Recruits Army of Husbands*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

42. [*The Clans of Gaza take on the men of Hamas - Part 1*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

43. [*Israeli Foreign Minister Rules Out Peace Negotiations With Hamas*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

44. [*Where are the tears for the Jews slaughtered by Hamas?*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

45. [*ISRAEL, HAMAS RESUME FIGHTING AFTER LULL*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

46. [*Analysis Sights are lowered as Jerusalem aims to teach Hamas a lesson*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

47. [*ISRAELI GRIP ON GAZA GETS TIGHTER. Hamas defiant on 2nd day of ground campaign*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

48. [*The Clans of Gaza take on the men of Hamas - Part 2*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

49. [*Hamas says no 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, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

50. [*Israel attack leaves 298 dead; Weekend air strikes a response to daily rocket attacks by Hamas*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

51. [*Haniyeh: Hamas will consider cease-fire initiatives. Fatah official says leader in hiding has 'raised the white flag'*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

52. [*BLISTERING ATTACK BY ISRAEL KILLS 230. Air strikes come after Hamas launches rockets & mortars*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

53. [*Israelis attacking deeper; Lebanese reports say Hamas will reject ceasefire*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

54. [*Hamas and Israel are fighting under same old Gaza rules*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

55. [*Israel widens Gaza attack Death toll nears 300 as air offensive targets Hamas leaders*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

56. [*HAMAS' GUT IN GAZA Israel enters in darkness, but enemy promises swift retaliation*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

57. [*As the world weeps, Israel and Hamas unleash hell*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

58. [Defiant Palestinians fire rockets deeper into Israel Hamas commander may have been killed in strike](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

59. [ISRAEL BOMBS AS HAMAS ROCKETS FLY Gaza 'all out war'](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

60. [Hard-line Hamas is the enemy of all moderate Palestinians, as well as Israelis](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

61. [NO EARLY END SEEN TO 'ALL-OUT WAR' ON HAMAS 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, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

62. [Israel hammers Hamas; Air strikes in response to rocket attacks kill 229 in Gaza territory](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

63. [Hamas leader: Israel 's Gaza attacks have killed 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, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

64. [ISRAEL PONDERES 48-HOUR PAUSE CEASE-FIRE WOULD REQUIRE HAMAS TO SILENCE ROCKETS](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

65. [Hamas wants dead civilians on both sides; Rockets fired into Israel invite retaliation against Palestinians set up as human shields](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

66. [ISRAELI JETS HIT GAZA, LEAVING SCORES DEAD AIR OFFENSIVE AIMED AT PUNISHING HAMAS FOR INCREASE IN ROCKET ATTACKS](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

67. [Israel mulls ceasefire if Hamas halts rocket attacks; But 'leading option' is ground invasion](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

68. [*UN approves draft resolution, calls for Israel - Hamas ceasefire*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

69. [*GAZA FIGHTING INTENSIFIES ISRAEL, HAMAS IGNORE CALLS FOR CEASE-FIRE AMID SIGNS OF GROUND ASSAULT*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

70. [*Israel batters Hamas in Gaza; Bloody toll: Retaliation for rocket barrages might be start of sustained drive*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

71. [*Israel presses its attack on Gaza Death toll in airstrikes rises to 280, with 600 wounded Hamas vows revenge*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

72. [*Israel, Hamas ignore U.N. ,keep fighting*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

73. [Tunnels - the secret weapon for Hamas Troops may face street guerrillas equipped by a web of underground supply lines](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

74. [Hamas overthrow not Israel 's goal; Officials say the main aim of bombing Gaza is to end rocket attacks](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

75. [Hamas ends truce on Gaza border; Islamic group blames military moves against group in ending truce](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

76. ['A time for fighting' * I srael set to invade * Hundreds dead * Hamas vows revenge](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

77. [Hamas martyrs fight to recover land lost to Israel ; Iranian trainers may have transformed Gaza militants into potent force](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

78. [*Israel to 'deepen' Hamas bombing blitz; Set to deploy ground forces if necessary as 6,500 reservists called up*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

79. [*Hamas calls for new intifada as Israeli air strikes kill 229; Bloodiest day in 60-year history of Mideast conflict*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

80. [*Israel devastates Hamas targets Raids strike next to premier's home, level university building. 3-day death toll at 364.*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

81. [*Jewish and Arab MKs trade volleys in Knesset. Barak: 'All-out war' on Hamas; Tibi slams 'rivers of blood'*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

82. [*UN ceasefire proposal proves futile; Israel, Hamas reject ceasefire as major new offensive begins*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

83. [*Israel weighing brief cease-fire Under deal, Hamas would halt rocket fire and aid would flow*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

84. [*Israel , Hamas defy UN resolution; More fighting. UN says it will soon resume aid to Palestinians*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

85. [*Hamas doubles rocket fire into Israel , as IDF advances*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

86. [*Reason to doubt casualty claims; Arab neighbours send weapons to Hamas and Gaza, but no humanitarian aid*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

87. [*Gaza militants braced for final offensive as Israel pushes on Hamas under orders from Iran to spurn ceasefire offers*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

88. [*Peace is the last thing Hamas want*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to
Jan 14, 2009

89. [*Comment & Debate: End the siege of Gaza: It was not Hamas that broke the truce - but it is willing to revive it if Israel shows its commitment*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to
Jan 14, 2009

90. [*\[Fania Oz-Salzberger\] Hamas's zero-sum game in Palestine*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to
Jan 14, 2009

91. [*Al-Qaida-style Salafist extremism gains real power within Hamas armed wing 'The secular era in Gaza has ended without a trace'*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to
Jan 14, 2009

92. [*Israel intensifies Gaza assault, eyes ground invasion Border buildup is on, call-up of reserves gets OK as rocket fire from Hamas decreases substantially.*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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

Jan 14, 2009

93. [*Israel lets Palestinians with passports flee Gaza; UN estimates at least a quarter of the 400 Palestinians killed by Israeli air strikes against Hamas have been civilians*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

94. [*ISRAELIS DRIVE INTO GAZA, HAMAS DEFIANT War won't be easy or short, sez Barak, but rocketing must stop*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

95. [*Aiming at Hamas, but hitting Gazans Targets intertwined with civilian areas*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

96. [*Fears in Gaza of a wider attack Foreigners are allowed to leave as Israeli jets pound Hamas sites for a 7th day*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

97. [*Gaza siege enters third day; Death toll passes 300 as Israeli jets step up attacks against Hamas in Palestinian territory*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

98. [*Israel takes bloody revenge More than 200 killed in Gaza strikes to halt Hamas rockets*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

99. [*Obama ready to open channel to Hamas*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

100. [*We must adjust our distorted image of Hamas Gaza is a secular society where people listen to pop music, watch TV and many women walk the streets unveiled*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Sep 30, 2008 to Jan 14, 2009

Israel returns fire on Hamas

Townsville Bulletin (Australia)

December 30, 2008 Tuesday

1 - Edition

Copyright 2008 Nationwide News Pty Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: WORLD; Pg. 11

Length: 389 words

Body

ISRAEL widened its deadliest-ever air offensive against Gaza's Hamas rulers on Sunday, pounding smuggling tunnels and a central prison, sending more tanks and artillery toward the Gaza border and approving a reserves call-up for a possible ground invasion.

Israeli leaders said they would press ahead with the Gaza campaign, despite enraged protests across the Arab world and Syria's decision to break off indirect peace talks with the Jewish state. Israel's foreign minister said the goal was to halt Gaza rocket fire on Israel for good, but not to reoccupy the territory.

As the two-day death toll climbed above 290 on Sunday, crowds of Gazans breached the border wall with Egypt in an effort to escape the chaos. Egyptian forces, some firing in the air, tried to push them back into Gaza and a border guard was killed.

Hamas fired missiles deeper into Israel, near the Israeli port city of Ashdod, and continues to command some 20,000 fighters.

Yet Hamas leaders were forced into hiding, most of the dead were from the Hamas security forces, and Israel's military intelligence chief said Hamas's ability to fire rockets had been reduced by 50 per cent. In fact rocket fire dropped from more than 130 on Saturday to about 20 on Sunday.

Israel's intense bombings -- some 300 air strikes since midday on Saturday -- reduced entire Gaza buildings to rubble.

Late on Sunday Israeli aircraft attacked a building in the Jebaliya refugee camp next to Gaza City, killing a 14-month-old baby, a man and two women.

Early yesterday Israeli aircraft bombed the Islamic University and government compound in Gaza City, centres of Hamas power. Witnesses counted six airstrikes there just after midnight.

Other targets were a guest palace used by the Hamas government and the house next to Gaza Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh's home in a refugee camp next to Gaza City. He was not home, as Hamas leaders have gone into hiding.

In the southern town of Rafah, a toddler and his two teenage brothers were killed in an airstrike aimed at a Hamas commander.

Israel returns fire on Hamas

Shlomo Brom, a former senior Israeli military official, said it was the deadliest force ever used in decades of Israeli-Palestinian fighting.

The UN Security Council and European leaders called on both Israel and **Hamas** to end the bloodshed, while the White House blamed **Hamas** for Israel's retaliatory strikes.

Load-Date: December 29, 2008

End of Document

The recklessness of Hamas

Guardian.com

December 28, 2008

Copyright 2008 Guardian Unlimited (© Guardian Newspapers Limited) All rights reserved

theguardian

Length: 673 words

Highlight: Seth Freedman: Those who have condemned Israel for falling into a trap ought to be just as vocal in condemning Hamas for setting such a trap

Body

The last time I visited the embattled town of Sderot, I encountered a furious young resident who spat out his solution for his community's plight. "We have to kill all the militants [who are launching the Kassams]", he declared. "It's the only way to bring quiet back to the town. They had the chance to stop the rockets after we pulled out of Gaza, but they chose to carry on. I know they're suffering in Gaza too, but that doesn't excuse helping the terrorists attack us - they bring it on themselves".

What those militants sowed over the last few years, in the shape of thousands of rockets and mortars fired over the border at Israeli civilians, they reaped yesterday as the might of the Israeli air force came crashing down on Gaza. For all that I regularly sound off about almost every facet of the Israeli occupation and the government's policies towards the Palestinians, I struggle to see what option Israel's leaders had, other than to take the kind of action that they took this weekend.

As soon as the six-month ceasefire ended, with Hamas refusing to lay down their weapons and resuming their attacks on Israeli civilians, it was plain that Israel was being invited, if not provoked into, an operation to cut the head off the hydra. Hamas knew that with tens of thousands of Israeli men, women and children within range of the Kassam rockets, public opinion would demand action to protect those in the line of fire.

Indeed, you would be hard-pressed to find an Israeli who thinks that Israel was wrong to respond to the rockets in the way it did today. I suspect that Israel's response was no different to that which citizens of any other state would demand of their leaders in similar circumstances.

As Israeli spokesmen have reiterated time and again in the media, there is not a country in the world which would allow such assaults to take place on a daily basis without taking action to defend their citizens. Hamas knew this, and that their barrage of rockets would inevitably bring retaliation on the people of Gaza. Despite the ever-louder sabre-rattling by Israeli politicians during the last week, Hamas continued to use heavily-populated civilian centres as launching pads for their daily attacks on Israel.

On Friday, militants in Gaza killed two Palestinian schoolgirls when a rocket aimed at Israeli targets misfired and slammed into a Palestinian house. That tragedy underlined the rocket crews' utter disregard for civilian lives, Palestinian or Israeli. In response, Israel has called time on these assaults, dealing a serious blow to Hamas's infrastructure. Cue deafening calls for restraint from the outside world.

The recklessness of Hamas

But not all such calls are quite so deafening. Condoleeza Rice and Gordon Brown, in carefully-worded statements, have expressed their concern about Hamas rockets ahead of Israeli retaliation. Tzipi Livni was in Egypt last week obtaining Egyptian support for yesterday's activities. If Mahmoud Abbas openly condemns the air strikes and expresses support for the people of Gaza, the unspoken message is that he would not be entirely sorry to see Hamas brought to its knees.

Those who have condemned Israel, loudly and unequivocally, for falling into the trap laid by Hamas ought to be just as vocal in their condemnation of Hamas for setting such a trap in the first place. Speaking on SkyNews to an Israeli embassy spokesman, Tim Marshall castigated Israel for responding to Hamas rockets ("which rarely cause fatalities") with an assault leaving around 150 people dead. Who will castigate Hamas for their reckless endangerment of civilian lives in Gaza?

Gordon Brown said in the wake of the strikes: "Peaceful means are the only way of reaching a lasting solution to the situation in Gaza." I firmly believe that this is a view shared by the majority of Israelis, notwithstanding the devastation that is currently being wrought. I also firmly believe that this is a view shared by the majority of Palestinians, notwithstanding that their leadership (in Gaza at least) appears to take a different approach.

Load-Date: December 28, 2008

End of Document

Hamas prompted Israeli attacks

Times Colonist (Victoria, British Columbia)

January 13, 2009 Tuesday

Final Edition

Copyright 2009 Times Colonist, a division of Canwest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: COMMENT; Pg. A11

Length: 250 words

Byline: John Harrison, Times Colonist

Body

Re: "Canadians turn out in droves to rally against attacks on Gaza," Jan. 11.

Those vociferous protesters would have us overlook several salient points. **Hamas** is a terrorist organization dedicated to Israel's annihilation, which has not ceased to target Israeli **women** and children over an ever-widening area since it took control in Gaza. When it refused to extend the six-month "truce" and began showering 50 longer-range missiles daily, Israel was forced to react in defence of her citizens.

Before the first strike, over 100,000 phone calls were made to advise the civilian population of the intended targets, in order to reduce casualties, and emphasizing that Israel was not at war with the Palestinian people, but the result was that **Hamas** ensured there'd be civilians in place to attract world sympathy. Secondary explosions prove that mosques and schools were **Hamas** ordnance depots.

One poster urges "Free Gaza," but this situation arose when Israel did that -- at immense cost to thousands of Israelis, many of whom are still dislocated -- in the hope that doing so would enable Palestinians to build a free society and live peaceably. Instead, they have enabled **Hamas** to divert billions of humanitarian aid dollars toward the construction of 600 tunnels for the smuggling of weaponry and munitions.

Is that really a cause worthy of support from Canadians, especially since **Hamas** itself does not want a ceasefire, having refused to take part in the Egypt-brokered negotiations?

John Harrison

Sidney

Load-Date: January 13, 2009

Column: Hamas attacks provoked response

University Wire

January 12, 2009 Monday

Copyright 2009 Daily Bruin via U-Wire

Length: 582 words

Byline: By Shirley Eshagian and Roxana Pourshalimi, Daily Bruin; SOURCE: UCLA

Dateline: LOS ANGELES

Body

Throughout history, every nation has reserved and executed the right to defend itself against lethal attack. It seems like an elementary concept, common sense even; however, with the recent events in Israel and Gaza, and the lack of attention to actual facts and issues, we believe it requires reinforcement.

Israel's actions beginning Dec. 27, 2008 are the result of over 8,000 rocket attacks barraging southern Israel since 2001. Israel has exhibited enormous restraint - taking in rocket after rocket, delivering appeal after appeal - but unfortunately, to no avail. In August 2005, Israel unilaterally withdrew from Gaza, relocating over 8,500 people in efforts to demonstrate its ability to uproot settlements for peace, if needed, but Hamas continued to proclaim its chartered commitment to destroy Israel.

It should be mentioned that Hamas is recognized by groups such as the United Nations as a terrorist organization, unlike the way its supporters describe it. Its charter is founded on principles of jihad, or holy war, and its military leaders specifically target innocent civilians.

Nizzar Rayyan, a recently killed Hamas leader, said in an interview with the Atlantic two years ago, "Israel is an impossibility. It is an offense against God." Hamas uses Palestinian men, women and children as human shields during times of war, and launches rockets out of schoolyards, hospitals and other densely populated areas. This is not news to anyone who has been following the Arab news media, but may be appalling to those who follow many Western media fronts, which too often choose to omit it.

On Dec. 25, 2008, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert begged Hamas leaders to end their assault on Israel in order to prevent military retaliation. Inconsiderate of the innocents among them, Hamas leaders ignored Olmert's appeal, daring Israel to respond. Hamas ignored Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, as well: "We talked to (Hamas) and we told them, 'Please, we ask you, do not end the truce. Let the truce continue and not stop,' so that we could have avoided what happened." Two days later, Israel launched Operation Cast Lead in a desperate attempt to stop Hamas shelling, which had reached as many as 60 rockets a day.

Again, response to provocation is not a new concept: In Bosnia, it was only when the world responded with military action that former Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic's destructive regime was defeated. In World War II, Japan's attack on American soil resulted in full U.S. mobilization to protect its citizens.

The loss of innocent lives is regrettable and tragic, and Israel is committed to a complete cease-fire as long as all rocket-fire and mortar-shelling is successfully and absolutely terminated by Hamas. Smuggling of weaponry and

Column: Hamas attacks provoked response

illegal kidnapping of soldiers must also end. Israel has the right to defend its citizens, and Hamas must consider the same logic to prevent death rather than beckon it.

Last July, during his visit to Israel, President-elect Barack Obama said, "If somebody was sending rockets into my house, where my two daughters sleep at night, I'm going to do everything in my power to stop that." Israel is, too. Just this Thursday, the House echoed Obama's observation in voting 390 to 5 to reaffirm "Israel's right to defend itself against attacks from Gaza." We join President-elect Obama, the U.S. Congress, and people of conscience everywhere in supporting Israel's fight against the enemies of coexistence.

(C) 2008 Daily Bruin via UWIRE

Load-Date: January 12, 2009

End of Document

Israel blasts Hamas

The Bismarck Tribune
December 28, 2008 Sunday

Copyright 2008 The Bismarck Tribune, a division of Lee Enterprises All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 1A

Length: 1026 words

Byline: IBRAHIM BARZAK Associated Press Writer

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip - Israeli warplanes retaliating for rocket fire from the Gaza Strip pounded dozens of security compounds across the **Hamas**-ruled territory in unprecedented waves of airstrikes Saturday, killing more than 200 people and wounding nearly 400 in the single bloodiest day of fighting in years.

Most of those killed were security men, but an unknown number of civilians were also among the dead. **Hamas** said all of its security installations were hit, threatened to resume suicide attacks, and sent at least 70 rockets and mortar shells crashing into Israeli border communities, according to the Israeli military. One Israeli was killed and at least six people were hurt.

With so many wounded, the Palestinian death toll was likely to rise.

The strikes caused widespread panic and confusion in Gaza, as black clouds of smoke rose above the territory, ruled by **Hamas** for the past 18 months. Some of the Israeli missiles struck in densely populated areas as children were leaving school, and **women** rushed into the streets frantically looking for their children.

"My son is gone, my son is gone," wailed Said Masri, a 57-year-old shopkeeper, as he sat in the middle of a Gaza City street, slapping his face and covering his head with dust from a bombed-out security compound nearby.

He said he had sent his 9-year-old son out to purchase cigarettes minutes before the airstrikes began and now could not find him. "May I burn like the cigarettes, may Israel burn," Masri moaned.

The offensive began eight days after a six-month truce between Israel and the militants expired. The Israeli army says Palestinian militants have fired some 300 rockets and mortars at Israeli targets over the past week, and in recent days, Israeli leaders had threatened to launch a major offensive.

"There is a time for calm and there is a time for fighting, and now is the time for fighting," said Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak, vowing to expand the operation if necessary.

Asked whether **Hamas** political leaders might be targeted, Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni declared at a news conference: "**Hamas** is a terrorist organization and nobody is immune."

The first round of airstrikes on Gaza came just before noon. More than 100 attacks took place, continuing well into the evening.

Israel blasts Hamas

Hospitals crowded with people, civilians rushing in wounded people in cars, vans and ambulances. "There are heads without bodies There's blood in the corridors. People are weeping, women are crying, doctors are shouting, " said nurse Ahmed Abdel Salaam from Shifa Hospital, Gaza's main treatment center.

The offensive sparked angry protests throughout the Arab world, and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, the Vatican, the U.N. secretary-general and special Mideast envoy Tony Blair all called for an immediate restoration of calm. The Arab League scheduled an emergency meeting Sunday to discuss the situation.

In Washington, White House spokesman Gordon Johndroe said, "Hamas' continued rocket attacks into Israel must cease if the violence is to stop. The United States urges Israel to avoid civilian casualties as it targets Hamas in Gaza."

In Gaza City's main security compound, bodies of more than a dozen uniformed Hamas police lay on the ground. One survivor raised his index finger in a show of Muslim faith, uttering a prayer. The Gaza police chief was among those killed. One man, his face bloodied, sat dazed on the ground as a fire raged nearby.

By early evening, 205 Gazans were known to be dead and 388 wounded, Gaza health official Dr. Moaiya Hassanain said. He did not provide figures on civilian deaths. But earlier in the day, police said about 140 Hamas security forces were killed. Some of the dead, rolled in blankets, were laid out on the floor of Gaza's main hospital for identification.

Israeli military officials said more than 100 tons of bombs were dropped on Gaza by mid-afternoon. They spoke on condition of anonymity under military guidelines.

Defiant Hamas leaders threatened revenge. Hamas "will continue the resistance until the last drop of blood," vowed spokesman Fawzi Barhoum.

Israel told its civilians near Gaza to take cover, and in the West Bank, moderate Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, in a bitter rivalry with Hamas, condemned Israel. Egypt summoned the Israeli ambassador to express condemnation and opened its border with Gaza to allow ambulances to drive out some of the wounded.

Despite the overwhelming show of force, it was not clear whether it would halt the rocket fire. Past operations have failed to stop the attacks.

One rocket struck the Israeli town of Netivot, killing an Israeli man and wounding four people, rescue services said.

Dozens of stunned residents, some of them weeping, gathered around the house that took the deadly rocket hit. A hole gaped in one of the walls, which was pocked with shrapnel marks. The crowd broke up after an alert siren went off and everyone went running.

Streets were nearly empty in Sderot, the Israeli border town that has been pummeled hardest by rockets. A few cars carried panicked residents leaving town. Dozens of people congregated on a hilltop to watch the Israeli aerial attacks.

Protests against the campaign erupted in Arab Israeli villages, the Abbas-ruled West Bank and across the Arab world.

The most violent West Bank response came in the city of Hebron, where dozens of youths, many of them masked, hurled rocks for hours at Israeli forces, who lobbed tear gas and stun grenades in response. Officials in Bethlehem, Jesus' traditional birthplace, turned off Christmas lights and traders shuttered shops to protest the Israeli attack.

Anti-Israel protests also erupted in Amman, Jordan, and in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon and Syria.

Israel has targeted Gaza in the past, but the number of simultaneous attacks was unprecedented.

Israel blasts Hamas

Israel left Gaza in 2005 after a 38-year occupation, but the withdrawal did not lead to better relations with Palestinians in the territory as Israeli officials had hoped.

Instead, the evacuation was followed by a sharp rise in militant attacks on Israeli border communities that on several occasions provoked harsh Israeli military reprisals.

Load-Date: December 29, 2008

End of Document

HAMAS BETRAYS THE PALESTINIANS

The Australian

December 29, 2008 Monday

2 - All-round First Edition

Copyright 2008 Nationwide News Pty Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: FEATURES; Pg. 11

Length: 1066 words

Body

The deaths of hundreds in the Gaza airstrikes at the weekend are a further cost of implacable militancy

THE piteous images of the dead and wounded in the Gaza Strip after the Israeli airstrikes there at the weekend cannot obscure the betrayal of Palestinian welfare and interests that is perpetrated by Hamas, the militant ruling party in the long-suffering refugee enclave. Civilians have died cruelly, caught in the line of fire. Even the Hamas police recruits who were killed may have been young men seeking one of the few jobs to be had in the besieged Strip. But who is to blame? Where might peace be found? How will other governments, particularly the incoming administration of Barack Obama in the US, respond to this test in a most fractious region?

The Gazans have been on the path to worsening strife since many of them, with other Palestinians in the West Bank, elected Hamas to power in the Palestinian Authority's parliament in early 2006. Hamas is an Islamist group whose goal of Israel's destruction is also championed by Iran, which likes to see the Middle East and Gulf as part of its rising hegemony. Hamas did not follow up on its election win by implementing a program of enlightened and progressive policies across the Palestinian territories. Instead it chose to entrench itself militarily and politically within teeming Gaza, expelling its main Palestinian rival party, Fatah. The Strip became a base camp for the radicals' struggle against Israel.

The military and political wisdom of the caretaker Israeli cabinet's approval of the strikes will be debated, as was the case with Israel's incursion into Lebanon in 2006. The latter was seen afterwards as possibly having strengthened the political clout of the radical Islamist party Hezbollah, which was Israel's target in Lebanon. The same risk applies with Hamas, but to a much lesser degree. Both military actions were responses to an intolerable pattern of rocket attacks on Israel and the seizing of its soldiers.

What counts now is that the Israeli leadership has at least a partial political solution to the conflict with Gaza in mind, beyond a substantial dismantling of Hamas's ability to harass. The cabinet, dominated by the Kadima and Labour parties, will be hoping the strikes have done sufficient military damage to obviate the need for a major ground invasion, with its risk of high casualties on both sides.

The relatively muted and balanced response from Western governments shows Israel's dilemma is understood, and Jerusalem will be given time. The strongest language among leaders is probably that of French President Nicolas Sarkozy, who called the strikes "disproportionate" to Hamas's threat. The strikes certainly exceeded the rockets emanating from Gaza in destruction but they were reportedly aimed at reducing Hamas's military power for long enough to get useful negotiations going -- finally.

HAMAS BETRAYS THE PALESTINIANS

In 2005, then prime minister Ariel Sharon took Israeli forces and civilian settlers out of Gaza after nearly four decades of occupation, but instead of the improved relations that could have been a precursor to an eventual Palestinian state, the result was an increase in attacks on nearby communities in Israel. Israel's punitive reprisals were tough and by the middle of this year a six-month ceasefire was in place. But rocket attacks resumed in earnest after the six months were up this month.

Hamas has proved the hardest of enemies to crack without warfare. A near-total Israeli blockade of the Strip, accompanied by matching security to the south by Egypt -- desirous of excluding radicals from entry -- has boosted the dominance of **Hamas** within the Strip, as the party grabbed control of goods and money in short supply. The blockade became porous as a result of tunnelling, but **Hamas** controlled that, too. Instead of the revolt against **Hamas** that Israel -- and let it be said most Western nations -- hoped would occur, **Hamas** was able to exploit the shortages to encourage dependence on it among Gazans. For months, it turns out, the Israeli leadership has been contemplating an attempt at disarming Gaza as the next step, and these airstrikes are the result. Dislodging **Hamas** appears impossible in the near future, despite Fatah's expressed interest in filling any void, so renewed international pressure to draw it into talks with Israel, directly or otherwise, would be welcome.

The suffering of the Gazans, who number about 1.5 million, must end. The impasse has global consequences. The death and maiming will inflame opponents of Israel and the West, especially in Muslim countries. But often that denunciation will be hypocritical, if understandable. It is also no time for holding the misapprehension that Israel's existence is a thorn between the West and Israel's implacable opponents. Israel attracts fierce opposition in the Middle East because it is seen as Western, as a democracy espousing liberal values, including religious tolerance. If the Middle East question merely concerned a territorial settlement for displaced Palestinians, peace would have come long ago.

The strikes have come at a messy time. The US is in political transition, and Israel faces elections in February. The latest polling, done just before the strikes, rates as fairly even Kadima and Labour on the one hand, and the Likud opposition, led by former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, usually regarded as a hardliner. Likud had been seen as the likely winner. The military option was reportedly supervised by caretaker Prime Minister Ehud Olmert. If the Israeli public approves of the strikes, this will do no harm to his successor as Kadima leader, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, who is seeking to become Israel's second **female** prime minister.

In the US, even before being sworn into office on January 20, the president-elect, Mr Obama, is facing his first major foreign challenge, as is his secretary of state-designate, Hillary Clinton. The choice of Senator Clinton -- one of whose main advisers would be her husband, former president Bill Clinton -- has been depicted as of much significance for the Middle East. Mr Clinton made the last concentrated attempt at a solution until Fatah's Yasser Arafat pulled the rug out from under him. His successor, George W. Bush, has seen little point in trying again at this late stage. Mr Obama and Senator Clinton are presented with grave danger, but also opportunity.

Load-Date: December 28, 2008

Hamas 20,000 men under arms

The Daily Telegraph (London)

January 6, 2009 Tuesday

Copyright 2009 Telegraph Media Group Limited All Rights Reserved

The Daily Telegraph

Section: NEWS; Gaza; Pg. 4

Length: 346 words

Byline: Tim Butcher

Body

Hamas has up to 20,000 armed men under its command divided between its armed wing, known as the Izzedine al-Qassam Brigades, and paramilitary police, commonly known as Executive Force.

Unlike al-Qaeda and its acolytes that work on an ideology of holy war or jihad, the Islam-fuelled militancy of **Hamas** is more focused on recovering land lost to Israel.

Foot soldiers show little fear of death and the group's ideology conveys great respect on what it calls "shaheed" or martyrs, who die for the cause.

There is a smattering of **women** in the police force but the rest of the police and all members of the armed wing are men.

They each carry a Kalashnikov assault rifle and have access to a modest stock of weapons including 4,000 rocket-propelled grenades, hundreds of heavy machine guns and stock of about 120 tons of high explosive. They have a range of mortars and about 15 BRDM-2 armoured personnel carriers.

But perhaps their most potent weapon is their stock of rockets with which they attack Israel. As well as Qassams - rockets made mostly in workshops in Gaza - they have longer range Katyusha and Grad rockets.

The quality of the troops is questionable. In the early days after the founding of **Hamas** on Dec 14, 1987, the Izzedine

al-Qassam brigades evolved to fight not just Israel but other rival Palestinian factions.

Members of Izzedine were entirely self-taught and their fighting ability was limited.

But when **Hamas** was elected to power in January 2006 its leaders moved to create a police force from scratch.

In May 2006, the Executive Force was born and overnight "police", with black uniforms and hats, carrying Kalashnikovs appeared manning road junctions in Gaza City centre.

Hamas 20,000 men under arms

It soon matured, earning its stripes in June 2007 when it secured Hamas rule over Gaza.

Around this period a crucial change took place as senior Hamas security figures visited Iran for military training.

The worry was that the Iranian trainers would have transformed Hamas into a potent fighting force.

Israeli troops are currently learning at first-hand the extent to which this might be true.

Load-Date: January 6, 2009

End of Document

Israel plays into hands of Hamas

Canberra Times (Australia)

December 30, 2008 Tuesday

Final Edition

Copyright 2008 The Federal Capital Press of Australia PTY Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: A; Pg. 10

Length: 847 words

Byline: The Canberra Times

Body

Israel has been goaded beyond endurance by a Hamas missile terror campaign from Gaza and had served ample intention of a massive response from the time of the collapse of a six-month ceasefire, when again missiles had begun raining down on Israel 10 days ago. If the precise nature of the retaliation had been unclear and there is some evidence that the air strikes on Hamas military and missile points, and political centres at the weekend were unexpected there were ample warnings to the Hamas leadership, private, public and through other nations that Israel planned to act. The warnings led to more missile attacks, more posturing about the need to wipe out the state of Israel, and more public daring of Israel to respond. Then Hamas got just what it wanted, what it (from its own point of view) needed and what it had hoped for.

The air strikes did considerable damage to the Hamas military inventory, human and mechanical, but in the nature of a terror war, such costs are trifling and had certainly been calculated in advance. The real trophies were hundreds of dead bodies, many of them innocent civilians, including women and children, and many hundreds more seriously injured, and yet a further brake to any hope of any reconciliation between the Israeli and Palestinian peoples. Not to mention a public relations coup, firstly in the Arab and third world, but just as importantly in the West. Most Western observers, pro or anti-Palestinian, would have recognised the Hamas provocation and the virtual inevitability of a large-scale Israeli response. But their gloom about that serves other Hamas purposes. It underscores the barriers to peace and the determination of some players that there cannot be a negotiated or political peace. It cocks a snook at the US and international efforts to broker a peace. It manipulates international uncertainty as the US begins a transition to a new president. It reminds people that Israel a well armed nation-state has power out of all proportion to a mere gang of terrorists, and makes it look the bully again. It returns Palestinian grievances to the front pages of newspapers around the world. And, because a good deal of that world has lost patience with the pace of the peace process, it renews anger and exasperation at Israel for its own role and intransigence in the peace process. Indeed, Hamas is even playing Israeli politics, knowing that the Israeli response will be popular in Israel; and tend to make Israeli politicians even more hardline and obdurate.

Repression suits Hamas very well.

By the look of it, almost everyone, even in Israel, is playing to the Hamas script. And all for the price of a few soldiers and activists, and a good many civilians. Naturally, the anger of most of the grieving relatives will be channelled against Israel, and may, further down the track, add zeal to recruitment and fresh waves of suicide bombing, terror, kidnapping and murder. Meanwhile, the sense of siege and crisis provides Hamas with fresh excuses to avoid actually delivering anything in the nature of services to the population which gives it support. But

Israel plays into hands of Hamas

Hamas is not a political movement in the sense of seeking ordinary power. Its base, for many, its attraction, lies in its fanaticism, obduracy and refusal to be reasonable.

It would be quite wrong to assume that Israel's leaders, notoriously hard-headed, do not know they are doing much as **Hamas** wants and expects. Israel does not think that its thrashings will make the **Hamas** leadership even the people of Gaza more reasonable, or make them think before they go too far next time. Israel has been down this path before most recently in being goaded into attacking Lebanon a few years back and any military successes (in Lebanon unusually scarce anyway) ended up being overshadowed by the political and diplomatic cost. But, inside a calculus it has helped make, Israel is in a cleft stick.

Attacking leaders generally only brings even more immoderate ones, Killing soldiers produces only more, and more motivated, volunteers, and punishing populations only more resentful support, active or passive, of ever more extremist operators. How galling that in such matters, it has lost the initiative and any chance for subtlety. Israel's critics will say that it has brought this upon itself.

What is clear is that Israel cannot reform, or obliterate, **Hamas**. Nor teach it anything, or anything useful or likely to produce peace. More likely the greater the military effort to destroy **Hamas**, the more likely that its successor will be even more ferocious.

Probably only an active peacemaking initiative by genuinely disinterested parties by definition, these days, excluding the US could create some peace and prosperity inside Gaza, and on the West Bank, by which **Hamas** might be marginalised and more reasonable Palestinian politicians emerge. But the precondition for that, even imagine that the international political will for such an intervention could be achieved, is that such a body could impose some reason, and some social justice, on Israel. It does take two to tango.

Load-Date: December 29, 2008

The Problems Posed By Hamas

Intelligencer Journal (Lancaster, Pennsylvania)

January 12, 2009 Monday

Copyright 2009 Lancaster Newspapers, Inc.

Section: A; Pg. 7

Length: 357 words

Byline: Letters

Dateline: Lancaster, PA

Body

TO THE EDITOR:

The letter ("No military solution in Gaza," Intell, Jan. 6) from Urbane Peachy and Robert Webber about the conflict in Gaza makes several excellent points about the downsides of using military force, especially in regard to the relationship between civilian casualties and the recruitment of extremists. However, they fail to address the complexity of the situation.

In 2006, the Palestinians elected the organization **Hamas** in favor of the previous secular Fatah party. They did so knowing that **Hamas** is considered a terrorist group that openly calls for the elimination of Israel. Does this mean it is fair to punish civilians (including many **women** and children) for this choice? Of course not. But who is really to blame: the Israelis for shooting the missiles, or **Hamas** for purposely placing their weapons stashes in the midst of their own civilians? **Hamas** knowingly created a situation where any retaliation from Israel would result in a staggering civilian toll, which, in turn would cause Israel to lose the support of the international community.

It is easy for us to criticize Israel for its strong use of military force. But what if the shoe were on the other foot? If Canada or Mexico were launching rockets into towns in the United States - not just a few, but thousands - would our reaction be any different? No, except that we would not have tolerated it as long as Israel did.

The recent escalation in Gaza will surely breed more angry young extremists. And they should be angry, but not with Israel. They should be angry with their own government that gladly uses them as sacrificial pawns in this campaign of hate and terror.

Unfortunately, Palestinians will not get that message because they are only exposed to **Hamas** propaganda. Even their children's TV shows perpetuate the lie that the Palestinians are the ones being victimized. It seems like the only way to resolve this conflict is to completely take **Hamas** out of power and replace it with a moderate government that is willing to work towards a solution (sound familiar?). Until that happens, neither Palestinians nor Israelis will be safe.

Luke Dunn, Lancaster

Load-Date: January 12, 2009

The Problems Posed By Hamas

End of Document

Hamas missiles barrage Israel

Deseret Morning News (Salt Lake City)

December 30, 2008 Tuesday

Copyright 2008 The Deseret News Publishing Co.

Length: 1523 words

Byline: Ibrahim Barzak and Jason Keyser Associated Press

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip -- Palestinian militants sent a deadly barrage of missiles flying deep into Israel on Monday, demonstrating that **Hamas** still had firepower three days into Israel's punishing air offensive in Gaza.

Four Israelis, including a soldier, were killed and eight wounded. Palestinian health officials put the three-day death toll in Gaza at 364; the United Nations said the total included at least 62 civilians.

Early Tuesday, Israeli aircraft dropped at least 16 bombs on five **Hamas** government buildings in a Gaza City complex, destroying them, setting fires and sending rubble flying for hundreds of yards, witnesses said. Rescue workers said 40 people were injured.

In Monday's attacks, Israel focused its bombing on the houses of **Hamas** field operatives in a campaign meant to tear at the roots of the extremist group ruling Gaza. Israel's defense minister promised a "war to the bitter end against **Hamas**" and allied militants.

Intensified rocket strikes by Gaza militants, which triggered the Israeli offensive, have revealed the expanding range of missiles that are making larger cities farther inside Israel vulnerable.

In a barrage Monday night, a missile crashed into a bus stop in Ashdod, 23 miles from the Gaza Strip. A woman died and two others were wounded, one seriously -- the first casualties in the city of 190,000 residents.

The military said an Israeli soldier was killed later in a mortar strike, the first soldier to be killed in the conflict. Five others were wounded, one seriously, according to a military statement.

Earlier Monday, an Israeli was killed and one seriously wounded by a rocket strike in the Negev desert community of Nahal Oz, closer to the Gaza border. A rocket also killed an Israeli construction worker in the city of Ashkelon. In all, five Israelis have been killed since the Gaza offensive began Saturday, bringing to 19 the number killed in rocket attacks from Gaza this year.

Early Tuesday, **Hamas** released a statement saying its squads had fired 43 homemade rockets, 17 longer-range Grads and six mortar shells at Israel. Other militant groups also fired rockets at Israel.

The targets chosen by Israel on Monday pointed to an intention to chip away at **Hamas**' foundation. Israeli aircraft staged five separate strikes on the houses of field operatives, though there was no confirmation that any of them were killed.

Hamis missiles barrage Israel

A grainy video taken by an Israeli drone airplane showed several men loading a pickup truck with what the Israeli military said were medium-range Grad rockets. Moments later, a big explosion from an Israeli missile strike envelops the image.

One Israeli attack targeted a house in the Jebaliya refugee camp, killing seven people, but the Hamis activist was not there, Hamis security and relatives said. Another hit the Jebaliya home of Abdel-Karim Jaber, a Hamis political figure who is a senior administrator at Gaza's Islamic University. He was not at home and it wasn't immediately clear if anyone was hurt in the strike.

In another air assault, an Islamic Jihad commander was killed as he was walking near his house, said Abu Hamza, a spokesman for Islamic Jihad's military wing.

Israel's airstrikes on more than 325 sites since midday Saturday reduced dozens of buildings to rubble, overwhelmed hospitals with wounded and filled Gaza's deserted streets with smoke and fire. The military said Israeli naval vessels had also bombarded targets from the sea.

On Monday, aircraft pulverized a house next to the home of Hamis Premier Ismail Haniyeh, a security compound and a five-story building at a university closely linked to the Islamic group -- all symbols of Hamis strength in the coastal territory it has ruled since June 2007.

Israel's offensive has rattled the Middle East and capitals around the world, triggering street protests and fiery speeches by adversaries of Israel like the militant group Hezbollah in Lebanon. In the day's biggest outpouring of anger, tens of thousands of Hezbollah's supporters stood in a pouring rain in a Beirut square to condemn Israel.

Stone-throwing clashes broke out in about a half-dozen spots in the Palestinians' West Bank territory as well as in several Arab-populated areas inside Israel. Israeli police and soldiers fired rubber bullets and tear gas at rioting youths, but it did not appear anyone was injured.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon condemned Israel's offensive as excessive and demanded an immediate cease-fire. He said key international and regional players -- including foreign ministers of the Arab League nations holding an emergency meeting Wednesday -- must "act swiftly and decisively to bring an early end to this impasse."

The U.S. government said it was "vigorously engaged" in trying to restore a cease-fire.

White House spokesman Gordon Johndroe defended the Israeli response but added that the Bush administration was urging Israel to avoid civilian casualties in Gaza.

With Israeli troops and tanks massing on the Gaza border, Defense Minister Ehud Barak told parliament he wanted to strike a devastating blow against Hamis. However, later he indicated a ground assault was not inevitable, issuing a warning that he was giving Hamis a last chance to halt its rocket fire.

Short of reoccupying Gaza, however, it was unlikely any amount of Israeli firepower could completely snuff out militant rocket attacks. Past operations all failed to do so.

The Cabinet's decision over the weekend to call up 6,500 reserve soldiers could be a pressure tactic. Military experts noted no full combat units had been mobilized and said Israel would need at least 10,000 soldiers for a full-scale invasion.

For the first time, Israel also hit one of a series of tunnels prepared by Hamis along the border with Israel for use in attacks on invading ground troops, several Israeli TV networks said. One tunnel was packed with explosives and several militants inside were killed, Channel 1 said.

Most of those killed in three days of airstrikes were Hamis members. A Hamis police spokesman, Ehab Ghussen, said 180 members of Hamis security forces were among the dead.

Hamis missiles barrage Israel

But the U.N. agency in charge of Palestinian refugees expressed concern about civilian casualties. A rise in civilian casualties could intensify international pressure on Israel to end the offensive.

In New York, U.N. humanitarian chief John Holmes said his agency had not been able to determine a precise number of civilian casualties but knew of at least 62 women and children killed. He said 1,400 people had been injured.

Eight children under the age of 17 were killed in two separate Israeli airstrikes Sunday night, Palestinian medics said.

Holmes said he was very worried about a shortage of humanitarian supplies in Gaza.

"Because of the effective blockade that's been in place for many months now, and because of the increasing tightening of this blockade in recent weeks around Gaza, stocks of vital items are either very low or nonexistent, and that's particularly the case, for example, with wheat flour," he said.

Israel opened one of Gaza's border crossings Monday to allow several ambulances and 62 trucks carrying medical supplies and food to cross.

"Obviously these supplies are better than nothing, but they remain wholly inadequate," Holmes said, saying that his agency needed 100 truckloads of flour every day to meet needs.

In Gaza, some families left their apartments next to institutions linked to Hamas, fearing they could be targeted. Suad Abu Wadi, 42, kept her six children close to her on mattresses in her Gaza City living room. Her husband sat with them, chain-smoking. Abu Wadi said he had not said a word since seeing their neighbor carrying the body of his child, killed in an airstrike Saturday.

Gaza's nine hospitals were overwhelmed. Dr. Moaiya Hassanain, who keeps a record for the Gaza Health Ministry, said 364 Palestinians had died and more than 1,400 wounded. Some of the injured were being taken to private clinics and even homes, he said.

Egyptian officials said ambulances were ferrying wounded Gazans to hospitals in Egypt from Gaza's Rafah border crossing. Tariq al-Mahlawi, Egypt's deputy health minister, said 32 patients had been brought in by nightfall and that 500 beds were ready to treat Palestinians.

Around mid-afternoon, ambulances ferried the wounded from Gaza toward the crossing in the border town of Rafah, where over a dozen Egyptian ambulances waited to take over the casualties.

Despite Israel's battering attacks, sirens warning of incoming rockets sent Israelis scrambling for cover throughout the day as more than 40 rockets and moZrtar rounds rained down.

Israeli security officials warned that the militants' rockets are powerful enough now to reach Beersheba, a major city 30 miles from Gaza.

Mazal Ivgi, a 62-year-old resident of Beersheba, said she had prepared a bomb shelter. "In the meantime we don't really believe it's going to happen, but when the first boom comes people will be worried," she said. Associated Press writers Aron Heller in Ashkelon, Jason Keyser in Jerusalem, Edith M. Lederer in New York, Deb Riechmann in Crawford, Texas, and Omar Sinan in Rafah, Egypt, contributed to this report.

Load-Date: December 30, 2008

End to strikes in Hamas' hands

The Dominion Post (Wellington, New Zealand)

January 6, 2009 Tuesday

Copyright 2009 Fairfax New Zealand All Rights Reserved

Section: FEATURES; EDITORIAL; Pg. 4

Length: 514 words

Body

IT IS almost trite to say the death and destruction in the Gaza Strip is a tragedy. Hospitals are awash with gore, homes have been reduced to rubble, more than 450 Palestinians are dead and thousands more have been injured. Many are innocents whose only crime was to live, work or shop near strongholds of Hamas, the militant Islamic group that runs Gaza.

But Hamas' leaders and those who unquestioningly side with them overlook a simple fact when they deplore Israel's assault on Gaza. Hamas, an organisation that is committed to the destruction of Israel, provoked the Israeli attacks and it has it within its power to stop them. All it has to do is stop firing rockets into Israeli territory.

In the past eight years 16 Israelis have been killed by rockets launched from within the strip. Israel's response - air attacks and now a ground assault - is disproportionate. But what is Israel supposed to do? Would its critics prefer it to send a rocket back every time one landed in its territory? No other sovereign nation would tolerate a neighbour indiscriminately targeting its citizens, and anyone who thinks a people who pledged "never again" after the Holocaust would do so, has rocks in their head.

Of course, Hamas was not under that misapprehension. What is happening now is what Hamas' leaders wanted.

Hopelessly outgunned militarily, Hamas cannot hope to defeat Israel in a conventional war, but it can compete in a public relations battle for hearts and minds. The Israeli attacks are producing images of dead and wounded Palestinians that damage Israel's international reputation.

They also serve as rallying posters for future Hamas foot soldiers.

That the strategy has cost hundreds of Palestinians their lives and condemned Gaza's population of 1.5 million to even greater hardship does not appear to concern Hamas' leaders.

In a column published in yesterday's Dominion Post, Fania Oz-Salzberger, professor of modern Israel studies at Monash University in Melbourne, likened Hamas' behaviour to that of a "poor and traumatised" man who sits with his daughter on his lap taking pot shots at a neighbour's house packed with women and children.

It is an accurate analogy for the events that led up to the Israeli invasion. So is her description of what happens next.

After a child's bedroom window is struck in the neighbouring home, the neighbour pulls out his own, far superior gun and attempts a surgical strike, aiming at the shooter's head.

End to strikes in Hamas' hands

None of this justifies the wrongs done to Palestinians dispossessed of their ancestral lands, the unconscionable conditions in which millions of Palestinians live, or the excesses of the Israeli military. As Professor Oz-Salzberger writes: "Gazans are worse off than Israelis in every single way."

Palestinians have reason for being poor and traumatised and bitter and vengeful.

But one simple fact remains. If **Hamas** leaders really want to end the suffering caused by the Israeli attacks they can do so.

All they have to do is stop firing rockets into Israeli territory, acknowledge that Israel has a right to exist and start negotiating.

Load-Date: January 29, 2009

End of Document

Israel rejects Hamas truce

The Pantagraph (Bloomington, Illinois)

January 01, 2009 Thursday

Copyright 2009 The Pantagraph

Section: NEWS; Pg. A1

Length: 1443 words

Byline: By Ibrahim Barzak and Jason Keyser;Associated Press

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip - Israel sent more troops to the Gaza border Wednesday, rapidly moving forward with preparations for a possible ground offensive as the next stage of its military assault on the coastal territory's Hamas rulers.

Israel rebuffed calls by world leaders for a truce, and Hamas also was cold to a cease-fire.

Instead, both intensified their fire. Israel bombed a mosque that it said was used to store rockets as well as vital smuggling tunnels along the Egyptian border, and the Islamic militants hammered southern Israeli cities with about 60 rockets.

Israeli troops trudged between dozens of tanks in muddy, rain-sodden fields outside Gaza, assembling equipment, cleaning weapons and scrubbing out tank barrels. Their commanders moved forward with preparations for a ground operation, said an Israeli defense official who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitive nature of the information.

The U.N. Security Council scheduled emergency consultations Wednesday night to discuss an Arab request for a legally binding and enforceable resolution to ensure an immediate cease-fire in Gaza. Egyptian Ambassador Maged Abdelaziz said he was on instructions from Arab League foreign ministers who met in Cairo.

Diplomatic efforts by U.S., European and Middle Eastern leaders appeared to be having little effect. A French proposal for a 48-hour cease-fire to allow humanitarian supplies into Gaza failed to gain traction. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said the time was not ripe to consider it.

A separate proposal by Turkey and Egypt, two of Israel's few allies in the Muslim world, also seemed to be attracting little serious study in Israel or Gaza, where Hamas leaders dismissed talk of a truce.

With a shrinking number of targets to hit from the air and top Hamas leaders deep in hiding, a ground operation seemed all the more likely. In five days of raids, Israeli warplanes carried out about 500 sorties against Hamas targets and helicopters flew hundreds more combat missions, a senior Israeli military officer said, speaking on condition of anonymity in line with military regulations.

The government has approved the call-up of more than 9,000 reserve soldiers. Heavy rain clouds cover that could hinder ground forces were expected to lift Thursday.

Israel rejects Hamas truce

U.N. humanitarian chief John Holmes said the death toll was estimated at 320-390 and the number of injured at 1,500-1,900. Between 20 percent and 25 percent of the dead are either women or children, said Karen Abu Zayd, U.N. Relief and Works Agency commissioner.

Hamas says some 200 uniformed members of its security forces have been killed, and the U.N. says at least 60 Palestinian civilians have died.

In Israel, three civilians and a soldier have been killed by rocket fire, which has reached deeper into Israel than ever. The sites of the missile hits have drawn curious crowds.

In the Negev desert city of Beersheba, people visited a school where a rocket made a direct hit Tuesday evening, slamming through the ceiling and showering debris on students' desks. A visitor illuminated by a shaft of light through the hole in the roof said with some astonishment, "This is my daughter's seat."

In Gaza, the sites of airstrikes have also attracted the curious and the defiant, including a Palestinian man who planted a green Hamas flag atop a mound of debris at a flattened mosque, its minaret still thrusting toward a stormy sky.

The Israeli military, which leveled the mosque Wednesday, said that it was being used as a missile storage site and that the bombs dropped on it set off secondary explosions. It was the fifth mosque hit in the campaign.

The chief of Israel's internal security services, Yuval Diskin, told a government meeting that Hamas members had hidden inside mosques, believing they would be safe from airstrikes and using them as command centers, according to an Israeli security official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not allowed to share the information.

Other militants were hiding in hospitals, some disguised as doctors and nurses, Diskin said, according to the official.

Echoing Israel's cool response to truce proposals, a senior Hamas leader with ties to its military wing said that now was not the right time to call off the fight. Hamas was unhappy with the six-month truce that ended just before the fighting began because it didn't result in an easing of Israel's crippling economic blockade of Gaza.

Hamas spokesman Taher Nunu said that although Hamas leaders had been driven underground, the Gaza government was functioning and had met in the past few days.

"What our people want is clear: an immediate stop to all kinds of aggression, the end of the siege by all means, the opening of all border crossings, and international guarantees that the occupation will not renew this terrorist war again," Nunu said.

Israel's latest airstrikes concentrated on crushing the many smuggling tunnels under Gaza's southern border with Egypt. They provide a crucial lifeline, not just for Hamas rulers, but also for bringing in food and fuel for Gaza's people.

Holmes, the U.N. humanitarian chief, expressed concern about the fighting's impact on civilians. He said hospitals were struggling to cope with casualties and the lack of fuel deliveries had forced Gaza's power plant to shut down Tuesday.

But U.N. officials said the major need was grain and other food. Holmes said the Kerem Shalom crossing remained open and 55 trucks got through Tuesday and about 60 on Wednesday, mainly carrying food. He said Israel had been "cooperative in principle about these supplies, but we need to see more results."

White House spokesman Gordon Johndroe said U.S. officials were seeing "a good flow" of medical and food supplies into Gaza.

Israel and Egypt blockaded Gaza after Hamas fighters violently seized control of the territory in 2007 and the two nations have opened their borders only to let in limited humanitarian aid.

Israel rejects Hamas truce

On Wednesday, several wounded Palestinians were taken across the Israeli and Egyptian borders for treatment, including a child bundled in blankets.

Gaza's southern smuggling zone was hit again in morning airstrikes that left vast craters over the collapsed underground passages.

Diskin, the Israeli security chief, told a Cabinet meeting that the tunnel network had been badly damaged. Israel said more than 80 tunnels were destroyed. Several hundred tunnels ran under the border before Israeli warplanes began striking.

Hamas was trying to smuggle some of its activists to Egypt through still-passable tunnels, Diskin said.

Israel fears that opening border crossings would allow **Hamas** - which remains officially committed to Israel's destruction - to further strengthen its hold on the territory.

Moderate Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, a **Hamas** rival who controls only the West Bank, suggested he would not continue peace talks with Israel at any price. He said on Palestinian TV that the stalled talks had become useless and were not reaching any of the goals - namely the creation of a Palestinian state.

"Negotiation is not a goal by itself; it's a tool," Abbas said. "Unless it is a tool to achieve peace ... there is no need for it to continue."

Gaza's militants fired dozens of rockets into Israel on Wednesday evening, including one in the city of Ashkelon that was caught on video. It showed a man on a sidewalk ducking for cover along a wall as the missile exploded in a cloud of smoke a few steps behind him.

The city of 120,000 people 11 miles north of Gaza has been a frequent target.

Israel's rescue service said it had responded to 250 rocket attack scenes since Saturday and treated 48 wounded, most of whom had light injuries.

School was canceled in much of Israel's south because of the rocket threat. The 18,000 students at Ben-Gurion University in Beersheba, southern Israel's only university, were also told to stay home.

Beersheba, 19 miles from Gaza, had never before been within range of Gaza rockets, reflecting the increasing sophistication of what started out as homemade weaponry.

Now militants are firing weapons made in China and Iran that have dramatically expanded their range and put more than one-tenth of Israel's population in their sights, defense officials said.

In Gaza, two Palestinian medics were killed and two others were wounded when an Israeli missile hit next to their ambulance east of Gaza City, Palestinians said. The Israeli military said it did not know of the incident.

Load-Date: January 2, 2009

ISRAEL, HAMAS BOTH WRONG; IN COMPETING PATHOLOGIES

The Santa Fe New Mexican (New Mexico)

January 3, 2009 Saturday

Copyright 2009 The New Mexican

Section: MAIN; Pg. A-3

Length: 821 words

Byline: WILLIAM M. STEWART

Body

Once again the fat is in the fire. Hamas called off a shaky, 6-month-old cease-fire with Israel, and Israel responded with a massive air attack on Gaza that is still under way at week's end. Israel claimed the right of self-defense, saying it could no longer tolerate constant rocket attacks along its southern frontier. Hamas claimed Israel had virtually imprisoned 1.5 million Palestinians in the narrow Gaza Strip since the Israeli withdrawal in 2005, leaving Hamas little choice in defending its people.

Once again, each side has engaged in a pathological defense of its position: Hamas, that only violence would end Israeli occupation of Palestinian land; Israel, that only violence could put an end to Hamas' terrorist activities.

Both are wrong.

Hamas cannot destroy Israel, but then neither can Israel destroy Hamas. Israel will continue to win all the battles but will never win the war. It cannot win because military victory is impossible. Only a political settlement can bring a solution.

The world cannot -- and does not -- deny Israel the right of self-defense. But there is the vital question of proportionality. There is no doubt that the homemade rockets Hamas fires into southern Israel have made life miserable for the people of that area, especially in the city of Sderot. The rockets cannot be guided, and while they are generally ineffective, they are deadly if one happens to fall on you. Since the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza in 2005, about three Israelis have been killed from rocket fire. That is three too many.

But in just a few days of Israeli air attacks, some 400 Palestinians were killed, many of them women and children. That is unacceptable and amounts to collective punishment. The Israelis, of all people, should find collective punishment not only deeply offensive, but a crime.

If the Hamas rockets have made life miserable for the people of Sderot, the Israeli blockade of the past three years has made life intolerable for the Palestinians. The economy has collapsed. Everything, including vital medical supplies, is in short supply. Israel's opening of the border posts for a few hours to allow in supplies will not change the situation. It is grim and getting grimmer.

In military terms, Israel is one of the most powerful countries in the world. Hamas has its armed wing, and that wing indulges in terrorist activities. But in military terms, the Palestinian territories and the Palestinian people are defenseless. What's wrong with this picture? Something has to change.

ISRAEL, HAMAS BOTH WRONG IN COMPETING PATHOLOGIES

One of the complicating factors is the political division among the Palestinians. Hamas is not just a semimilitary organization that resorts to acts of terror, it is also a civilian organization that in 2007 seized control of Gaza from Fatah, the dominant political faction headed by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. Hamas had already won an open election in Gaza, astounding the Bush administration. Hamas won largely because it was perceived by Gazans to be more honest and competent than Fatah. It was -- that's why they won.

The Palestinian Authority and Israel enjoy mutual recognition, though Israel has done little to bolster Abbas' position. Hamas is bent on the destruction of Israel -- a futile cause -- and the world in general regards Hamas as a terrorist organization, regardless of its civilian activities. The Arab world as a whole does not trust Hamas, which is why Egypt and Jordan have done little to help in the current crisis.

While Abbas, as well as the Egyptian, Jordanian and Saudi leaders, condemn the Israeli attacks -- what else can they do? -- they also hope that Hamas is severely damaged by the Israelis. Abbas hopes to gain with the military destruction of Hamas, perhaps even restoring Gaza to the control of the Palestinian Authority.

But that is the midterm prospect. The immediate prospect is the further destruction of the Gaza Strip by the overwhelming might of the Israeli Self Defense Force. Israel itself is scheduled for elections early this year, and Defense Minister Ehud Barak, the former prime minister, will enhance his chances for an even more prominent role if the attack on Gaza is successful.

Israel invaded Lebanon a few years ago in what is widely regarded not only as a disastrous political mistake but also a bungled military operation. Hezbollah, which the Israelis sought to destroy, emerged stronger than ever in Lebanon. The Israeli military would like to avoid making that same mistake in Gaza, and so a successful operation would restore not only the military's reputation but enhance that of Barak and the ruling Kadima Party.

A great deal is at stake here, and not just for Gaza and the people of Gaza. The world is rapidly changing before our eyes and those of Barack Obama, soon to be our president.

William M. Stewart, a former U.S. Foreign Service officer and Time magazine correspondent, lives in Santa Fe. He writes weekly on foreign affairs and politics.

Graphic

See pdf's for exact rendition, caption, graphics and photographer info.

Load-Date: January 5, 2009

Hamas is staging Gaza blackouts, Ramallah officials say

The Jerusalem Post

November 19, 2008 Wednesday

Copyright 2008 The Jerusalem Post All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 431 words

Byline: KHALED ABU TOAMEH

Body

Palestinian Authority officials in Ramallah accused Hamas on Tuesday of staging the latest blackouts in the Gaza Strip in a bid to win sympathy and incite the Palestinian public against Israel and the PA.

The officials said that contrary to Hamas's claim, there is no shortage of basic goods, medicine and fuel in the Gaza Strip, largely thanks to the many underground tunnels along the border with Egypt.

This is not the first time that Palestinians have accused Hamas of staging Gaza blackouts under the pretext that Israel had cut off fuel supplies to the district's power grid.

Earlier this year, Palestinian journalists in Gaza City told The Jerusalem Post that scenes of Palestinian children and women holding lit candles in the dark had been staged by Hamas and some Arab satellite TV stations.

"There's no shortage of fuel in the Gaza Strip and the Electricity Company is continuing to function normally," said a PA official. "Our people in the Gaza Strip have told us that the blackouts are all staged as part of the Hamas propaganda."

Another PA official noted that Hamas's lies reached their peak last January when its legislators held a meeting in a darkened hall of the Palestinian Legislative Council - while light could be seen coming in through the curtained windows.

The official accused Al-Jazeera of serving as a platform for Hamas's propaganda machine by airing staged footage of children and women during candlelight protests in the streets of Gaza City.

"There's enough fuel in the Gaza Strip," he said. "Even when Israel reduces the fuel supplies, Hamas continues to smuggle tens of thousands of liters through the underground tunnels."

The Fatah-controlled Pal-Press Web site on Thursday quoted a senior official in the Gaza Electricity Company as saying that Hamas has been stealing fuel supplies intended for the power grid.

The official, who asked not to be identified, also denied claims by Hamas and Al-Jazeera about power outages in large parts of the Gaza Strip. He noted that 70% of the Gaza Strip's electricity came from Israel and Egypt, while the remaining 30% were being supplied by the local company.

"Hamas has seized more than 220,000 liters of fuel that was intended for generators belonging to our company," he revealed. "There's no shortage of fuel and as such there is no reason for a crisis."

Hamas is staging Gaza blackouts, Ramallah officials say

The official also disclosed that **Hamas** militiamen had been forcing the company to cut off power supplies to some areas in the Gaza Strip so as to create the impression that the outage was due to a lack of fuel caused by the ongoing closure of the border crossings.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

End of Document

Hamas threatens to kill Israeli leaders

The Australian

December 30, 2008 Tuesday

3 - All-round Metro Edition

Copyright 2008 Nationwide News Pty Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: LOCAL; Pg. 1

Length: 520 words

Byline: Abraham Rabinovich, Jerusalem

Body

HAMAS last night threatened to assassinate Israeli leaders as the bombing of the Gaza Strip entered a third day and armoured forces were deployed along the borders of the Palestinian territory.

As Israel mobilised 6700 reservists in preparation for the next stage of combat, senior **Hamas** official Fatah Hamad warned that the militant group would assassinate Defence Minister Ehud Barak, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and other leaders if the attacks continued.

Mr Barak countered that Israeli was in "all-out war against **Hamas**", as the army declared the border area a closed military zone -- a move that in the past has often been followed by ground operations in Gaza.

At least 57 civilians were among the 318 victims in Gaza, 21 of them children and at least seven **women**, the UN agency for Palestinian refugees said last night. An Israeli Arab was killed and eight others were wounded yesterday when a missile fired from Gaza landed near a construction site in the southern Israeli city of Ashkelon. Earlier, **Hamas** unleashed the longest-range rockets yet fired into Israel, striking near the port city of Ashdod, 40km inside the Jewish state.

Mr Hamad also threatened senior officials of the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and "those in the Arab world who have conspired against us", an apparent reference to Egyptian leaders. **Hamas** has called for suicide bombers to attack inside Israel.

Planes used bunker buster bombs to destroy 40 tunnels through which supplies were smuggled into the Gaza Strip from Egypt, Israeli officials said.

Most of the targets hit were in Gaza City, including homes of **Hamas** leaders and the office of Prime Minister Ismail Haniya. A house next to Mr Haniya's home was destroyed but the Prime Minister had gone into hiding, as had other **Hamas** leaders.

Planes hit a security compound that included a **Hamas** prison, allowing dozens of prisoners to flee through the shattered walls. Also hit were two laboratory buildings at the Islamic University said by Israel to have been used to prepare explosives and fuel for rockets. Gaza's nine hospitals were reported to be overwhelmed as the number of wounded approached 1000.

Hamas threatens to kill Israeli leaders

Israel announced that it would permit the entry into Gaza of 100 trucks carrying medicines, food and other supplies contributed by Turkey, Jordan and international organisations. Hundreds of Gaza residents breached the border fence with Egypt to escape from the Strip.

Yuval Diskin, the head of domestic spy agency Shin Bet, told the Israeli cabinet early yesterday that **Hamas** was still in shock from the scale of the onslaught but was preparing attacks it hoped would change the picture.

The cabinet approval for the mobilisation of 6700 reservists suggested any initial ground thrusts would be limited in scope. Ms Livni said Israel had no intention of reoccupying the Gaza Strip, from which it pulled out three years ago. Officials said the Foreign Ministry was already working on an exit strategy that would not involve stationing an international force in Gaza similar to that deployed in southern Lebanon after the war against Hezbollah.

World -- Page 7

Opinion -- Page 10

Load-Date: December 29, 2008

End of Document

Column: Hamas, Israel share blame in Gaza conflict

University Wire

January 5, 2009 Monday

Copyright 2009 The Lantern via U-Wire

Length: 566 words

Byline: By Travis Schulze, The Lantern; **SOURCE:** Ohio State U.

Dateline: COLUMBUS, Ohio

Body

Palestinians carry a dead man into Shifa hospital in Gaza City, killed during the Israeli army operation in Gaza, Sunday. Israeli ground troops and tanks cut swaths through the Gaza Strip Sunday, bisecting the coastal territory and surrounding its biggest city as the new phase of a devastating offensive against the Hamas group gained momentum. The Israeli military used overwhelming firepower from tanks, artillery and aircraft to protect the advancing soldiers, and Gaza officials said at least 31 civilians were killed in the onslaught. One Israeli soldier was killed.

As the conflict in Gaza escalates, it seems that the only group without blood on its hands is the one that has paid the greatest cost: the civilians of Gaza. Israel has again chosen to collectively punish Palestinians for the actions of Hamas with a response completely disproportionate to the rocket attacks on their country.

Before the ground invasion by Israel on Saturday, there had been 430 Gaza casualties, including 26 women, 74 children and an unknown number of male civilians. Israel has suffered four deaths from the rocket attacks.

And although Israel has directly caused the most damage in this conflict, Hamas is no less responsible. Hamas has chosen to direct rocket fire at the cities of southern Israel, deliberately targeting civilians. Hamas knew what the response from Israel would be, yet ignored the effect it would have on the lives of the people they claim to represent. Hamas has even used mosques and university buildings as weapon building sites, gambling on Israel's unwillingness to bomb such civilian sites and risking the safety of Gaza civilians. Throughout this conflict, Hamas has seemed willing to trade the blood of innocent Palestinians for the possibility of a political victory against Israel.

As Israel and Hamas fight for victory in this conflict, it is the civilians of Gaza who suffer. Their already weak economy was destroyed by the Israeli-led boycott, and now much of Gaza lies in rubble. It is time for the powers that be in this conflict to stop and think about those they are hurting. It is time for both sides to turn the other cheek.

Hamas, if it truly cares about its fellow Palestinians, should stop its rocket attacks and start to worry more about its own people and less about chasing the unattainable dream of ending the "occupation."

And if Hamas chooses not to stop its rocket attacks, Israel needs to stop following the misguided lead of the United States. It must respond to terror not with missiles, bombs and economic sanctions, but by attacking the underlying problem of Palestinian poverty.

Although Israel might win a short-term victory against Hamas in this current conflict, they are fueling the extremism of the next generation. If Israel chooses to continue punishing a whole nation of people for the actions of a few, this

Column: Hamas, Israel share blame in Gaza conflict

conflict will never end. Instead, Israel should defuse the extremism by working to build the Palestinian economy. They need to reopen Gaza borders and not only allow aid from other countries to go to Gaza, but also work to provide aid on their own. Instead of working to destroy the infrastructure of Hamas, they need to work to build the infrastructure of Gaza. If Israel can improve the lives of Palestinians, Hamas and other extremist groups will be helpless to do anything but watch as their support dwindles.

(C) 2008 The Lantern via UWIRE

Load-Date: January 5, 2009

End of Document

Hamas official: Israeli assault 'a holocaust'

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

January 11, 2009 Sunday

Copyright 2009 Woodward Communications, Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: A; Pg. 5

Length: 429 words

Byline: The Associated Press

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP) - Israel dropped bombs and leaflets on Gaza Saturday, pounding suspected rocket sites and tunnels used by **Hamas** militants and warning of a wider offensive despite frantic diplomacy to end the bloodshed. Egypt hosted talks aimed at defusing the crisis, but war had the momentum on a bloody day on which more than 30 Palestinians, many of them noncombatants, were killed. At hospitals, distraught relatives - men in jeans and jackets and **women** in black Islamic robes - sobbed and shrieked at the loss of family.

Flames and smoke rose over Gaza City amid heavy fighting. Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas predicted a "waterfall of blood" unless all parties adhere to a U.N. call for a cease-fire. But Israel has said the Security Council resolution passed Thursday was unworkable, and **Hamas**, the Islamic group whose government controls Gaza but is not recognized internationally, was angry that it was not consulted. A top **Hamas** leader said Saturday that the Gaza war has ended chances of negotiations with Israel and urged Arabs to pressure the Jewish state to end attacks in Gaza. Damascus-based **Hamas** leader Khaled Mashaal made his fiery speech on the Arab news channel Al-Jazeera. He described the Israeli assault as a "holocaust." "We are living the hardest moments of the resistance now, we want another intifada (uprising) in Palestine and on the Arab street," he said. Still, **Hamas** teams were in Cairo to discuss a cease-fire proposed by Egypt. At least 814 Palestinians, roughly half of them civilians, have died since war broke out on Dec. 27, according to Palestinian medical officials. Thirteen Israelis, including 10 soldiers, have been killed. Weary Palestinians watched from apartment windows across Gaza as thousands of leaflets fluttered from aircraft with a blunt warning: Israeli forces will step up operations against Islamic militants who have unleashed daily rocket fire on southern Israeli towns. "The IDF (Israeli Defense Forces) is not working against the people of Gaza but against **Hamas** and the terrorists only," the leaflets said in Arabic. "Stay safe by following our orders." The leaflets urged Gaza residents not to help **Hamas** and to stay away from its members. There was no immediate sign of an escalation, though earlier in the day, witnesses said Israeli troops moved to within one mile of Gaza City before pulling back slightly. Israeli defense officials said they are prepared for a third stage of their offensive, in which ground troops would push further into Gaza, but are waiting for approval from the government.

Load-Date: January 12, 2009

Military sources say Hamas chief of staff may have been killed. Hamas hit hard but still believed to be capable of firing barrages

The Jerusalem Post

December 29, 2008 Monday

Copyright 2008 The Jerusalem Post All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 578 words

Byline: YAAKOV KATZ and KHALED ABU TOAMEH

Body

Conflicting reports emerged Sunday regarding the fate of top Hamas military commander Ahmed Ja'abri, who may have been killed in one of the hundreds of Israeli air strikes against Hamas infrastructure in the Gaza Strip.

Since Operation Cast Lead began on Saturday, the air force has flown over 300 sorties over the Strip, bombing close to 280 different targets. Palestinian and Israeli sources said that Ja'abri, the overall commander of Hamas's armed wing, Izaddin Kassam, may have been killed in an air strike on a mosque which he frequented.

Sources close to Hamas in the Gaza Strip said they could neither confirm nor deny the report. They said that the bodies of many of the victims had yet to be identified and that several bodies were still under the rubbles of demolished buildings.

Defense officials said that at least 50 percent of Hamas's underground rocket launchers had been bombed during the air campaign, as well as a significant number of weapons warehouses. In addition, almost all of the Hamas bases and headquarters in the Gaza Strip were completely destroyed.

On Sunday, IAF aircraft bombed a top Hamas security installation, a mosque, a TV station and dozens of other targets.

But despite the bombings and the relatively low number of Kassam rockets fired into Israel throughout the day - some 30 in comparison to the earlier predictions of over 100 - senior officials said that Hamas was still capable of firing barrages of rockets into Israel.

"Hamas's operational capabilities were damaged, but the group still has underground launchers as well as the capability to launch attacks along the security fence and into Israel," said one official.

Officials said that Hamas was believed to still have thousands of Kassam rockets as well as a significant number of Grad-model Katyushas. Top officers would not rule out the possibility that Hamas may also have rockets with ranges greater than 40 kilometers. Hamas is also believed to have advanced anti-tank missiles as well as a number of shoulder-to-air missiles capable of downing Israeli aircraft.

The majority of the Palestinians killed in the IDF air raids that began Saturday were policemen and militiamen belonging to Izaddin Kassam, human rights activists and medical sources said Sunday.

Military sources say Hamas chief of staff may have been killed. Hamas hit hard but still believed to be capable of firing barrages

They revealed that about 160 blue-uniformed policemen were killed in the first day of the operation. Most of the cadets were attending a graduation ceremony at the main police headquarters in Gaza City on Saturday. The IDF said that in total, over 280 Palestinians were killed, most of them Hamas operatives.

Among the victims: Tawkif Jaber, the director-general of the Hamas-run "civil" police force in the Gaza Strip, and Ismail Ja'bari, commander of one of Hamas's most-feared security forces. The two are the most senior Hamas officials who are known to have been killed since the beginning of the IDF operation.

A human rights activist estimated that so far at least 60 civilians had been killed, including nine children under the age of 14 and 20 women. Another human rights activist said he knew about "fewer than 45" civilian casualties.

By Sunday night, the Palestinians reported that about 300 people had been killed and 1000 wounded since the beginning of the operation.

Palestinian journalists in Gaza City said they were facing many difficulties in collecting information about the casualties because of restrictions imposed by Hamas and because many of the victims' relatives had buried the bodies quickly.

Graphic

Photo: Ahmed Ja'abri

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

Deadly gamble in Hamas rout

Canberra Times (Australia)

January 8, 2009 Thursday

Final Edition

Copyright 2009 The Federal Capital Press of Australia PTY Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: A; Pg. 9

Length: 1230 words

Byline: The Canberra Times

Body

The scenes of calamity just get worse. This week Guardian readers awoke to an image that will haunt many for years: three young children, their eyes closed as if in sleep, laid out dead on a hospital floor. One was no bigger than a baby; next to him, a toddler wearing junior tracksuit trousers, the kind your own son might wear. Except these were dyed red with blood.

Somehow, and quickly, even that horror was surpassed with the news that a United Nations school, used as a shelter, had been hit, killing more than 40 Palestinians, more than half of them women or children. Israel says Hamas fighters were launching mortar shells from the UN facility, which is why Israel hit back. Either way, Operation Cast Lead seems designed to leaden the heart with sorrow.

Still, we have no cause for self-righteousness. The scale of the Israeli offensive is shocking, and yet the killing is not of a greater order than that of the two wars, in Iraq and Afghanistan.

I spoke this week with one foreign diplomat based in Jerusalem who recalled how, during an earlier posting in Afghanistan, he had seen the remains of an entire village razed to the ground by American fighter jets in pursuit of a couple of Taliban commanders. "All that was left was rubble and body parts," he says now.

Seen in the context of the past seven years, the grim truth is that Israelis are not guilty of a unique crime in Gaza.

When and how will this end? "The sooner, the better," says Ehud Olmert, the accidental Israeli Prime Minister whose tenure began with the pounding of southern Lebanon and will end with the pummelling of Gaza. He told Israeli daily newspaper Ha'aretz that he was in touch with world leaders seeking a diplomatic way out but he did not sound like a man in a hurry.

The conventional wisdom suggests crises like this conclude when the international community finally says enough is enough. But in the Middle East, the international community is a fiction. The only pressure that counts is from the United States and nothing is coming from that direction. President George W. Bush fully endorses Israel's action and President-elect Barack Obama is sticking to the protocol that a president-elect stays quiet till he has sworn the oath on January 20.

That leaves the only pressure that can divert Israeli governments: Israeli public opinion. If the fathers and mothers of Israel's soldiers turn on this operation, then its days will be numbered. For that to happen, the Israel Defence

Deadly gamble in Hamas rout

Forces would have to sustain serious casualties. Support for the 2006 war in Lebanon melted when too many Israeli families were burying their dead.

But that does not seem to be about to happen.

For one thing, the IDF is winning plaudits from the Israeli media for proceeding gingerly, pushing its ground troops forward with caution as if they have learned some of the operational lessons of 2006.

More importantly, Hamas is not staging anything like the opposition mounted by Hezbollah in Lebanon, when Israeli fatalities reached triple figures. It lacks the resources of Hezbollah, with its open border and supply lines to Syria.

Hamas is in tiny, sealed-off Gaza.

True, it is backed by Iran which partly explains the strength of support for Cast Lead from an Israeli public long fearful of an Iranian proxy on its southern border but relying on smuggled kit is not the same as having a powerful patron across the border.

Unless, of course, this is all a fiendish plot by the Hamas leadership. On this theory, they are not really cowering in their underground bunkers too scared to resist, saving their own skins, as the uncle of those dead toddlers accusingly said. Instead they are waiting to lure the IDF in, enticing Israeli troops deep into Gaza's cities where they will be most vulnerable.

But in the absence of such a lethal Hamas fightback, the ending of this conflict will be in Israel's hands.

The Israelis won't end it now, not when they are still finding weapons caches or other Hamas military capacity to be degraded. It is too tempting to press on, to crush the enemy. That way Israel gets to claim what it could not in 2006: a clear and total victory.

But there is a massive risk. Such a victory will not just achieve Cast Lead's original stated aim, namely altering Hamas's calculus reducing its incentive to fire rockets at civilian targets inside Israel but could topple the Hamas Government altogether.

Israeli officials deny that regime change in Gaza is either likely to happen or is the goal of their mission. But that may end up being the result: intelligence reports suggest the organisation has been eviscerated, its ability to govern all but destroyed. Israeli leaders will crow at that; their poll numbers will surge. But it will surely prove a pyrrhic victory. For what would be the consequences of crippling the Hamas administration in Gaza?

Israel would be confronted with a sharp dilemma. Either it would have to stay, resuming the occupation it sought to end in 2005 a notion with zero popular appeal in Israel. Or it would have to withdraw, leaving behind a huge and dangerous question mark. Gaza could rapidly descend into a lawless badland of warlords and clans. A new force could seek to replace Hamas. Most likely it would be even more radical: al-Qaeda has long been pushing at the edges of Gaza, eager to find a way in. Would either of those options appeal to Israel? Of course they wouldn't. As one Israeli commentator said, "In this context the IDF is afraid of being too successful."

Israel's preferred scenario, having pushed Hamas out of the way, is for the pro-Western moderates of Fatah to take over. But Fatah knows that to return to Gaza on the back of an Israeli tank is the kiss of death: it would forever be branded collaborators with the enemy.

Israel may try to dump responsibility for Gaza on a coalition of moderate Arab states and others, including the Fatah-led Palestinian Authority. But would any of them be willing to take it on? Analyst Ahmad Khalidi notes that the "amount of aid, reconstruction and psychological nursing is of such intensity" that surely no one would step in. Israel may be left recalling what Colin Powell once called the Pottery Barn rule: "You break it, you own it."

And from the rubble of Gaza, the attacks on Israel will surely resume.

Deadly gamble in Hamas rout

Hamas is too deeply rooted to disappear. New cells will arise, more filled with hatred and bent on revenge than ever. Already there are warnings of a return to suicide bombing, inside Israel and beyond.

And, Khalidi warns, there would be no **Hamas** leadership with undeniable discipline over its forces and the pragmatism to see the benefits of a ceasefire to rein in these new, angry fighters. The great irony is that Israel may well decapitate **Hamas** only to regret the passing of a Palestinian administration with sufficient stature to bring order.

Perhaps Israel's leadership will see this danger and hold back, pushing for a ceasefire that would be robust and externally supervised but would ultimately, if indirectly, amount to a deal with **Hamas**. If that is the outcome, it will be a strange kind of victory. For Israel could have got that through diplomacy, without causing the death, mayhem and damage to its international reputation now unfolding before our eyes. If it goes further, it will have removed one danger only to have replaced it with one far greater.

Jonathon Freeland writes for The Guardian.

Load-Date: January 7, 2009

End of Document

Truce with Israel leaves Hamas playing matchmaker

The International Herald Tribune

November 1, 2008 Saturday

Copyright 2008 International Herald Tribune All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 685 words

Byline: Taghreed El-Khodary - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: GAZA

Body

The grooms were resplendent in white shirts, while the brides all wore black. At a sports stadium one recent October evening, thousands of Palestinians - 300 newly married couples along with relatives and friends - gathered for a mass wedding celebration, the 10th here this year courtesy of Hamas.

Hamas, the militant Islamist group that controls Gaza, has been observing a truce with Israel since June, allowing its underground fighters to resurface but leaving them without much to do. At the same time, hundreds of the group's women have been recently widowed, their husbands having been killed either in confrontations with Israel or in the fighting last year between Hamas and its secular rival, Fatah.

Taking advantage of the pause in violence, the Hamas leaders have turned to matchmaking, bringing together single fighters and widows, and providing dowries and wedding parties for the many here who cannot afford such traditional trappings of matrimony.

"Marriage is the same as jihad," or holy war, said Muhammad Yousef, one recently married member of the Qassam Brigades, the Hamas underground. "With marriage, you are producing another generation that believes in resistance."

About 300 Qassam members, mostly in their 20s, signed up with their new wives for the most recent celebration, held at a sports stadium in the Tuffah district east of Gaza City. Local mosques spread the word about the event and offered to help find spouses for single men whose families had not yet managed to arrange a match for them. As an added incentive, couples were promised a cash grant in lieu of a dowry that few families could afford.

But the economic embargo on Gaza, spearheaded by the Israelis who, like the United States and the European Union, classify Hamas as a terrorist organization, somewhat dampened the celebrations. While the poorest couples received a gift equivalent to \$2,000, many others in less dire straits came away with only \$200.

Wael al-Zard, head of Al Taysir, an association affiliated with Hamas that tries to provide its fighters with the means to marry, said that many Muslims who used to contribute money from the Gulf states have stopped transferring funds "out of fear."

To make up some of the shortfall, Ismail Haniya, head of the Hamas government in Gaza, made a personal contribution of \$30,000 to the Tuffah group wedding; another senior Hamas leader, Mahmoud Zahar, contributed \$10,000.

Truce with Israel leaves Hamas playing matchmaker

"Your money is not going to casinos," Zard declared during the wedding event. His point was that the donations would be devoted only to furthering the Islamist agenda and not going to line officials' pockets, an accusation widely leveled against the previous leaders from Fatah. "There will be more weddings, and no one will remain single," he said.

Although **Hamas** has long organized joint weddings, it is now doing so with more verve and is placing special emphasis on remarrying its war widows. One of them, Amani Saed, 24, attended the mass wedding with her two young sons from her first marriage, Rami, 5, and Muhammad, 3. Their father, Khaled Saed, was killed at the age of 28 during the **Hamas**-Fatah clashes of August 2007.

Eight months after Khaled's death, his father asked for Amani's hand for his younger son, Muhammad, 22, who worked at the Interior Ministry. Amani said she reluctantly agreed. "Muhammad is younger," she said. "It's hard, but it's good for the kids."

Muhammad Yousef, the groom who equated marriage with jihad, came to celebrate and collect \$200. In July 2006, an Israeli tank crew fired in his direction as he and his group fired rockets at Israel. He was badly wounded in his chest and both legs, and his friends took him for dead and celebrated his "martyrdom" on the way to the hospital morgue.

But he survived and, because of his severe injuries, moved from firing rockets to manufacturing them. He said he shared all details of his past with his wife before they married and she accepted his way of life wholeheartedly. The night before the weddings, he said, she shared with him her ultimate wish: to carry out a joint suicide attack against Israel.

Load-Date: November 2, 2008

Death toll hits 925 amid new clash with Hamas

Evening Herald (Ireland)

January 13, 2009 Tuesday

Copyright 2009 Independent News and Media Ltd. All Rights Reserved



Section: WORLD NEWS

Length: 552 words

Body

FIGHTING: No let-up as Palestinians reject 'surrender'

Israeli forces tightened their hold on the outskirts of the city of Gaza today and Israel's top general said "there is still work" ahead against Hamas in an 18-day-old offensive that has killed more than 900 Palestinians.

The sounds of explosions and heavy machinegun fire echoed through the city of 500,000 after Israeli tanks drew nearer but did not enter its densely populated centre, local residents said.

FIGHTING

Medical workers said 12 Palestinian gunmen, some of them members of the Islamist Hamas group that rules the Gaza Strip, were killed in morning fighting.

Hamas said its forces detonated explosives beneath Israeli armour and fought with Israeli forces backed by helicopter gunships and naval fire.

Israel aircraft attacked 60 targets, including tunnels used by Gaza militants to smuggle arms across the border from Egypt, weapons-making facilities and Hamas command posts, the military said.

Two rockets hit the Israeli city of Beersheba, causing no casualties.

"We have achieved a lot in hitting Hamas and its infrastructure, its rule and its armed wing, but there is still work ahead," Lieutenant-General Gabi Ashkenazi, chief of staff of Israel's armed forces, told a parliamentary committee.

"We are working to deepen the blow to its military arm, reduce (Hamas) fire, strengthen (Israeli) deterrence and improve the security situation for residents of southern Israel living under the threat of (rocket) attacks," he said.

Earlier, an Israeli general speaking to reporters touring Israeli positions, said his forces were "tightening the encirclement" of the city of Gaza.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon was heading to the region for a week of talks with leaders in Egypt, Israel, Jordan and Syria aimed at ending the bloodshed.

Death toll hits 925 amid new clash with Hamas

"My message is simple, direct, and to the point: the fighting must stop. To both sides, I say: Just stop now," Bantold reporters before his departure.

CHILDREN

Palestinian medical officials said at least 925 people in the Gaza Strip have been killed since Israel began its offensive on December. 27.

The health minister in Gaza's Hamas-run government said close to 400 of those were women and children.

Thirteen Israelis --- 10 Israeli soldiers and three civilians hit by mortar bombs and rockets from the Gaza Strip -- have been killed. Egypt pursued efforts to broker a ceasefire, 18 days after Israel began its attack in the Gaza Strip saying it aimed to halt cross-border rocket fire, salvoes.

Lebanese political sources said Hamas negotiators have rejected Cairo's peace proposals.

A Lebanese source close to Hamas said the group wanted a truce for a limited time only.

Human rights groups report shortages of vital supplies including water, in the Gaza Strip, due to the fighting.

Hamas's leader in Gaza, Ismail Haniyeh, said on television that it was ready to negotiate a ceasefire but only if Israel pulled back all its forces and ended a blockade it tightened after Hamas seized the Gaza Strip in 2007.

Speaking from a secret location, he said that "victory is at hand".

Israel has rejected a U.N. Security Council call for a truce but said it was ready to discuss proposals, insisting a ceasefire should include measures to stop Hamas from rearming through tunnels in a Gaza-Egypt frontier area.

hnews@herald.ie

Load-Date: January 13, 2009

Defiant Hamas strikes at Israel

The Bismarck Tribune

December 30, 2008 Tuesday

Copyright 2008 The Bismarck Tribune, a division of Lee Enterprises All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 1A

Length: 1411 words

Byline: IBRAHIM BARZAK and JASON KEYSER Associated Press Writers

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip - Palestinian militants sent a deadly barrage of missiles flying deep into Israel on Monday, demonstrating that Hamas still had firepower three days into Israel's punishing air offensive in Gaza.

Three Israelis were killed and two seriously wounded. Palestinian health officials put the three-day death toll in Gaza at 364; the U.N. said the total included at least 62 civilians.

In Monday's attacks, Israel focused its bombing on the houses of Hamas field operatives in a campaign meant to tear at the roots of the extremist group ruling Gaza. Israel's defense minister promised a "war to the bitter end against Hamas" and allied militants.

Intensified rocket strikes by Gaza militants, which triggered the Israeli offensive, have revealed the expanding range of missiles that are making larger cities farther inside Israel vulnerable.

In a barrage Monday night, a missile crashed into a bus stop in Ashdod, 23 miles from the Gaza Strip. A woman died and two others were wounded, one seriously - the first casualties in the city of 190,000 residents.

Another Israeli was killed and one seriously wounded by a rocket strike in the Negev desert community of Nahal Oz, closer to the Gaza border. Earlier, a missile killed a construction worker in the city of Ashkelon. In all, four Israelis were dead since the Gaza offensive began Saturday, bringing to 19 the number of people killed in attacks from Gaza since the beginning of the year.

The targets chosen by Israel on Monday pointed to an intention to chip away at Hamas' foundation. Israeli aircraft staged five separate strikes on the houses of field operatives, though there was no confirmation that any of them were killed.

A grainy video taken by an Israeli drone airplane showed several men loading a pickup truck with what the Israeli military said were medium-range Grad rockets. Moments later, a big explosion from an Israeli missile strike envelops the image.

One Israeli attack targeted a house in the Jebaliya refugee camp, killing seven people, but the Hamas activist was not there, Hamas security and relatives said. Another hit the Jebaliya home of Abdel-Karim Jaber, a Hamas political figure who is a senior administrator at Gaza's Islamic University. He was not at home and it wasn't immediately clear if anyone was hurt in the strike.

Defiant Hamas strikes at Israel

In another air assault, an Islamic Jihad commander was killed as he was walking near his house, said Abu Hamza, a spokesman for Islamic Jihad's military wing.

Israel's airstrikes on more than 320 sites since midday Saturday reduced dozens of buildings to rubble, overwhelmed hospitals with wounded and filled Gaza's deserted streets with smoke and fire. The military said Israeli naval vessels had also bombarded targets from the sea.

On Monday, aircraft pulverized a house next to the home of Hamas Premier Ismail Haniyeh, a security compound and a five-story building at a university closely linked to the Islamic group - all symbols of Hamas strength in the coastal territory it has ruled since June 2007.

Israel's offensive has rattled the Middle East and capitals around the world, triggering street protests and fiery speeches by adversaries of Israel like the militant group Hezbollah in Lebanon. In the day's biggest outpouring of anger, tens of thousands of Hezbollah's supporters stood in a pouring rain in a Beirut square to condemn Israel.

Stone-throwing clashes broke out in about a half-dozen spots in the Palestinians' West Bank territory as well as in several Arab-populated areas inside Israel. Israeli police and soldiers fired rubber bullets and tear gas at rioting youths, but it did not appear anyone was injured.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon condemned Israel's offensive as excessive and demanded an immediate cease-fire. He said key international and regional players - including foreign ministers of the Arab League nations holding an emergency meeting Wednesday - must "act swiftly and decisively to bring an early end to this impasse."

The U.S. government said it was "vigorously engaged" in trying to restore a cease-fire.

White House spokesman Gordon Johndroe defended the Israeli response, but added that the Bush administration was urging Israel to avoid civilian casualties in Gaza.

With Israeli troops and tanks massing on the Gaza border, Defense Minister Ehud Barak told parliament he wanted to strike a devastating blow against Hamas. However, later he indicated a ground assault was not inevitable, issuing a warning that he was giving Hamas a last chance to halt its rocket fire.

Short of reoccupying Gaza, however, it was unlikely any amount of Israeli firepower could completely snuff out militant rocket attacks. Past operations all failed to do so.

The Cabinet's decision over the weekend to call up 6,500 reserve soldiers could be a pressure tactic. Military experts noted no full combat units had been mobilized and said Israel would need at least 10,000 soldiers for a full-scale invasion.

For the first time, Israel also hit one of a series of tunnels prepared by Hamas along the border with Israel for use in attacks on invading ground troops, several Israeli TV networks said. One tunnel was packed with explosives and several militants inside were killed, Channel 1 said.

Most of those killed in three days of airstrikes were Hamas members. A Hamas police spokesman, Ehab Ghussen, said 180 members of Hamas security forces were among the dead.

But the U.N. agency in charge of Palestinian refugees expressed concern about civilian casualties. A rise in civilian casualties could intensify international pressure on Israel to end the offensive.

In New York, U.N. humanitarian chief John Holmes said his agency had not been able to determine a precise number of civilian casualties, but knew of at least 62 women and children killed. He said 1,400 people had been injured.

Eight children under the age of 17 were killed in two separate Israeli airstrikes Sunday night, Palestinian medics said.

Defiant Hamas strikes at Israel

Holmes said he was very worried about a shortage of humanitarian supplies in Gaza.

"Because of the effective blockade that's been in place for many months now, and because of the increasing tightening of this blockade in recent weeks around Gaza, stocks of vital items are either very low or nonexistent, and that's particularly the case, for example, with wheat flour," he said.

Israel opened one of Gaza's border crossings Monday to allow several ambulances and 62 trucks carrying medical supplies and food to cross.

"Obviously these supplies are better than nothing, but they remain wholly inadequate," Holmes said, saying that his agency needed 100 truckloads of flour every day to meet needs.

In Gaza, some families left their apartments next to institutions linked to **Hamas**, fearing they could be targeted. Suad Abu Wadi, 42, kept her six children close to her on mattresses in her Gaza City living room. Her husband sat with them, chain-smoking. Abu Wadi said he had not said a word since seeing their neighbor carrying the body of his child, killed in an airstrike Saturday.

Gaza's nine hospitals were overwhelmed. Dr. Moaiya Hassanain, who keeps a record for the Gaza Health Ministry, said 364 Palestinians had died and more than 1,400 wounded. Some of the injured were being taken to private clinics and even homes, he said.

Egyptian officials said ambulances were ferrying wounded Gazans to hospitals in Egypt from Gaza's Rafah border crossing. Tariq al-Mahlawi, Egypt's deputy health minister, said 32 patients had been brought in by nightfall and that 500 beds were ready to treat Palestinians.

Around mid-afternoon, ambulances ferried the wounded from Gaza toward the crossing in the border town of Rafah, where over a dozen Egyptian ambulances waited to take over the casualties.

Despite Israel's battering attacks, sirens warning of incoming rockets sent Israelis scrambling for cover throughout the day as more than 40 rockets and mortar rounds rained down.

Israeli security officials warned that the militants' rockets are powerful enough now to reach Beersheba, a major city 30 miles from Gaza.

Mazal Ivgi, a 62-year-old resident of Beersheba, said she had prepared a bomb shelter. "In the meantime we don't really believe it's going to happen, but when the first boom comes people will be worried," she said.

(Associated Press writers Aron Heller in Ashkelon, Jason Keyser in Jerusalem, Edith M. Lederer in New York, Deb Riechmann in Crawford, Texas, and Omar Sinan in Rafah, Egypt, contributed to this report.)

Load-Date: December 30, 2008

West Bank residents angry at Hamas too

Charleston Gazette (West Virginia)

January 10, 2009, Saturday

Copyright 2009 Charleston Newspapers

Section: NEWS; Pg. P9C

Length: 846 words

Body

RAMALLAH, West Bank - Since the war in Gaza began two weeks ago, Rami Hamdan has oscillated between two emotions: sadness at the deaths of Palestinian civilians, and anger, not only at Israel but also at its Palestinian foe, the militant Islamist group **Hamas**.

"Of course I am unhappy about the killings," said Hamdan, a 30-year-old building inspector in Ramallah, the de facto capital of the West Bank. "But **Hamas** is also responsible. They breached the truce. Israel is an aggressive entity at the end of the day, and **Hamas** knew this could happen."

Not many Palestinians will say that out loud in the West Bank these days. Most people voice outrage about Israel's offensive in the **Hamas**-controlled Gaza Strip, which by Friday had killed nearly 800 people, two-fifths of them **women** and children.

Below the surface, however, many in the West Bank are conflicted. A violent rift between **Hamas** and the secular Fatah party, which controls the West Bank, has left many unsure of their political future and fearful that their own territory could be engulfed in yet another round of battles with Israel.

Since **Hamas** seized control of Gaza in June 2007, the two Palestinian mini states have been on very different tracks. While Israel and the United States have tried to isolate Gaza and bring **Hamas** to its knees, the Fatah-led Palestinian Authority, with U.S. backing, has consolidated its hold on the West Bank, building up its security forces and trying to make its administration more efficient.

Despite the bitter political rivalry, most Palestinians appear to view the onslaught in Gaza as an attack on them all. Any real hope of peace negotiations with Israel has been forestalled by the division between Fatah and **Hamas**, however, leaving many feeling helpless.

"This is the first face-off with the Israelis where we have not had a united front," said Sam Bahour, an Ohio-born Palestinian who returned to Ramallah 15 years ago and runs a leading consulting firm. "This is a bitter reality that we're facing, and it's affecting how people are mobilizing."

Hamas leaders have called for a third Intifada, or uprising, against Israel, but there's little sign of that in Ramallah.

This city saw fierce clashes with Israeli forces during the second Intifada, starting in 2000, including a grisly mob lynching of two Israeli soldiers, whose bodies then were dragged through the town square. Up to Friday, however, when a well-organized rally drew thousands into the streets, anti-Israeli protests had been relatively small.

West Bank residents angry at Hamas too

Many said that was because Fatah leaders had deployed security forces to intimidate protesters and had banned displays of the **Hamas** flag. Several **Hamas** leaders continue to be held behind bars.

Fatah leaders say they're trying to prevent the West Bank from slipping into chaos. Many people chafe at the security presence, however, and criticize Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas for remaining silent through much of the conflict.

"Everybody feels a problem with the authority's response," said Ashraf Shahin, a 20-year-old working at a car wash. He said he was stunned when Palestinian riot police broke up a pro-Gaza demonstration at Birzeit University earlier this week, beating students with clubs and hauling away several protesters in police vans.

"Instead of using weapons to fight Israeli occupation, they are using them to fight our own people. That never happened under Abu Ammar," Shahin said, referring to Yasser Arafat, the longtime Palestinian president and Fatah founder, who died in 2004.

(EDITORS: STORY CAN END HERE)

There's no question that Palestinians are deeply disillusioned with Abbas, whose term as president officially expired Friday, although he shows no sign of stepping down. His critics say that Abbas has become little more than a client of Israel and the United States, undermining **Hamas** while pursuing peace negotiations that few think have any real chance of success.

Instead, with little to show for years of often violent political struggle, many Palestinians have opted for a quieter response. In homes, offices and restaurants across Ramallah, people are glued to television coverage of Gaza and are organizing charity drives via social organizations and Web sites such as Facebook.

"People are more analytical now," 24-year-old Nura Treish said. "If there was a viable peace process to cling to, it might be different. There is no such peace process. So this idea of a third intifada, people are thinking, well, really, what would we be fighting for?"

Many in Ramallah remain hopeful that the onslaught in Gaza could help unite the Palestinian factions. At Friday's rally, however, Jamil El Abed, a 27-year-old carpenter, said he was disheartened to hear so many people voicing support for one faction or the other.

For now, he said, the thought of Palestinian unity is farfetched.

"I've lost hope in everybody: Fatah, **Hamas** and the authority," El Abed said. "Their division makes it easy for Israel to swallow us."

McClatchy Newspapers special correspondent Khader Musleh contributed to this report from Ramallah.

Load-Date: January 12, 2009

Israeli assault targets symbols of Hamas power

Daily News Egypt

December 29, 2008 Monday

Copyright 2008 Daily News Egypt - Egyptian Media Services Ltd. Provided by Syndigate.info, an Albawaba.com company All Rights Reserved



Length: 1004 words

Body

GAZA CITY: Israel's air force obliterated symbols of Hamas power on the third day of its overwhelming Gaza assault Monday, striking a house next to the Hamas premier's home, devastating a security compound and flattening a five-story building at a university closely linked to the Islamic group.

The three-day death toll rose to 315, including seven children under the age of 15 who were killed in two separate strikes late Sunday and Monday, medics said. Israel launched its campaign, the deadliest against Palestinians in decades, on Saturday in retaliation for rocket fire targeting southern Israeli towns.

The strikes appear to have gravely damaged Hamas' ability to launch rockets, but one medium-range rocket fired at the Israeli city of Ashkelon killed a man there Monday and wounded several others. It was the second fatality in Israel since the beginning of the offensive, and the first person ever to be killed by a rocket in Ashkelon, a city of 120,000.

On Sunday, Hamas missiles struck for the first time near the city of Ashdod, twice as far from Gaza as Ashkelon and only 40 km from Israel's heart in Tel Aviv.

At first light Monday, strong winds blew black smoke from the bombed sites in Gaza City over deserted streets. The air hummed with the buzz of pilotless drones and the roar of jets, punctuated by the explosions of new airstrikes.

Most of those killed since Saturday were members of Hamas security forces, though the precise numbers remain unclear. The UN agency in charge of Palestinian refugees said at least 51 of the dead were civilians. A rise in civilian casualties could intensify international pressure on Israel to abort the offensive.

Israel's intense bombings - more than 300 air strikes since midday Saturday - wreaked unprecedented destruction in Gaza, reducing buildings to rubble.

One strike destroyed a five-story building in the women's wing at Islamic University, one of the most prominent Hamas symbols. Another attack ravaged a compound controlled by Preventive Security, one of the group's chief security arms, and a third destroyed a house next to the residence of Ismail Haniyeh, the Hamas prime minister. Like other Hamas leaders, Haniyeh is in hiding.

Israeli assault targets symbols of Hamas power

Late Sunday, Israeli aircraft attacked a building in the Jebaliya refugee camp next to Gaza City, killing a woman, a toddler and three young teenage girls, Gaza Health Ministry official Dr Moaiya Hassanain said.

In the southern town of Rafah, a toddler and his two teenage brothers were killed in an air strike aimed at a Hamas commander, Hassanain said. In Gaza City, another attack killed a man and his wife.

Shlomo Brom, a former senior Israeli military official, said it was the deadliest force ever used in decades of Israeli-Palestinian fighting.

In the most dramatic attacks Sunday, warplanes struck dozens of smuggling tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border, cutting off a lifeline that had supplied Hamas with weapons and Gaza with commercial goods. The influx of goods helped Hamas defy an 18-month blockade of Gaza by Israel and Egypt.

Gaza's nine hospitals were overwhelmed. Hassanain, who keeps a record for the Gaza Health Ministry, said over 1,400 were wounded over two days of fighting, and that casualties were now being taken to private clinics and even homes.

Abdel Hafez, a 55-year-old history teacher, waited outside a Gaza City bakery to buy bread, one of the few people visible outdoors. He said he was not a Hamas supporter, but believed the strikes would only increase support for the group. "Each strike, each drop of blood are giving Hamas more fuel to continue," he said.

In Jerusalem, Israel's Cabinet approved a call-up of 6,500 reserve soldiers Sunday in apparent preparation for a ground offensive. The final decision to call up more reserves has yet to be made by the defense minister, Ehud Barak, and the Cabinet decision could be a pressure tactic.

Israel has doubled the number of troops on the Gaza border since Saturday and also deployed an artillery battery. Several hundred reservists have already been summoned to join their units, but no full combat formations have been mobilized so far.

Israeli leaders have said the operation might be long. "The goal of our current operation is to ... create a situation where Israeli civilians living in the south of the country no longer have to live in constant fear of a Hamas rocket attack," government spokesman Mark Regev said Monday.

Since Israel's withdrawal from Gaza in 2005 after a 38-year military occupation, Israeli forces have repeatedly returned to the territory to hunt insurgents firing rockets at Israeli towns. But it has shied away from retaking the entire strip for fear of getting bogged down in urban warfare.

Military experts said Israel would need at least 10,000 soldiers for a full-scale invasion.

The assault has sparked diplomatic fallout. Syria decided to suspend indirect peace talks with Israel, begun earlier this year. The UN Security Council called on both sides to halt the fighting and asked Israel to allow humanitarian supplies into Gaza. Raed Fattouh, a Gaza border official, said Israel informed him that two key crossings would be open Monday to allow in fuel and aid supplies.

The prime minister of Turkey, one of the few Muslim countries to have relations with Israel, called the air assault a "crime against humanity," and French President Nicolas Sarkozy condemned "the provocations that led to this situation as well as the disproportionate use of force."

The carnage inflamed Arab and Muslim public opinion, setting off street protests in Arab communities in Israel and the West Bank, across the Arab world, and in some European cities.

Some of the protests turned violent. Israeli troops quelling a West Bank march Sunday killed one Palestinian and seriously wounded another.

Israeli assault targets symbols of Hamas power

On Monday, a Palestinian stabbed and wounded four Israelis in a West Bank settlement before he was shot and wounded. It was not immediately clear if the attack was directly connected to the events in Gaza. -Matti Friedman reported from Jerusalem.

Load-Date: December 30, 2008

End of Document

Neither Hamas nor Israel will win with violence

Windsor Star (Ontario)

January 9, 2009 Friday

Final Edition

Copyright 2009 Windsor Star, a division of CanWest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: EDITORIAL/OPINION; Pg. A7

Length: 222 words

Byline: Danny Berteon, Windsor Star

Body

Re : Canada Should Send Troops To Help Israel, Jan. 5, by Dan Smith.

I could not believe Mr. Smith believes Canada should send troops to Israel to fight Hamas and that Hamas is killing Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan.

Mr. Smith should look at the map of the Middle East before making such comments. Hamas is not fighting Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan, it's the Taliban and al-Qaida.

Our soldiers are already shedding enough blood as a result of American foreign policy. We do not need to get involved in any more adventures.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper is right about not continuing the mission beyond 2011. Canadian soldiers are known for peacekeeping around the world and should remain as such.

I am for Canadian soldiers being deployed in Gaza if there is a UN resolution, but fighting the war for Israel would not benefit this country.

Canada has never been attacked by any terrorists, but putting our foot where we do not belong might make us vulnerable.

If Hamas thinks that by firing rockets at Israel, they can scare them, they are wrong. At the same time, if Israel thinks it can bomb innocent children and women and achieve peace, they are living in a dreamland, too.

We can only hope that organizations like Hamas become irrelevant and moderates take over on both sides so the peace process can go forth.

DANNY BERTEON

Kingsville

Load-Date: January 9, 2009

Neither Hamas nor Israel will win with violence

End of Document

U.S. blames Hamas; calls for cease fire

Chicago Daily Herald

December 28, 2008 Sunday

L2 Edition

Copyright 2008 Paddock Publications, Inc.

Section: NEWS; Pg. 6

Length: 764 words

Byline: Associated Press

Body

CRAWFORD, Texas — The U.S. on Saturday blamed the militant group Hamas for breaking a cease-fire and attacking Israel, which retaliated with strikes of its own during what became the single bloodiest day of fighting in years.

The White House called for the cease-fire to be restored, yet there were few indications that the violence, which has left more than 200 people dead and nearly another 400 wounded, was waning. Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak warned that the operation in Gaza would widen if necessary.

It was "completely unacceptable" for Hamas, which controls Gaza, to launch attacks on Israel after a truce lasting several months, said Gordon Johndroe, a spokesman for the National Security Council.

"These people are nothing but thugs, so Israel is going to defend its people against terrorists like Hamas that indiscriminately kill their own people," Johndroe said in Texas as President George W. Bush was spending the week before New Year's at his ranch here. "They need to stop. We have said in the past that they have a choice to make. You can't have one foot in politics and one foot in terror."

President-elect Barack Obama was receiving an intelligence briefing on Saturday from various security agencies, Johndroe said, and Bush has spoken to regional leaders and the administration will remain in close contact.

Brooke Anderson, Obama's national security spokeswoman, said Saturday that Obama "is closely monitoring global events, including the situation in Gaza, but there is one president at a time."

As Israel bombed Gaza, defiant Hamas leaders threatened revenge. Hamas "will continue the resistance until the last drop of blood," vowed spokesman Fawzi Barhoum.

Moderate Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who controls the West Bank, condemned Israel. Egypt summoned the Israeli ambassador to express condemnation and opened its border with Gaza to allow ambulances to drive out some of the wounded.

Asked if the United States would back a continuation of the retaliatory strikes by Israel, Johndroe said: "The U.S. doesn't want to see any more violence. I think what we've got to see is Hamas stop firing rockets into Israel. That's what precipitated this."

U.S. blames Hamas; calls for cease fire

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice kept the president abreast of the situation. At the ranch, the president took a call from King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, who wanted to discuss the violence that began eight days after a six-month truce expired.

"The United States strongly condemns the repeated rocket and mortar attacks against Israel and holds Hamas responsible for breaking the cease-fire and for the renewal of violence in Gaza," Rice said in a statement. "The cease-fire should be restored immediately. The United States calls on all concerned to address the urgent humanitarian needs of the innocent people of Gaza."

Israeli warplanes launched counterattacks on dozens of security compounds across the Hamas-ruled territory in unprecedented waves of airstrikes. Most of those killed were security men, but an unknown number of civilians were also among the dead.

Hamas said all of its security installations were hit, threatened to resume suicide attacks, and sent at least 70 rockets and mortar shells crashing into Israeli border communities, according to the Israeli military. One Israeli was killed and at least six people were hurt.

With so many wounded, the Palestinian death toll was likely to rise. The strikes caused widespread panic and confusion in Gaza. Some of the Israeli missiles struck in densely populated areas as children were leaving school, and women rushed into the streets frantically looking for their children.

Johndroe said the U.S. was concerned that humanitarian needs were being met in Gaza. He urged Israel to avoid striking civilians, but he refrained from commenting specifically on positions that had been hit on the ground.

"I know they are targeting security and Hamas headquarters facilities," Johndroe said. "We urge them (the Israelis) to avoid civilian casualties."

"The message from the United States is that Hamas is a terrorist organization that is firing rockets into Israel and they fired them onto their own people as well," Johndroe said, noting reports he'd seen about the death of two Palestinian girls. "Hamas has done nothing for the people of Gaza."

The offensive has sparked angry protests throughout the Arab world. British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, the Vatican, the U.N. secretary-general and special Mideast envoy Tony Blair called for an immediate restoration of calm. The Arab League scheduled an emergency meeting Sunday to discuss the situation.

Load-Date: December 28, 2008

Inadvertent martyrs to the cause of Hamas

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

January 2, 2009 Friday

First Edition

Copyright 2009 The Age Company Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: INSIGHT; Opinion; Pg. 21

Length: 793 words

Byline: David Bernstein is an Age journalist.

Body

WHO could not be distressed by the heart-wrenching picture of four-year-old Jawaher Balousha's tiny, lifeless body on the front page of Wednesday's Age?

She and four of her sisters died when, according to the accompanying report, their family home collapsed on them from the force of the blast generated by an Israeli bomb attack on the nearby Imad Aqil mosque, presumably a **Hamas** target, in Gaza's Jabaliya refugee camp.

The gut response of most readers would be, I imagine, much like my own: one of distress, horror, and pity - closely followed, not by the sense of uneasy shame and helplessness that has afflicted me as a Jew deeply invested culturally and emotionally with the conflict in the Middle East, but one of anger and outrage towards the Israeli perpetrators.

There will undoubtedly be charges of disproportionality, callousness, and even inhumanity, and mounting calls for international pressure to bring Israel to heel. All perfectly understandable, when one sees images such as this.

But there have also been charges that Israel is deliberately targeting civilians. One pro-Palestinian Australian witness in Gaza even claimed on radio earlier this week that she had seen many dead **women** and children brought to a local hospital - and not a single combatant.

This not only belies the figures coming from UN and Palestinian sources in Gaza that make it clear that the overwhelming majority of casualties, so far at least, have been **Hamas** operatives, but defies all rationality. Pictures and reports of Palestinian children dying in Israeli air raids are the last thing Israel wants or needs as it attempts to protect its own children from falling victim to incessant rocket attacks from Gaza.

Whether the steps Israel is taking will achieve that end is, at the very least, debatable. But what is not debatable is the fact that the human tragedy that has afflicted the Balousha family, displayed graphically and prominently in the world media, is an unmitigated public relations disaster for Israel in the all-important battle for international hearts and minds.

And, by the same token, it represents a massive propaganda coup for **Hamas** and its supporters, painting Israel as a heartless, ruthless, barbaric foe that has little or no regard for human life.

Inadvertent martyrs to the cause of Hamas

In that sense, the five Balousha children have become inadvertent martyrs to the Hamas cause, achieving more by their tragic deaths than 100 Hamas-inspired suicide bombers sent to take the lives of Israeli men, women and children.

Israeli academic Fania Oz-Salzberger, in her opinion piece on this page on Wednesday, accused Hamas of deliberately and cynically using Palestinian civilians to this end. While

this is by no means improbable, given Hamas' record of deliberately and cynically targeting Israeli civilians, including children, in its Islamic fundamentalist war of elimination against the hated Jewish state, it seems to me not to be the whole story.

Yes, combatants and civilians are hopelessly intermingled in Gaza, but one would have to recognise that it probably has as much to do with the nature of the terrain - one of the most overcrowded and geographically featureless strips of semi-desert on the face of the earth - as it does with any deliberate policy on the part of Hamas. Where do proponents of the "human shield" theory expect Hamas to set up its camps safe from Israeli attack: in the dense forests and remote mountain tops of Gaza?

And the fact that Israel has declared that it is targeting the entire "Hamas infrastructure" - including Hamas-run mosques, evidently - in its current

"Cast Lead" offensive would make any "combatant/civilian" separation even more impossible.

So while there is ample reason for even the most obdurate sceptic to accept that Israel is doing its best to avoid civilian casualties, if only to escape the international opprobrium and pressure these bring, this appears all but impossible in the circumstances. It is a factor that Israel obviously takes into account in its risk-benefit assessment of its current operation, regardless of whether one, from the safety and comfort of far-off Melbourne, agrees with its conclusion.

Meanwhile, the depressing truth is that, in this soul and hope-destroying, God-forgotten conflict between Muslim and Jew, Palestinian and Israeli, in the "Holy Land", children - Arab and Israeli alike - will continue to be the helpless "collateral victims" of a political situation their elders (and, for that matter, the world) appear impotent to bring to a just and workable conclusion.

As we enter a new year, and perhaps a new era with a new black messiah in the White House, it is tempting to hope that 2009 will bring more cheer to this benighted part of the world than most of the past 2008. But it is a forlorn hope.

Load-Date: January 1, 2009

Israel strikes hit Gaza 155 dead as Hamas targets razed

Sunday Mail (South Australia)

December 28, 2008 Sunday

2 - Final Edition

Copyright 2008 Nationwide News Pty Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: FOREIGN; Pg. 32

Length: 584 words

Byline: IBRAHIM BARZAK IN GAZA CITY

Body

ISRAELI aircraft struck Hamas security compounds across Gaza last night in unprecedented waves of simultaneous strikes, leaving dozens dead and many others buried under rubble.

The strikes caused widespread panic and confusion, as black clouds of smoke rose above Gaza.

Health Ministry official Moawiya Hassanain said at least 140 people were killed and more than 310 wounded. Hamas later reported the rising toll had reached at least 155.

In one of the Hamas compounds, bodies of more than a dozen uniformed security officers were seen lying on the ground. One survivor raised his index finger in a show of Muslim faith, uttering a prayer.

Among the dead was the Gaza police chief, Major General Tawfiq Jaber, witnesses said.

Hamas radio said militants had launched dozens of rockets into Israel in retaliation.

In a statement, Hamas's military wing said it had fired off four.

The Israeli army said three rockets and two mortars had fallen within Israel. Israeli rescue services said one man died when a rocket scored a direct hit on a house in the southern town of Netivot. Hamas officials said all of Gaza's security compounds were destroyed. Hamas vowed it would seek revenge, including launching new rocket attacks on Israel and sending suicide bombers to Israel.

“Hamas will continue the resistance until the last drop of blood,” said Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum, speaking on Gaza radio.

The Israeli strikes came in response to renewed rocket fire from Gaza on Israeli border towns.

Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak said that “the operation will last as long as necessary” but it was not clear if it would be coupled with a ground offensive.

Asked if Hamas political leaders might be targeted next, military spokeswoman Major Avital Leibovitch said: “Any Hamas target is a target.”

Israel strikes hit Gaza 155 dead as Hamas targets razed

Military spokesman Avi Benayahu told army radio: ``This is only just the beginning of an operation launched after a security cabinet decision. It could take time. We have not fixed a timeline and we will act according to the situation on the ground."

Israel had warned in recent days it would strike back hard against continued rocket fire from Gaza. Israel urged Israelis living near Gaza to seek refuge in secure locations.

The first round of air strikes came just before noon (local time), and several more waves followed. **Hamas** security compounds are often located in civilian areas. The first air strikes took place as children were leaving school.

Plumes of black smoke rose over Gaza City, sirens wailed through the streets and **women** frantically looked for their children.

One man sat in the middle of a Gaza City street, close to a security compound, alternately slapping his face and covering his head with dust from the bombed-out building. ``My son is gone, my son is gone," wailed Sadi Masri, 57. The shopkeeper said he sent his son out to buy cigarettes minutes before the airstrikes and now could not find him. ``May I burn like the cigarettes, may Israel burn," he wailed.

Civilians rushed to the targeted areas, trying to move the wounded in their cars to hospitals.

Television footage showed Gaza City hospitals crowded with people, as civilians rushed in the wounded in various vehicles.

``We are treating people on the floor, in the corridors. We don't know who is here and what the priority is to treat," said one doctor at Shifa Hospital.

In the West Bank, **Hamas** rival, moderate Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, said in a statement that he ``condemns this aggression" and called for restraint.

Load-Date: December 29, 2008

In Gaza, Hamas plays role of matchmaker

The International Herald Tribune

October 31, 2008 Friday

Copyright 2008 International Herald Tribune All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 7

Length: 778 words

Byline: Taghreed El-Khodary - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: GAZA

Body

The grooms were resplendent in white shirts, while the brides all wore black. At a sports stadium one recent October evening, thousands of Palestinians - 300 newly married couples along with relatives and friends - gathered for a mass wedding celebration, the 10th here this year courtesy of Hamas.

Hamas, the militant Islamist group that controls Gaza, has been observing a truce with Israel since June, allowing its underground fighters to resurface but leaving them without much to do. At the same time, hundreds of the group's women have been recently widowed, their husbands having been killed either in confrontations with Israel or in the fighting last year between Hamas and its secular rival, Fatah.

Taking advantage of the pause in violence, the Hamas leaders have turned to matchmaking, bringing together single fighters and widows, and providing dowries and wedding parties for the many here who cannot afford such traditional trappings of matrimony.

"Marriage is the same as jihad," or holy war, said Muhammad Yousef, one recently married member of the Qassam Brigades, the Hamas underground. "With marriage, you are producing another generation that believes in resistance."

About 300 Qassam members, mostly in their 20s, signed up with their new wives for the most recent celebration, held at a sports stadium in the Tuffah district east of Gaza City. Local mosques spread the word about the event and offered to help find spouses for single men whose families had not yet managed to arrange a match for them. As an added incentive, couples were promised a cash grant, in lieu of a dowry that few families could afford.

But the economic embargo on Gaza, spearheaded by the Israelis who, like the United States and the European Union, classify Hamas as a terrorist organization, somewhat dampened the celebrations. While the poorest couples received a gift equivalent to \$2,000, many others in less dire straits came away with only \$200.

"That's the cost of a plank of wood for a bedroom suite," said one disappointed bride, Ola Dalo, 21, as she leaned her head on her new husband, Ali Msabah, 24.

Wael al-Zard, head of Al Taysir, an association affiliated with Hamas that tries to provide its fighters with the means to marry, said that many Muslims who used to contribute money from the Gulf states have stopped transferring funds "out of fear."

In Gaza, Hamas plays role of matchmaker

To make up some of the shortfall, Ismail Haniya, head of the Hamas government in Gaza, made a personal contribution of \$30,000 to the Tuffah group wedding, while another senior Hamas leader, Mahmoud Zahar, contributed \$10,000.

"Your money is not going to casinos," Zard declared during the wedding event. His point was that the donations would be devoted only to furthering the Islamist agenda, and not going to line officials' pockets, an accusation widely leveled against the previous leaders from Fatah. "There will be more weddings, and no one will remain single," he said.

The 300 grooms were dressed in black pants, white shirts and colorful ties but no jackets, because of recent budget cuts. The brides, sitting separately among the women, wore headscarves and black robes over their evening dresses, but were easily spotted by their heavy makeup. The couples had all signed marriage contracts before the event.

Although Hamas has long organized joint weddings, it is now doing so with more verve and is placing special emphasis on remarrying its war widows. One of them, Amani Saed, 24, attended the mass wedding with her two young sons from her first marriage, Rami, 5, and Muhammad, 3. Their father, Khaled Saed, was killed at the age of 28 during the Hamas-Fatah clashes of August 2007.

Eight months after Khaled's death, his father asked for Amani's hand for his younger son, Muhammad, 22, who worked at the Interior Ministry. Amani said she reluctantly agreed. "Muhammad is younger. It's hard, but it's good for the kids," she said.

Muhammad Yousef, the groom who equated marriage with jihad, came to celebrate and collect \$200 even though his family is considered reasonably well-off. In July 2006, an Israeli tank crew fired in his direction as he and his group fired rockets at Israel. He was badly wounded in his chest and both legs, and his friends took him for dead and celebrated his "martyrdom" on the way to the hospital morgue.

But he survived and, because of his severe injuries, moved from firing rockets to manufacturing them. He said he shared all details of his past with his wife before they married and she accepted his way of life wholeheartedly. The night before the weddings, he said, she shared with him her ultimate wish: to carry out a joint suicide attack against Israel.

Load-Date: October 31, 2008

Hamas strikes back amid devastating air attacks

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

December 30, 2008 Tuesday

Copyright 2008 Woodward Communications, Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: A; Pg. 5

Length: 1504 words

Byline: The Associated Press

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP) - Palestinian militants sent a deadly barrage of missiles flying deep into Israel on Monday, demonstrating that **Hamas** still had firepower three days into Israel's punishing air offensive in Gaza. Four Israelis, including a soldier, were killed and three were wounded. Palestinian health officials put the three-day death toll in Gaza at 364; the U.N. said the total included at least 62 civilians. Early Tuesday, Israeli aircraft dropped at least 16 bombs on five **Hamas** government buildings in a Gaza City complex, destroying them, setting fires and sending rubble flying for hundreds of yards, witnesses said. Rescue workers said 40 people were injured.

In Monday's attacks, Israel focused its bombing on the houses of **Hamas** field operatives in a campaign meant to tear at the roots of the extremist group ruling Gaza. Israel's defense minister promised a "war to the bitter end against **Hamas**" and allied militants. Intensified rocket strikes by Gaza militants, which triggered the Israeli offensive, have revealed the expanding range of missiles that are making larger cities farther inside Israel vulnerable. In a barrage Monday night, a missile crashed into a bus stop in Ashdod, 23 miles from the Gaza Strip. A woman died and two others were wounded, one seriously - the first casualties in the city of 190,000 residents. The military said an Israeli soldier was killed later in a mortar strike, the first soldier to be killed in the conflict. Five others were wounded, one seriously, according to a military statement. Earlier Monday, an Israeli was killed and one seriously wounded by a rocket strike in the Negev desert community of Nahal Oz, closer to the Gaza border. A rocket also killed an Israeli construction worker in the city of Ashkelon. In all, five Israelis have been killed since the Gaza offensive began Saturday, bringing to 19 the number killed in rocket attacks from Gaza this year. Early Tuesday, **Hamas** released a statement saying its squads had fired 43 homemade rockets, 17 longer-range Grad rockets and six mortar shells at Israel. Other militant groups also fired rockets at Israel. The targets chosen by Israel on Monday pointed to an intention to chip away at **Hamas**' foundation. A grainy video taken by an Israeli drone airplane showed several men loading a pickup truck with what the Israeli military said were medium-range Grad rockets. Moments later, a big explosion from an Israeli missile strike enveloped the image. One Israeli attack targeted a house in the Jebaliya refugee camp, killing seven people, but the **Hamas** activist was not there, **Hamas** security and relatives said. Another hit the Jebaliya home of Abdel-Karim Jaber, a **Hamas** political figure who is a senior administrator at Gaza's Islamic University. He was not at home and it wasn't immediately clear if anyone was hurt in the strike. In another air assault, an Islamic Jihad commander was killed as he was walking near his house, said Abu Hamza, a spokesman for Islamic Jihad's military wing. Israel's airstrikes on more than 325 sites since midday Saturday reduced dozens of buildings to rubble, overwhelmed hospitals with wounded and filled Gaza's deserted streets with smoke and fire. The military said Israeli naval vessels had also bombarded targets from the sea. On Monday, aircraft pulverized a house next to the home of **Hamas** Premier Ismail Haniyeh, a security compound and a five-story building at a university closely linked to the Islamic group - all symbols of **Hamas** strength in the coastal territory it has ruled since June 2007. Israel's offensive has rattled the Middle East and capitals around the world,

Hamas strikes back amid devastating air attacks

triggering street protests and fiery speeches by adversaries of Israel like the militant group Hezbollah in Lebanon. In the day's biggest outpouring of anger, tens of thousands of Hezbollah's supporters stood in a pouring rain in a Beirut square to condemn Israel. Stone-throwing clashes broke out in about a half-dozen spots in the Palestinians' West Bank territory as well as in several Arab-populated areas inside Israel. Israeli police and soldiers fired rubber bullets and tear gas at rioting youths, but it did not appear anyone was injured. U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon condemned Israel's offensive as excessive and demanded an immediate cease-fire. He said key international and regional players - including foreign ministers of the Arab League nations holding an emergency meeting Wednesday - must "act swiftly and decisively to bring an early end to this impasse." The U.S. government said it was "vigorously engaged" in trying to restore a cease-fire. White House spokesman Gordon Johndroe defended the Israeli response, but added that the Bush administration was urging Israel to avoid civilian casualties in Gaza. With Israeli troops and tanks massing on the Gaza border, Defense Minister Ehud Barak told parliament he wanted to strike a devastating blow against Hamas. However, later he indicated a ground assault was not inevitable, issuing a warning that he was giving Hamas a last chance to halt its rocket fire. Short of reoccupying Gaza, however, it was unlikely any amount of Israeli firepower could completely snuff out militant rocket attacks. Past operations all failed to do so. The Cabinet's decision over the weekend to call up 6,500 reserve soldiers could be a pressure tactic. Military experts noted no full combat units had been mobilized and said Israel would need at least 10,000 soldiers for a full-scale invasion. For the first time, Israel also hit one of a series of tunnels prepared by Hamas along the border with Israel for use in attacks on invading ground troops, several Israeli TV networks said. One tunnel was packed with explosives and several militants inside were killed, Channel 1 said. Most of those killed in three days of airstrikes were Hamas members. A Hamas police spokesman, Ehab Ghussen, said 180 members of Hamas security forces were among the dead. But the U.N. agency in charge of Palestinian refugees expressed concern about civilian casualties. A rise in civilian casualties could intensify international pressure on Israel to end the offensive. In New York, U.N. humanitarian chief John Holmes said his agency had not been able to determine a precise number of civilian casualties, but knew of at least 62 women and children killed. He said 1,400 people had been injured. Eight children under the age of 17 were killed in two separate Israeli airstrikes Sunday night, Palestinian medics said. Holmes said he was very worried about a shortage of humanitarian supplies in Gaza. "Because of the effective blockade that's been in place for many months now, and because of the increasing tightening of this blockade in recent weeks around Gaza, stocks of vital items are either very low or nonexistent, and that's particularly the case, for example, with wheat flour," he said. Israel opened one of Gaza's border crossings Monday to allow several ambulances and 62 trucks carrying medical supplies and food to cross. "Obviously these supplies are better than nothing, but they remain wholly inadequate," Holmes said, saying that his agency needed 100 truckloads of flour every day to meet needs. In Gaza, some families left their apartments next to institutions linked to Hamas, fearing they could be targeted. Suad Abu Wadi, 42, kept her six children close to her on mattresses in her Gaza City living room. Her husband sat with them, chain-smoking. Abu Wadi said he had not said a word since seeing their neighbor carrying the body of his child, killed in an airstrike Saturday. Gaza's nine hospitals were overwhelmed. Dr. Moaiya Hassanain, who keeps a record for the Gaza Health Ministry, said 364 Palestinians had died and more than 1,400 wounded. Some of the injured were being taken to private clinics and even homes, he said. Egyptian officials said ambulances were ferrying wounded Gazans to hospitals in Egypt from Gaza's Rafah border crossing. Tariq al-Mahlawi, Egypt's deputy health minister, said 32 patients had been brought in by nightfall and that 500 beds were ready to treat Palestinians. Around mid-afternoon, ambulances ferried the wounded from Gaza toward the crossing in the border town of Rafah, where over a dozen Egyptian ambulances waited to take over the casualties. Despite Israel's battering attacks, sirens warning of incoming rockets sent Israelis scrambling for cover throughout the day as more than 40 rockets and mortar rounds rained down. Israeli security officials warned that the militants' rockets are powerful enough now to reach Beersheba, a major city 30 miles from Gaza. Mazal Ivgi, a 62-year-old resident of Beersheba, said she had prepared a bomb shelter. "In the meantime we don't really believe it's going to happen, but when the first boom comes people will be worried," she said. --- Associated Press writers Aron Heller in Ashkelon, Jason Keyser in Jerusalem, Edith M. Lederer in New York, Deb Riechmann in Crawford, Texas, and Omar Sinan in Rafah, Egypt, contributed to this report.

Hamas strikes back amid devastating air attacks

End of Document

Blame Hamas, not Israel, for civilian casualties

USA TODAY

January 12, 2009 Monday

FINAL EDITION

Copyright 2009 Gannett Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 8A

Length: 675 words

Body

USA TODAY's editorial "Israel's tactics in Gaza invite Palestinian backlash" states, "Israel needs to step back and figure out how to prevent the same cycle from repeating without end: Israel punishing innocent Palestinians in response to terrorism." It is not Israel but **Hamas** that should be blamed for any civilian casualties in this conflict (Our view, The Middle East debate, Wednesday).

Hamas fires rockets at Israeli cities from within civilian population centers and even uses Palestinian **women** and children as human shields when fighting Israeli soldiers.

On the other hand, Israel targets **Hamas** military installations through precision strikes to prevent civilian deaths.

This is a war and, unfortunately, sometimes civilians are killed. Nonetheless, the difference is that Israel is distraught when innocent Palestinian civilians are killed, while **Hamas** celebrates when Israeli civilians lose their lives.

Josh Hasten

Jerusalem

Israel must change tactics

Israel's so-called justification for its latest bombing and invasion of the Gaza Strip is that Israel has a right to defend itself against rocket attacks from across the border. But there is no comparison between the wild scatter shots from Gaza and Israel's devastating bombing campaign on this densely populated area.

True, the **Hamas** rocketeers are madmen. Out of blind rage, they pelt the Israeli Goliath with stones, knowing that Goliath will in turn clobber them and everyone around them with boulders.

Nevertheless, the ultimate responsibility for this decades-old blood feud lies with Israel, and only Israel has the power to turn it around.

The **Hamas** madmen have been driven mad by generations of living with Goliath's boot on their neck. Say what you like about Israel's right to exist. The fact remains that if you drive people out of their ancestral land, pen them up in refugee camps, impoverish them and continue to build "settlements" on land that many recognize as belonging to the Palestinians, they will hate you and fight back.

Blame Hamas, not Israel , for civilian casualties

Richard Hoff

Occidental, Calif.

Stop fanaticism

The mistake in USA TODAY's editorial on Israel's tactics in Gaza is the assertion that the Israelis are "punishing innocent Palestinians in response to terrorism."

The Palestinians are not innocent when they permit **Hamas** to fight and to shoot rockets from within apartment buildings, schools, mosques, hospitals and other population centers, and when they do not rise up or speak out against Islamic fanaticism.

Marvin S. Helfand

Northbrook, Ill.

Roots of the conflict

USA TODAY's editorial on Gaza misstated cause and effect. There is no "cycle" of "Israel punishing innocent Palestinians in response to terrorism, inevitably stirring up more resentment and retaliation."

From September 2000 to September 2002 of the Al-Aqsa intifada, about 80% of Israel's fatalities were non-combatants, while 54% of Palestinian fatalities were combatants and 12% of Palestinians were killed by their own side. The side targeting innocents has been the Palestinian.

There have not been "years of punishments" engendering "animosity toward Israel." There have been Israeli counterterrorism operations, dealing with the result of years of Palestinian incitement in schools, mosques and mass communications, incitement that violates peace process commitments.

The editorial states that the Palestine Liberation Organization came to accept Israel and that its leader, Yasser Arafat, rejected a two-state solution. Arafat did so to avoid accepting a Jewish and new Arab state side-by-side and at peace.

The editorial says **Hamas** won elections because it promised better services and an end to corruption "but it remained committed to terrorism." Not "but"; the correct wording is "and." It campaigned as uncorrupt and better at anti-Israeli terrorism.

The analogy to Northern Ireland fails. Irish Republican Army bombings did not peter out. A British military force spent years preventing the IRA from winning via terrorism.

Eric Rozenman

Washington director; Committee

for Accuracy in Middle East

Reporting in America; Washington

Graphic

PHOTO, B/W, Menahem Kahana, AFP/Getty Images

Blame Hamas, not Israel , for civilian casualties

Load-Date: January 12, 2009

End of Document

Hamas ends six month truce in Gaza

Prince Rupert Daily News (British Columbia)

December 19, 2008 Friday

Final Edition

Copyright 2008 Prince Rupert Daily News All Rights Reserved

Section: WORLD NEWS; Pg. 16

Length: 588 words

Byline: Canadian Press

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

JERUSALEM - **Hamas** has formally announced the end of its unwritten truce with Israel.

The end of the often-breached ceasefire was punctuated by two rockets being fired into southern Israel by militants on the Gaza Strip side of the border.

The Israeli military says troops guarding Israeli farmers in fields adjoining Gaza also came under sniper fire from across the border.

No injuries are reported in any of the incidents.

In a statement posted on its website, **Hamas** said it could no longer stand idly by despite what it called Israeli provocations.

It cited the painful economic blockade of Gaza, along with Israeli military strikes into the densely populated coastal strip and continuing efforts by Tel Aviv to hunt down **Hamas** operatives in the West Bank.

"Since the enemy did not abide with the conditions ... we hold the enemy the fully responsible for ending the truce and we confirm that the Palestinian resistance factions headed by **Hamas** will act," the statement said.

There was no immediate Israeli comment about **Hamas**' announcement that it would not extend the ceasefire past its end Friday.

Israel said previously that the six-month-old truce, brokered by Egypt, didn't have an official expiration date and that the government was interested in prolonging "understandings" with **Hamas**.

In Washington, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was critical of **Hamas**' move.

"I sincerely hope that there will not be a resumption of the violence because that is not going to help the people of Gaza, it is not going to help the Palestinians, it is not going to help the Palestinian cause," she said.

Hamas ends six month truce in Gaza

Hamas, which seized control of the Gaza Strip in June 2007 from a faction more to the liking of Israel and the West, is listed as a terrorist organization by Israel, the United States and much of the international community. Israel does not officially have direct contacts with it.

Though violence and casualties dropped significantly under the ceasefire agreement, the truce has increasingly unravelled since early November, when Israeli soldiers entered Gaza to destroy a tunnel that the army said could have been used in a cross-border raid. In response, Palestinian militants resumed firing rockets at Israel.

On Thursday, Gaza militants fired 11 rockets and six mortar shells toward Israel and Israel staged at least two air strikes against rocket squads. The day before, at least 20 rockets were fired at Israel, wounding two people and causing property damage, the army and police said.

Even before the truce began fraying, Israel did not allow the free transfer of goods in and out of Gaza. Since cross-border fighting resumed in November, Israel has kept the borders virtually sealed, allowing in only minimal humanitarian aid.

There were protests against the Gaza blockade in several Mideast states Friday.

In Lebanon, thousands of supporters of the militant group Hezbollah swarmed Beirut's southern suburbs, some chanting "Death to America" and "Israel is the enemy of Muslims."

In the southern city of Sidon, about 1,000 Hezbollah supporters staged a sit-in at the main square, halting traffic for about three hours.

About 3,000 Palestinian refugees in Syria joined a demonstration at the Sbeineh camp outside the capital, Damascus.

In the Persian Gulf island state of Bahrain, security forces clashed with thousands of protesters who were demanding that Arab governments take action to end the Gaza blockade.

Witnesses said a number of people, including **women** and children, were wounded by rubber bullets and others overcome by tear gas.

Load-Date: December 22, 2008

Hamas leader killed as second week of bombing begins

Sunday Tribune (Ireland)

January 4, 2009

Copyright 2009 The Sunday Tribune plc All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. N10

Length: 603 words

Body

Israeli warplanes and gunboats blasted more than two dozen Hamas positions yesterday, killing a senior Hamas commander, and targeting weapons storage facilities, training centres and homes of leaders as its offensive against Gaza's Islamic militant rulers entered a second week.

Most of the air strikes targeted empty buildings and abandoned sites, suggesting Israel may be running out of targets. Troops massed on the border, waiting for a signal to invade, but international ceasefire efforts were also gaining momentum.

The Israeli air strike killed Abu Zakaria al-Jamal, a senior commander of Hamas's armed wing, the Islamist group said. On Thursday, another Hamas leader, Nizar Rayyan, was killed. Most of Hamas's senior officials have gone into hiding to evade Israeli assassination attempts.

French president Nicolas Sarkozy is visiting the region next week, and US president George Bush and UN chief Ban Ki-moon spoke in favour of an internationally monitored truce.

Israel launched the offensive on 27 December in response to intensifying rocket fire by Hamas militants in Gaza. The operation has killed more than 430 Palestinians, including dozens of civilians, according to Palestinian and UN counts. Four Israelis have also been killed, and rocket attacks on Israel persist.

In the latest attacks, the army struck the homes of two Hamas operatives, saying the buildings were used to store weapons and plan attacks. Hamas outposts, training camps and rocket-launching sites also were targeted.

Early yesterday, Israel dropped leaflets in downtown Gaza City ordering people off the streets. Later in the day, several air strikes struck the city, killing a night watchman at a school. Four people, including a mid-level Hamas commander, died of wounds sustained earlier, Gaza health officials said.

Palestinian militants fired three rockets into southern Israel, causing no injuries.

The Israeli air strikes have badly damaged Gaza's infrastructure, knocking out power and water in many areas and raising concerns of a humanitarian disaster.

Israel briefly opened its border yesterday to allow nearly 300 Palestinians with foreign passports to flee the besieged area. The evacuees told of crippling shortages of water, electricity and medicine.

Maxwell Gaylard, UN humanitarian co-ordinator for the Palestinian Territories, said some 2,000 people have been wounded in the past week and a "significant number" of the dead were women and children.

Hamas leader killed as second week of bombing begins

"There is a critical emergency right now in the Gaza Strip," he said.

Israel denies there is a humanitarian crisis and has increased its shipments of goods into Gaza. It says it has confined its attacks to militants and tried to prevent civilian casualties. Israel has said it would accept a ceasefire if it is enforced by international monitors.

This latest violence erupted after the expiration of a six-month ceasefire that was repeatedly marred by sporadic rocket attacks on Israel.

A call for international monitors appeared to be gaining steam. At the UN, Ban Ki-moon urged world leaders to intensify efforts to achieve an immediate ceasefire that includes monitors to enforce the truce and possibly protect Palestinian civilians.

George Bush yesterday branded the rocket fire an "act of terror" and outlined his own condition for a ceasefire, saying no peace deal would be acceptable without monitoring to halt the smuggling of weapons to terrorist groups.

Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas and several Arab foreign ministers were flying to New York this weekend to urge the UN to adopt an Arab draft resolution that would condemn Israel and demand a halt to the bombing.

Load-Date: January 7, 2009

MORE THAN 225 DIE IN GAZA AS ISRAEL STRIKES AT HAMAS

The New York Times
December 28, 2008 Sunday
Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2008 The New York Times Company

Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1

Length: 1390 words

Byline: By TAGHREED EL-KHODARY and ETHAN BRONNER; Taghreed El-Khodary reported from Gaza, and Ethan Bronner from Jerusalem. Isabel Kershner contributed reporting from Netivot, Israel, and Robert Pear from Crawford, Tex.

Dateline: GAZA

Body

Waves of Israeli airstrikes destroyed **Hamas** security facilities in Gaza on Saturday in a crushing response to the group's rocket fire, killing more than 225 -- the highest one-day toll in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in decades.

Israeli military officials said the airstrikes, which went on into the night, were the start of what could be days or even months of an effort to force **Hamas** to end its rocket barrages into southern Israel. The operation could include ground forces, a senior Israeli security official said.

Palestinian officials said that most of the dead were security officers for **Hamas**, including two senior commanders, and that at least 600 people had been wounded in the attacks.

After the initial airstrikes, dozens of rockets were fired into southern Israel, where an emergency was declared. Thousands of Israelis hurried into bomb shelters amid the hail of rockets, including some longer-range models that reached farther north than ever before. One man was killed in the town of Netivot, the first death from rocket fire since it intensified a week ago, and four were wounded.

A number of governments and international officials, including leaders of Russia, Egypt, the European Union and the United Nations, condemned Israel's use of force and also called on **Hamas** to end the rocket fire. But in strong terms, the Bush administration blamed **Hamas** for the violence and demanded that it stop firing rockets.

A military operation had been forecast and demanded by Israeli officials for weeks, ever since a rocky cease-fire between Israel and **Hamas** fully collapsed a week ago, leading again to rocket attacks in large numbers against Israel and isolated Israeli operations here.

Still, there was a shocking quality to Saturday's attacks, which began in broad daylight as police cadets were graduating, **women** were shopping at the outdoor market, and children were emerging from school.

The center of Gaza City was a scene of chaotic horror, with rubble everywhere, sirens wailing, and **women** shrieking as dozens of mutilated bodies were laid out on the pavement and in the lobby of Shifa Hospital so that

MORE THAN 225 DIE IN GAZA AS ISRAEL STRIKES AT HAMAS

family members could identify them. The dead included civilians, including several construction workers and at least two children in school uniforms.

By afternoon, shops were shuttered, funerals began and mourning tents were visible on nearly every major street of this densely populated city.

The leader of the Hamas government in Gaza, Ismail Haniya, said in a statement that "Palestine has never witnessed an uglier massacre." Later, in a televised speech, he vowed to fight Israel. "We say in all confidence that even if we are hung on the gallows or they make our blood flow in the streets or they tear our bodies apart, we will bow only before God and we will not abandon Palestine," he said.

In Damascus, Syria, Hamas's supreme leader, Khaled Meshal, said in an interview with Al Jazeera television that he was calling for a new Palestinian intifada against Israel, including the resumption of suicide attacks within Israel for the first time since 2005. Hamas, he said, had accepted "all the peaceful options, but without results."

Ehud Barak, the Israeli defense minister and chairman of the Labor Party, said the military operation in Gaza would expand and deepen as necessary, adding, "There is a time for calm and a time for fighting, and this is the time for fighting."

"We wanted to attack military targets while the terrorists were inside the facilities and before Hamas was able to get its rockets out that were stored in some of the targets," said a top Israeli security official, briefing a group of reporters by telephone on condition of anonymity.

"Right now, we have to hit Hamas hard to stop the launching," he added. "I don't see any other way for Hamas to change its behavior. Hamas is not just a terrorist organization. It actually rules Gaza and is well supported by Iran with some of its leadership in Syria."

Hamas had in recent weeks let it be known that it doubted Israel would engage in a major military undertaking because of its coming elections. But in some ways the elections have made it impossible for officials like Mr. Barak not to react, because the public has grown anxious and angry over the rocket fire, which while causing no recent deaths and few injuries is deeply disturbing for those living near Gaza.

Israeli officials said that anyone linked to the Hamas security structure or government was fair game because Hamas was a terrorist group that sought Israel's destruction. But with work here increasingly scarce because of an international embargo on Hamas, young men are tempted by the steady work of the police force without necessarily fully accepting the Hamas ideology. One of the biggest tolls on Saturday was at a police cadet graduation ceremony in which 15 people were killed.

Spokesmen for Hamas officials, who have mostly gone underground, called on militants to seek revenge and fight to the last drop of blood. Several compared what was happening to the 2006 war between Israel and the Lebanese militia Hezbollah, when Israel reacted to the capture and killing of soldiers along its northern border with air raids, followed by a ground attack. Hezbollah is widely viewed as having withstood those assaults and emerged much stronger politically.

The Arab League initially called an emergency meeting for Sunday in Cairo with all the foreign ministers from the member states, but later postponed it to Wednesday to give ministers time to respond.

Governments that dislike Hamas, like Egypt's, Jordan's and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, are in a delicate position. They blame Hamas for having taken over Gaza by force 18 months ago in the aftermath of its election victory in the Palestinian Parliament, and they oppose its rocket fire on Israeli towns and communities.

But the sight of scores of Palestinians killed by Israeli warplanes outraged their citizens, and anti-Israel demonstrations broke out across the region.

President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority angrily condemned the Israeli airstrikes. Egypt, worried about possible efforts by Palestinians to enter the country, has set up machine guns along the Gaza border. But on

MORE THAN 225 DIE IN GAZA AS ISRAEL STRIKES AT HAMAS

Saturday it temporarily opened the Rafah border crossing in order to allow the wounded to be brought to Egyptian hospitals.

In the West Bank and in some Arab parts of Jerusalem and Israel, Palestinians threw stones, causing some injuries.

Hamas is officially committed to Israel's destruction, and after it took over Gaza in 2007, it said it would not recognize Israel, honor previous Palestinian Authority commitments to it or end its violence against Israelis.

Israel, backed by the United States, Europe, Egypt and the Palestinian Authority, has sought to isolate **Hamas** by squeezing Gaza economically, a policy that human rights groups condemn as collective punishment. Israel and Egypt, which control routes into and out of Gaza, have blocked nearly all but humanitarian aid from going in.

The result has been the near death of the Gazan economy. While enough food has gone in to avoid starvation, the level of suffering is very high and getting worse each week, especially in recent weeks as Israel closed the routes entirely for about 10 days in reaction to daily rocket fire.

Opening the routes to commerce was **Hamas**'s main goal in its cease-fire with Israel, just as ending the rocket fire was Israel's central aim. But while rocket fire did go down drastically in the fall to 15 to 20 a month from hundreds a month, Israel said it would not permit trade to begin again because the rocket fire had not completely stopped and because **Hamas** continued to smuggle weapons from Egypt through desert tunnels. **Hamas** said this was a violation of the agreement, a sign of Israel's real intentions and cause for further rocket fire. On Wednesday, some 70 rockets hit Israel over 24 hours, in a distinct increase in intensity.

The United Nations Security Council met late Saturday night to discuss the situation.

Envoys of the 15-nation council were discussing what diplomats said was a Russian-drafted statement calling for a halt to Israeli military operations in Gaza as well as a halt to rocket attacks upon Israel, Reuters reported.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

PHOTOS: An injured Palestinian was helped from the rubble after an Israeli airstrike hit Rafah in the Gaza Strip on Saturday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HATEM OMAR/ASSOCIATED PRESS)(A1)

Palestinians in Gaza City on Saturday gathered around the bodies of people killed by Israeli airstrikes, launched in response to recent **Hamas** rocket attacks. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MAHMUD HAMS/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES)

A relative of a victim wept outside a hospital in Gaza City after the Israeli airstrikes, which hit **Hamas** security facilities. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ABID KATIB/GETTY IMAGES)(A10)

Load-Date: December 28, 2008

Fed up Israel targets Hamas symbols in Gaza air assaults

The Salt Lake Tribune
December 29, 2008 Monday

Copyright 2008 The Salt Lake Tribune All Rights Reserved

Section: BREAKING; Top Stories; News; National; World

Length: 1342 words

Byline: By Ibrahim Barzak and Matti Friedman The Associated Press

Body

Gaza City, Gaza Strip » Israel obliterated symbols of Hamas power on the third day of what the defense minister described Monday as a "war to the bitter end," striking next to the Hamas premier's home, and devastating a security compound and a university building.

The three-day death toll rose to 364 on Monday, with some 1,400 reported wounded. The U.N. said at least 62 of the dead were civilians, and medics said eight children under the age of 17 were killed in two separate strikes overnight. Israel launched its campaign, the deadliest against Palestinians in decades, on Saturday in retaliation for rocket fire aimed at civilians in southern Israeli towns..

Since then, the number of Israeli troops on the Gaza border has doubled and the Cabinet approved the call-up of 6,500 reserve soldiers..

The strikes have driven Hamas leaders into hiding and appear to have gravely damaged the organization's ability to launch rockets, but barrages continued. Sirens warning of incoming rockets sent Israelis scrambling for cover throughout the day..

One medium-range rocket fired at the Israeli city of Ashkelon killed an Arab construction worker there Monday and wounded several others. He was the second Israeli killed since the beginning of the offensive..

At first light Monday, strong winds blew black smoke from the bombed sites over Gaza City's deserted streets. The air hummed with the buzz of drone aircraft and the roar of jets, punctuated by airstrike explosions. Palestinian health officials said one strike killed four Islamic Jihad militants and a child.

Some Palestinians ventured outside for mourning. In northern Gaza, a father lifted the body of his 4-year-old during a funeral Monday for five children from the same family killed in an Israeli missile strike..

On Sunday, Hamas missiles struck for the first time near the city of Ashdod, only 25 miles (40 kilometers) from Israel's heart in Tel Aviv. Hamas leaders have also threatened to renew suicide attacks inside Israel. A missile from Gaza struck Ashdod again on Monday, seriously wounding two people.

On Monday, the White House released a statement saying "in order for the violence to stop, Hamas must stop firing rockets into Israel and agree to respect a sustainable and durable cease-fire."

But in Damascus, Syria, a senior exiled Hamas official said there can be no talk of a truce with Israel until the assault ends and Israel reopens the Gaza crossings..

Fed up Israel targets Hamas symbols in Gaza air assaults

"We need our liberty, we need our freedom and we need to be independent. If we don't accomplish this objective, then we have to resist. This is our right," the official, Abu Marzouk, told The Associated Press in an English-language interview..

A six-month truce between Hamas and Israeli expired earlier this month, but Hamas refused to extend it, saying Israel had violated its terms.

Most of those killed since Saturday were members of Hamas security forces, though the precise numbers remain unclear. A Hamas police spokesman, Ehab Ghussen, said 180 members of the Hamas security forces were among the dead, and the U.N. said at least 62 of the dead were civilians. A rise in civilian casualties could intensify international pressure on Israel to end the offensive..

Ehud Barak, the Israeli defense minister, told parliament Israel was not fighting the residents of Gaza. "But we have a war to the bitter end against Hamas and its branches," he said. Barak said the goal is to deal Hamas a "severe blow" and that the operation would be "widened and deepened as needed..".

Israel's intense bombings - more than 300 airstrikes since midday Saturday - reduced dozens of buildings to rubble. The military said naval vessels also bombarded targets from the sea..

At the United Nations, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon again condemned Israel's excessive use of force and called for an immediate cease-fire.

"The frightening nature of what is happening on the ground, in particular its effects on children - who are more than half of the population - troubles me greatly. I have continuously stressed the need for strict observance of international humanitarian law," he said..

One Israeli strike destroyed a five-story building in the women's wing at Islamic University, one of the most prominent Hamas symbols in Gaza. Other attacks ravaged a compound controlled by Preventive Security, one of the group's chief security arms, and destroyed a house next to the residence of Ismail Haniyeh, the Hamas prime minister..

Late Sunday, Israeli aircraft attacked a building in the Jebaliya refugee camp next to Gaza City, killing five children and teenagers under age 17 from the same family, Gaza Health Ministry official Dr. Moaiya Hassanain said. In the southern town of Rafah, a toddler and his two teenage brothers were killed in an airstrike aimed at a Hamas commander, Hassanain said. In Gaza City, another attack killed two women..

Some families fled their apartments next to institutions linked to Hamas..

Suad Abu Wadi, 42, kept her six children close on mattresses in her Gaza City living room. Her husband sat with them, chain-smoking. Abu Wadi said he said nothing since seeing their neighbor carrying the body of his child, killed in an airstrike Saturday..

Gaza's nine hospitals were overwhelmed. Hassanain, who keeps a record for the Gaza Health Ministry, said that some of the over 1,400 wounded were now being taken to private clinics and even homes..

Abdel Hafez, a 55-year-old history teacher, waited outside a Gaza City bakery to buy bread. He said he was not a Hamas supporter but believed the strikes would only increase support for the group. "Each strike, each drop of blood are giving Hamas more fuel to continue," he said..

In Israel, 17 people have been killed in attacks from Gaza since the beginning of the year, including nine civilians - six of them killed by rockets - and eight soldiers, according to Israel's Foreign Ministry.

Israeli security officials have warned that the militants' range now includes Beersheba, a major city 30 miles (50 kilometers) from Gaza. Resident Mazal Ivgi, 62, said she had prepared a bomb shelter. "In the meantime we don't really believe it's going to happen, but when the first boom comes people will be worried," she said.

Fed up Israel targets Hamas symbols in Gaza air assaults

In Jerusalem, Israel's Cabinet approved a call-up of 6,500 reserve soldiers Sunday in apparent preparation for a ground offensive. The final decision to call up reserves has yet to be made by the defense minister, and the Cabinet decision could be a pressure tactic. Military experts said Israel would need at least 10,000 soldiers for a full-scale invasion..

The assault has sparked diplomatic fallout. Syria decided to suspend indirect peace talks with Israel, and the U.N. Security Council called on both sides to halt the fighting and asked Israel to allow humanitarian supplies into Gaza. Israel opened one of Gaza's border crossings Monday, and about 40 trucks had entered with food and medical supplies by midday, military spokesman Peter Lerner said..

Egypt also opened its borders to Gaza and allowed trucks loaded with humanitarian aid to enter the Rafah terminal Monday. It was also taking in wounded Palestinians from Gaza, with more than a dozen Egyptian ambulances waiting at the crossing..

The Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, who heads a moderate government in the West Bank and is holding peace talks with Israel, issued his strongest condemnation yet of the operation, calling it a "sweeping Israeli aggression against Gaza" and saying he would consult with his bitter rivals in **Hamas** in an effort to end it..

Israel is trying to avoid civilian casualties, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni told reporters Monday, while "**Hamas** is looking for children to kill.".

The carnage inflamed Arab and Muslim public opinion, setting off street protests in Arab communities in Israel and the West Bank, across the Arab world, and in some European cities. On Monday, a Palestinian stabbed and wounded four Israelis in a West Bank settlement before he was shot and wounded. It was not immediately clear if the attack was directly connected to the events in Gaza.

Graphic

A Palestinian mourner carries the body of 4-year-old Dena Balosha, one of five members of the same family including three children and two teenagers who were killed in an Israeli missile strike, during their funeral in the Jebaliya refugee camp, in the northern Gaza Strip, Monday, Dec. 29, 2008. Israel's overwhelming air campaign against the Gaza Strip inched closer to the territory's **Hamas** rulers as the assault entered its third day Monday, as missiles struck a house next to the **Hamas** premier's home and destroyed symbols of the Islamic movement's power. (AP Photo/Hatem Moussa)

Palestinians, top, search the rubble of a building after it was hit in an Israeli missile strike in Jebaliya, northern Gaza Strip, Monday, Dec. 29, 2008. Israel's overwhelming air campaign against the Gaza Strip entered its third day Monday, as missiles struck targets and wreaked unprecedented destruction in Gaza, reducing buildings to rubble, and the death toll continues to rise. (AP Photo/Hatem Moussa)

Israeli tanks move at a staging area near Israel's border with the Gaza Strip, in southern Israel, Monday, Dec. 29, 2008. Israel's overwhelming air campaign against the Gaza Strip entered its third day Monday, as missiles struck targets and wreaked unprecedented destruction in Gaza, reducing buildings to rubble, and the death toll continues to rise.(AP Photo/Ariel Schalit)

The father of Palestinian Dena Balosha, 4, left, one of five members of the same family including three children and two teenagers who were killed in an Israeli missile strike, carries her body during their funeral in the Jebaliya refugee camp, in the northern Gaza Strip, Monday, Dec. 29, 2008. Israel's overwhelming air campaign against the Gaza Strip inched closer to the territory's **Hamas** rulers as the assault entered its third day Monday, as missiles struck a house next to the **Hamas** premier's home and destroyed symbols of the Islamic movement's power. (AP Photo/Hatem Moussa)

Fed up Israel targets Hamas symbols in Gaza air assaults

A Palestinian protesters flashes the V-sign during clashes with Israeli troops at a demonstration against Israel's military operation in Gaza, in the West Bank town of Hebron, Monday, Dec. 29, 2008. Israel's air force obliterated symbols of **Hamas** power on the third day of its overwhelming Gaza assault Monday, striking a house next to the **Hamas** premier's home, devastating a security compound and flattening a five-story building at a university closely linked to the Islamic group.(AP Photo/Nasser Shiyoukhi)

Load-Date: December 29, 2008

End of Document

Israeli defence chief declares all-out war against Hamas

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

December 30, 2008 Tuesday

Second Edition

Copyright 2008 The Age Company Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 678 words

Byline: JASON KOUTSOUKIS, MIDDLE EAST CORRESPONDENT JERUSALEM with DPA, AFP

Body

ISRAELI Defence Minister Ehud Barak says Israel is in an "all-out war against Hamas" as the Jewish state continues its massive bombardment of the Islamist movement's installations in Gaza.

"We have nothing against Gaza residents, but we are engaged in an all-out war against Hamas and its proxies," Mr Barak said yesterday.

"This operation will expand and deepen as much as needed," he said. "We went to war to deal a heavy blow to Hamas, to change the situation in the south.

"We will avoid as much as possible hitting civilians while the people of Hamas and other terrorists deliberately hide and operate within the civilian population."

He said Israel did not want to hit women and children and it would not stop humanitarian aid from reaching Gaza.

Israel has vowed to continue its bombardment of the Gaza Strip until it has demolished the military capacity of the governing Hamas regime.

The Israeli air force and navy kept up attacks on targets in Gaza yesterday as medics said the toll reached 310 dead and 1400 wounded.

An Israeli man was killed and seven people wounded after a Grad rocket launched by Palestinian militants in Gaza hit the Israeli port city of Ashkelon, north of Gaza.

A Palestinian man was shot dead last night after he infiltrated an Israeli settlement near Ramallah in the occupied West Bank and stabbed three Jewish settlers, one of whom was wounded seriously.

The Israel Defence Forces' chief of staff, General Gabi Ashkenazi, continued to hold out the possibility of a ground operation too, with thousands of troops assembled outside the Gaza Strip. The Israeli cabinet has approved the call-up of about 7000 reservists.

Israeli military officials said that since the launch of Operation Cast Lead on Saturday, more than 250 "targets" had been destroyed.

Israeli defence chief declares all-out war against Hamas

Early yesterday local time, Israeli jets attacked about 40 sites, including two laboratory buildings at the Islamic University. The IDF said these buildings were used for the development of ammunition and the manufacture of rockets and explosives.

Captain Benjamin Rutland, a senior IDF spokesman, told The Age: "The targets which have been attacked have been targets associated with Hamas, including command posts, training facilities, weapons manufacturing facilities and weapons storage facilities.

"The majority of the casualties have been uniform-wearing members of the Hamas terror organisation responsible for attacks on Israel."

But the United Nations office in Gaza said the official number of civilian casualties had risen to 51. UN spokesman Christopher Gunness said the list had been compiled from the names of casualties released so far. They included eight teenagers killed on Saturday afternoon as they were leaving the UN compound in Gaza where they had been attending a vocational training course.

"We are demanding a full and transparent investigation into how a bus that was carrying a group of teenagers could have been hit," Mr Gunness said.

A locally engaged UN staff member was killed at the weekend when an Israeli missile hit a police station.

Living conditions inside Gaza continued to worsen yesterday because of severe shortages of medical supplies.

The bombardment of Gaza's border with Egypt has put a halt to smuggling operations that had been a major source of food, fuel and other daily necessities. Israel has allowed four trucks carrying humanitarian supplies to pass through the border.

Thousands of Israel's Arab citizens have taken to the streets in protest against the offensive.

About 20,000 protested in the northern Israeli town of Umm al-Fahm, while clashes also raged between Israeli police and stone-throwing Palestinians in occupied East Jerusalem.

Hamas officials have threatened to respond to Operation Cast Lead by assassinating senior Israeli officials.

Hamas spokesman Fatah Hamad specifically mentioned Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and Mr Barak. He said Hamas would target senior Palestinian Authority officials in the West Bank, as well as "those in the Arab world who have conspired against us", Israeli daily Ha'aretz said. -- With DPA, AFP

Graphic

PHOTO: A Palestinian hurls a stone at Israeli troops near Jerusalem. PICTURE: AP

Load-Date: December 29, 2008

SPARE A THOUGHT FOR THE VIOLENCE OF HAMAS

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

December 31, 2008 Wednesday

SOONER EDITION

Copyright 2008 P.G. Publishing Co.

Section: EDITORIAL; LETTERS TO THE EDITOR; Pg. B-4

Length: 210 words

Byline: EDWIN J. BORREBACH, Bradford Woods

Body

It is greatly disturbing to much of the world that Israel has bombed the Gaza Strip so heavily.

Yet it is quite all right for Hamas to lob rockets into Israel while men, women and children there scurry for shelter almost daily to prevent becoming a casualty, having their lives disrupted, being afraid, hoping for an end to the barrage. That just isn't news. Heaven forbid that Israel should fight back and kill off some Hamas patriots -- patriots, that is, until the bombs begin to fall and they run like crazy for succor in Egypt.

Shame on Hamas leaders as they scurry underground in fear, to talk some young kid into strapping on bombs to become a martyr for their cause. They themselves would never do such a dumb thing, but they talk a young man or woman into it.

But the larger shame is that if they left Israel alone there'd be no rockets and therefore no bombings, no confrontations, no crying over the dead and wounded, no fear as shelter was sought. But it appears that the Hamas leaders hate Israel so much that her very presence is more than they can stand.

So we have disruption instead of accord, war rather than peace, destroyed lives in place of happy lives. What a shame, what a waste, what stupidity to hate so very much that it is all-consuming.

Load-Date: December 31, 2008

ISRAELI TANKS SPLIT GAZA. HAMAS NEEDS A REAL & SERIOUS LESSON **- PERES**

Daily News (New York)
January 5, 2009 Monday
SPORTS FINAL EDITION

Copyright 2009 Daily News, L.P.



Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 575 words

Byline: BY MATTHEW KALMAN in Jerusalem and HELEN KENNEDY in New York DAILY NEWS WRITERS

Body

THOUSANDS OF Israeli troops backed by tanks and helicopter gunships began to surround Gaza City yesterday in the first full day of the ground war against **Hamas** militants.

"**Hamas** needs a real and serious lesson. They are now getting it," said Israeli President Shimon Peres. "They are now beginning to feel the weight of their mistakes."

As the ground invasion got underway, Israeli forces effectively split the narrow Gaza Strip in two, halting any north-south flow of refugees or weapons.

One Israeli soldier was killed in a firefight and up to 70 Palestinians died, officials said.

At least 512 Palestinians have been killed since Operation Cast Lead began Dec. 27 - more than 100 of them civilians. Three Israeli civilians and two soldiers have died.

As **Hamas** fired 30 rockets into southern Israel and nearly 1 million Israelis stayed near bomb shelters, witnesses said Israeli armored columns were advancing on Gaza City from the north, south and east.

In the city, families cowered in their apartments, the buildings shaking from explosions that sent booms and flashes ripping across the sky.

In northern Gaza, there were reports of heavy street fighting as Israeli forces captured positions in Beit Hanoun, Zeitoun and Beit Lahiya and advanced into the crowded alleyways of the Jabalya refugee camp just north of Gaza City. "Most of the resistance that we faced was from mortar shells - not from serious **Hamas** fighters face to face," a senior Israeli officer told reporters.

Another armed column moved into position near Rafah on Gaza's southern border with Egypt, leveling a disused airport.

ISRAELI TANKS SPLIT GAZA. HAMAS NEEDS A REAL & SERIOUS LESSON - PERES

Israeli Navy gunships pounded targets along the shoreline, and three senior **Hamas** commanders were reported killed when Israeli helicopter gunships targeted their vehicles with missiles.

Abu Obaida, a spokesman for **Hamas**' paramilitary Qassem Brigades, denied reports that 30 of the dead were **Hamas** fighters, branding it an example of "the enemy's psychological warfare."

Israel also denied **Hamas** claims it captured two soldiers. The reports could not be verified because journalists were denied access to Gaza despite an Israeli High Court order.

Israel confiscated all its soldiers' cell phones so they couldn't divulge their movements.

Israeli soldiers captured the **Hamas**-run Al Aqsa TV channel and broadcast messages telling **Hamas** leaders to surrender.

Other Arab TV channels broadcast gruesome photos of dead Palestinian children, fueling pro-Palestinian protests in New York; Athens; London; Kabul, Afghanistan, and the West Bank.

U.S. Secretary of State Rice canceled a visit to China to monitor the Mideast. Her designated successor, Hillary Clinton, kept a low profile.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas headed to New York to beg the UN Security Council for help. The United States is blocking a UN resolution calling for a ceasefire.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy is set to arrive in Israel today to try to broker a truce.

Appearing on ABC, Peres rejected the idea, saying Israel won't cease fire while **Hamas** keeps firing rockets into Israel.

"We don't intend neither to occupy Gaza nor to crush **Hamas**, but to crush terror," Peres said.

Palestinian diplomat Saeb Erakat said military crackdowns never bring peace.

"It does not work in south Lebanon. It does not work in Iraq. It does not work in Afghanistan. It will not work in Gaza," he said, predicting instead the result will be "weakening moderates and strengthening extremists."
hkennedy@nydailynews.com

Graphic

Israeli **women** in embattled southern town of Sderot run for cover after rocket attack from Gaza, one of at least 30 missiles launched by militants despite Israeli forces pushing deep into Gaza. Photo by Getty Images

Load-Date: January 5, 2009

Israeli assault on Hamas kills more than 200

The Bismarck Tribune
December 28, 2008 Sunday

Copyright 2008 The Bismarck Tribune, a division of Lee Enterprises All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 1A

Length: 1143 words

Byline: IBRAHIM BARZAK and AMY TEIBEL Associated Press Writer

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip - Israeli warplanes rained more than 100 tons of bombs on security installations in Hamas-ruled Gaza on Saturday, killing at least 230 people in one of the bloodiest days in decades of the mideast conflict. The government said the open-ended campaign was aimed at stopping rocket and mortar attacks that have traumatized southern Israel.

More than 400 people were also wounded. Most of the casualties were security forces, but Palestinian officials said at least 15 civilians were among the dead.

The unprecedented assault sparked protests and condemnations throughout the Arab world, and many of Israel's Western allies urged restraint, though the U.S. blamed Hamas for the fighting.

But there was no end in sight. Israel warned it might go after Hamas' leaders, and militants kept pelting Israel with rockets - killing at least one Israeli and wounding six.

Hundreds of Israeli infantry and armored corps troops headed for the Gaza border in preparation for a possible ground invasion, military officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity under army guidelines.

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said the goal was "to bring about a fundamental improvement in the security situation of the residents of the southern part of the country." He added, "It could take some time."

The Israeli airstrikes caused widespread panic and confusion, and black plumes of smoke billowed above the territory, ruled by the Islamic militant Hamas for the past 18 months. Some of the Israeli missiles struck in densely populated areas as students were leaving school, and women rushed into the streets frantically looking for their children.

"My son is gone, my son is gone," wailed Said Masri, a 57-year-old shopkeeper, as he sat in the middle of a Gaza City street, slapping his face and covering his head with dust from a bombed-out security compound nearby.

He said he had sent his 9-year-old son out to purchase cigarettes minutes before the airstrikes began and could not find him. "May I burn like the cigarettes, may Israel burn," Masri moaned.

Militants often operate against Israel from civilian areas. Late Saturday, thousands of Gazans received Arabic-language cell-phone messages from the Israeli military, urging them to leave homes where militants might have stashed weapons.

Israeli assault on Hamas kills more than 200

The offensive began eight days after a six-month truce between Israel and the militants expired. The Israeli army says Palestinian militants have fired some 300 rockets and mortars at Israeli targets over the past week, and 10 times that number over the past year.

"There is a time for calm and there is a time for fighting, and now is the time for fighting," said Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak, vowing to expand the operation if necessary.

In Gaza City's main security compound, bodies of more than a dozen uniformed Hamas police lay on the ground. Civilians rushed wounded people in cars and vans to hospitals because there weren't enough ambulances to transport all the dead and wounded.

"There are heads without bodies There's blood in the corridors. People are weeping, women are crying, doctors are shouting, " said nurse Ahmed Abdel Salaam from Shifa Hospital, Gaza's main treatment center.

Military officials said aircraft released more than 100 tons of bombs in the first nine hours of fighting, focusing initially on militant training camps, rocket-manufacturing facilities and weapons warehouses that had been identified in advance.

A second wave was directed at squads who fired about 180 rockets and mortars at Israeli border communities. In an attack early today, Palestinians said Israeli aircraft bombed a mosque near Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, destroying it.

Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni said Hamas' political leaders could soon be targeted. "'Hamas is a terrorist organization and nobody is immune," she declared.

The campaign was launched six weeks before national elections. Livni and Barak hope to succeed Ehud Olmert as prime minister, and the outgoing government has faced pressure to take tough action.

Gaza's political leaders, who have been targeted in the past, went into hiding earlier this week. In a speech broadcast on local Gaza television, Hamas' prime minister, Ismail Haniyeh, declared his movement would not be cowed.

"We are stronger, and more determined, and have more will, and we will hold onto our rights even more than before," Haniyeh said. It was not clear where he spoke.

In Damascus, Syria, Hamas' top leader, Khaled Mashaal, called on Palestinians to rekindle their fight against Israel. "This is the time for a third uprising," he said.

Israel withdrew its troops and settlers in 2005 after crushing the second Palestinian uprising, but it has maintained control over the territory's border crossings.

Despite the overwhelming show of force, it was not clear the offensive would halt the rocket fire. Past operations have never achieved that goal.

Late Saturday, Gaza health official Dr. Moaiya Hassanain said 230 Palestinians were killed and more than 400 were wounded.

The lone fatality in Israel was in the town of Netivot, where a rocket killed an Israeli man. Six other people were wounded, rescue services said.

Netivot only recently become a target, and dozens of stunned residents, some weeping, gathered at the house that took the deadly rocket hit. A hole gaped in one of the walls, which was pocked with shrapnel marks.

"We need to finish this once and for all and strike back hard," said next-door neighbor Avraham Chen-Chatam, 57.

Streets were nearly empty in Sderot, the Israeli border town pummeled hardest by rockets. But dozens of people congregated on a hilltop to watch the Israeli aerial attacks.

Israeli assault on Hamas kills more than 200

The TV images of dead and wounded Gazans inflamed Arab public opinion, and protests erupted in Arab Israeli villages, the West Bank and elsewhere in the Arab world.

The campaign embarrassed moderate Arab regimes that have encouraged Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking and weakened Hamas' rival, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who has ruled only the West Bank since Hamas violently seized control of Gaza in June 2007.

Abbas condemned the attacks, but fearing violence could spiral out of control, his forces also broke up protests in the West Bank.

The offensive also risked opening new fronts, including unrest that could destabilize the West Bank and ignite possible rocket attacks by Lebanese Hezbollah guerrillas on northern Israel.

Britain, the EU, the Vatican, the U.N. secretary-general and special Mideast envoy Tony Blair all called for an immediate restoration of calm. The Arab League scheduled an emergency meeting Wednesday to discuss the situation.

But the U.S., Israel's closest ally, blamed Hamas. "These people are nothing but thugs, so Israel is going to defend its people against terrorists like Hamas that indiscriminately kill their own people," White House spokesman Gordon Johndroe said.

Load-Date: December 29, 2008

End of Document

Coherent arguments demanded to explain horrifying Hamas objectives

The Herald (South Africa)

January 5, 2009 Monday

Copyright 2009 BDFM Publishers PTY Ltd. All Rights Reserved

THE HERALD

Section: OPINION & EDITORIAL

Length: 826 words

Byline: C Volpe, Severiano Von Buchenroder

Body

Coherent arguments demanded to explain horrifying Hamas objectives

IN his letter ("Seeking support for bias and prejudice at expense of Islam", The Herald, December 31), Iqbal Jassat, of the Media Review Network, mounts a ferocious attack on what he calls "the fanaticism of an overzealous Zionist lobby" and "the murder of innocent babies in Gaza". He castigates David Abel's "bias and prejudice" in place of "cogent and coherent arguments" ("Bush made a contribution to fighting the war on terror", The Herald, December 29).

Assuming Jassat supports Hamas, which is the target of Israel's attacks in Gaza, let him then provide "cogent and coherent arguments" to explain the Hamas Charter (see <http://www.mideastweb.org/hamas.htm>). Just as the Freedom Charter defines the ANC, so the Hamas Charter defines what Hamas stands for.

But unlike the noble and admirable ideals of the Freedom Charter, the Hamas Charter reveals a mindset that is nothing if not delusional. Here are a few extracts (although there is much more to astonish and horrify):

Hamas states its aim as "to raise the banner of Allah over every inch of Palestine" (Article 6) (in other words, to wipe Israel off the map) and further that "[Peace] initiatives, the so-called peaceful solutions, and the international conferences to resolve the Palestinian problem, are all contrary to the beliefs of [Hamas]. There is no solution to the Palestinian problem except by Jihad" (Article 13).

While "Jihad is an obligation binding on all Muslim men ... Muslim women ... have a no lesser role [in that] they manufacture men" and prepare them for Jihad (Article 17). Furthermore, they (the women) should be on guard lest they be impeded by "the Zionist invasion (which) relies ... on clandestine organisations ... such as the Freemasons, Rotary Clubs, (and) Lions ... to demolish societies, to destroy values ... and to wipe out Islam.

"[These organisations] stand behind the diffusion of drugs and toxics of all kinds in order to facilitate its control and expansion" (Article 28).

The fabrication of such ideas outside a mental institution is only slightly less stupefying than the fact that some people believe them. What do you believe, Mr Jassat? I look forward to your explanation.

C Volpe, Port Elizabeth

Coherent arguments demanded to explain horrifying Hamas objectives

IT is media bias and Pro-Palestinian lobby groups who assert Israel is the instigator of the Middle East conflict. I stand in full agreement with Abel's letter and Janette Khan's "Why always cast Israel as the villain?" (The Herald, December 30).

Rockets handmade in Syria and Iran are being targeted at Israeli towns and people on almost a daily basis in which scores of Israelis get either injured or killed. Last week, days after the ceasefire officially ended, 80 rockets were launched against Israel in just one day.

As soon as Israel retaliated (and keeping in mind they are making every effort to target only terrorists and Hamas headquarters and stake-out places, but unfortunately, in a war, like any war, sometimes civilians also pay the price), a chorus of condemnation from world leaders roared through every media outlet. That's what we call pure and blatant hypocrisy!

Opposition to Israel from the neighbouring Muslim nations stems from their religious belief that Jews are infidels. Dressed in military paraphernalia, the children in elementary schools learn to shout, "Death to the Jews!" and "Death to America!" in unison.

Teachers applaud these young children, who are taught from an early age to love death, hate Jews, and long for the glory of being a martyr. One of the poison streams that sweep young Palestinians into such fanatical hatred is the claim that the Jews have taken their land from them. Not so!

The fact of history is that Israel lived as a sovereign nation in the land until the Roman army, led by Hadrian in AD 130, attacked Jerusalem. The emperor, Hadrian, hated the Jews for their monotheistic theology and their refusal to bow to Rome.

Hadrian retaliated against the Jews by removing the name Judea from the maps of the world and renaming the area Syria Palaestina, after the ancient enemies of Israel, the Philistines. His attempt to rename Jerusalem as Aelia Capitolina failed miserably, but his efforts to steal the Jewish claim to the land of Israel were successful.

In spite of Hadrian's use of the term Palaestina, the Palestinians have never existed as an autonomous society, and the land of Israel never belonged to them. Media reports in Europe, the Middle East and elsewhere, referring to Israel as an "occupier" have no basis in fact.

It is nothing more than anti-Semitic propaganda.

In order to respond to distortions of truth about the true cause of the Middle East conflict, some basic facts of Israel's history must be understood, beginning at the end of the First World War with the breakup of the Ottoman Empire, which had ruled the region for many centuries.

Severiano von Buchenroder, Gelvandale, Port Elizabeth.

Load-Date: January 22, 2009

For War Widows, Hamas Recruits Army of Husbands

The New York Times

October 31, 2008 Friday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2008 The New York Times Company

Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 8; GAZA JOURNAL

Length: 862 words

Byline: By TAGHREED EL-KHODARY

Dateline: GAZA

Body

The grooms were resplendent in white shirts while the brides all wore black. At a sports stadium one recent October evening, thousands of Palestinians -- 300 newly married couples along with relatives and friends -- gathered for a mass wedding celebration, the 10th here this year courtesy of Hamas.

Hamas, the militant Islamist group that controls Gaza, has been observing a truce with Israel since June, allowing its underground fighters to resurface but leaving them without much to do. At the same time, hundreds of the group's women have been recently widowed, their husbands having been killed either in confrontations with Israel or in the fighting last year between Hamas and its secular rival, Fatah.

Taking advantage of the pause in violence, the Hamas leaders have turned to matchmaking, bringing together single fighters and widows, and providing dowries and wedding parties for the many here who cannot afford such trappings of matrimony.

"Marriage is the same as jihad," or holy war, said Muhammad Yousef, one recently married member of the Qassam Brigades, the Hamas underground. "With marriage, you are producing another generation that believes in resistance."

About 300 Qassam members, mostly in their 20s, signed up with their new wives for the most recent celebration, held at a sports stadium in the Tuffah district, east of Gaza City. Local mosques spread the word about the event and offered to help find spouses for single men whose families had not yet managed to arrange them a match.

As an added inducement, couples were promised a cash grant in lieu of a dowry, which few families could afford. But the economic embargo on Gaza, spearheaded by the Israelis who, like the United States and the European Union, classify Hamas as a terrorist organization, somewhat dampened the celebrations. While the poorest couples received a gift equivalent to \$2,000, many others in less dire straits came away with only \$200.

"That's the cost of a plank of wood for a bedroom suite," said one disappointed bride, Ola Dalo, 21, as she leaned her head on her new husband, Ali Msabah, 24.

For War Widows, Hamas Recruits Army of Husbands

Wael al-Zard, head of Al Taysir, an association affiliated with Hamas that tries to provide its fighters with the means to marry, said that many Muslims who used to contribute money from the Persian Gulf states had stopped transferring funds "out of fear."

To make up some of the shortfall, Ismail Haniya, the head of the Hamas government in Gaza, made a personal contribution of \$30,000 to the Tuffah group wedding, while another senior Hamas leader, Mahmoud Zahar, contributed \$10,000.

"Your money is not going to casinos," Mr. Zard declared during the wedding event. His point was that the donations would be devoted only to furthering the Islamist agenda, and not going to line officials' pockets, an accusation widely leveled against the previous rulers from Fatah. "There will be more weddings, and no one will remain single."

The 300 grooms were dressed in black pants, white shirts and colorful ties but no jackets, because of recent budget cuts. The brides, sitting separately among the women, wore head scarves and black robes over their evening dresses but were easily spotted by their heavy makeup. The couples had all signed marriage contracts before the event.

The grooms danced on the stage as a male singer extolled the virtues of married life. Ehab Adas, 25, one of the grooms, said he missed fighting but was keeping busy working as a secretary at the Interior Ministry. He pointed out his bride in the crowd, and proudly displayed the last text message he had received from her on his mobile phone. "Today is my real wedding," it read. He had replied simply, "I love you."

Although Hamas has long organized joint weddings, it is now doing so with more verve, placing special emphasis on remarrying its war widows. One of them, Amani Saed, 24, attended the mass wedding with her two young sons from her first marriage, Rami, 5, and Muhammad, 3. Their father, Khaled Saed, was killed at the age of 28 during the clashes between Hamas and Fatah in August 2007.

Eight months after Khaled's death, his father sought Amani's hand for his younger son, Muhammad, 22, who also worked at the Interior Ministry. Amani said she reluctantly agreed. "Muhammad is younger. It's hard, but it's good for the kids," she said.

Muhammad Yousef, the groom who equated marriage with jihad, came to celebrate and collect \$200 even though his family is considered reasonably well off. In July 2006, an Israeli tank crew fired in his direction as he and his group fired rockets at Israel. He was badly wounded in the chest and both legs, and his friends took him for dead and celebrated his "martyrdom" on the way to the hospital morgue.

But he survived, and because of his severe physical injuries, moved from firing rockets to manufacturing them instead. Mr. Yousef said he shared all the details of his past with his wife before they married, and she accepted his way of life wholeheartedly. The night before the mass wedding party, he said, his wife shared with him her ultimate wish: to carry out a joint suicide attack against Israel.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

PHOTO: With the grooms on the left, children danced at a stadium in Gaza this month during a mass wedding celebration for 300 couples, the 10th such event here this year organized by Hamas. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MOHAMMED ASAAD)

For War Widows, Hamas Recruits Army of Husbands

Load-Date: October 31, 2008

End of Document

The Clans of Gaza take on the men of Hamas - Part 1

Financial Times (London, England)

November 22, 2008 Saturday

Copyright 2008 The Financial Times Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: FT MAGAZINE; Pg. 30

Length: 2203 words

Byline: Tobias Buck

Highlight: Stories - Reportage

"Let the machinegun sing the melody of our memory. We are the men of Shajaiyeh, and everyone is afraid of us"

Body

As night fell on Gaza on August 2, the leaders of the Hilles clan realised they could resist the enemy no longer. Their men had battled for more than 13 hours, since dawn, in a futile attempt to stop the security forces of the Hamas government from overrunning the family compound in the Shajaiyeh neighbourhood of Gaza City. As machine-gun fire pounded Hilles homes and rocket-propelled grenades rained down, the men surveyed their losses. Nine members of the family had been killed and more than 100 wounded, including six women and 17 children.

Hamas gunmen were now swarming into the neighbourhood; what had been the family stronghold was becoming a deathtrap. Ahmed Hilles, the chief of the clan and a veteran power broker in the Gaza Strip, saw only one way out. Along with more than 180 gunmen and senior family members, he made a dash across an open field of scrub towards the wire-mesh fence that marks the border between Gaza and a different enemy's territory: Israel.

The startled Israeli soldiers eventually allowed the men to enter, but not before blindfolding them, stripping them down to their underpants and searching for weapons. Pictures of the half-naked fugitives, humiliated but alive, appeared the following day, confirming what everyone in the Gaza Strip already knew: that the Hilles, until recently one of the biggest, strongest and most combative of the traditional Gaza clans, were defeated. The 500 gunmen that formed something of a private militia for the Hilles proved no match for the tough, disciplined fighters of Hamas. The new masters of the Gaza Strip had razed one of the last enemy outposts.

When the fighting was over, the humbling of the proud clan continued, as Hamas security forces arrested scores of family members, searched their homes and collected their weapons. It marked the decisive, though not final, blow in a war that has been raging inside the Gaza Strip since the territory fell to Hamas in June last year. Fought with vehemence and brutality, it pitted the Islamist newcomers of Hamas against a much older order - that of Gaza's clans.

Extended families, or hamulas, have played a key role in Gaza's social and political fabric for centuries. Some trace their roots back hundreds of years, while others settled in Gaza as refugees from the villages and towns that became part of Israel in 1948. The biggest hamulas boast thousands of members from hundreds of individual families, yet still manage to operate as close-knit units, answering to their mukhtar, the headman, and a small group of elders who advise him.

The Clans of Gaza take on the men of Hamas - Part 1

Tensions between Hamas and the Hilles clan, which supports the rival Fatah political party, had been brewing from the first day of Islamist rule in the Gaza Strip. The two sides had already clashed once before, in a shoot-out that left several people dead, but agreed a truce. Now, more than a year after Hamas ousted Fatah and the Palestinian Authority from the coastal territory, that ceasefire was over and done.

Months later, the cinderblock maze of narrow lanes and unpaved streets that forms the heart of Shajaiyeh bears witness to the ferocity of the fighting. Several houses are burnt out, and dozens are riddled with bullet holes and the craters left behind by the grenades. Staring down from many walls in the neighbourhood are haunting photographs - colour photocopied - of the young men who died in the clashes. Martyrs' posters are normally reserved for fighters or civilians killed by Israeli troops, and are often put up by Hamas. Here, however, it is the victims of Hamas who are being mourned. One of the posters depicts a young man, clean-shaven and brandishing a huge machine gun. The dedication reads: "The Hilles family mourns the lion of the battle of dignity, Adhan Bassam Taleb Hilles / Let the machinegun sing the melody of our memory / We are the men of Shajaiyeh, and everyone is afraid of us."

A few days before the assault, a car bomb had exploded outside a beachside cafe in Gaza City, killing five Hamas security officers and a girl. Hamas investigators quickly concluded that the bombers were members of the Hilles family, and demanded the handover of 11 people. At first the clan rejected the order, fearing that the men would be tortured or simply killed on the spot. But eventually Abu Osama Hilles, who runs a paint factory and was acting as the clan's interlocutor with Hamas, won assurances that his relatives would be treated fairly. "The night before the attack," he says, "I met again with the 11 wanted men and asked them to surrender themselves." All agreed. But even as the men were getting ready to do so, Abu Osama heard worrying news. "There was a build-up of Hamas forces coming into the area," he says. "At 5.30 in the morning, the fighting began."

Many people had predicted that Hamas would sooner or later take on the Hilles and other big Gaza clans. Few, however, thought the conflict would be quite so bloody. Most of the clans were - and remain - reluctant to meddle in politics, and function largely as a social safety net, helping members who fall on hard times. Yet others developed into powerful political actors, running neighbourhoods and villages like private fiefdoms and even dabbling in national politics. Their powers reached a new pinnacle in the mid-1990s after the creation of the Palestinian Authority, the quasi-government set up to prepare for self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Several clans hitched their fate to a particular political faction, more often than not Yassir Arafat's Fatah party. Others turned to violent crime, exploiting and accelerating Gaza's descent into lawlessness and making a fortune from smuggling, kidnappings, extortion and robbery. The most powerful hamulas ended up not only with excellent political connections, but were also able to rely on hundreds of gunmen ready to do a family's bidding.

For these clans, the events of June last year marked the beginning of a harsh new era. After years of tension between Hamas and Fatah, the conflict between the two biggest Palestinian political groups turned violent. Hamas, which had won a surprise victory in the 2006 parliamentary elections but was unable to translate its triumph into a lasting government, fought bloody street battles with Fatah. The Islamists won, taking control of the territory in which the movement was born two decades earlier.

Hamas moved quickly to consolidate its grip on power. After eliminating the direct political threat from Fatah, it turned up the heat on other groups. It targeted critical newspapers, battled with the judiciary and put pressure on universities and non-governmental organisations to support Islamist rule. Clans such as the Hilles, with a strong militia and equally strong ties to the Fatah party, represented a particular challenge, which Hamas took on with a vengeance. Today, not even the families doubt that the conflict, at least for the moment, has been won by Hamas. As Abu Osama says, "All the big families have vanished."

As the Islamist group ponders its next moves, and amid fears that it may make a bid for power in the West Bank as well, the story of how Hamas defeated the clans of Gaza offers a glimpse at the workings of the divisive group. While Israel, the US and Europe shun Hamas as a terrorist organisation, Palestinians and most Arabs see it as a legitimate resistance movement. And despite its harsh rule in the Gaza Strip, Hamas continues to enjoy deep roots and a vast following among Palestinians. But as the clans were made to learn over the past 18 months, it is a group that, fired by a keen sense of ideological and religious righteousness, will move ruthlessly to crush opposition from within.

The Clans of Gaza take on the men of Hamas - Part 1

The Gaza Strip is not an area where opponents are easily ignored. It is 40km long, 10km wide, and its fast-growing population of more than 1.5 million makes it one of the most densely populated territories on earth. A handsome, sandy beach runs the length of the territory; not so long ago, it was destined to become a tourist attraction. Arafat had big dreams for the strip, which he boasted would be transformed into a second Singapore. Today, a half-finished luxury hotel on the northern fringes of Gaza City bears witness to those ambitious plans.

The strip has been under a strict Israeli embargo since Hamas took control of the territory in June last year. Even basic supplies disappear from the shelves for weeks at a time - making Gaza City one of the last places on earth where a host will try to impress his guests by serving bottles of Coca-Cola. The sanctions are designed to undermine Hamas and discourage militants from firing rockets at nearby Israeli towns. Until June this year, when Israel and Hamas agreed an uneasy ceasefire, the economic sanctions were supplemented by frequent military incursions and aerial attacks, claiming the lives of 399 Gazans this year alone.

Even with the ceasefire, however, curbs remain on movement into and out of the strip. Gazans call their homeland the biggest prison in the world, and it is easy to see why. Israel has surrounded the territory with fences and walls patrolled by soldiers. Anyone approaching the barrier from the Gaza side without prior co-ordination is likely to be shot at. Foreign journalists, aid workers and diplomats are allowed through the Erez terminal crossing six days a week; only a few dozen Palestinians a day share that privilege - mainly businessmen and patients seeking treatment at hospitals in Israel or Jordan.

Egypt, too, has sealed its border with Gaza, but uses its Rafah crossing into the territory as a safety valve. When the pressure inside the strip reaches boiling point, Cairo allows people out for a few days before resealing the border.

Inside the pressure cooker, the battle between the clans and Hamas ebbed and flowed according to the fortunes and political needs of the Islamist group. One of the first clans targeted by Hamas was the al-Bakr family, which controls much of the strip's fishing fleet. Known as Fatah loyalists, they came under attack during the clashes between Hamas and Fatah in June last year; after suffering heavy casualties, more than 200 al-Bakr gunmen surrendered to the Hamas fighters. The al-Masri family in the northern town of Beit Hanoun was also targeted during the June fighting. And one month after the assault on the Hilles, the compound of the powerful and notorious Doghmush family came under attack, leaving 11 people dead, including two children. Few Gazans felt pity for the Dogmush, a clan with a fearsome reputation for violent crime, including the abduction and four-month incarceration of BBC journalist Alan Johnston last year.

At its most basic, the conflict is over individual loyalty. Unlike other political groups such as Fatah or Islamic Jihad, Hamas demands that its members place their political affiliation above all else - even above family and kinship. As Ghazi Hamad, a senior Hamas official, says: "Here in Gaza, the political affiliation is very strong. A man who is a member of Hamas will be loyal to the organisation more than to his own family."

The Hilles learnt that this even applied to the more than 100 family members who defied clan tradition to join Hamas. "In the first clashes [between the Hilles and Hamas last year], most stood with the family against Hamas. In the second round they were neutral," says Abu Osama.

Abu Mohammed Hilles, a burly 24-year-old with a thick beard and piercing eyes, embodies the dilemma. He has served in the Hamas military wing for six years, and while he was not asked to take part in the assault on his own family in August, he did not rush to defend his relatives either. "I cannot give up the movement - it is Islam - and I cannot give up the family," he says.

Abu Mohammed and dozens of other family members are gathered on a blustery autumn day close to the Erez crossing. Almost three months have passed since the battle of Shajaiyeh, and the first of the Hilles men who fled across the border are expected to return today. The young men arrive one by one, picking their way along a track ripped open by the juddering tanks that used to operate here almost every day. Piles of concrete rubble and twisted metal are scattered across their path, which ascends gradually towards a barrier and a small parking lot. As the men walk, the rain slowly fills the potholes, turning the unpaved track into slippery mud.

The Clans of Gaza take on the men of Hamas - Part 1

A small crowd of flag-waving and cheering family members and friends has gathered to greet the men. The men approach their fathers and brothers, shake hands, exchange kisses and then collapse into a tight embrace.

I approach one of the youngsters, who reluctantly agrees to talk to me. He is pale and worried, and doesn't want to give his name. Did he take part in the August battle with fighters from **Hamas**? He shakes his head. What does he think of the Islamist group now? As he searches for words, his father steps in, grabs him by the jacket and drags him away. **Hamas** had promised not to arrest or harm the Hilles men when they returned, but one still has to be careful about railing against a group that, at the height of the battle with Fatah, threw enemies, alive and handcuffed, from the rooftops of Gaza skyscrapers.

Load-Date: November 21, 2008

End of Document

Israeli Foreign Minister Rules Out Peace Negotiations With Hamas

RTT News (United States)

January 12, 2009 Monday

Copyright 2009 NoticiasFinancieras/Grupo de Diarios America All Rights Reserved

Length: 239 words

Body

(RTTNews) - Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni on Monday ruled out the need for conducting peace negotiations with **Hamas**, the radical Islamist group that controls Gaza, saying that the group's words were "meaningless."

"I am not going to negotiate with **Hamas** and don't need them to sign anything for me. What they said is meaningless," Livni said in an interview with Israel's Army Radio on Monday.

"This is what is called deterrence: they know that the next time they attack us, they will be harmed," she added, as the Israeli offensive on the Gaza Strip entered a straight seventeenth day on Monday.

She said that Israel would continue with its offensive on the Gaza strip until it ends the capacity of **Hamas** militants to fire rockets into southern Israel, adding that Israel is currently negotiating with the Egyptian government on an Egypt-France proposed cease-fire deal aimed at ending the ongoing Gaza offensive.

The Israeli assault on the Gaza strip began on 27 December after **Hamas** refused to renew an Egyptian-brokered cease-fire deal that expired in December, and began pounding southern Israel with rockets and mortar shells.

It is estimated that at least 900 Palestinians, including **women** and children, have been killed and over 3,100 wounded in the Israeli offensive that began 17 days ago.

For comments and feedback: contact editorial@rttnews.com

Copyright(c) 2009 RealTimeTraders.com, Inc. All Rights Reserved

Load-Date: April 16, 2010

Where are the tears for the Jews slaughtered by Hamas?

Pretoria News (South Africa)

January 08, 2009 Thursday

e1 Edition

Copyright 2009 Independent News and Media Ltd All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 9

Length: 361 words

Body

Israeli citizens have been under the threat of daily attack from Gaza for years.

In the week before the Israeli incursion into Gaza - hundreds of missiles and mortars shells were fired at Israeli civilian communities including the firing of 80 missiles on a single day.

When Israeli children were killed by Hamas rockets, the world was silent.

Once again those who would like to see Israel destroyed and it's people subjected to genocide, are falling over themselves to join in the hyena chorus against Israel, using the excuse the fact that she finally responded to 40 000 thousand rockets launched by Hamas and Islamic Jihad aimed at Israel's men, women and children.

Hamas rain rockets down on Israel, targeting Jewish men, women and children for death, in accordance to their charter which calls for the killing of all Jews, which is what led to the IAF airstrikes on Hamas in the first place.

On the hundreds of rockets that have rained down on Israel, they have nothing to say. Hamas are responsible for the IAF response, since if they did not target Jews for terrorist rocket attacks, there would be no IAF response at all, there wouldn't need to be one.

One marvels how in a world filled with enormous evils - such as totalitarian states that make their countries into large prison camps (Iran and North Korea); that massacre and enslave millions of citizens (Sudan); that wage deadly war against their own populations (Zimbabwe and Myanmar); that destroy entire cultures (As China is doing in Tibet) - why Israel and the US are the two most vilified countries in the world.

Where were all these hysterical hyenas when thousands of Jewish women and children were incinerated by Hamas and Islamic Jihad?

When hundreds of Jewish children were shot in their beds by Arab murderers?

Well we will never again walk quietly to the gas chambers.

We will react when our men, women and children are killed in cold blood and we will hold on to that which belongs to us.

The hysteria of the anti-Semites of whatever stripe will not deter us.

Where are the tears for the Jews slaughtered by Hamas?

Even though the Palestinians will continue to work towards our destruction, they will not succeed.

Bless Israel forever.

Gary Selikow, Johannesburg

Load-Date: January 7, 2009

End of Document

ISRAEL, HAMAS RESUME FIGHTING AFTER LULL

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

January 8, 2009 Thursday

SOONER EDITION

Copyright 2009 P.G. Publishing Co.

Section: NATIONAL; Pg. A-1

Length: 775 words

Byline: Dion Nissenbaum and Ahmed Abu Hamda, McClatchy Newspapers

Body

JERUSALEM -- A surreal calm settled over the Gaza Strip for three hours yesterday afternoon, as the 12-day-old Israeli military campaign to destabilize the militant Islamist group **Hamas** came to a temporary halt.

Palestinians who had been huddling for days in their chilly, powerless homes rushed out in search of scarce food, clean water, cooking gas, warm blankets and supplies to get them through the deepening crisis.

Then, as abruptly as the firing stopped, the Israeli attacks resumed with renewed force. Gaza militants fired more than two dozen rockets into southern Israel yesterday. Four Israelis were killed by rockets in the past 12 days, but yesterday no one was seriously injured. Nearly 700 Palestinians have died in the Israeli attacks, including a rapidly rising number of **women** and children.

The International Committee of the Red Cross late yesterday said its teams, which the Israeli military allowed into the Zaytun neighborhood of Gaza City for the first time, found at least 15 corpses in several houses.

In one, workers found four small children next to their dead mothers, the ICRC said. In a statement, the Geneva-based organization called Israel's delay in permitting rescue services "unacceptable" and said Israel had "failed to meet its obligations" under international humanitarian law.

As diplomats struggled to craft a deal that would bring the fighting to a permanent halt, Israeli airstrikes targeted the **Hamas**-controlled smugglers' tunnels that have emerged as the focal point of a possible truce.

After dropping fliers warning Gaza residents living near the Egyptian border to flee, Israel again hit the barren area that **Hamas** had transformed into underground smuggling routes for weapons and supplies.

Egyptian officials said Israeli and Palestinian delegations were due in Cairo today for separate talks to see whether an Egyptian initiative could be the foundation for a cease-fire.

"We're open to hearing creative ideas on how to make sure that arms smuggling into Gaza no longer happens," said Mark Regev, spokesman for Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.

At the United Nations, where diplomats were debating a formula for ending the crisis, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said she had urged Israel to embrace the Egyptian proposal.

ISRAEL , HAMAS RESUME FIGHTING AFTER LULL

Rather than try to create a new international force to patrol the small but troublesome eight-mile section of the border from inside Gaza, the proposal would transform the modest Egyptian force patrolling the area into a multinational unit charged with keeping smuggling in check.

In late 2007, the United States dedicated \$23 million of Egypt's U.S. military aid to help it crack down on border smuggling into Gaza. Plans are afoot to expand the program.

U.S. officials said an Army Corps of Engineers team, which undertook an initial mission to Egypt to provide training and technology for detecting tunnels, could return to launch a broader effort. "We definitely could consider expanding it," said one official, speaking on condition of anonymity because no decision has been announced.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy, who spearheaded the diplomatic move, expressed optimism yesterday that the plan could gain momentum and bring the fighting to an end. Mr. Sarkozy yesterday announced that Israel and the Palestinian Authority had agreed in principle to the proposal. But the Palestinian Authority, which lost control of Gaza to **Hamas** militants in a June 2007 military showdown, lacks any ability to enforce the plan's provisions in Gaza.

Israeli leaders, with strong U.S. backing, have made clear that they're doing all they can to marginalize **Hamas** and regain a role for the secular Palestinian Authority. "**Hamas** has no official status," Mr. Regev said of the group, which won control of the Palestinian government in free, democratic elections in 2006. "**Hamas** is part of the problem," he said. "They are not part of the solution."

As the cease-fire talks unfold, Israel is moving ahead with its military campaign. Israel's security Cabinet met yesterday to weigh its next moves, including an expansion of the 4-day-old ground offensive. Israeli leaders declined to discuss their next steps publicly, but Israeli media reported the Cabinet will press ahead with the military operation.

The Israeli campaign, codenamed Operation Cast Lead, has killed nearly 700 Palestinians, including more than 100 children, according to Gaza medical officials. More than 3,000 Palestinians have been wounded in the fighting.

Seven Israeli soldiers have been killed since the ground operation began Saturday. Four were killed by an Israeli tank that accidentally opened fire on an Israeli position.

Graphic

PHOTO: Ahmad Gharabli/Agence France-Presse/Getty Images: A Palestinian protestor flashes the victory sign in front of an Israeli soldier during a demonstration yesterday in Jerusalem.

Load-Date: January 8, 2009

Analysis; Sights are lowered as Jerusalem aims to teach Hamas a lesson

The Daily Telegraph (London)

December 31, 2008 Wednesday

Copyright 2008 Telegraph Media Group Limited All Rights Reserved

The Daily Telegraph

Section: NEWS; International; Pg. 11

Length: 523 words

Byline: David Blair Diplomatic Editor

Body

AS ISRAEL'S assault on Gaza enters its fifth day, much of Hamas's military machine remains intact, including about two thirds of its stock of missiles.

A briefing for Israel's national security cabinet on Sunday assessed that Hamas "still has the ability to launch perhaps 100 rockets a day", claims Mark Regev, the official spokesman for Ehud Olmert, the prime minister. Of an arsenal of about 3,000 missiles in Gaza, Israeli reports suggest that about 2,000 remain.

But Israel's planners face a crucial problem: they must achieve their military objective before the government succumbs to outside pressure to halt the offensive. The more ambitious their goal, the harder this will be.

Ehud Barak, the defence minister, has raised expectations by pledging "all-out war" on Hamas to the "bitter end". This brand of fighting talk gives the impression that Israel's central aim is to topple Hamas from power in Gaza.

If so, this would entail a full-scale invasion and probably a campaign lasting months. If Hamas survived in power - or returned to government after an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza - the war would be deemed a failure.

So Israeli officials are carefully lowering expectations. Mr Regev said "regime change" was not Israel's goal and denied any intention to "reoccupy" Gaza.

Instead, the campaign's only aim was to end the rocket attacks on southern Israel and bring a "sustainable situation of quiet".

Just as Israel's northern border has been quiet for two years, despite the presence of Hizbollah in Lebanon, so the same can be done with Gaza.

Mr Regev said this "peace and quiet" would be "based on deterrence and that will only be achieved if we continue to inflict painful and surgical blows on the Hamas military machine". The crucial word here is "deterrence". Israel does not aim to destroy Hamas or overthrow its government in Gaza, nor even totally eliminate its ability to fire rockets. Instead, the aim is to drive home the cost of bombarding Israel. This campaign is designed to deprive Hamas of the will - not necessarily the means - to fire its missiles.

Analysis Sights are lowered as Jerusalem aims to teach Hamas a lesson

As war aims go, this is relatively modest. The question is whether Israel's armed forces will have enough time to achieve it.

"A lot depends on what we do and how we do it. If we continue to be as surgical as possible, that gives us more time," said Mr Regev.

No-one can say for certain how many civilians have been among the 360 Palestinians killed so far. About 60 were women or children. Scores of policemen have also been killed - and many question how they can be called military targets.

If one attack kills a large number of civilians, the entire operation may become untenable, just as the deaths of 106 refugees under

Israeli shellfire in Qana, southern Lebanon, forced the end of Operation Grapes of Wrath

in 1996.

But whenever this does end, Hamas will probably still be in power in Gaza. Israel hopes the movement will then be deterred from launching any more rockets. Then it would declare victory.

If, however, Hamas promptly fires another salvo, having become still more radical and won greater popular support, Israel's campaign will have failed.

Load-Date: December 31, 2008

ISRAELI GRIP ON GAZA GETS TIGHTER. Hamas defiant on 2nd day of ground campaigning

Daily News (New York)

January 6, 2009 Tuesday

SPORTS FINAL EDITION

Copyright 2009 Daily News, L.P.



Section: NEWS; Pg. 9

Length: 529 words

Byline: BY MATTHEW KALMAN in Jerusalem ERICA SILVERMAN in Ramallah, West Bank and HELEN KENNEDY in New York DAILY NEWS WRITERS

Body

Hamas leaders emerged from their bunkers yesterday to offer only defiance and new threats as Israeli helicopters and tanks killed a growing number of Palestinian civilians.

"The enemy is flustered, the enemy has failed. It cannot hurt us. All it does is kill innocent **women** and children," **Hamas** paramilitary wing spokesman Abu Obaida said proudly.

On Day 10 of the Gaza war, the second full day of ground operations, Israeli troops and tanks surrounding Gaza City began to squeeze.

They broadcast radio warnings telling people to move toward the center of the city for their safety.

But there was no safety.

As F-16s swooped overhead firing missiles into buildings, the city's 400,000 residents were suffering - or dying.

At least 14 children were killed, raising the Palestinian death toll from the 10-day onslaught to 540 - about a third of them civilians, the UN said.

Eleven members of Salah Samouni's family, including five small children, died when their apartment building suddenly became rubble.

Thirteen members of another family, including three toddlers, were killed by shells in the mourning tent where they were watching over the body of a paramedic killed in northern Gaza.

Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak said the offensive would stop only when Israel had won "peace and tranquility" for citizens living in range of **Hamas** rockets.

ISRAELI GRIP ON GAZA GETS TIGHTER. Hamas defiant on 2nd day of ground campaign

"**Hamas** has sustained a very heavy blow from us, but we have yet to achieve our objective and therefore the operation continues," he said.

The Israeli Army said "many dozens" of militants have been killed or wounded.

A senior **Hamas** political leader outside Gaza told the Daily News he thought **Hamas** would agree to a ceasefire if the border crossings were reopened.

"The government in Gaza is completely paralyzed," he said.

In Gaza City, Israeli commandos went block by block, seeking out houses marked by intelligence as shielding **Hamas** missiles and explosives.

Under one house, soldiers chased **Hamas** fighters who fled into a warren of underground tunnels.

Israel said its forces sustained five wounded, bringing the Israeli military casualties to 53 wounded and one dead.

Despite the onslaught, more than 20 **Hamas** rockets were launched at Israel, hitting towns up to 25 miles away.

Mahmoud al-Zahar, the most powerful **Hamas** figure inside Gaza, broke his 10-day silence, reading a statement on video from an underground bunker.

Israel, he said, "has hardly touched the **Hamas** forces. Victory is coming, God willing."

At the overwhelmed Palestinian hospitals, where generator fuel is about to run out, victory was low on the list of concerns.

"Whoever comes with a head, we check his pulse. If there's no pulse, he's straight to the morgue. If there's no head, well, goodbye," said Raed Arini, an official at chaotic Shifa Hospital.

The carnage had some Palestinians wishing for **Hamas'** demise.

"I am counting the days until **Hamas** is finished, it will be a holiday," said Hashem, a Gaza pharmacist holed up in an apartment with his mother and two sisters.

Others were becoming radicalized.

"I used to criticize the rockets," said Abu Othman, waiting for bread to feed his seven children.

"Now I want to see buses blown up in Israel."

hkennedy@nydailynews.com

Graphic

Relatives of three Palestinian children, (l.-to-r.) Ahmad, Mohammed and Issa al-Samone, killed in missile strike, carry their bodies during funeral yesterday in Gaza City. Photo by EPA

Load-Date: January 6, 2009

The Clans of Gaza take on the men of Hamas - Part 2

Financial Times (London, England)

November 22, 2008 Saturday

Copyright 2008 The Financial Times Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: FT MAGAZINE; Pg. 30

Length: 1964 words

Byline: Tobias Buck

Highlight: Stories - Reportage

"Let the machinegun sing the melody of our memory. We are the men of Shajaiyeh, and everyone is afraid of us"

Body

Not far from the scenes of reunion stands the house of Rafik al-Masri, who combines his daytime post as a professor of sociology with the rather more archaic role as an elder of the al-Masri clan. A distinguished looking man of 50 years, he wears a thin moustache and an easy smile. The imposing nose and high forehead give him an air of thoughtful authority, and his deliberate manner of speech betrays the long years he spent studying the works of neo-Marxist German sociologists such as Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer.

We sit in his living room surrounded by heavy furniture, brocade curtains, gold-painted vases and four matching chandeliers. It is the type of modern baroque found in many Middle Eastern homes, but it is also at shocking odds with the dirt and poverty nearby. Just down the road lies a rubbish-strewn field that until a few months ago served as one of the main launch-pads for rocket squads targeting nearby Israeli towns.

The al-Masris trace their roots back to four brothers who arrived here from Egypt more than 300 years ago. Today, the family counts up to 5,000 members. Its status rests not only on tradition, numbers and the wealth of its leading members, but also on its ability to fight. Al-Masri says he can call upon at least 600 armed men to defend the family compound against attack. Another source of prestige lies with the family's contribution to the Palestinian struggle against Israel. "The family has given 20 martyrs," he states, pointing out that seven al-Masris have died in "martyrdom operations" - the term used by many Palestinians to describe suicide attacks.

The al-Masris and the other big Gaza clans that have dominated the territory's political and economic life for decades, if not centuries, know how to survive regime change. To help each other through the bad times, the clan - like many others - operates a welfare fund: every male above the age of 16 is required to contribute at least five shekels (around 85p) a month. Rafik al-Masri, who manages the fund, says this gives him an annual budget of about 60,000 shekels (just over £10,000) to spend on funerals, weddings and study grants for needy family members.

The support of a large family became even more vital as the power of the Palestinian Authority declined after Arafat's death in 2004 and Gaza descended into lawlessness. Along with the decline of the authority's status came a gradual escalation in the stand-off between Fatah and **Hamas**.

The Clans of Gaza take on the men of Hamas - Part 2

The al-Masris backed the losing side. And they now have a foe some family members believe is more menacing even than the hated Israelis. "Hamas," Rafik tells me, stressing every syllable, "is worse than the Israeli occupation."

I ask him to explain the ferocity of the family's animosity, so he tells me the story of his nephew, Louai al-Masri, who served as a bodyguard for the Palestinian Authority's deputy head of intelligence in the Gaza Strip, another al-Masri. Just days before Hamas finally took over the Gaza Strip, the young man was stopped at a Hamas checkpoint and dragged from the car. "He was stopped while coming back from work. They shot him in the legs and left him in the street."

Vowing revenge, the young man's father and brothers went in search of Hamas gunmen. In a shoot-out on Beit Hanoun's main market square, they killed one Hamas security officer and injured three more, setting off a bloody cycle of killings that reached its nadir just outside the town's only hospital. More than 100 Hamas men laid siege to the hospital, while inside doctors were treating the injured al-Masri men. Eventually Hamas stormed the clinic, hauled out one of the attackers and shot him on the ramp leading up to Accident & Emergency. In total, "they assassinated three members of the family - my brother and two nephews," Rafik al-Masri says.

Hamas today is at pains to stress that it does not seek all-out war with Gaza's leading families. Unlike other, more radical Islamist groups, Hamas has often shown a tendency towards pragmatism. Keen to prove that it could govern as well or even better than Fatah, the group in principle had little interest in antagonising powerful players such as the Hilles or the al-Masris. In this case, however, moderation lost out to a mix of vulnerability, rigidity and the desire to crush even small signs of defiance - before they could escalate into a full-blown challenge to its authority.

Fawzy Barhoum, the ever-cheerful spokesman for Hamas, works hard to present the calm, acceptable face of the Islamist group. It does not always work (he recently blamed the global financial crisis on the "Jewish lobby"), but his appearance and manner are certainly a world away from the image of the gun-toting fanatic. He is dressed meticulously in a dark suit, grey shirt and tie. The two flags behind his tidy desk - the green banner of Hamas and the red, black, white and green flag of Palestine - are arranged in perfect symmetry.

A year ago, Barhoum was locked in something of a battle with the English language, which he delivered in an uneasy staccato. Since then, he has achieved a fluency that betrays his increasingly frequent conversations with foreign reporters. But at least some of his progress may also have to do with the methodical dedication typical of members of the Islamist group: on his desk, I notice a scrap of paper on which he jots down unfamiliar words and phrases with their Arabic translation. One is "destabilising", another is "from the bottom of the heart". Neither is used in our conversation.

"The clans are a victim of Fatah," he insists, turning the conventional wisdom on its head. "When Abu Amar [Yassir Arafat] came back to Palestine, he came to depend on the clans for support. Fatah and its security apparatus gave the families guns and money." In the years after Arafat's death, as the power of the Palestinian Authority began to crumble, the clans used their new-found power to further their own - often criminal - interests, Barhoum says. Some clans kidnapped foreign journalists, erected roadblocks and terrorised the civilian population. "These families committed crimes, and even killings."

Even independent observers acknowledge that Fatah was instrumental in politicising - and arming - a select group of powerful Gaza clans, and promoting family elders to top positions in the PA's intelligence and security apparatus. Both the Hilles and the al-Masris saw leading members elevated to high offices under Fatah rule.

After the Hamas takeover in Gaza, the Islamists vowed to put an end to the general state of lawlessness. No one except members of the Hamas security forces was allowed to carry a weapon in the street; the families were ordered to remove roadblocks and checkpoints around their strongholds; Hamas even banned the firing of weapons during family celebrations - a custom that had caused numerous fatalities over the years, and provided a fearsome soundtrack to weddings and funerals in the strip.

The Clans of Gaza take on the men of Hamas - Part 2

Barhoum explains the rules governing the Gaza Strip today: "No one is above the law. No family is allowed to give shelter to people who committed a crime or carry weapons. We are not against any family - but everything has to be done according to the law."

Ironically, Hamas worked to implement the very slogan that Arafat's successor, Mahmoud Abbas, chose for his election campaign (and on which, until recently, he conspicuously failed to deliver): "One law, one authority, one gun." The Islamists made it clear that they would not tolerate any rival power inside the Gaza Strip - and soon set out to prove that defiance, even for a family as strong as the Hilles, would come at a bloody price.

In an unpaved lane not far from the main Hilles compound in Shajaiyeh, I find Mohammed Redda and his sons huddled over a motorbike. Dressed in a smart blue shirt and ironed jeans, the unemployed Redda introduces himself as a member of the extended Hilles clan. He relates the events of August with a mixture of resignation and pride: "We were sitting here when the clashes started," he says, gesturing to a plastic chair standing just outside his three-floor home. They came under fire from an unfinished building on the other side of a small plot of land in front of the house. Several rocket-propelled grenades slammed into the plot, blasting holes the size of a football into the iron gate right next to where we stand.

The men brought the women and children to safety, before fetching their guns and firing back. The family lost the battle, but - as I am told by everyone here - not their honour. The Hilles, Redda says, held their own against the famously disciplined fighters of Hamas for 13 hours, inflicting several casualties on the Islamist forces. "We engaged with Hamas to protect our dignity and honour, and our dignity and honour are still intact," he says.

And there is always revenge. "We lost 18 men. As soon as the situation changes, we will fight against Hamas again," says Redda. One of his sons interrupts. "We always said we would never allow Hamas men into our houses unless they step over our corpses. We are going to break into their homes, and make their families suffer what we suffered here." The small group of Hilles men that has gathered around us nod their approval.

Back in Beit Hanoun, the al-Masris are also thinking about revenge - just not at the moment, while Hamas is strong and in power. "For the time being, they can arrest us, they can detain us, but we will not be lured out on to the battlefield," says Rafik al-Masri. "But we will never accept the principle of forgiveness. We will never let bygone be bygone. In Islam we say that every time has its own judge." Justice, he adds solemnly, can "take hours, or can take years".

I ask him whether the family erected mourning tents for the men killed in the stand-off with Hamas last year - usually a crucial part of honouring the dead in Gaza. Relatives spend hours languishing in the shade, to smoke, drink tea and swap stories and memories. Lighting up another cigarette, al-Masri slowly shakes his head. The family has unfinished business, and in the tradition of the Gaza clans, not putting up a mourning tent is a sign that the dead will be avenged. The families will not forget the losses and humiliation suffered at the hand of Gaza's new masters.

Abu Osama Hilles, sitting in the office of his paint factory, told me earlier that the families had "vanished" under the Hamas onslaught. A moment later, he corrects himself. "But they can come back. Hamas cannot rule the Gaza Strip forever."

Tobias Buck is the FT's Jerusalem bureau chief.

Families Under Fire

June 11/12 2007

As violence escalates between Hamas and Fatah forces in the Gaza Strip, three members of the al-Masri family are killed by Hamas in Beit Hanoun.

June 13 2007

The Clans of Gaza take on the men of Hamas - Part 2

After two days of fighting, more than 200 members of the al-Bakr clan in Gaza City surrender to **Hamas** fighters. Eight family members were killed in the clashes, including five gunmen and two **women**.

June 14 2007

Hamas takes control of the Gaza Strip.

Oct 17-20 2007

Clashes between the Fatah-affiliated Hilles clan and **Hamas** gunmen claim the lives of six Palestinians. At least 20 more are wounded.

July 25 2008

A car bomb explodes outside a beach cafe in Gaza City. The blast kills five **Hamas** security officers and one girl. **Hamas** claims the bomb was planted by members of the Hilles family.

August 2 2008

Hamas security forces and police attack the Hilles compound, forcing more than 180 clan members to flee into Israel. Eleven Palestinians are killed and more than 100 are injured.

Sept 15 2008

A policeman is killed. **Hamas** blames the attack on members of the Doghmush family.

Sept 16 2008

The Doghmush family comes under attack from **Hamas** security forces and policemen. At least 12 Palestinians are killed and more than 40 injured.

Load-Date: November 21, 2008

Hamas says no to Abbas:

Chicago Daily Herald

October 7, 2008 Tuesday

L2 Edition

Copyright 2008 Paddock Publications, Inc.

Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 518 words

Body

Hamas says no to Abbas:

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip — **Hamas** will cease to recognize Mahmoud Abbas as Palestinian president after Jan. 8 and replace him with one of its own leaders, according to a resolution approved by the Islamic movement's legislators Monday. The **Hamas** resolution demands that Abbas issue a decree by Wednesday to hold new presidential elections within three months, to coincide with what **Hamas** says is the end of his term.

U.S., Lebanon commission:

BEIRUT, Lebanon — The United States and Lebanon on Monday set up a joint military commission to bolster military cooperation a move that follows the first visit by the newly elected Lebanese president to Washington. The development comes against the backdrop of a Syrian troop buildup along Lebanon's northern border and follows bombings blamed on Islamic militants in the two neighboring Mideast countries.

China cancels contacts:

WASHINGTON — China has abruptly canceled a series of military and diplomatic contacts with the United States to protest a planned \$6.5 billion package of U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, American officials told The Associated Press on Monday. Beijing has notified the U.S. that it will not go forward with several senior level visits and other cooperative military-to-military plans because of the sale, which was announced last week, Pentagon and State Department officials said.

NRC delays decision:

SALT LAKE CITY — The Nuclear Regulatory Commission said Monday it is delaying a decision on whether to allow EnergySolutions Inc. to import the largest-ever amount of nuclear waste into the U.S., opening the window for Congress to block all foreign waste before the decision is made.

DUI in bus crash:

WILLIAMS, Calif. — Police say the driver of a casino-bound charter bus that crashed and killed eight people is in critical condition and faces charges of driving under the influence. The California Highway Patrol is identifying the driver as 52-year-old Quintin Watts of Stockton.

Transgender pol wins case:

Hamis says no to Abbas:

ATLANTA — Georgia's top court ruled in favor of a transgender politician who was slapped with a lawsuit by two political opponents who claimed she misled voters by running as a **female**. The Georgia Supreme Court's unanimous ruling on Monday found that the two political opponents who filed the lawsuit failed to produce evidence of fraud, misconduct or illegal action after claiming that Michelle Bruce bamboozled voters by identifying herself as a **female**. Bruce landed one of four council seats in Riverdale, Ga., in 2003.

Polar bear victory:

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — Three conservation groups have reached a partial settlement with the federal government on polar bear habitat that could add restrictions to future petroleum exploration or drilling off Alaska's coast

New Purple Heart rules:

WASHINGTON — An estimated 17,000 deceased U.S. prisoners of war could be awarded Purple Hearts under a new Pentagon policy announced Monday. Purple Hearts are awarded to soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines wounded by enemy action. The revised policy announced Monday by the Defense Department will award it to POWs killed in captivity.

Load-Date: December 22, 2008

End of Document

Israel attack leaves 298 dead; Weekend air strikes a response to daily rocket attacks by Hamas

The Vancouver Sun (British Columbia)

December 29, 2008 Monday

Final Edition

Copyright 2008 The Vancouver Sun, a division of CanWest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: CANADA & WORLD; Pg. B1

Length: 1290 words

Byline: Nidal Al-Mughrabi, Reuters

Dateline: GAZA

Body

Israel pounded **Hamas** targets in the Gaza Strip from the air overnight and prepared for a possible invasion after killing at least 298 Palestinians and wounding about 900 in two days of attacks.

Israel said the campaign that began on Saturday was a response to almost daily rocket and mortar fire that intensified after **Hamas**, the Islamist group in charge of the enclave that Israel quit in 2005, ended a six-month ceasefire a week ago.

Israel stepped up air strikes after dark on Sunday, destroying a laboratory building at the Islamic University in Gaza, a significant cultural symbol, **Hamas** said. Israel has accused **Hamas** of using the facilities to develop explosives.

During the first two days of the assault, **Hamas** gunmen fired about 150 of their makeshift rockets and mortars at Israel, the army said, less than had been expected.

In the deepest strike yet into Israel, two rockets struck near the port of Ashdod, 30 km from Gaza. There were no casualties, but the strikes underscored **Hamas** efforts to build longer-range rockets in Gaza.

Israeli army Chief of Staff Gabi Ashkenazi reportedly told the cabinet on Sunday that 50 percent of **Hamas**'s rocket-launching capabilities had been destroyed.

The Israeli attacks enraged Arabs across the Middle East, where protesters burned Israeli and U.S. flags to press for a stronger response from their leaders to Israel's attack on Gaza.

Israeli tanks deployed on the edge of the Gaza Strip, poised to enter the densely populated enclave of 1.5 million Palestinians.

Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak told top commanders at a briefing on Sunday that the Israeli offensive was open-ended.

Mark Regev, a spokesman for Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, said the campaign would continue until the population in southern Israel "will no longer live in terror and in fear of constant rocket barrages."

Israel attack leaves 298 dead; Weekend air strikes a response to daily rocket attacks by Hamas

Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, who hopes to become prime minister after a Feb. 10 election, appeared to rule out a large-scale invasion to seize the territory.

"Our goal is not to reoccupy Gaza Strip," she said on NBC's Meet the Press program. Asked on Fox News if Israel was out to topple Gaza's Hamas rulers, Livni replied: "Not now."

The UN Security Council called on all sides to cease fire. But an Israeli official said Israel was feeling little international pressure to halt its operations.

Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum urged Palestinian groups to use "all available means, including martyrdom operations" -- a reference to suicide bombings in Israel.

Keeping pressure on Hamas after bombing runs that turned Saturday into one of the bloodiest days for Palestinians in 60 years of conflict, Israeli aircraft flattened the group's main security compound in Gaza, killing at least four security men. Other airstrikes targeted a large prison in downtown Gaza City and vehicles that the Israelis said were carrying gunmen.

Palestinian health officials said the deaths raised to 298 the number of Palestinians killed since Saturday.

Hamas said 180 of its members had been killed and the rest included civilians, among them 16 women and some children.

One Israeli was killed on Saturday by a rocket fired from Gaza. Gazan rockets have caused few Israeli casualties but have damaged property and sparked panic in many border towns.

Military spokesman Avi Benayahu said Hamas had not yet responded as strongly as expected, possibly because it was "trying to recover from the blows," but that "it is too soon to eulogize" it.

Livni said Israel was trying to "target only terrorists and Hamas headquarters ... but, unfortunately, in a war ... sometimes also civilians pay the price."

Violence spread to the occupied West Bank, where Israeli soldiers opened fire at stone-throwing Palestinian protesters. Palestinian medical officials said two Palestinians were killed.

Palestinian forces loyal to President Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah shot and wounded three people in a protest in support of Hamas. Arab citizens of Israel also held protests.

Abbas, speaking in Cairo, accused Hamas, which seized the Gaza Strip from Fatah in 2007, of triggering Israel's raids by not extending the ceasefire that Egypt brokered in June.

U.S. President George W. Bush's administration, in its final weeks in office, put the onus on Hamas to prevent more violence.

ISRAEL'S OPTIONS

The opening of an all-out air assault on the Gaza Strip, aimed at stopping rocket attacks by Hamas terrorists, presents Israel's leaders with a crucial decision. They can escalate their campaign into a general offensive, or draw back having inflicted serious punishment on Hamas.

The options facing Israel are:

- A ground invasion of Gaza. This is the toughest and riskiest option. It would guarantee the overthrow of the Hamas administration and make it impossible for gunmen to launch rockets at Israeli towns. The fighting would be fierce and casualties heavy. On the day after taking Gaza, Israel would be faced with the impossible choice of a quick withdrawal or staying permanently. Leave Gaza, and Hamas would probably return to power. Stay, and the costs of occupation would be immense, so a full-scale invasion remains unlikely.

Israel attack leaves 298 dead; Weekend air strikes a response to daily rocket attacks by Hamas

- More air strikes. These incur very little risk for Israel and inflict immense damage on Hamas. This option carries the least cost for Israel -- but is highly unlikely to be effective in the long run.
- Ground incursions plus air strikes. Israel may choose to deploy troops for raids on selected targets inside Gaza. It may also try to carve out a buffer zone to shield against rocket attacks by occupying a small area along Gaza's borders with Israel. All this could be combined with continued air strikes. This would inflict great damage on Hamas at relatively low cost to Israel and is the most likely option.

David Blair, Daily Telegraph

SUNDAY'S DEVELOPMENTS

- Palestinian medics say seven people, including five young sisters, die in an air strike in northern Gaza and three young children are killed when a bomb strikes a house near the abandoned home of a senior Hamas official in Rafah.
- Israeli naval vessels pound Gaza port, targeting Hamas structures, an official from the group's security wing says.
- Hamas says an Israeli air strike after dark destroys a laboratory building at the Islamic University, a significant cultural symbol of Hamas. Israel has accused Hamas of using the facilities to develop explosives. An Israeli spokeswoman confirms the facility which Hamas had used for weapons and explosives development was targeted.
- Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak tells commanders at the operation's military headquarters the offensive is open-ended, saying "the Israeli army is continuing and shall continue to act to achieve the goals."
- Israeli air strike targets police compound in refugee camp near Gaza City, injuring four Hamas policemen, medics say. The strike occurred a block away from the house of Ismail Haniyeh, the head of Hamas's government in Gaza.
- Dozens of Palestinians try to cross into Egyptian territory from Gaza as Egyptian riot police fire in the air to fend them off. Some Palestinians used bulldozers and explosives to blow open sections of the border wall. Egyptian security official says 40 Palestinians were arrested after crossing into Egypt.
- Israeli aircraft bomb some 40 smuggling tunnels in the southern Gaza Strip, part of a network that runs under the border with Egypt and provides a lifeline to the outside world. Israeli bombs also destroy Hamas's regional headquarters, wounding several people.
- Israeli tanks deploy on the edge of the Gaza Strip in preparation for a possible ground incursion into the enclave. Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's cabinet approves a call-up of 6,500 reservists.
- Israeli air strike destroys much of Hamas's main security complex in the Gaza Strip.

Reuters

Graphic

Colour Photo: Getty Images; Relatives of Palestinian police chief Tawfiq Jaber, who was killed in an Israeli air strike, hold pictures of him during his funeral on Sunday in the southern town of Rafah, Gaza. ; Map: Reuters; Gaza Air Strikes ;

Load-Date: December 29, 2008

Israel attack leaves 298 dead; Weekend air strikes a response to daily rocket attacks by Hamas

End of Document

Haniyeh: Hamas will consider cease-fire initiatives. Fatah official says leader in hiding has 'raised the white flag'

The Jerusalem Post

January 13, 2009 Tuesday

Copyright 2009 The Jerusalem Post All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 649 words

Byline: KHALED ABU TOAMEH

Body

For the first time since the beginning of the IDF military operation in the Gaza Strip, Hamas on Monday openly signaled its willingness to accept a cease-fire with Israel.

The message from Hamas was issued by its prime minister, Ismail Haniyeh, who has been in hiding since the beginning of the offensive.

Haniyeh's remarks contradict fiery statements made by Hamas leaders in Syria and Lebanon.

Haniyeh said in a televised speech that Hamas would cooperate with any initiative to stop the offensive and reopen the border crossings into the Gaza Strip.

"We will deal positively with any initiative aimed at ending the offensive," he said.

However, Haniyeh said that Hamas would also continue to fight against the "occupation forces" of Israel.

"We are confident that eventually we would achieve victory and crush the aggression," he said. "The intifada must continue because the occupation is continuing to kill."

Haniyeh claimed that at least half of the Palestinians killed in the IDF operation were women and children. "Victory comes to those who believe in Allah and carry out his commandments," he added, citing several verses from the Koran.

"We have confidence in Allah because He's on our side. We are nearing victory over the Zionist war machine. After 17 days of fighting, I can say that the Gaza Strip and faith will prevail. With Allah's help, the Palestinian people will prevail over the infidels."

Haniyeh's speech, which ended with a prayer, was seen by some Palestinians as an admission of defeat. A Fatah official in Ramallah said the speech reflected Hamas's growing predicament.

"This speech shows that Hamas has been defeated," he said. "Haniyeh has actually raised the white flag."

The official pointed out that the speech was also an indication of the growing rift between the Hamas leadership in the Gaza Strip and the one in Damascus and Beirut.

Haniyeh: Hamas will consider cease-fire initiatives. Fatah official says leader in hiding has 'raised the white flag'

"The **Hamas** leaders in the Gaza Strip are desperate for a cease-fire," he said. "After more than two weeks of fighting, they are tired and frustrated."

The Fatah official said that Haniyeh's remarks were likely to escalate tensions between the two leaderships. "I don't think [Damascus-based **Hamas** leader] Khaled Mashaal is going to like what Haniyeh said," he remarked. "The **Hamas** leaders in Damascus and Beirut are under heavy pressure from the Syrians and Iranians not to accept the latest Egyptian cease-fire initiative."

A **Hamas** delegation returned to Cairo Tuesday night carrying the movement's response to the Egyptian initiative, which calls for an immediate cease-fire between Israel and the Islamist movement.

The four-member delegation held talks in Cairo earlier this week with Egyptian Intelligence Chief Omar Suleiman before heading to Damascus for consultations with **Hamas** leaders.

The delegation had originally expressed reservations about some points in the Egyptian proposal, especially regarding the Rafah border crossing and the deployment of an international force in the Gaza Strip. The delegation also voiced opposition to declaring a long-term cease-fire with Israel.

Osama Hamdan, the **Hamas** representative in Lebanon, denied that the Egyptians had set an ultimatum to **Hamas** to accept their initiative. "No one can impose a deadline on us," he said. "Everything now depends on whether the Egyptians accept our reservations over their proposal." He expressed hope that the Egyptians would accept **Hamas**'s reservations over the cease-fire initiative. He added that **Hamas** was demanding an immediate halt to the Israeli operation before discussing the issue of a cease-fire.

In a related development, the **Hamas** government said that it would continue to function despite the "reoccupation" of the Gaza Strip by Israel.

"We are continuing to assume our responsibilities although the Gaza Strip has been divided," said a statement issued by the **Hamas** government. "We are continuing to provide the citizens with various services."

Graphic

Photo: **HAMAS** PRIME Minister Ismail Haniyeh, in a TV appearance yesterday. (Credit: Channel 2)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

BLISTERING ATTACK BY ISRAEL KILLS 230. Air strikes come after Hamas launches rockets & mortars

Daily News (New York)

December 28, 2008 Sunday

SPORTS FINAL EDITION

Copyright 2008 Daily News, L.P.



Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 628 words

Byline: BY ERICA SILVERMAN in Gaza City and LARRY McSHANE in New York DAILY NEWS WRITERS With News Wire Services

Body

THE FRAGILE Gaza Strip peace disintegrated beneath waves of Israeli warplanes yesterday as a relentless air attack killed at least 230 people and drew vows of blood-soaked vengeance from Hamas.

More than 700 people were injured in the unprecedented and devastating air strikes that began without warning just before noon and continued overnight. Israeli officials warned the hours of incessant bombing were just the beginning of its retaliatory strikes against Hamas.

"It won't be easy, and it won't be short," said Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak. "There is a time for calm, and a time for fighting, and now the time has come to fight."

Hamas echoed the violent sentiment while still reeling from the "Massacre of the Black Saturday," as the carnage was quickly dubbed by Palestinians in Gaza.

Abu Ubaida, spokesman for the armed wing of Hamas, promised his group will "teach the enemy a lesson they will never forget."

It was the bloodiest day for the Palestinians in more than two decades of unrest in the region, with Gaza residents still bracing for the worst. Hundreds of Israeli infantry and armored corps troops moved out for the Gaza border in preparation for a possible ground invasion, military officials said.

"It is a war," said Umm Mohammed, a Gaza City resident looking at a demolished Hamas office. "Look at the smoke; look at the bodies and the body parts. It is like Afghanistan or Iraq."

The attacks, more than 100 in all, sent black smoke billowing into the skies and created panic on the streets.

More than 100 tons of bombs fell upon 40 targets, including the presidential compound, a police headquarters hosting a graduation ceremony and the central prison.

BLISTERING ATTACK BY ISRAEL KILLS 230. Air strikes come after Hamas launches rockets & mortars

Fatima Salem, 53, was left unconscious after being hit by flying debris near the prison. Her son, Majed, kept a grim vigil at Gaza's overburdened Shifa Hospital.

"This is the face of terror," he said. "My mother being torn apart while at work. . . . My mother was not firing rockets against Israel."

The bloodshed was widespread and gruesome, with stunned rescue workers struggling to handle the influx of disfigured victims arriving in vans, cars and ambulances.

Blood was spattered and body parts scattered in the hallways at Shifa, the main medical facility in Gaza City.

"There are heads without bodies," said nurse Ahmed Abdel Salaam. "People are weeping; women are crying; doctors are shouting."

Mosques were converted into temporary morgues, while hospital workers - using emergency generators - rigged 10 additional intensive care units for victims.

The attack came just eight days after a six-month truce between Hamas and Israel expired. An increase in mortar and rocket attacks on Israel since the truce ended led to yesterday's assault.

Hamas responded to yesterday's onslaught by launching several Grad rockets into Israel, killing one person and wounding six others.

Gaza's most senior police commander and scores of officers gathered for a pair of Hamas graduation ceremonies were killed in the attacks. Two other senior Hamas officials were also slain.

Secretary of State Rice condemned Hamas for its mortar and rocket attacks against Israel and held the group responsible for breaking the ceasefire.

"The ceasefire should be restored immediately. The United States calls on all concerned to address the urgent humanitarian needs of the innocent people of Gaza," she said.

Although some of the Israeli bombs struck in busy neighborhoods as children were leaving school, most of the victims were Hamas security men.

Juma Al-Affish said his brother, a police officer, was barely recognizable after surviving a bomb strike at a small police station.

But the 58-year-old Gaza resident said he was opposed to any acts of revenge by Hamas.

"No," he said. "We do need peace."

lmcshane@nydailynews.com

Graphic

Ehud Barak Corpses lie in Gaza City street yesterday after Israeli air strikes killed 230 people. Photo by Getty Images Distaught Palestinian clutches body of Hamas security member killed in missile strike. Photo by AP

Load-Date: December 28, 2008

BLISTERING ATTACK BY ISRAEL KILLS 230. Air strikes come after Hamas launches rockets & mortars

End of Document

Israelis attacking deeper; Lebanese reports say Hamas will reject ceasefire

The Vancouver Province (British Columbia)

January 13, 2009 Tuesday

Final Edition

Copyright 2009 The Vancouver Province, a division of CanWest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A9

Length: 584 words

Byline: News Services

Dateline: GAZA CITY

Body

GAZA CITY -- Israeli tanks made their deepest incursion yet into three areas of Gaza City early today, firing shells and backed by heavy aerial bombing, an AFP correspondent quoted witnesses as saying.

"Tanks have entered Tal al-Hawa, Ash Sheikh Ajlin and Zeitun neighbourhoods farther than before" in the Israeli war on **Hamas**, the correspondent said. "The airplanes are bombing and the tanks are shelling."

Palestinian fighters were responding to the advancing tanks with mortar fire, he said to the sound of explosions in the background, adding there were no immediate reports of casualties.

Yesterday, residents said Israeli tanks punched their way into the southern rim of Gaza City, advancing several hundred metres into Ash Sheikh Ajlin, Zeitun and Tuffah, where the sound of gunfire echoed constantly.

Meanwhile, Israel won renewed support from its main ally the United States when President George W. Bush said a ceasefire to end its offensive in the Gaza Strip depended on **Hamas** ending its rocket fire on Israeli towns.

As the Palestinian death toll passed 900, including many civilians, troops tightened their grip around urban areas in search of elusive guerrillas and Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said Israel would pursue the 17-day-old war as long as it took.

Hamas's leader in Gaza made a rare television and radio broadcast from a secret site, promising "victory is at hand."

Troops and tanks, backed by warplanes and helicopters that mounted more than 25 air strikes, probed guerrilla defences around the city, wary of snipers and booby traps. **Hamas** fighters kept largely out of sight, firing several rockets into Israel and bracing for an all-out assault that may yet come.

As international diplomats worked with Egypt on a truce plan, Israeli army spokesman Brig.- Gen. Avi Benayahu said the army had yet to launch a much-heralded "Phase 3" of the war, following the initial air campaign and then ground advance.

But reserve units had moved in, he said, to hold positions and free up regulars for thrusts deeper into the city of Gaza.

Israelis attacking deeper; Lebanese reports say Hamas will reject ceasefire

"We are tightening the encirclement of the city," Brig.-Gen. Eyal Eisenberg told reporters touring Israeli positions.

They saw few signs of civilians in farmland near the city. Troops exchanged occasional fire with fighters and seemed confident they had control of territory outside urban areas.

Figures from Palestinian medics indicate at least 913 people have been killed. The health minister in Gaza's Hamas-run government said close to 400 of those were women and children.

Medics said Israeli forces killed 13 people, including at least five civilians, yesterday. Israel says 10 soldiers and three civilians have died since the offensive began Dec. 27.

In other developments:

- Hamas is set to reject Egypt's proposals to end Israel's Gaza invasion, Lebanese political sources close to the group said last night in Beirut.

Hamas opposes a long-term truce and any truce must include the immediate pullout of Israeli troops. Hamas also wants the presence of foreign observers on the Rafah crossing point on the Egyptian border, the source said.

- Canadian officials are looking into evacuating more Canadians from the Gaza Strip. Last week, Ottawa helped 48 Canadian citizens escape. With the assistance of the Red Cross, they were taken by bus to Jordan.

Another 14 Canadians had indicated they wished to leave Gaza but the Department of Foreign Affairs was not able to contact some of them last week, while others did not or could not show up at the departure point.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Reuters; An Israeli reservist brandishes weapons before crossing into the northern Gaza Strip yesterday. ;

Load-Date: January 13, 2009

Hamas and Israel are fighting under same old Gaza rules

The Salt Lake Tribune

December 31, 2008 Wednesday

Copyright 2008 The Salt Lake Tribune All Rights Reserved

Section: OPINION; Columnists

Length: 823 words

Byline: The Salt Lake Tribune

Body

The Israelis just struck back hard at Hamas in Gaza. In response, the United Nations, the European Union and the Arab world (at least publicly) expressed their anger at the killing of over 300 Palestinians, most of whom were terrorists and Hamas officials.

For several prior weeks, Hamas terrorists had been daily launching rockets into Israeli towns that border Gaza. The recent volleys of missiles had insidiously become more frequent -- up to 80 a day -- and the payloads larger. Iranian-backed Hezbollah terrorists were reportedly supplying their own training and expertise.

These terrorists point to the Lebanon war of 2006 as the proper template for provoking an Israeli counter-response that will bog down the Israeli Defense Forces in the streets of urban Gaza and ensure that Palestinian civilians are harmed on global television.

Watching both this week's war and the world's predictable reaction to it, we can recall the Gaza rules. Most are reflections of our postmodern age, and completely at odds with the past protocols of war.

First is the now-familiar Middle East doctrine of proportionality. Legitimate military action is strangely defined by the relative strength of the combatants. World opinion more vehemently condemns Israel's countermeasures, apparently because its rockets are far more accurate and deadly than previous Hamas barrages that are poorly targeted and thus not so lethal.

If America had accepted such rules in, say, World War II, then by late 1944 we, not the Axis, would have been the culpable party, since by then once-aggressive German, Italian and Japanese forces were increasingly on the defensive and far less lethal than the Allies.

Second, intent in this war no longer matters. Every Hamas unguided rocket is launched in hopes of hitting an Israeli home and killing men, women and children. Every guided Israeli air-launched missile is targeted at Hamas operatives, who deliberately work in the closest vicinity to women and children.

Killing Palestinian civilians is incidental to Israeli military operations and proves counterproductive to its objectives. Blowing up Israeli non-combatants is the aim of Hamas' barrages: the more children, aged and women who die, the more it expects political concessions from Tel Aviv.

By this logic, the 1999 American bombing of Belgrade -- aimed at stopping the genocide of Slobodan Milosevic -- was, because of collateral damage, the moral equivalent of the carefully planned Serbian massacres of Muslim civilians at Srebrenica in 1995.

Hamas and Israel are fighting under same old Gaza rules

Third, culpability is irrelevant. The "truce" between Israel and Hamas was broken once Hamas got its hands on new stockpiles of longer-range mobile rockets -- weapons that are intended to go over Israel's border walls.

Yet, according to the Gaza rules, both sides always deserve equal blame. Indeed, this weird war mimics the politically correct, zero-tolerance policies of our public schools, where both the bully and his victim are suspended once physical violence occurs.

According to such morally equivalent reasoning, World War II was only a tragedy, not a result of German aggression. Once the dead mounted up, it mattered little what were the catalysts of the outbreak of fighting.

Fourth, with instantaneous streaming video from the impact sites in Gaza, context becomes meaningless. Our attention is glued to the violence of the last hour, not that of the last month that incited the war.

Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005 to great expectations that the Palestinians there would combine their new autonomy, some existing infrastructure left behind by the Israelis, Middle East oil money and American pressure for free and open elections to craft a peaceful, prosperous democracy.

The world hoped that Gaza might thrive first, and then later adjudicate its ongoing disputes with Israel through diplomacy. Instead, the withdrawal was seen not as a welcome Israeli concession, but as a sign of newfound Jewish weakness -- and that the intifada tactics that had liberated Gaza could be amplified into a new war to end the Zionist entity itself.

Fifth and finally, victimization is crucial. Hamas daily sends barrages into Israel, as its hooded thugs thump their chests and brag of their radical Islamic militancy. But when the payback comes, suddenly warriors are transmogrified into weeping victims, posing teary-eyed for the news camera as they deplore "genocide" and "the Palestinian Holocaust." At least the Japanese militarists did not cry out to the League of Nations for help once mean Marines landed on Iwo Jima.

By now, these Gaza asymmetrical rules are old hat. We know why they persist -- worldwide fear of Islamic terrorism, easy anti-Westernism, the old anti-semitism, and global strategic calculations about Middle East oil -- but it still doesn't make them right.

Victor Davis Hanson is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and a recipient of the 2007 National Humanities Medal. E-mail: author@victorhanson.com

Graphic

Victor Davis Hanson, photographed for Tribune Media Services, on 09.10.04. Photo by Glenn Kaupert.

Load-Date: December 31, 2008

Israel widens Gaza attack; Death toll nears 300 as air offensive targets Hamas leaders

Charleston Gazette (West Virginia)

December 29, 2008, Monday

Copyright 2008 Charleston Newspapers

Section: NEWS; Pg. P1A

Length: 1347 words

Byline: Ibrahim Barzak and Karin Laub, The Associated Press

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip - Israel widened its deadliest-ever air offensive against Gaza's **Hamas** rulers Sunday, pounding smuggling tunnels and a central prison, sending more tanks and artillery toward the Gaza border and approving a reserves callup for a possible ground invasion.

Israeli leaders said they would press ahead with the Gaza campaign, despite enraged protests across the Arab world and Syria's decision to break off indirect peace talks with the Jewish state. Israel's foreign minister said the goal was to halt Gaza rocket fire on Israel for good, but not to reoccupy the territory.

With the two-day death toll nearing 300 Sunday, crowds of Gazans breached the border wall with Egypt to escape the chaos. Egyptian forces, some firing in the air, tried to push them back into Gaza and an official said one border guard was killed.

Hamas, in turn, fired rockets deeper than ever into Israel, near the Israeli port city of Ashdod.

Yet **Hamas** leaders were forced into hiding, most of the dead were from the **Hamas** security forces, and Israel's military intelligence chief said **Hamas**' ability to fire rockets had been reduced by 50 percent. Indeed, **Hamas** rockets fire dropped off sharply, from more than 130 on Saturday to just over 20 on Sunday. Still, **Hamas** continues to command approximately 20,000 fighters.

Israel's intense bombings - about 300 air strikes since midday Saturday - wreaked unprecedented destruction in Gaza, reducing entire buildings to rubble.

After nightfall, Israeli aircraft attacked a building in the Jebaliya refugee camp next to Gaza City, killing a 14-month-old baby, a man and two **women**, Gaza Health Ministry official Dr. Moaiya Hassanain said.

Israeli aircraft also bombed the Islamic University and government compound in Gaza City, centers of **Hamas** power. Witnesses saw fire and smoke at the university, counting six separate airstrikes there just after midnight.

Shlomo Brom, a former senior Israeli military official, said it was the deadliest force ever used in decades of Israeli-Palestinian fighting.

"Since **Hamas** took over Gaza (in June 2007), it has become a war between two states, and in war between states, more force is used," he said.

Israel widens Gaza attack Death toll nears 300 as air offensive targets Hamas leaders

European leaders called on both Israel and Hamas to end the bloodshed.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy spoke Sunday with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who leads a rival government to Hamas in the West Bank, and condemned "the provocations that led to this situation as well as the disproportionate use of force."

The White House was mum about the situation in Gaza on Sunday after speaking out expansively on Saturday, blaming Hamas for provoking Israel's retaliatory strikes.

In the most dramatic attacks Sunday, warplanes struck dozens of smuggling tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border, cutting off a lifeline that had supplied Hamas with weapons and Gaza with commercial goods. The influx of goods had helped Hamas defy an 18-month blockade of Gaza by Israel and Egypt, and was key to propping up its rule.

Sunday's blasts shook the ground several miles away and sent black smoke high into the sky. Earlier, warplanes dropped three bombs on one of Hamas' main security compounds in Gaza City, including a prison. Moments after the blasts, frantic inmates, their faces dusty and bloodied, scrambled down the rubble. One man, still half buried, raised a hand to alert rescuers.

Gaza's nine hospitals were overwhelmed. Hassanain, who keeps a record for the Gaza Health Ministry, said more than 290 people were killed over two days and more than 800 wounded.

The Palestinian Center for Human Rights, which keeps researchers at all hospitals, said it had counted 251 dead by midday Sunday, and that among them were 20 children under the age of 16 and nine women.

Across Gaza, families pitched traditional mourning tents of green tarp outside homes. Yet the rows of chairs inside these tents remained largely empty, as residents covered indoors for fear of new Israeli strikes.

Israeli leaders gave interviews to foreign television networks to try win international support.

Public Security Minister Avi Dichter, speaking Arabic, spoke on Arab satellite TV stations, denouncing Hamas rule in Gaza. And Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni told NBC that the assault came because Hamas, an Islamic group backed by Syria and Iran, is smuggling weapons and building a "small army."

In Jerusalem, Israel's Cabinet approved a callup of 6,500 reserve soldiers, raising fears of an impending ground offensive. Israel has doubled the number of troops on the Gaza border since Saturday and also deployed an artillery battery. It was not clear, though, whether the deployment was meant to pressure Hamas or whether Israel is determined to send ground troops.

Since Israel's withdrawal from Gaza in 2005, after 38 years of full military occupation, Israeli forces have repeatedly returned to the territory to hunt militants. However, Israel has shied away from retaking the entire strip, for fear of getting bogged down on urban warfare.

Military experts said Israel would need at least 10,000 soldiers for a full-scale invasion.

The diplomatic fallout, meanwhile, was swift.

Syria decided to suspend indirect peace talks with Israel, begun earlier this year. "Israel's aggression closes all the doors" to any move toward a settlement in the region, Syria said.

The U.N. Security Council called on both sides to halt the fighting and asked Israel to allow humanitarian supplies into Gaza; 30 trucks were let in Sunday. The prime minister of Turkey, one of the few Muslim countries to have relations with Israel, called the air assault a "crime against humanity."

The carnage inflamed Arab and Muslim public opinion, setting off street protests across the West Bank, in an Arab community in Israel, in several Middle Eastern cities and in Paris.

Israel widens Gaza attack Death toll nears 300 as air offensive targets Hamas leaders

Some of the protests turned violent. Israeli troops quelling a West Bank march killed one Palestinian and seriously wounded another. A crowd of anti-Israel protesters in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul became a target for a suicide bomber on a bicycle. In Lebanon, police fired tear gas to stop demonstrators from reaching the Egyptian Embassy.

Egypt, which has served as a mediator between Israel and the Palestinians as well as between Hamas and its rival Fatah, has been criticized for joining Israel in closing its borders with Gaza. The blockade was imposed immediately after the Hamas takeover in June 2007.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit called on Hamas to renew its truce with Israel. The cease-fire began unraveling last month, and formally ended more than a week ago. Since then, Gaza militants have stepped up rocket fire on Israel, prompting the latest offensive.

A Hamas leader in exile, Osama Hamdan, said the movement would not relent. "We have one alternative which is to be steadfast and resist and then we will be victorious," Hamdan said in Beirut.

Also in Beirut, Hassan Nasrallah, leader of the Hezbollah militia, said he would not abandon Hamas, but did not threaten to attack Israel. During the Israel-Hezbollah war of 2006, the militia fired thousands of rockets into Israel.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said it was unclear when the operation would end but told his Cabinet was "liable to last longer than we are able to foresee at this time."

Hundreds of thousands of Israelis live in cities and towns in Gaza rocket range, and life slowed in some of the communities. Schools in communities in a 12-mile radius from Gaza were ordered to remain closed beyond the weeklong Jewish holiday of Hanukkah, which ends Monday.

In the southern city of Ashkelon, home to some 120,000 people, streets were relatively busy, despite the military's recommendations against being out in the open.

Several times throughout the day, however, that routine was briefly interrupted by the sounds of wailing sirens warning of an imminent attack. Pedestrians scurried for cover in buildings. After a number of rocket landed in the distance, a woman taking cover nearby briefly fainted. She refused water and food from bystanders, instead shivering in a corner, apparently in shock.

Load-Date: December 29, 2008

HAMAS' GUT IN GAZA Israel enters in darkness, but enemy promises swift retaliation

Daily News (New York)

January 4, 2009 Sunday

CITY FINAL EDITION

Copyright 2009 Daily News, L.P.



Section: NEWS; Pg. 7

Length: 576 words

Byline: BY ERICA SILVERMAN in Ramallah, West Bank and CHRISTINA BOYLE in New York DAILY NEWS WRITERS With News Wire Services

Body

ISRAELI TROOPS and tanks crossed into the Gaza Strip under the cover of darkness yesterday, signaling the start of a bloody ground offensive that military leaders warned would not be short.

Hamas, which seized control of Gaza a year and a half ago and has been attacking Israel with rockets, responded with defiant threats.

"We will fight till our last breath. Your invasion of Gaza will not be a cakewalk. Gaza will be your cemetery," **Hamas** spokesman Ismail Radwan said.

Israeli officials called up tens of thousands of reservists and warned the incursion would not end quickly.

"It won't be easy and it won't be short," Defense Minister Ehud Barak said in a televised address. "We do not seek war, but we will not abandon our citizens to the ongoing **Hamas** attacks."

The invasion started a week after Israel began slamming **Hamas** targets with air strikes, aiming to end rocket and mortar attacks from Gaza.

A column of military vehicles backed by combat helicopters rolled into northern Gaza as forces marched across the border.

Gun battles could be heard, and the night sky was illuminated by heavy artillery gunfire that sent bright lights streaking over the densely packed neighborhoods.

It was unclear how deeply the forces planned to drive into the strip, but security officials said the objective was not to reoccupy Gaza but to seize areas **Hamas** was using to launch rockets into Israel.

"Residents of Gaza are not the target of the operation," the Israeli Defense Force said in a statement.

HAMAS' GUT IN GAZA Israel enters in darkness, but enemy promises swift retaliation

"Those who use civilians, the elderly, women and children as 'human shields' are responsible for any and all injury to the civilian population," the statement said.

More than 400 Palestinians have been killed in a week of air strikes by Israel.

Before yesterday's troop movements, Israeli artillery pounded 40 targets, including a mosque where at least 11 people, including some children, died.

Hamas launched six rockets into Israeli territory, striking a house and a bomb shelter in the southern city of Ashkelon. There were no injuries reported.

With some 10,000 troops massed on the border ready to charge forward, the army dropped leaflets in downtown Gaza City early yesterday, warning people to stay off the streets.

Many residents spent the day trying to stockpile food and water, but after eight days of fighting, supplies were scarce and bread lines stretched for blocks.

As the invasion began, most people heeded the warnings and the city appeared abandoned with families huddled in their homes around the radio.

The Israeli Army also jammed Al-Aqsa TV, which is run by Hamas, and a 15-minute address was broadcast every hour by an Israeli speaking in Arabic.

"Hamas has abandoned you. Do not let Hamas use your children as human shields," said the broadcast.

Holed up in her Gaza City apartment, high school student Nour Saroor, 17, listened for news with her family.

"We are going to die," she said. "They are going to kill us. I am afraid to die," she said.

There was widespread international concern at the sudden escalation of violence.

British Foreign Secretary David Miliband repeated calls for an "immediate ceasefire" and said the situation caused "alarm and dismay."

The French Foreign Ministry said, "France condemns the Israeli ground offensive against Gaza as it condemns the continuation of rocket firing."

A White House spokesman said President Bush was briefed in the afternoon by officials who have been in contact with the Israelis.

cboyle@nydailynews.com

Graphic

Israeli soldiers on the Israel-Gaza border yesterday wait to deploy as battle commences with Hamas forces. Photo by Marco Longari/AFP/Getty

Load-Date: January 4, 2009

As the world weeps, Israel and Hamas unleash hell

Sunday Express

January 11, 2009 Sunday

U.K. 1st Edition

Copyright 2009 EXPRESS NEWSPAPERS All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS TYPE=ARTICLE LINK=1; 42

Length: 611 words

Byline: By Stuart Winter FOREIGN EDITOR

Body

DEATH and mayhem continued to stalk the innocent on both sides of Gaza's border as peace efforts floundered yesterday.

As world leaders made futile pleas for a halt to the suffering, Israeli tank shells and improvised **Hamas** rockets continued to rain down on civilians.

A Palestinian family of nine were killed instantly as they ate breakfast in the garden of their home in the northern Gaza town of Jebaliya. Two **women** and two children were among the dead.

About 20 miles away, five Israelis were wounded when a **Hamas** rocket struck an apartment block in Ashod.

It is not known who fired first but tit-for-tat reprisals no longer dictate the military strategy of Tel Aviv or **Hamas** commanders deep in their underground lairs.

Hamas is fighting for its existence and Israel is accelerating its offensive to emasculate the Islamic rulers of Gaza.

After hours of tank bombardments and air strikes, Israel dropped leaflets warning that it was "escalating" its offensive.

Forty targets were hit by F-16 Fighting Falcon warplanes, including 10 **Hamas** rocket-launch sites and weapon stores.

Gaza hospital administrator Adham Hakim painted a gruesome picture of the scene when the bodies of the nine family members were brought in.

"Residents put them all in the trunk of a car because their bodies were mangled, " he said. "We identified them after separating their bodies in the morgue."

Gaza medical officials say more than 800 Palestinians have been killed since the offensive began two weeks ago and that a third of the victims are children.

Thirteen Israelis have died in **Hamas** rocket attacks - 10 soldiers and three civilians.

Israeli families living close to the border with Gaza have suffered years of torment at the hands of **Hamas**.

As the world weeps, Israel and Hamas unleash hell

Since 2001, 3,984 rockets and 3,943 mortar shells have been launched from Gaza, many at Sderot in southern Israel.

Four years ago this week Ella Abukasis, a popular, fun-loving 17-year-old, was walking her brother Tamir, 10, home when the sirens began wailing, giving them 15 seconds to take cover from an incoming Qassam rocket fired from Gaza.

Seconds later, it slammed into the street beside them, sending shards of jagged metal and debris scorching through the air.

Tamir escaped with relatively minor injuries but Ella took the full force of the blast. After three days in a coma, doctors declared her brain-dead and she was disconnected from life-support.

The boy has been scarred for life, said their father, Yonatan, 50.

"Every time there is a boom of another rocket, he can't take it. He can't sleep. His childhood has been stolen from him.

Only when he goes away from Sderot can he relax. At home every sudden noise makes him re-live that terrible nightmare."

Yesterday, as the blue skies over Gaza were striped by the smoke of missile fire, peace remained a distant dream.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told Israeli Premier Ehud Olmert of his disappointment that the violence was continuing in disregard of the UN Security Council's resolution.

In Cairo, Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak and Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas, of the Fatah party, tried to come up with a peace proposal. Privately, diplomats believe the initiative, sponsored by French President Nicolas Sarkozy, is in trouble.

Egypt objects to proposals that foreign troops will be stationed on its nine-mile border with Gaza to prevent arms smuggling.

There were hopes of a short lull in the fighting to allow Gaza's citizens to leave their homes for food and medical supplies.

In recent days, the Israelis have called a series of three-hour ceasefires. In earlier lulls, however, there was only time to distribute food to 9,500 of the 150,000 people in need, said Save the Children.

Graphic

ONSLAUGHT: An Israeli tank firing yesterday. Right, a wounded Arab boy at Gaza's hospital

Load-Date: January 13, 2009

Defiant Palestinians fire rockets deeper into Israel; Hamas commander may have been killed in strike

The Evening Standard (London)

December 29, 2008 Monday

A Edition

Copyright 2008 Associated Newspapers Ltd. All Rights Reserved

London
**Evening
Standard**

Section: Pg. 4

Length: 744 words

Byline: KIRAN RANDHAWA

Body

PALESTINIAN militants today fought back against a new wave of air raids pounding the Gaza strip by firing rockets deeper into Israel than ever before.

Their missiles have hit targets up to 23 miles away from the Hamas-ruled territory, leaving two dead and 15 injured. An Israeli was killed today in the southern city of Ashkelon, 10 miles north of Gaza, in a rocket attack that wounded seven others.

Today Israel declared a buffer zone around Gaza up to four kilometres wide as a "closed military zone". A military spokesman said the new policy meant that civilians, including journalists, may be barred from the area, opening the way for a surprise ground assault.

It also emerged today that Hamas military commander Ahmed Ja'abri who may have been killed in the conflict.

In recent months Gaza's Hamas rulers have been attacking targets deeper and deeper inside Israel. Yesterday Palestinian missiles struck near the city of Ashdod, twice as far from Gaza as Ashkelon for the first time.

Israeli officials said that Hamas was believed to still have thousands of Kassam rockets as well as a large number of Katyushas. It is thought Hamas may also have rockets with ranges greater than 25 miles as well as advanced antitank missiles and a number of missiles capable of downing Israeli aircraft.

As Israeli forces prepared a possible invasion of the Gaza strip, warplanes targeted a house next to the Hamas leader's home and rockets hit the Interior Ministry and the Islamic University in one of the deadliest ever air offensives seen in the Middle East.

Tanks have been massing on the border and 6,500 reserve soldiers have been put on standby for a ground assault.

Defiant Palestinians fire rockets deeper into Israel Hamas commander may have been killed in strike

Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni told the BBC: "We took Hamas by surprise, we targeted Hamas headquarters, so this is the beginning of a successful operation, I hope, but the idea is to change realities on the ground." Israeli leaders said it launched the campaign in response to almost daily rocket and mortar fire by the Palestinians after the Hamas group ended a six-month ceasefire a week ago. The three-day campaign is believed to have left at least 310 Palestinians dead and 1,400 wounded.

The air raids have struck centres of Hamas strength in the Gaza strip, including security compounds, government offices and tunnels into Egypt which have provided a lifeline for the territory during the Israeli blockade.

As dawn broke over Gaza City, a powerful explosion struck the Interior Ministry. Earlier, another air raid hit a laboratory building in the Islamic University, a centre of support for Hamas.

Other targets were a guest palace used by the Hamas government and the house next to Gaza Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh's home in a refugee camp next to Gaza City. He was not at home, as Hamas leaders have gone into hiding.

Ewa Jasiewicz, of the Free Gaza Movement in Bayt Lahiya in the north of Gaza, said she had heard explosions late into the night and had seen local

TV reports of a helicopter bombing a mosque and killing five girls. She said she had seen hospitals desperately overstretched as they struggled with serious casualties. "Because Gaza is so densely populated, there is no such thing as precision strike you have glass, brick, shrapnel flying into people's homes," she said.

As jets pounded the southern Gaza Strip, hundreds of Palestinians stormed over a fence on the Gaza-Egypt border, but Egyptian security forces fired shots to prevent them entering. An Egyptian security official was shot dead and another wounded in the turmoil.

Israel says Palestinian militants have fired more than 150 rockets into Israel since Saturday. An Israeli was believed killed in the town of Netivot, 12 miles east of Gaza, on Saturday, the first day of the air offensive. Four people have also been stabbed on the West Bank by Palestinians. Israel's intense bombings about 300 air strikes in the last three days wreaked unprecedented destruction in Gaza, reducing entire buildings to rubble. Its army has hit targets in all Gaza's main towns, including Gaza City in the north and Khan Younis and Rafah in the south.

Most of those killed were policemen in the Hamas militant movement, but officials said women and children also died. The head of Gaza's police was among the dead.

The high numbers of casualties made Saturday the single deadliest day in the Gaza Strip since Israel's occupation of the territory in 1967, analysts said, although no independent confirmation is available of the numbers killed.

Graphic

Devastation: dazed Palestinian prisoners, left, flee the rubble of their bombed-out jail in central Gaza after it was hit by Israeli missiles. Top, Israeli troops discharge tear gas rounds at protesters on the main road between Jerusalem and Ramallah. Above, a Palestinian demonstrator walks past burning tyres outside the Egyptian embassy in Beirut

Load-Date: December 29, 2008

ISRAEL BOMBS AS HAMAS ROCKETS FLY Gaza 'all out war'

The Gold Coast Bulletin (Australia)

December 30, 2008 Tuesday

B - Main Edition

Copyright 2008 Nationwide News Pty Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: WORLD BRIEFING; Pg. 10

Length: 301 words

Body

ISRAELI Defence Minister Ehud Barak has declared Israel is in an 'all-out war against Hamas' as the Jewish state continues its massive bombardment of the Islamists' targets in Gaza.

"We have nothing against Gaza residents, but we are engaged in an all-out war against Hamas and its proxies," he said yesterday.

Israeli jets bombed Hamas targets in Gaza for a third day, killing several children, while the Islamists fired deadly rockets to retaliate for the blitz that has left more than 300 dead.

In Sydney yesterday, the CBD went into gridlock as more than 1000 Arab-Australians marched on the consulate, protesting the bombing and shouting slogans against Israel and the United States.

"Bomb Bush and the Jews," they yelled.

As Israeli tanks massed on the Gaza border, the army declared the area a closed military zone - a move that in the past has often been followed by ground operations in the Palestinian enclave.

Amid mounting international calls for a halt to the violence, Israel allowed the passage of humanitarian aid into the impoverished and overcrowded territory where most of the 1.5 million population depends greatly on foreign aid.

Hamas militants remained defiant yesterday, firing some 20 rockets into Israel.

An Israeli Arab was killed and eight people were wounded when one of the projectiles slammed into a construction site in the southern city of Ashkelon, about 13km north of the Gaza border.

The Israeli blitz, unleashed on Saturday in retaliation for ongoing rocket and mortar fire from Gaza, has killed at least 312 Palestinians and wounded more than 1400 others, according to Gaza medical sources.

"We have 51 confirmed civilian casualties including women and children," said a UN Palestinian refugee agency spokesman.

Among those killed overnight were four girls from the same family.

Load-Date: December 30, 2008

ISRAEL BOMBS AS HAMAS ROCKETS FLY Gaza `all out war'

End of Document

Hard-line Hamas is the enemy of all moderate Palestinians, as well as Israelis

Cape Times (South Africa)

January 09, 2009 Friday

e1 Edition

Copyright 2009 Independent News and Media Ltd All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 9

Length: 901 words

Byline: Dov Segev Steinberg

Body

The world was shocked as terrorists caused explosions in European cities and turned New York skyscrapers into piles of rubble. Everyone agreed that there should be strong international co-operation to confront terrorist attacks perpetrated by Islamist fanatics.

Israel's operation in Gaza is part of this global fight against terror. Israelis have the same basic right as the citizens of the world, to live in safety without being exposed to the danger of rockets and bombs that might rain upon them at any given moment.

Fifteen seconds is all the time that hundreds of Israelis have, wherever they are, from the moment the alarm sounds, signalling that a rocket has been launched at them by **Hamas**, to run to the nearest bomb shelter and save their lives. For eight years the residents of Sderot have been living this way. A quarter of the town's population has already deserted it. Would you be willing to live as veritable human sitting ducks in the crossfire of a **Hamas** projectile?

The Palestinians as a people are not our enemy; we truly want to build bridges of dialogue and hope for a better future with them. Our enemy is **Hamas**, a violent Islamic terror organisation, a member of the radical Tehran-Hezbollah axis. With its hardline adherence to a particularly extremist religious doctrine, **Hamas** is unwilling to compromise or respect any agreements. Its declared aim is to eliminate the State of Israel and murder all its citizens.

Hamas has blown up buses in Tel Aviv, Haifa and Jerusalem, and sent suicide bombers to murder Israeli teenagers in discotheques. They have perpetrated horrendous massacres in restaurants, killing hundreds of Israelis. How would you act if a brutal terrorist organisation were to send its murderers to kill men, **women** and children in your restaurants, supermarkets and trains?

Hamas is not the enemy of Israel alone, but the enemy of all moderate Palestinians. When **Hamas** took over Gaza by force, they thought nothing of throwing their political opponents, supporters of President Mahmoud Abbas, off buildings. Scores of Palestinians were killed by **Hamas** gunfire, as **Hamas** wrestled control of Gaza from the hands of President Abbas.

Hard-line Hamas is the enemy of all moderate Palestinians, as well as Israelis

Hamas is the incarnation of the Middle East's worst nightmare. It does not represent the Palestinian national desire for independence, because it objects to the two-state solution; that is, Israel and a Palestinian state living side by side in peace and security. Rather, it espouses the idea of one fanatical Islamist state that would be established on top of the ruins of the Jewish state. This is the most important message which the media fails time and again to impart.

In the summer of 2005, Israel pulled out of the Gaza Strip completely. Anyone speaking today of the "Israeli occupation of Gaza" simply does not know what he's talking about. The Palestinians were given a historical opportunity to change their fate and turn Gaza into an economic, national and cultural miracle.

Instead, **Hamas** seized control and made Gaza into a den of terrorism and oppression. It methodically violated all ceasefire agreements with Israel, smuggled Iranian-made weapons and rockets through tunnels dug under the border, and consistently ignored the basic human needs of Gaza's civilian population.

Hamas deliberately fires at our civilians from its hideouts among its own civilian population. It deliberately holes up among **women** and children, in mosques and hospitals, while hoping Israel will respond so that it can portray itself as the victim in the world press. This is a tremendous moral dilemma, which Israel handles far better than other armies in the world, who have found themselves in less difficult [circumstances].

There are those among the world media who fall easily into the traps of deceptive photos. I ask you not to be taken in.

Israel endeavours to enable the transfer of humanitarian aid to Gaza despite ongoing fighting. The Israeli Air Force invests huge efforts to avoid hitting civilians who are not involved in terror. Israeli aircraft distribute leaflets calling on residents to leave areas that are about to be bombed. Do you know of any other air force in the world that takes such measures, in the midst of war?

Our people actually make telephone calls to homes in Gaza, warning innocent civilians of what may happen to a building that houses a **Hamas** HQ office or a stockpile of rockets.

Despite all our efforts, we are not always successful. Civilian casualties are deeply regretted. Mistakes happen even in times of peace, let alone in the turmoil of war.

Our war against **Hamas** is aimed at protecting the lives of citizens of Israel's south, but it is far more than that. It also can protect the political process and the chance for peace between Israelis and Palestinians, a chance that is persistently torpedoed by **Hamas**. It comes also to rescue this region from slipping into an abyss of fanaticism and from Iranian hegemony. It is part of the world's legitimate struggle against terrorism and murderous [extremism].

When talking about the southern Israeli towns and cities, I ask you to engage in a mental exercise. Just for a moment, imagine your lovely city under a sudden barrage of Grad and Qassam rockets. Only if you put yourself for a moment in our place and realise the hardships that Israel's residents cope with, will you be able to see the true picture.

I Steinberg is the ambassador of Israel in South Africa.

Load-Date: January 8, 2009

NO EARLY END SEEN TO 'ALL-OUT WAR' ON HAMAS IN GAZA

The New York Times

December 30, 2008 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2008 The New York Times Company

Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1

Length: 1396 words

Byline: By ETHAN BRONNER and TAGHREED EL-KHODARY; Ethan Bronner reported from Jerusalem and Taghreed El-Khodary from Gaza. Dina Kraft contributed reporting from Ashkelon, Israel, and Mark Landler from Washington.

Body

JERUSALEM -- Israel is engaged in an "all-out war with Hamas," Defense Minister Ehud Barak told Parliament on Monday as his air force struck at the organization's civic institutions -- the Islamic University, Interior Ministry and presidential guesthouse. The death toll surpassed 350, more than 60 of them civilians, according to United Nations officials.

As the conflict passed its third day, with no active diplomacy, there appeared to be no quick end to the largest assault on Gaza in decades.

Israel has defined its aims relatively narrowly, saying it seeks to cripple Hamas's ability to fire rockets into Israel. It has not made clear if it means to topple the leadership of Hamas, which Israel and the United States brand as a terrorist organization.

Hamas sought to cast its fighters as martyrs in a continuing battle against Israel, the lone resisters in a Palestinian community divided between Gaza, where Hamas rules, and the West Bank, which is governed by the rival Fatah organization.

Hamas killed four Israelis on Monday after firing more than 70 rockets, including a long-range one into the booming city of Ashdod some 18 miles from Gaza, where it hit a bus stop, killing a woman and injuring two other people. Earlier, a rocket hit nearby Ashkelon, killing an Israeli-Arab construction worker and wounding three others. The other dead Israelis, The Associated Press reported, were a civilian in the Negev desert and a soldier.

Thousands of Israelis huddled in shelters as the long-range rockets hit streets or open areas late in the night, the most serious display of Hamas's arsenal since the Israeli assault began.

In Gaza, where the bombardment continued early Tuesday, residents pulled relatives from the rubble of prominent institutions leveled by waves of Israeli F-16 attacks, as hospitals struggled to keep up with the wounded and the dead and doctors scrambled for supplies. Hamas gunmen publicly shot suspected collaborators with Israel; families huddled around battery-powered radios, desperate for news.

NO EARLY END SEEN TO 'ALL-OUT WAR' ON HAMAS IN GAZA

Mr. Barak said that Israel would widen and deepen the attack if necessary and told Israeli lawmakers that it would continue until Hamas no longer had the ability to fire rockets into Israel. Politicians on the left who supported the initial attack urged the government to seek a new cease-fire rather than continue the bombardment.

But the military created a two-mile war cordon along the Gaza border and amassed tanks and troops there, with commanders saying that a ground force invasion was a distinct possibility but had not yet been decided upon.

In Crawford, Tex., a spokesman for President Bush renewed calls for the parties to reach a cease-fire, but said Israel was justified in retaliating against Hamas's attacks. "Let's just take this one day at a time," said the spokesman, Gordon Johndroe.

Allies of Hamas in parts of the Muslim world raised their voices. In Beirut, tens of thousands of Hezbollah supporters stood in pouring rain in protest, and in Tehran a group of influential conservative Iranian clerics began an online registration drive seeking volunteers to fight Israel.

Mr. Barak had told lawmakers that Israel had nothing against the citizens of Gaza and that it had more than once offered its hand in peace to the Palestinian nation. "But we have an all-out war with Hamas and its offshoots," he said.

Israel sent in some 40 trucks of humanitarian relief, including blood from Jordan and medicine. Egypt opened its border with Gaza to some similar aid and to allow some of the wounded through.

At Shifa Hospital in Gaza, the director, Dr. Hussein Ashour, said that keeping his patients alive from their wounds was an enormous challenge. He said there were some 1,500 wounded people distributed among Gaza's nine hospitals with far too few intensive care units, equipped ambulances and other vital equipment.

On Monday, Dr. Ashour was not the only official in charge. Armed Hamas militants in civilian clothes roamed the halls. Asked their function, they said it was to provide security. But there was internal bloodletting under way.

In the fourth-floor orthopedic section, a woman in her late 20s asked a militant to let her see Saleh Hajoj, her 32-year-old husband. She was turned away and left the hospital. Fifteen minutes later, Mr. Hajoj was carried out by young men pretending to transfer him to another ward. As he lay on the stretcher, he was shot in the left side of the head.

Mr. Hajoj, like five others killed at the hospital this way in 24 hours, was accused of collaboration with Israel. He had been in the central prison awaiting trial by Hamas judges; when Israel destroyed the prison on Sunday he and the others were transferred to the hospital. But their trials were short-circuited.

A crowd at the hospital showed no mercy after the shooting, which was widely observed. A man in his 30s mocked a woman expressing horror at the scene.

"This horrified you?" he shouted. "A collaborator that caused the death of many innocent and resistance fighters?"

Sobhia Jomaa, a lawyer with the Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizens' Rights, said 115 accused collaborators were in the central prison. None had been executed by Hamas since it took office and their cases were monitored closely.

"The prison provided the sole protection to all of them," she said. "But once it was bombed, many wanted to take revenge."

Across the street from the hospital, a mosque where militants often took refuge has been destroyed by Israel, one of five mosques it has hit so far.

Electricity arrives in Gaza only a few hours a day, offering the diversion of television, but nothing local. The Hamas station was taken out by an Israeli missile and most local radio stations have closed their doors out of fear of suffering the same fate.

NO EARLY END SEEN TO 'ALL-OUT WAR' ON HAMAS IN GAZA

Israeli drones buzz overhead taking photographs.

Israel's heavy bombing, more than 300 airstrikes since the operation began on Saturday, reduced dozens of buildings to rubble, but appeared to be directed mainly at the political, military and academic symbols of Hamas's rule in Gaza. The Israelis also made targets of the homes and offices of Hamas's political and military leaders, who did not appear in public during the day.

Despite an apparent effort to limit the attacks to specific buildings, ordinary Gazans are constantly caught up in the bombing. On Saturday, when dozens of Israeli sorties were made simultaneously, a group of young people, ages 18 to 20, were hit when a missile was aimed at a group of Hamas policemen in the street. According to a statement by United Nations Special Coordinator Robert Serry, eight of the young people, emerging from a United Nations training center, were killed instantly and 19 wounded. Eight of those hurt were in critical condition on Monday. One is awaiting emergency transfer to an Israeli hospital.

Mr. Serry sent Mr. Barak a letter of protest.

In the Jabalya refugee camp on Sunday, an attack on a mosque where militants were hiding also struck a nearby house, killing five girls under the age of 18, health ministry officials said.

Meanwhile in Israel, sirens wailed over mostly empty streets in the seaside city of Ashkelon. Storefronts were battered shut.

Families clustered inside the city's stretches of towering white apartment blocks and single-family houses. Weary of venturing too far outside, they scurried into protected rooms when sirens sounded, listening for the sound of another rocket crashing somewhere in their city.

It is a city that is reluctantly getting used to its status as the front line. "It's frightening, but what can we do?" asked Chen Hassan, 18, a high school senior. She woke up Monday morning, jolted by the sound of a missile hitting a public library under construction across the street.

The rocket killed the construction worker and wounded several others, Bedouins from Israel's Negev Desert.

Correction: January 5, 2009, Monday

This article has been revised to reflect the following correction: An article on Tuesday about the Israeli assault in Gaza referred incorrectly to the number of civilians killed in Gaza through the first three days of the conflict. The total number of civilians killed was more than 60, not "some 60." (The number of women and children civilians alone totaled 62, according to United Nations officials; they had no count for male civilians who were killed.)

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Graphic

PHOTOS: Israeli tanks Monday on the northern border of the Gaza Strip.(PHOTOGRAPH BY MENAHEM KAHANA/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES)(A1)

A father in the Jabalya refugee camp in Gaza whose five daughters were killed in an Israeli airstrike on Monday held his son.(PHOTOGRAPH BY MOHAMMED SALEM/REUTERS)

Israelis in Ashkelon took cover on Monday as a siren wailed

NO EARLY END SEEN TO 'ALL-OUT WAR' ON HAMAS IN GAZA

a construction worker was killed there by a missile fired from Gaza. (PHOTOGRAPH BY TSAFRIR ABAYOV/ASSOCIATED PRESS)(A12) MAP: Map details the affected area of Gaza Strip.(A12)

Load-Date: May 6, 2011

End of Document

Israel hammers Hamas; Air strikes in response to rocket attacks kill 229 in Gaza territory

Edmonton Journal (Alberta)

December 28, 2008 Sunday

Early Edition

Copyright 2008 Edmonton Journal, a division of Canwest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A1

Length: 1043 words

Byline: New York Times; With files from Agence France-Presse

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

Waves of Israeli air strikes destroyed Hamas security facilities in Gaza on Saturday, killing at least 229 people -- the highest one-day toll in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in decades.

The air strikes, which went on into the night, were the start of what Israeli military officials said could be days or even months of an effort to force Hamas to end its rocket barrages into southern Israel.

The operation could include ground forces, a senior Israeli security official said.

Palestinian officials said that most of the dead were security officers for Hamas, including two senior commanders, and that at least 600 people were wounded in the attacks.

After the initial air strikes, dozens of rockets were fired into southern Israel, where an emergency was declared. Thousands of Israelis hurried to bomb shelters amid the hail of rockets, including some longer-range models that reached farther north than ever before. One man was killed in the town of Netivot and four were wounded.

A number of governments and international officials, including leaders of Russia, Egypt, the European Union and the United Nations, condemned Israel's use of force and also called on Hamas to end the rocket fire.

But in strong terms, the outgoing U.S. administration of George W. Bush blamed Hamas for the violence and demanded that it stop firing rockets.

"These people are nothing but thugs, and so Israel is going to defend its people against terrorists like Hamas," White House spokesman Gordon Johndroe said at Bush's Texas ranch.

"If Hamas stops firing rockets into Israel, then Israel would not have a need for strikes in Gaza." The Israeli military operation had been expected after a rocky ceasefire between Israel and Hamas collapsed a week ago, leading again to rocket attacks in large numbers against Israel.

Still, there was a shocking quality to Saturday's attacks, which began in broad daylight as police cadets were graduating, women were shopping at an outdoor market and children were emerging from school.

Israel hammers Hamas; Air strikes in response to rocket attacks kill 229 in Gaza territory

The centre of Gaza City was a scene of chaotic horror, with rubble everywhere, sirens wailing, and women shrieking as dozens of mutilated bodies were laid out on the pavement and in the lobby of Shifa Hospital so that family members could identify them.

The dead included civilians, among them several construction workers and at least two children in school uniforms.

By afternoon, shops were shuttered, funerals began and mourning tents were visible on nearly every major street of this densely populated city.

The leader of the Hamas government in Gaza, Ismail Haniya, said in a statement that "Palestine has never witnessed an uglier massacre." Later, in a televised speech, he vowed to fight Israel.

"We say in all confidence that even if we are hung on the gallows or they make our blood flow in the streets or they tear our bodies apart, we will bow only before God and we will not abandon Palestine."

In Damascus, Syria, Hamas' supreme leader, Khaled Meshal, told Al-Jazeera television that he was calling for a new Palestinian uprising against Israel, including the resumption of suicide attacks in Israel for the first time since 2005.

Ehud Barak, the Israeli defence minister, said the military operation in Gaza would expand and deepen as necessary, adding, "There is a time for calm and a time for fighting, and this is the time for fighting."

Barak said he was withdrawing from campaigning for Israel's February elections to focus on the operation.

"We wanted to attack military targets while the terrorists were inside the facilities and before Hamas was able to get its rockets out that were stored in some of the targets," said the top Israeli security official, briefing reporters by telephone on condition of anonymity.

Israeli officials said that anyone linked to the Hamas security structure or government was fair game, since Hamas was a terrorist group that sought Israel's destruction. But with work here increasingly scarce because of an international embargo on Hamas, young men are tempted by the steady work of the police force without necessarily fully accepting the Hamas ideology.

Spokesmen for Hamas officials, who have mostly gone underground, called on militants to seek revenge and fight to the last drop of blood. Several compared what was happening to the 2006 war between Israel and the Lebanese militia Hezbollah, when Israel reacted to the capture and killing of soldiers along its northern border with air raids, followed by a ground attack. Hezbollah is viewed as having withstood those assaults and emerged stronger politically.

The air strikes put Arab governments that dislike Hamas, like Egypt's, Jordan's and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, in a delicate position. They blame Hamas for having taken over Gaza by force 18 months ago in the aftermath of its election victory in the Palestinian parliament, and oppose its rocket fire on Israeli communities.

But the sight of scores of Palestinians killed by Israeli warplanes outraged their citizens, and anti-Israel demonstrations broke out across the region.

President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority angrily condemned the Israeli air strikes. Egypt, worried about possible efforts by Palestinians to enter the country, has set up machine-guns along the Gaza border. But on Saturday it temporarily opened the Rafah border crossing in order to allow the wounded to be brought to Egyptian hospitals for treatment.

Israel, backed by the United States, Europe, Egypt and the Palestinian Authority, has sought to isolate Hamas by squeezing Gaza economically, a policy that human rights groups condemn as collective punishment. Israel and Egypt, which control routes into and out of Gaza, have blocked nearly all but humanitarian aid from going in.

Israel hammers Hamas; Air strikes in response to rocket attacks kill 229 in Gaza territory

The result has been the near death of the Gaza economy. While enough food has gone in to avoid starvation, the level of suffering is very high and getting worse each week, especially in recent weeks as Israel closed the routes entirely for about 10 days in reaction to daily rocket fire.

The EU called for all crossing points out of Gaza to be reopened and deliveries of aid and fuel to resume, along with free access for international humanitarian groups, journalists and diplomats, which Israel has blocked.

Load-Date: December 28, 2008

End of Document

Hamas leader: Israel's Gaza attacks have killed peace talks

Guardian.com

January 12, 2009

Copyright 2009 Guardian Unlimited (© Guardian Newspapers Limited) All rights reserved

theguardian

Length: 888 words

Highlight: Israeli strikes and ground fighting continue after it drops leaflets warning Gazans of imminent escalation in war

Body

The leader of **Hamas** warned that Israel's offensive in Gaza had ended any chance for broader peace negotiations with the Palestinians as the Israeli military pressed on with its attacks today.

Israeli aerial bombardments, artillery strikes and ground fighting deep inside Gaza continued into a 16th day of attacks after the military dropped leaflets yesterday warning Gazans of an imminent escalation in the war.

A dozen Palestinians, apparently including several gunmen, were killed today in the Sheikh Ajleen neighbourhood on the edge of Gaza City. Five others, including four **women**, were killed by tank shelling in Beit Lahiya, in northern Gaza.

Khaled Meshal, head of the **Hamas** political bureau who lives in exile in Damascus, called for a Palestinian uprising and told Arab neighbours to break relations with Israel.

Addressing Israel, Meshal said: "You have destroyed the last chance for negotiations. No one will now believe you. Our people are fed up with compromises after they had tried them for so long. A bitter taste is all that's left."

Meshal said Israel's attack had not achieved its military goals despite overwhelming firepower and said rockets were still being fired from Gaza into southern Israel. Early today several rockets hit near the Israeli town of Be'er Sheva, although there were no injuries.

"You have created resistance in every household and every town," Meshal said in a late-night speech, broadcast on several Arabic television channels. "We are living the most difficult days of the battle. What is needed is fierce resistance on the ground of Gaza and fierce support from the Arab, Islamic and international street until the aggression ends and the enemy withdraws."

He said **Hamas** wanted a halt to the Israeli offensive, a withdrawal of Israeli troops and the reopening of crossings into Gaza from Israel and Egypt, which have remain closed for several months to all but a limited supply of aid. He would not accept an international monitoring force in Gaza, which he said would be regarded as an "occupation".

Meshal said **Hamas** should be included with the Egyptians and Europeans in any agreement to monitor the border crossing at Rafah, on Gaza's border with Egypt. His comments came as a **Hamas** delegation was in Cairo for talks on ending the conflict.

Hamas leader: Israel 's Gaza attacks have killed peace talks

The Palestinian death toll rose to at least 846 dead, with more than 3,200 injured. Thirteen Israelis, including three civilians, have been killed.

Some key Israeli generals are pressing for more intensive fighting, among them the head of the military's southern command, Major-General Yoav Galant, who is a leading figure in this conflict. He said an escalation was a "once in a generation" opportunity to strike at Hamas. "If we don't do that we'll be missing an historic opportunity," he was quoted as saying in the Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper.

The Israeli military said it hit 60 targets overnight, including groups of armed men, a mosque in Rafah which it said was housing weapons, tunnels under the Egyptian border and the apparently empty house of Ahmad al-Jabari, head of the Hamas armed wing. Yesterday, the military said it had killed Amir Mansi, who it said was head of rocket launching in Gaza City for Hamas.

International criticism of Israel's conduct of the war grew, with Human Rights Watch saying it believed Israeli troops were using white phosphorous munitions over densely populated areas of Gaza in violation of international humanitarian law. It said on Friday and yesterday its researchers in Israel had seen "multiple air-bursts of artillery-fired white phosphorous" over Gaza City and Jabalia. The weapon is permissible in some circumstances as a smokescreen but it can burn people and buildings. Each artillery round spread 116 burning wafers over an area of up to 250m in diameter, Human Rights Watch said.

The Israeli military has refused to detail which weapons are being used in the Gaza war, but says all its weapons are used within international rules. On Wednesday last week, a military spokesman denied white phosphorous was being used.

Israel's security cabinet was meeting today to discuss whether to step up the fight by ordering troops into the heart of Gaza's towns and cities or whether to consider the ceasefire proposals that are still being discussed. The military dropped leaflets on Gaza on Saturday warning it would "soon escalate its operations" and ordered residents to keep away from "terrorists, weapons warehouses and the places where the terrorists operate".

Despite a UN security council resolution last week calling for an immediate ceasefire, the diplomacy to end the war has moved only haltingly.

A senior Israeli official ruled out the presence of an international monitoring force to stop weapons smuggling to Hamas through the Egyptian border. Amos Gilad, the top defence ministry official who has been in Cairo for talks, said Egypt should have the responsibility to stop smuggling. He told Israel Radio an international force would be "devoid of intelligence, devoid of an ability to penetrate those doing all of this smuggling, devoid of an operational capability".

"There's no doubt Egypt has a superb military and security forces which can tackle all the undesirable phenomena from a security standpoint. No one can compete with this," he said. Gilad was due back in Cairo for more talks on Monday.

Load-Date: January 11, 2009

ISRAEL PONDERES 48-HOUR PAUSE; CEASE-FIRE WOULD REQUIRE HAMAS TO SILENCE ROCKETS

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

December 31, 2008 Wednesday

SOONER EDITION

Copyright 2008 P.G. Publishing Co.

Section: WORLD; Pg. A-1

Length: 795 words

Byline: Ethan Bronner and Taghreed el-Khodary, The New York Times

Body

JERUSALEM -- With its punishing air attacks on Gaza about to enter a fifth day, its gunboats gathering near the Gaza port and its ground forces poised for imminent action, Israel said yesterday it was considering a 48-hour cease-fire that would also require **Hamas** to stop its rocket fire.

The idea was in an early stage, the result of a conversation between Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner of France and Defense Minister Ehud Barak of Israel seeking at least a temporary pause in the fighting that would allow humanitarian relief to be delivered to the besieged coastal strip. Aides to Mr. Barak said he was interested in exploring it and would do so with Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and the rest of the Cabinet today.

"The leading option right now is still a ground invasion, but the target of this operation is an improved cease-fire and if that can come without the invasion, fine," said a close aide to Mr. Barak, speaking on the condition of anonymity because he is not Mr. Barak's authorized spokesman. "But, of course, **Hamas** has to agree, and there has to be a mechanism to make it work."

In Paris, where Mr. Kouchner was meeting with his European Union colleagues over the Gaza crisis, he called publicly for a permanent cease-fire. A similar call came from the so-called Quartet focused on the region -- the United Nations, the European Union, the United States and Russia.

President George W. Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice made phone calls to Israeli and Arab leaders to explore prospects for halting the fighting. They emphasized that any cease-fire should be "durable and sustainable," compelling **Hamas** to end its rocket attacks, a State Department spokesman said.

"That is different from the cease-fire that existed in the last six months," said the spokesman, Gordon Duguid, noting that **Hamas** routinely violated the previous agreement by firing rockets into southern Israel.

The flurry of diplomacy appeared to be mostly byplay in Jerusalem and Gaza, as Israeli officials spoke of a continuing and expanding military operation, and **Hamas** vowed to step up its resistance. Israeli warplanes attacked tunnels used to smuggle supplies in southern Gaza and destroyed the home of a top militant leader.

Mr. Olmert told the Israeli president, Shimon Peres, that the airstrikes were the first of several planned phases, according to spokesmen for the officials. It was also clear that the number of targets available from the air was declining, making the likelihood of a ground offensive greater.

ISRAEL PONDERES 48-HOUR PAUSE CEASE-FIRE WOULD REQUIRE HAMAS TO SILENCE ROCKETS

In Gaza, **Hamas** militants issued a taped statement vowing revenge for those killed in the Israeli air raids since Saturday and warning that a ground invasion would prove painful for Israel.

Palestinian officials say that more than 370 people have been killed, among them, the United Nations says, at least 62 **women** and children and an unknown number of civilian men. Two sisters, ages 4 and 11, were killed in a strike in the north as concern was growing around the world that the assault was taking a terrible toll on civilians.

"It would be easier to dry the sea of Gaza than to defeat the resistance and uproot **Hamas**, which is in every house of Gaza," said the statement from the military wing of **Hamas**. It was played on **Hamas**' television station, which had been shut down by an Israeli missile but went back on air by broadcasting from a mobile van. The statement added that if there was a ground invasion, "the children of Gaza will be collecting the body parts of your soldiers and the ruins of tanks."

Hamas continued to fire longer-range rockets at Israel, shooting deep into the city of Ashdod for a second day as well as into Beersheba, a major city in Israel's south, where one landed in an empty kindergarten. There was a report of light injuries and a number of people in shock.

Israeli warplanes, returning repeatedly to the same section of Gaza City overnight, pummeled the main government complex with about 20 missiles, locals said. The building had been evacuated since the start of the operation on Saturday, which also hit nearly all of **Hamas**' security complexes, its university and other symbols of its sovereignty and power.

The Nakhala family, which lives next to the compound, was inspecting the damage on Tuesday morning and recounting the utter fear and panic they all felt as the missiles hit.

"We have no shelters in Gaza," said the father, Osama Nakhala. "Where shall we go? I also have to worry about my mother, who is 80 years old and paralyzed."

Gaza City was entirely without electricity for the first time, the result of an air attack that hit the system's infrastructure.

The few open bakeries and grocery stores had lines stretching outside. But essentials, like diapers, baby food, bread and potatoes, were in short supply and costly.

Graphic

PHOTO: Uriel Sinai/Getty Images: Relatives weep over the casket of Irit Shitrit, a 39-year-old mother of four killed yesterday by a **Hamas** rocket in Ashdod, Israel.

Load-Date: December 31, 2008

Hamas wants dead civilians on both sides; Rockets fired into Israel invite retaliation against Palestinians set up as human shields

The Vancouver Sun (British Columbia)

January 14, 2009 Wednesday

Final Edition

Copyright 2009 The Vancouver Sun, a division of CanWest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: CANADA & WORLD; Pg. B7

Length: 773 words

Byline: Alan M. Dershowitz, Special to the Los Angeles Times

Body

A temporary ceasefire in Gaza that simply allows **Hamas** to obtain more lethal weapons will assure a repetition of **Hamas**' win-win tactic of firing rockets at Israeli civilians while using Palestinian civilians as human shields.

The best example of **Hamas**' double war crime tactic was on Jan. 6, when it succeeded in sending a rocket to a town fewer than 35 km south of Tel Aviv and injuring a child.

At the same time, it provoked Israel to attack a United Nations school from which **Hamas** was launching its rockets. Residents of the neighborhood said two **Hamas** fighters were in the area at the time, and the Israeli military said they had been killed, according to the New York Times.

The **Hamas** tactic of firing rockets from schools, hospitals and mosques dates back to 2005, when Israel ended its occupation of Gaza. Several months ago, the head of the Israeli air force showed me a videotape (now available on YouTube) of a **Hamas** terrorist moving his rocket launcher to the front of a UN school, firing a rocket and then running away, no doubt hoping that Israel would respond by attacking the rocket launcher and thus killing Palestinian children.

This is the **Hamas** dual strategy: to kill and injure as many Israeli civilians as possible by firing rockets indiscriminately at Israeli civilian targets, and to provoke Israel to kill as many Palestinian civilians as possible to garner world sympathy.

Lest there be any doubt about this, recall the recent case of Nizar Rayan, the **Hamas** terrorist and commander killed in Gaza by an Israeli missile strike Jan. 1. Israeli authorities had warned him that he was a legitimate military target, as was his home, which was a storage site for rockets. This is the same man who in 2001 sent one of his sons on a suicide mission to blow himself up at a Jewish settlement in Gaza.

Rayan had the option of moving his family to a safe area. Instead, his four wives and children remained with him and became martyrs as Israel targeted his home for destruction.

Hamas leaders have echoed the mantra of Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hezbollah, that, "We are going to win because they love life and we love death."

It is difficult to fight an enemy that loves death in a world that loves life.

Hamas wants dead civilians on both sides; Rockets fired into Israel invite retaliation against Palestinians set up as human shields

The world tends to think emotionally rather than rationally when it is shown dead women and children who are deliberately placed in harm's way by Hamas. Instead of asking who was really to blame for these civilian deaths, people place responsibility on those who fired the fatal shots.

Consider a related situation: An armed bank robber kills several tellers, then hides behind a hostage, the robber while killing civilians. Police, trying to prevent further killings, shoots at the robber but accidentally kills the hostage. Who is guilty of murder? The bank robber who fired from behind the human shield.

International law of war, likewise, makes it a war crime to use human shields in the way Hamas does. It also makes it a war crime for Hamas to target Israeli civilians with anti-personnel rockets.

In Lebanon in 2006, Hezbollah used this tactic in its war with Israel, setting up civilians to be in harm's way. When Israel accidentally killed civilians, Hezbollah celebrated them as martyrs.

The New York Times reported Friday that a wounded fighter was smiling at the suffering of civilians, saying, "They should be happy," because they "lost their loved ones as martyrs."

The best proof of Hamas' media strategy of manipulating sympathy is the way it dealt with a rocket it fired the day before Israel's airstrikes began. The rocket fell short of its target in Israel and landed in Gaza, killing two young Palestinian girls. No one saw pictures of these two dead children because they were killed by Palestinian rockets rather than by Israeli rockets. Hamas knows that pictures are more powerful than words.

Israel must continue to try to stop the Hamas rockets that endanger more than a million Israeli civilians. It also must continue to do everything in its power to avoid Palestinian civilian casualties, not only because that is the right thing to do but because every Palestinian death plays into the hands of Hamas' leaders.

A bad day for Hamas is a day in which its rockets fail to kill or injure any Israeli civilians and Israel kills no Palestinian civilians. That is what Israel and the world must strive for. Hamas knows that the moment it ends its policy of firing rockets at Israeli civilians from behind the shield of Palestinian civilians, Israel will end its military activities in Gaza. That is precisely the result Hamas does not want to achieve.

Dershowitz is a professor of law at Harvard University.

Load-Date: January 14, 2009

ISRAELI JETS HIT GAZA, LEAVING SCORES DEAD; AIR OFFENSIVE AIMED AT PUNISHING HAMAS FOR INCREASE IN ROCKET ATTACKS

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

December 28, 2008 Sunday

TWO STAR EDITION

Copyright 2008 P.G. Publishing Co.

Section: WORLD; Pg. A-1

Length: 1393 words

Byline: Taghreed El-Khodary and Ethan Bronner, The New York Times

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip -- Waves of Israeli airstrikes destroyed Hamas security facilities in Gaza yesterday in a crushing response to the group's rocket fire, killing more than 225 -- the highest one-day toll in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in decades.

Israeli military officials said the airstrikes, which went on into the night, were the start of what could be days or even months of an effort to force Hamas to end its rocket barrages into southern Israel. The operation could include ground forces, a senior Israeli security official said.

Palestinian officials said that most of the dead were security officers for Hamas, including two senior commanders, and that at least 600 people were wounded in the attacks.

After the initial airstrikes, dozens of rockets were fired into southern Israel, where an emergency was declared. Thousands of Israelis hurried into bomb shelters amid the hail of rockets, including some longer-range models that reached farther north than ever before. One man was killed in the town of Netivot and four were wounded.

A number of governments and international officials, including leaders of Russia, Egypt, the European Union and the United Nations, condemned Israel's use of force and also called on Hamas to end the rocket fire. But in strong terms, the Bush administration blamed Hamas for the violence and demanded that it stop firing rockets.

A military operation had been forecast and demanded by Israeli officials for weeks, ever since a rocky cease-fire between Israel and Hamas fully collapsed a week ago, leading again to rocket attacks in large numbers against Israel and isolated Israeli operations here.

Still, there was a shocking quality to yesterday's attacks, which began in broad daylight as police cadets were graduating, women were shopping at the outdoor market, and children were emerging from school.

The center of Gaza City was a scene of chaotic horror, with rubble everywhere, sirens wailing, and women shrieking as dozens of mutilated bodies were laid out on the pavement and in the lobby of Shifa Hospital so that family members could identify them. The dead included civilians, including several construction workers and at least two children in school uniforms.

ISRAELI JETS HIT GAZA, LEAVING SCORES DEAD AIR OFFENSIVE AIMED AT PUNISHING HAMAS FOR INCREASE IN ROCKET ATTACKS

By afternoon, shops were shuttered, funerals began and mourning tents were visible on nearly every major street of this densely populated city.

The leader of the Hamas government in Gaza, Ismail Haniya, said in a statement that "Palestine has never witnessed an uglier massacre." Later, in a televised speech, he vowed to fight Israel. "We say in all confidence that even if we are hanged on the gallows or they make our blood flow in the streets or they tear our bodies apart, we will bow only before God and we will not abandon Palestine," he said.

In Damascus, Syria, Hamas' supreme leader, Khaled Meshal, said in an interview with Al-Jazeera television that he was calling for a new Palestinian intifada against Israel, including the resumption of suicide attacks within Israel for the first time since 2005. Hamas, he said, had accepted "all the peaceful options, but without results."

Ehud Barak, the Israeli defense minister and chairman of the Labor Party, said the military operation in Gaza would expand and deepen as necessary, adding, "There is a time for calm and a time for fighting, and this is the time for fighting." He said he was withdrawing from campaigning for Israel's February elections to focus on the operation.

"We wanted to attack military targets while the terrorists were inside the facilities and before Hamas was able to get its rockets out that were stored in some of the targets," said the top Israeli security official, briefing a group of reporters by telephone on condition of anonymity.

"Right now, we have to hit Hamas hard to stop the launching," he added. "I don't see any other way for Hamas to change its behavior. Hamas is not just a terrorist organization. It actually rules Gaza and is well supported by Iran with some of its leadership in Syria."

Hamas had in recent weeks let it be known that because of the coming elections it doubted Israel would engage in a major military undertaking. But in some ways the elections have made it impossible for officials like Mr. Barak not to react, because the public has grown anxious and angry over the rocket fire, which while causing no recent deaths and few injuries is deeply disturbing for those living near the Gaza border.

Israeli officials said that anyone linked to the Hamas security structure or government was fair game since Hamas was a terrorist group that sought Israel's destruction. But with work here increasingly scarce because of an international embargo on Hamas, young men are tempted by the steady work of the police force without necessarily fully accepting the Hamas ideology. One of the biggest tolls yesterday was at a police cadet graduation ceremony in which 15 were killed.

Spokesmen for Hamas officials, who have mostly gone underground, called on militants to seek revenge and fight to the last drop of blood. Several compared what was happening to the 2006 war between Israel and the Lebanese militia Hezbollah, when Israel reacted to the capture and killing of soldiers along its northern border with air raids, followed by a ground attack. Hezbollah is widely viewed as having withstood those assaults and emerged much stronger politically.

The Arab League initially called an emergency meeting for today in Cairo with all the foreign ministers from the member states but later postponed it to Wednesday to give ministers time to respond.

Governments that dislike Hamas, like Egypt's, Jordan's and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, are in a delicate position. They blame Hamas for having taken over Gaza by force 18 months ago in the aftermath of its election victory in the Palestinian parliament, and they oppose its rocket fire on Israeli towns and communities.

But the sight of scores of Palestinians killed by Israeli warplanes outraged their citizens, and anti-Israel demonstrations broke out across the region.

President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority angrily condemned the Israeli airstrikes. Egypt, worried about possible efforts by Palestinians to enter the country, has set up machine guns along the Gaza border. But yesterday it temporarily opened the Rafah border crossing in order to allow the wounded to be brought to Egyptian hospitals for treatment.

ISRAELI JETS HIT GAZA, LEAVING SCORES DEAD AIR OFFENSIVE AIMED AT PUNISHING HAMAS FOR INCREASE IN ROCKET ATTACKS

In the West Bank and in some Arab parts of Jerusalem and Israel, Palestinians threw stones, causing some injuries.

Hamas is officially committed to Israel's destruction, and after it took over Gaza in 2007, it said it would not recognize Israel, honor previous Palestinian Authority commitments to it or end its violence against Israelis.

Israel, backed by the United States, Europe, Egypt and the Palestinian Authority, has sought to isolate **Hamas** by squeezing Gaza economically, a policy that human rights groups condemn as collective punishment. Israel and Egypt, which control routes into and out of Gaza, have blocked nearly all but humanitarian aid from going in.

The result has been the near death of the Gazan economy. While enough food has gone in to avoid starvation, the level of suffering is very high and getting worse each week, especially in recent weeks as Israel closed the routes entirely for about 10 days in reaction to daily rocket fire.

Opening the routes to commerce was **Hamas**' main goal in its cease-fire with Israel, just as ending the rocket fire was Israel's central aim. But while rocket fire did go down drastically in the fall to 15 to 20 a month from hundreds a month, Israel said it would not permit trade to begin again because the rocket fire had not completely stopped and because **Hamas** continued to smuggle weapons from Egypt through desert tunnels. **Hamas** said this was a violation of the agreement, a sign of Israel's real intentions and cause for further rocket fire.

On Wednesday, some 70 rockets hit Israel over 24 hours, in a distinct upsurge of intensity.

The rockets that flew into southern Israel yesterday left the streets of cities like Netivot, a hardscrabble town of immigrants, nearly deserted. Inside a public shelter, parents worked to keep restless children occupied. The man killed by a rocket was hit by shrapnel as he stood in the entrance to his building, next door to where the rocket hit.

Graphic

PHOTO: Thaer Al-Hasani/Associated Press: An injured **Hamas** security force officer crawls as he waits for assistance at the site of an Israeli missile strike at the security headquarters in Gaza City yesterday.

PHOTO: Hatem Omar/Associated Press: Palestinians carry a body from the rubble following an Israeli missile strike in Rafah, southern Gaza Strip, yesterday.

INFORMATIONAL GRAPHIC: New York Times: (Shifa Hospital)

Load-Date: December 29, 2008

Israel mulls ceasefire if Hamas halts rocket attacks; But 'leading option' is ground invasion

Edmonton Journal (Alberta)

December 31, 2008 Wednesday

Final Edition

Copyright 2008 Edmonton Journal, a division of Canwest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A9

Length: 798 words

Byline: Ethan Bronner and Taghreed El-Khodary, New York Times

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

With its punishing air attacks on Gaza about to enter a fifth day, its gunboats gathering near the Gaza port and its ground forces poised for imminent action, Israel said on Tuesday it was considering a 48-hour ceasefire that would also require **Hamas** to stop its rocket fire.

The idea was in an early stage, the result of a conversation between Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner of France and Defence Minister Ehud Barak of Israel seeking at least a temporary pause in the fighting that would allow humanitarian relief to be delivered to the besieged coastal strip. Aides to Barak said he was interested in exploring it and would do so with Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and the rest of the Cabinet today.

"The leading option right now is still a ground invasion, but the target of this operation is an improved ceasefire and if that can come without the invasion, fine," said a close aide to Barak, speaking on the condition of anonymity because he is not Barak's authorized spokesman. "But, of course, **Hamas** has to agree, and there has to be a mechanism to make it work."

In Paris, where Kouchner was meeting with his European Union colleagues over the Gaza crisis, he called publicly for a permanent ceasefire. A similar call came from the so-called Quartet focused on the region: the United Nations, the European Union, the United States and Russia.

President George W. Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice made phone calls to Israeli and Arab leaders to explore prospects for halting the fighting. They emphasized that any ceasefire should be "durable and sustainable," compelling **Hamas** to end its rocket attacks, a State Department spokesman said.

"That is different from the ceasefire that existed in the last six months," said the spokesman, Gordon Duguid, noting that **Hamas** routinely violated the previous agreement by firing rockets into southern Israel.

The flurry of diplomacy appeared to be mostly byplay in Jerusalem and Gaza, as Israeli officials spoke of a continuing and expanding military operation, and **Hamas** vowed to step up its resistance. Israeli warplanes attacked tunnels used to smuggle supplies in southern Gaza and destroyed the home of a top militant leader.

Israel mulls ceasefire if Hamas halts rocket attacks; But 'leading option' is ground invasion

Olmert told the Israeli president, Shimon Peres, that the air strikes were the first of several planned phases, according to spokesmen for the officials. It was also clear that the number of targets available from the air was declining, making the likelihood of a ground offensive greater.

In Gaza, **Hamas** militants issued a taped statement vowing revenge for those killed in the Israeli air raids since Saturday and warning that a ground invasion would prove painful for Israel. Palestinian officials say that more than 370 people have been killed, among them, the United Nations says, at least 62 **women** and children and an unknown number of civilian men. Two sisters, ages 4 and 11, were killed in a strike in the north as concern was growing around the world that the assault was taking a terrible toll on civilians.

"It would be easier to dry the sea of Gaza than to defeat the resistance and uproot **Hamas**, which is in every house of Gaza," said the statement from the military wing of **Hamas**. It was played on **Hamas** television station, which had been shut down by an Israeli missile but went back on air by broadcasting from a mobile van.

The statement added that if there was a ground invasion, "the children of Gaza will be collecting the body parts of your soldiers and the ruins of tanks."

Hamas continued to fire longer-range rockets at Israel, shooting deep into the city of Ashdod for a second day as well as into Beersheba, a major city in Israel's south, where one landed in an empty kindergarten. There was a report of light injuries and a number of people in shock.

Israeli warplanes, returning repeatedly to the same section of Gaza City overnight, pummelled the main government complex with about 20 missiles, locals said. The building had been evacuated since the start of the operation on Saturday, which also hit nearly all of **Hamas** security complexes, its university and other symbols of its sovereignty and power.

The Nakhala family, which lives next to the compound, was inspecting the damage on Tuesday morning and recounting the utter fear and panic they all felt as the missiles hit.

"We have no shelters in Gaza," said the father, Osama Nakhala. "Where shall we go? I also have to worry about my mother, who is 80 years old and paralyzed."

His 13-year-old son Yousef was with him. When asked his view of the situation, he took an unusual stand for someone in Gaza, where Israel is being cursed by most everyone. "I blame **Hamas**. It doesn't want to recognize Israel. If they did so, there could be peace," he said. "Egypt made a peace treaty with Israel, and nothing is happening to them."

Graphic

Colour Photo: Getty Images; As seen from Gaza City, Palestinian rockets leave trails of smoke after being launched from northern Gaza towards an Israeli town on Tuesday. ;

Load-Date: December 31, 2008

UN approves draft resolution, calls for Israel-Hamas ceasefire

The New Zealand Herald

January 9, 2009 Friday

Copyright 2009 The New Zealand Herald All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; World

Length: 1483 words

Body

GENEVA - The United Nations Security Council approved a resolution Thursday calling for an immediate and durable cease-fire between Hamas militants and Israeli forces now fighting in the Gaza Strip.

The vote was 14-0, with the United States abstaining.

The vote followed three days of intense negotiations between ministers from key Arab nations and the council's veto-wielding Western powers - the United States, Britain and France. It came on the 13th day of an Israeli air and ground offensive against the Islamic group Hamas, which rules Gaza and has been launching rockets and mortars into southern Israel for years.

The United States, Israel's closest ally, and Arab nations that have close ties to Hamas negotiated the text of the resolution. But it will be up to Israel and Hamas to decide to stop their military activities.

"We are all very conscious that peace is made on the ground while resolutions are written in the United Nations," British Foreign Secretary David Miliband said.

"Our job here is to support the efforts for peace on the ground and to help turn the good words on paper into changes on the ground that are desperately needed."

Earlier the UN halted deliveries to the Gaza Strip on after gunfire from an Israeli tank killed an aid truck driver, and the international Red Cross said it would restrict activities after one of its drivers was injured in a similar incident.

The threat of a wider conflict arose when militants in Lebanon fired two rockets into northern Israel. One rocket crashed into a retirement home, but there were no serious injuries. Israel responded with mortar shells.

During a three-hour pause in the fighting to allow in food and fuel and let medics collect the dead, nearly three dozen bodies were found beneath the rubble of bombed out buildings in Gaza City.

Many of the dead were in the same neighborhood where the international Red Cross said rescue workers discovered young children too weak to stand who had stayed by their dead mothers.

Relations between Israel and humanitarian organizations have grown increasingly tense as civilian casualties have mounted.

The United Nations demanded an investigation after Israel earlier this week fired shells at a target next to a UN school filled with Gazans seeking refuge from fighting that has left nearly 750 Palestinians dead, according to

UN approves draft resolution, calls for Israel - Hamas ceasefire

Palestinian hospital officials and human rights workers. Israel said militants had launched an attack from the area, and then ran into a crowd of civilians for cover. Nearly 40 Palestinians died.

"We've been coordinating with them (Israeli forces) and yet our staff continue to be hit and killed," said a UN spokesman, Chris Gunness, announcing the suspension. The UN is the largest aid provider in Gaza.

Israeli police, meanwhile, said militants in the Gaza Strip fired 24 rockets into Israel on Thursday, injuring four people, one of them seriously. Militants fired larger numbers of rockets in the early days of the conflict.

The Israeli military said one soldier attached to a tank battalion was killed by gunfire in the Gaza Strip on Thursday.

Twelve Israelis, including nine soldiers, have died since the Dec. 27 beginning of the offensive against the **Hamas** militants in charge of Gaza, meant to halt years of Palestinian rocket attacks on southern Israel. But with roughly half the Palestinian dead believed to be civilians, international efforts to broker a cease-fire have been gaining steam.

Israeli envoys traveled to Egypt on Thursday to discuss the proposal being brokered by France and Egypt and now backed by the U.S.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy said any time lost will play into the hands of those who want war.

"The weapons must go quiet, the escalation must stop, Israel must obtain security guarantees and leave Gaza," he said in Paris.

The UN provides food aid to around 750,000 Gaza residents - about half of Gaza's population - and runs dozens of schools and clinics throughout the territory. They have some 9,000 locally employed staffers inside Gaza, and a small team of international staffers who work there.

Elena Mancusi Materi, UNRWA's spokeswoman in Geneva, said the suspension concerned all truck movement in Gaza.

"If someone comes to one of our food distribution centers, we will give that person food," she said. "If people come to our clinics with injuries, we will treat them."

For a second straight day, Israel suspended its Gaza military operation for three hours to allow in humanitarian supplies. Shortly before the pause took effect, however, the UN said one of its aid trucks came under fire from a gunner on an Israeli tank, killing the driver.

UN spokesman Adnan Abu Hasna said the UN coordinated the delivery with Israel, and the vehicle was marked with a UN flag and insignia when it was shot in northern Gaza. The Israeli army said it was investigating.

In Geneva, the international Red Cross said it would restrict its aid operations to Gaza City for at least one day after one of its convoys came under Israeli fire at the Netzarim crossing during the three-hour lull in fighting Thursday. One driver was lightly injured.

Dr. Moaiya Hassanain of the Palestinian Health Ministry said 35 bodies were discovered Thursday during the three-hour pause in fighting in several areas around Gaza City that have seen fierce fighting between Israeli troops and **Hamas** militants.

He said it was unclear how many militants were killed because the remains were in poor condition, but that **women** and children were among the dead. Hassanain said 746 Palestinians have died in Israel's 13-day offensive.

Many of the dead found Thursday were in Gaza City's Zeitoun neighborhood, where the international Red Cross said it found four small children alive next to their mothers' bodies in the rubble of a home hit by Israeli shelling. The neutral aid group says a total of 15 dead were recovered from two houses in the Zeitoun neighborhood of Gaza City on Wednesday.

UN approves draft resolution, calls for Israel - Hamas ceasefire

A Red Cross spokesman says rescuers had been refused permission by Israeli forces to reach the site for four days. It said the delay in allowing rescue services access was "unacceptable."

The Red Cross statement was a rare public criticism from the aid group, which normally conducts confidential negotiations with warring parties.

The Israeli military said in a statement that Hamas militants used Palestinian civilians as human shields, and that Israeli forces work closely with international aid groups to help civilians during the fighting in Gaza.

In other Gaza violence, Israel killed at least 12 people, including the UN driver and three people who were fleeing their homes, according to Palestinian medical officials.

The rockets from Lebanon raised the specter of renewed hostilities on Israel's northern frontier, just 2½ years after Israel battled the Hezbollah guerrilla group to a 34-day stalemate. War broke out between Hezbollah and Israel in 2006 as Israel battled Palestinian militants in Gaza, on Israel's southern borders.

No group claimed responsibility. Lebanon's government condemned the attack, and Hezbollah - which now plays an integral role in Lebanon's government - denied any responsibility for the rocket fire, which lightly injured two Israelis at a retirement home.

"The rocket entered through the roof, hurling the water heaters into the air. It went through bedrooms upstairs and then into the kitchen," said Henry Carmelli, the home's manager.

Israel has repeatedly said it was prepared for a possible attack on the north since it launched its bruising campaign against Hamas militants in Gaza, to the south. Israel has mobilized thousands of reserve troops for such a scenario, and leaders have warned Hezbollah of dire consequences if it enters the fighting.

"We are prepared and will respond as necessary," Defence Minister Ehud Barak told reporters.

The Israeli offensive has reduced Palestinian rocket fire, but not stopped it altogether. Several barrages were reported Thursday, including one strike that damaged a school and sports center in the southern city of Ashkelon, police said. Both buildings were empty.

For Israel to accept a proposed cease-fire deal, "there has to be a total and complete cessation of all hostile fire from Gaza into Israel, and ... we have to see an arms embargo on Hamas that will receive international support," said government spokesman Mark Regev.

For its part, Hamas said it would not accept a truce deal unless it includes an end to the Israeli blockade of Gaza - something Israel says it is not willing to do. Israel and Egypt have maintained a stiff economic embargo on Gaza since the Hamas takeover.

The Palestinian Authority controls the West Bank while Hamas rules Gaza - two territories on opposite sides of Israel that are supposed to make up a future Palestinian state. Hamas took control of Gaza from forces loyal to Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas in June 2007.

- AP

Load-Date: January 9, 2009

GAZA FIGHTING INTENSIFIES; ISRAEL, HAMAS IGNORE CALLS FOR CEASE-FIRE AMID SIGNS OF GROUND ASSAULT

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

January 1, 2009 Thursday

SOONER EDITION

Copyright 2009 P.G. Publishing Co.

Section: WORLD; Pg. A-1

Length: 871 words

Byline: Ibrahim Barzak and Jason Keyser, The Associated Press

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip -- Israel sent more troops to the Gaza border yesterday, rapidly moving forward with preparations for a possible ground offensive as the next stage of its military assault on the coastal territory's Hamas rulers.

Israel rebuffed calls by world leaders for a truce, and Hamas also was cold to a cease-fire.

Instead, both intensified their fire. Israel bombed a mosque, which it said was used to store rockets, as well as vital smuggling tunnels along the Egyptian border, and the Islamic militants hammered southern Israeli cities with about 60 rockets.

Israeli troops trudged between dozens of tanks in muddy, rain-sodden fields outside Gaza, assembling equipment, cleaning weapons and scrubbing out tank barrels. Their commanders moved forward with preparations for a ground operation, said an Israeli defense official.

The U.N. Security Council scheduled emergency consultations last night to discuss an Arab request for a legally binding and enforceable resolution to ensure an immediate cease-fire in Gaza. Egyptian Ambassador Maged Abdelaziz said he was on instructions from Arab League foreign ministers who met in Cairo.

Diplomatic efforts by U.S., European and Middle Eastern leaders appeared to be having little effect. A French proposal for a 48-hour cease-fire to allow humanitarian supplies into Gaza failed to gain traction. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said the time was not ripe to consider it.

A separate proposal by Turkey and Egypt, two of Israel's few allies in the Muslim world, also seemed to be attracting little serious study in Israel or Gaza, where Hamas leaders dismissed talk of a truce.

With a shrinking number of targets to hit from the air and top Hamas leaders deep in hiding, a ground operation seemed all the more likely. In five days of raids, Israeli warplanes carried out about 500 sorties against Hamas targets and helicopters flew hundreds more combat missions, a senior Israeli military officer said.

The government has approved the call-up of more than 9,000 reserve soldiers. Heavy rain clouds cover that could hinder ground forces were expected to lift today.

GAZA FIGHTING INTENSIFIES ISRAEL, HAMAS IGNORE CALLS FOR CEASE-FIRE AMID SIGNS OF GROUND ASSAULT

U.N. humanitarian chief John Holmes said the death toll was estimated at between 320 and 390 and the number of injured at 1,500-1,900. Between 20 percent and 25 percent of the dead are either women or children, said Karen Abu Zayd, U.N. Relief and Works Agency commissioner.

Hamas says some 200 uniformed members of its security forces have been killed, and the U.N. says at least 60 Palestinian civilians have died.

In Israel, three civilians and a soldier have been killed by rocket fire, which has reached deeper into Israel than ever.

The Israeli military, which leveled the mosque yesterday, said that it was being used as a missile storage site and that the bombs dropped on it set off secondary explosions. It was the fifth mosque hit in the campaign.

The chief of Israel's internal security services, Yuval Diskin, told a government meeting that Hamas members had hidden inside mosques, believing they would be safe from airstrikes and using them as command centers, according to an Israeli security official.

Other militants were hiding in hospitals, some disguised as doctors and nurses, Mr. Diskin said, according to the official.

Echoing Israel's cool response to truce proposals, a senior Hamas leader with ties to its military wing said that now was not the right time to call off the fight. Hamas was unhappy with the six-month truce that ended just before the fighting began because it didn't result in an easing of Israel's crippling economic blockade of Gaza.

Hamas spokesman Taher Nunu said that although Hamas leaders had been driven underground, the Gaza government was functioning and had met in the past few days.

"What our people want is clear: an immediate stop to all kinds of aggression, the end of the siege by all means, the opening of all border crossings, and international guarantees that the occupation will not renew this terrorist war again," Mr. Nunu said.

Israel's latest airstrikes concentrated on crushing the many smuggling tunnels under Gaza's southern border with Egypt. They provide a crucial lifeline, not just for Hamas rulers, but also for bringing in food and fuel for Gaza's people.

Mr. Holmes, the U.N. humanitarian chief, expressed concern about the fighting's impact on civilians. He said hospitals were struggling to cope with casualties and the lack of fuel deliveries had forced Gaza's power plant to shut down Tuesday.

But U.N. officials said the major need was grain and other food. Mr. Holmes said the Kerem Shalom crossing remained open and 55 trucks got through Tuesday and about 60 yesterday, mainly carrying food. He said Israel had been "cooperative in principle about these supplies, but we need to see more results."

White House spokesman Gordon Johndroe said U.S. officials were seeing "a good flow" of medical and food supplies into Gaza.

Israel and Egypt blockaded Gaza after Hamas fighters violently seized control of the territory in 2007 and the two nations have opened their borders only to let in limited humanitarian aid.

Yesterday, several wounded Palestinians were taken across the Israeli and Egyptian borders for treatment, including a child.

GAZA FIGHTING INTENSIFIES ISRAEL, HAMAS IGNORE CALLS FOR CEASE-FIRE AMID SIGNS OF
GROUND ASSAULT

End of Document

**Israel batters Hamas in Gaza; Bloody toll: Retaliation for rocket barrages
might be start of sustained drive**

The Gazette (Montreal)
December 28, 2008 Sunday
Early Edition

Copyright 2008 The Gazette, a division of CanWest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A1

Length: 1016 words

Byline: TAGHREED EL-KHODARY AND ETHAN BRONNER, New York Times

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

Waves of Israeli airstrikes destroyed **Hamas** security facilities in Gaza yesterday in a crushing response to the group's rocket fire, killing more than 225 - the highest one-day toll in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in decades.

Israeli military officials said the airstrikes, which went on into the night, were the start of what could be days or months of an effort to force **Hamas** to end its rocket barrages into southern Israel. The operation could include ground forces, a senior Israeli security official said.

Palestinian officials said that most of the dead were security officers for **Hamas**, including two senior commanders, and that at least 600 people were wounded in the attacks.

After the initial airstrikes, dozens of rockets were fired into southern Israel, where an emergency was declared. Thousands of Israelis hurried into bomb shelters amid the hail of rockets, including some that reached farther north than ever before.

One man was killed in the town of Netivot and four were wounded.

A number of governments and international officials - including leaders of Russia, Egypt, the European Union and the United Nations - condemned Israel's use of force and also called on **Hamas** to end the rocket fire. But in strong terms, the Bush administration blamed **Hamas** for the violence and demanded that it stop firing rockets.

A military operation had been forecast and demanded by Israeli officials for weeks, since a rocky ceasefire between Israel and **Hamas** fully collapsed a week ago, leading again to rocket attacks in large numbers against Israel and isolated Israeli operations here.

Still, there was a shocking quality to yesterday's attacks, which began in broad daylight as police cadets were graduating, **women** were shopping at the outdoor market and children were emerging from school.

The centre of Gaza City was a scene of chaotic horror, with rubble everywhere, sirens wailing and **women** shrieking as dozens of mutilated bodies were laid out on the pavement and in the lobby of Shifa Hospital so that family members could identify them.

Israel batters Hamas in Gaza; Bloody toll: Retaliation for rocket barrages might be start of sustained drive

The dead included civilians, including several construction workers and at least two children in school uniforms.

By afternoon, shops were shuttered, funerals began and mourning tents were visible on nearly every major street of this densely populated city.

In Damascus, **Hamas**'s supreme leader, Khaled Meshal, said in an interview with Al-Jazeera television that he was calling for a new Palestinian intifada against Israel, including the resumption of suicide attacks within Israel for the first time since 2005.

Ehud Barak, the Israeli defence minister and chairman of the Labour Party, said the military operation in Gaza would expand and deepen as necessary, adding, "There is a time for calm and a time for fighting, and this is the time for fighting." He said he was withdrawing from campaigning for Israel's February elections to focus on the operation.

"We wanted to attack military targets while the terrorists were inside the facilities and before **Hamas** was able to get its rockets out that were stored in some of the targets," said the top Israeli security official, briefing a group of reporters by telephone on condition of anonymity.

Hamas had in recent weeks let it be known that because of the coming elections it doubted Israel would engage in a major military undertaking. But in some ways the elections have made it impossible for officials like Barak not to react, because the public has grown anxious and angry over the rocket fire, which while causing no recent deaths and few injuries is deeply disturbing for those living near the Gaza border.

Israeli officials said that anyone linked to the **Hamas** security structure or government was fair game since **Hamas** was a terrorist group that sought Israel's destruction. But with work here increasingly scarce because of an international embargo on **Hamas**, young men are tempted by the steady work of the police force without necessarily fully accepting the **Hamas** ideology. One of the biggest tolls yesterday was at a police cadet graduation ceremony in which 15 were killed.

Spokesmen for **Hamas** officials, who have mostly gone underground, called on militants to seek revenge and fight to the last drop of blood.

Governments that dislike **Hamas**, like Egypt's, Jordan's and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, are in a delicate position.

They blame **Hamas** for having taken over Gaza by force 18 months ago in the aftermath of its election victory in the Palestinian parliament, and they oppose its rocket fire on Israeli towns and communities.

But the sight of scores of Palestinians killed by Israeli warplanes outraged their citizens, and anti-Israel demonstrations broke out across the region.

In the West Bank and in some Arab parts of Jerusalem and Israel, Palestinians threw stones, causing some injuries.

Hamas is officially committed to Israel's destruction, and after it took over Gaza in 2007, it said it would not recognize Israel, honour previous Palestinian Authority commitments to it or end its violence against Israelis.

Israel, backed by the United States, Europe, Egypt and the Palestinian Authority, has sought to isolate **Hamas** by squeezing Gaza economically, a policy that human rights groups condemn as collective punishment.

Israel and Egypt, which control routes into and out of Gaza, have blocked nearly all but humanitarian aid from going in.

The result has been the near death of the Gazan economy. While enough food has gone in to avoid starvation, the level of suffering is very high and getting worse each week, especially in recent weeks as Israel closed the routes entirely for about 10 days in reaction to daily rocket fire.

Israel batters Hamas in Gaza; Bloody toll: Retaliation for rocket barrages might be start of sustained drive

On Wednesday, some 70 rockets hit Israel over 24 hours, in a distinct upsurge of intensity.

The rockets that flew into southern Israel yesterday left the streets of cities like Netivot, a hardscrabble town of immigrants, nearly deserted.

Inside a public shelter, parents worked to keep restless children occupied. The man killed by a rocket was hit by shrapnel as he stood in the entrance to his building, next door to where the rocket hit.

Graphic

Colour Photo: SAID KHATIB, AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES; Palestinians inspect the site of an Israeli air strike in the southern town of Rafah yesterday. ;

Colour Photo: ABID KATIB, GETTY IMAGES; Palestinians inspect the rubble of the presidential palace in Gaza City after Israeli airstrikes yesterday. ;

Load-Date: December 30, 2008

Israel presses its attack on Gaza; Death toll in airstrikes rises to 280, with 600 wounded; Hamas vows revenge

The International Herald Tribune

December 29, 2008 Monday

Copyright 2008 International Herald Tribune All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 1479 words

Byline: Taghreed El-Khodary and Ethan Bronner - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: GAZA

Body

Israeli airstrikes against Palestinian facilities in Gaza continued Sunday for a second day and the death toll rose to more than 280 as Israel retaliated for rocket fire from the area with its most severe campaign against Palestinian militants in decades.

The Palestinian groups again launched barrages of rockets and mortars into Israel on Sunday, extending their reach further than before, and the Israeli government approved the emergency call-up of thousands of army reservists in preparation for a possible ground operation.

Speaking before the weekly cabinet meeting in Jerusalem, Defense Minister Ehud Barak said the army "will deepen and broaden its actions as needed" and "will continue to act in Gaza."

Among the 30 or more targets hit Saturday and Sunday were the main security compound and prison in Gaza City known as the Saraya; metal workshops; **Hamas** military posts; and the house of a chemistry professor from Islamic University. The **Hamas**-owned Al Aqsa television station was also struck, as was a mosque that the Israelis said was housing armed men and was being used as a "terrorist operation center."

Palestinian officials said that most of the dead in Gaza were security officers for **Hamas**, including two senior commanders, and that at least 600 people had been wounded in the attacks.

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said Sunday that "the patience, determination and stamina" of the residents of Israel would, in the end, determine the success of the military campaign.

Two rockets fell in the vicinity of the Israeli port of Ashdod, 40 kilometers, or 25 miles, north of Gaza, a military spokeswoman said. Others hit the coastal city of Ashkelon. Some Israelis were lightly wounded by shrapnel.

Israeli military officials said their airstrikes, which began Saturday morning, were the start of what could be days or even months of an effort to force **Hamas** to end its rocket barrages. After the first airstrikes, dozens of rockets were fired into southern Israel, sending thousands of Israelis into bomb shelters. One man was killed Saturday in the town of Netivot.

Israel presses its attack on Gaza Death toll in airstrikes rises to 280, with 600 wounded Hamas vows revenge

A number of governments and international officials, including leaders of Russia, Egypt, the European Union and the United Nations, condemned Israel's assault and called on Hamas to end the rocket fire. But the Bush administration blamed Hamas for the violence and demanded that it stop firing rockets.

The Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, a fierce rival of Hamas, urged the Islamic group to renew a truce with Israel that collapsed last week, news services reported.

In New York on Sunday, the United Nations Security Council issued a statement expressing concern about the escalation of the conflict and calling on both parties for an immediate end to all violence. The statement came after the 15-member council met for more than four hours in closed session.

The Associated Press reported that the top UN human rights official had said that Israel's response to the firing of rockets was "disproportionate." The UN high commissioner for human rights, Navi Pillay, said she was distressed at the enormous loss of life in Gaza and called on Israel to end collective punishment and the targeting of civilians.

A military operation had been forecast and demanded by Israeli officials for weeks, even before the rocky cease-fire between Israel and Hamas fully collapsed more than a week ago, leading again to rocket attacks against Israel and some Israeli operations in Gaza.

The Israeli Army said that Palestinian militants had fired more than 300 rockets and mortars into Israel over the past week, and 10 times that number in the past year.

Still, there was a shocking quality to the Saturday attacks, which began in broad daylight as police cadets were graduating, women were shopping at an outdoor market and children were emerging from school.

The center of Gaza City was a scene of chaotic horror, with rubble everywhere, sirens wailing and women shrieking as dozens of mutilated bodies were laid out on the pavement and in the lobby of Shifa Hospital so that family members could identify them. The dead included civilians, including several construction workers and at least two children in school uniforms.

By afternoon, shops were shuttered, funerals began and mourning tents were visible on nearly every major street of this densely populated city.

The leader of the Hamas government in Gaza, Ismail Haniya, said in a statement that "Palestine has never witnessed an uglier massacre."

Later, in a televised speech, he vowed to fight Israel. "We say in all confidence that even if we are hung on the gallows or they make our blood flow in the streets or they tear our bodies apart, we will bow only before God and we will not abandon Palestine," he said.

In Damascus, Hamas's leader, Khaled Meshal, said in an interview with Al Jazeera television that he was calling for a new intifada against Israel, including the resumption of suicide attacks for the first time since 2005. Hamas, he said, had accepted "all the peaceful options, but without results."

A top Israeli security official, meanwhile, briefing reporters by telephone on condition of anonymity, said: "We wanted to attack military targets while the terrorists were inside the facilities and before Hamas was able to get its rockets out that were stored in some of the targets."

He added: "Right now, we have to hit Hamas hard to stop the launching. I don't see any other way for Hamas to change its behavior."

Hamas had made it known in recent weeks that it doubted Israel would engage in a major military undertaking because of its coming elections. But in some ways the elections have made it impossible for officials like Barak not to react. The Israeli public has grown anxious and angry over the rocket fire, which while causing no recent deaths and few injuries is deeply disturbing for those living near Gaza.

Israel presses its attack on Gaza Death toll in airstrikes rises to 280, with 600 wounded Hamas vows revenge

Israeli officials said that anyone linked to the Hamas security structure or government was fair game because Hamas was a terrorist group that sought Israel's destruction. But with jobs increasingly scarce in Gaza because of an international embargo on Hamas, young men are tempted by the steady work of the police force without necessarily fully accepting the Hamas ideology. One of the biggest tolls Saturday was at a police cadet graduation ceremony in which 15 people were killed.

Spokesmen for Hamas officials, who have mostly gone underground, called on militants to seek revenge and fight to the last drop of blood. Several compared what was happening to the 2006 war between Israel and the Lebanese militia Hezbollah, when Israel reacted to the capture and killing of soldiers along its northern border with air raids, followed by a ground attack. Hezbollah is widely viewed as having withstood those assaults and emerged much stronger politically.

The Palestine Liberation Organization, dominated by Abbas's Fatah movement, called a one-day commercial strike throughout the West Bank and urged Palestinians to take to the streets in peaceful protests.

Governments that dislike Hamas, like Egypt's, Jordan's and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, are in a delicate position. They blame Hamas for having taken over Gaza by force 18 months ago after its victory in elections for the Palestinian Parliament, and they oppose its rocket fire on Israeli towns and communities.

But the sight of scores of Palestinians killed by Israeli warplanes outraged their citizens, and anti-Israel demonstrations broke out across the region.

Hamas is officially committed to Israel's destruction, and after it took over Gaza in 2007, it said it would not recognize Israel, honor previous Palestinian Authority commitments to it or end its violence against Israelis.

Israel, backed by the United States, Europe, Egypt and the Palestinian Authority, has tried to isolate Hamas by squeezing Gaza economically, a policy that human rights groups condemn as collective punishment. Israel and Egypt, which control routes into and out of Gaza, have blocked aid from going in.

The result has been the near death of the Gazan economy. While enough food has gone in to avoid starvation, the level of suffering is very high and getting worse each week, especially in recent weeks as Israel closed the routes entirely for 10 days in reaction to rocket fire.

Opening the routes to commerce was Hamas's main goal in its truce with Israel, just as ending the rocket fire was Israel's aim. But while rocket firings did go down to 15 to 20 a month from hundreds a month, Israel said it would not permit trade to begin because the rocket fire had not completely stopped and because Hamas continued to smuggle weapons from Egypt through desert tunnels.

Hamas said that was a violation of the agreement, a sign of Israel's real intentions and cause for further rocket fire. On Wednesday alone, about 70 rockets from Gaza hit Israel.

Load-Date: January 6, 2009

Israel, Hamas ignore U.N., keep fighting

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

January 10, 2009 Saturday

SOONER EDITION

Copyright 2009 P.G. Publishing Co.

Section: WORLD; Pg. A-1

Length: 1281 words

Byline: Jeffrey Fleishman and Yasser Ahmad, Los Angeles Times

Body

JERUSALEM -- Israel and Hamas ignored a U.N. cease-fire resolution yesterday, as the Israeli army attacked 70 targets in the Gaza Strip and Palestinian militants fired a barrage of rockets at southern Israel from the beleaguered seaside enclave.

Fighting in Gaza continued for a 14th day with little indication that the international community or an Egyptian-backed peace initiative would bring a quick end to hostilities. Hamas officials said it would not heed a resolution about which it was not consulted. Israel, charging that the U.N. action was unworkable, kept thousands of Army reservists on alert and vowed to continue the offensive.

"The state of Israel has never agreed that any outside body would determine its right to defend the security of its citizens," Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said. He added the Army "will continue operations in order to defend Israeli citizens. ... This morning's rocket fire against residents of the south only proves U.N. Security Council Resolution 1860 is not practical and will not be honored in actual fact by the Palestinian murder organizations."

Hamas spokesman Sami abu Zuhri said the United Nations had failed to consider the interests of the Palestinian people. "This resolution doesn't mean that the war is over," he told the satellite television channel al-Jazeera. "We call on the Palestinian fighters to mobilize and be ready to face the offensive, and we urge the Arab masses to carry on with their angry protests."

Israel was under increasing international pressure over a military campaign that has killed more than 780 Palestinians, at least one-third of them civilians, according to Gaza medical workers. The United Nations, citing growing danger, on Thursday suspended the movements of its workers in Gaza, and the Israeli Supreme Court gave government officials four days to explain why the Army has delayed the evacuation of many wounded Palestinians to medical facilities.

U.N. relief officials have called for an investigation into the deaths of 30 Gaza civilians killed earlier this week, when Israeli shells battered a compound where they had taken refuge after being ordered out of their homes in the Zeitoun district. John Holmes, U.N. chief of humanitarian aid programs, called the deaths "a particularly outrageous incident."

Israel reported that rockets launched by militants landed in the Israeli areas of Beersheba and Ashkelon. Since Israel began its air attacks Dec. 27, Israeli deaths include at least nine soldiers and three civilians. The offensive,

Israel , Hamas ignore U.N. ,keep fighting

Israel says, has been designed to halt the militant rocket attacks from Gaza, which Hamas seized control of in mid-2007 as a unity government with a rival Palestinian faction fell apart.

While Israeli officials quickly defied the U.N. resolution, the nation's media were reporting differences emerging within the government over how aggressive to be in coming days. The ground invasion advanced quickly early on, but Israeli troops have not breached Gaza's most heavily populated urban areas, where sustained fighting could lead to higher casualties.

Israel's air and artillery attacks thundered across Gaza yesterday -- stopping only for a few hours as part of a daily truce, when both sides agree to hold fire while wounded Palestinians seek medical aid and families shop for food and supplies.

In the northern town of Beit Lahia, six members of one family, including an infant, were killed when an air strike destroyed their home, according to witnesses and medical officials.

Roads were nearly deserted around the southern Gaza town of Khan Younis, where Israeli forces clashed with militants earlier this week. Near a badly damaged school and six flattened houses, Mohammed Smeiro and his 12-year-old son scoured dried blood off the street. They said the blood belonged to two Palestinian cousins, Maather Mohammad Zneid, 23, and Faten Abdel Aziz Zneid, 33, who were putting on veils when a missile exploded.

"I could see what happened through my window," said Mr. Smeiro. "Their bodies were cut to pieces. ... Later, a relative found one of the mothers, and she came and identified the bodies."

The wife of Hamid Mohyi Smairi wept at a nearby house. She was surrounded by other women; they were weeping too.

"My husband went yesterday morning to bring us some food from the shop. We heard shots, and we did not know what happened," she said. "His body was in the street until after the Israeli troops left this morning. We found out that he had a bullet in the chest and another one in his leg."

She cursed. Not far away, the neighborhood of Qarara looked like a hill of stones and blocks. The Al Zuheir mosque was nearly wiped away, and more than 40 houses around it were destroyed.

Gaza's streets and corners are like that -- piles of mortar, cement, wood, iron rods and other materials that once were shops and houses and places of prayer. Israeli officials say these same buildings are often used by militants to fire rockets and mortars.

Many families in Qarara have sought shelter at a U.N. school, including Hisham Abu Modeif, who could not have a traditional mourning tent for his father, Jihad, because the streets were too dangerous. Instead, he and several relatives buried the man with little ceremony and hurried back to the school; Jihad Modeif had died Thursday about 110 yards from his home.

"Today, when the Israeli troops withdrew, I went to the area and found my father," Mr. Modeif said. "He bled to death after he was hit in the chest."

Politics, diplomacy and negotiations have seemed to make scant progress. The U.N. Security Council, which voted 14-0 for the resolution, with the United States abstaining, was snubbed by Israel and barely acknowledged by Hamas.

Israeli and Hamas officials in recent days have been shuttling to Cairo, Egypt, to meet with Egyptian Intelligence Chief Omar Suleiman on a possible cease-fire deal. But neither side has embraced the idea.

Hamas, whose charter calls for the destruction of Israel, wants the Israeli assault to stop and the blockade around Gaza lifted. Israel refuses to halt its incursion until it is sure that militants from Hamas and other groups will stop firing rockets into towns south of Tel Aviv and that tunnels to smuggle weapons from Egypt into Gaza are destroyed.

Israel , Hamas ignore U.N. ,keep fighting

The Egyptian-backed plan, which the United States supports, appears stalled. Two other key components also have not fallen into place: Reconciliation between **Hamas** and the rival Fatah faction led by Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas that would lead to security sharing along the Egyptian-Gaza border, and reluctance by Egypt to allow a sizable international force to patrol its territory to stop weapons trafficking along the Palestinian enclave.

Anger against the Israeli offensive by tens of thousands protesters in neighboring Egypt and Jordan resulted in clashes with police. Both countries have diplomatic relations with Israel.

Egyptians in the Sinai region threw rocks at police, and riots broke out yesterday in the Jordanian capital, Amman, after more than 2,000 demonstrators leaving Friday prayers marched toward the Israeli embassy, forcing their way past several checkpoints. The Jordanian protesters cheered Venezuela, waving the flag of the nation whose president, Hugo Chavez, expelled the Israeli envoy over the Gaza offensive.

"Today, the entire Jordanian people have a clear demand, shutting down the Israeli embassy," said Zaki Bani Arshid, leader of the Islamic Action Front, the Jordanian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. "It defies logic that while a country far away with no cultural ties to the Arab world like Venezuela cuts its ties with Israel, in Jordan we are keeping the Israeli embassy."

Graphic

PHOTO: Agence France-Presse/Getty Images: Young Palestinians throw stones at Israeli police during clashes in east Jerusalem yesterday.\

PHOTO: Omer Messinger/Agence France-Presse/Getty Images: Friends of fallen Israeli soldier Amit Robinzon, who was killed during operations in Gaza, mourn next to his grave during his funeral yesterday in the Israeli town of Magal.

Load-Date: January 13, 2009

Tunnels - the secret weapon for Hamas; Troops may face street guerrillas equipped by a web of underground supply lines

The Independent (London)

January 6, 2009 Tuesday

First Edition

Copyright 2009 Independent Print Ltd All Rights Reserved

The  **INDEPENDENT**

Section: NEWS; Pg. 8

Length: 1197 words

Byline: Kim Sengupta and Ben Lynfield IN JERUSALEM

Body

Israel's ground offensive is reaching a critical stage where its forces may soon have to face **Hamas** fighters on their chosen killing ground, the narrow, winding alleyways of Gaza City.

Despite the days of relentless air strikes, Israeli commanders admit that the Islamist movement still has large quantities of weapons and up to 20,000 trained men to use in a bloody campaign. The **Hamas** arsenal has been smuggled in through the intricate network of tunnels that dip under the Egyptian border, a network that has also provided the economic lifeblood for the Palestinian territory suffering from severe and punitive sanctions imposed by Israel.

The fact that these tunnels have played a key role in keeping **Hamas** in political and military power has made them not only targets of Israeli attacks but also a key issue in any ceasefire.

There are believed to be hundreds of tunnels criss-crossing the nine-mile wide barren border between Gaza and Egypt along what has become known as the Philadelphi Corridor. Constructed over years and varying in depth and width, the tunnels have carried everything from rockets to cattle. Some also allow access to routes for supposed VIPs to have quicker entry and exit from the Palestinian enclave.

Professor Efraim Inbar, director of Israel's Bar-Ilan University's Begin-Sadat Centre for Strategic Studies, believes the Israeli government bears a degree of responsibility for the existence of the tunnels. "They did not take them seriously at first and did not invest enough money and resources to detecting and stopping them. The problem they now face is that they have to destroy all the main tunnels and then also make sure that they are not rebuilt in the future."

In the past the Israelis have considered a number of options to deal with the tunnels, including digging a moat flooded with seawater, deterring smugglers with the risk of drowning. The plan was dropped, however, after it became apparent it could contaminate Gaza's crumbling underground aquifer. The Israelis have also asked the US to provide its Army Corps of Engineers to build an underground wall on the Egyptian side of the Philadelphi

Tunnels - the secret weapon for Hamas Troops may face street guerrillas equipped by a web of underground supply lines

Corridor. The Americans are said to have agreed in principle although it is unclear whether the Egyptians had also given the green light.

Jerusalem's demand that there should be stringent checks carried out by an international force to monitor any ceasefire shows the Israeli anxiety about the underground routes being reopened. For the moment, the Israelis are trying to destroy the network with pulverising bunker-busting bombs acquired from the US. Nicholas Pelham, an analyst with the International Crisis Group, said closing the tunnels permanently would be a major and lengthy undertaking. "Without occupying a fairly broad stretch of territory, it is hard to see how you can maintain the closure of the tunnels long-term," he said.

The more immediate concern for Israel is how **Hamas**'s armed wing, the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, have used the tunnels to prepare for battle. The militia is said to have sent thousands of members for training to Iran and Lebanon, where they have drawn on the tactics used successfully by Hizbollah against the Israelis in 2006.

According to one **Hamas** commander, one of the lessons learnt is to reduce the risk of taking return fire by not detonating missiles on site. Fighters "dig tunnels and use lengths of detonation wire so they can launch missiles from a distance. So we lose a tube or a firing frame worth \$10, not soldiers".

Abu Bilal, a commander of Islamic Jihad, which operates independently from **Hamas** in Gaza, acknowledged the rocket attacks have been psychologically damaging for Israelis but have little military impact. "We can't do anything but fire the rockets and hope they enter Gaza," he said. "We are praying for the tanks to come so we can show them new things. All our fighters wait for the chance to kill them."

Hamas's weaponry includes Qassam missiles, mainly manufactured within Gaza, and Chinese copies of Russian-made Grads smuggled from across the border along with mortars, rocket-propelled grenade launchers, heavy calibre machine guns, mines and improvised devices. **Hamas** also inherited a stockpile of US-made small arms and ammunition abandoned by the rival Fatah movement when its fighters were driven out of Gaza in 2007.

Hamas has also upgraded its military structure with five brigades under separate commanders who report to Izz al-Din al-Qassam chiefs but have also been trained to carry on as individual units when necessary.

The militant group has also been beefing up its propaganda offensive to try to take on the sophisticated Israeli machine. With journalists barred from Gaza by the Israeli military, the **Hamas** website - the Palestinian Information Center (PIC) - is the main weapon in getting its side of the story to the wider world. It pumps out reports of heavy casualties among invading Israelis, emotive accounts of Gaza civilians "eradicated", and vows to strike deeper and harder into enemy territory.

The website yesterday displayed the mobility of a guerrilla fighter. Saying PIC was under "violent and organised electronic attack", **Hamas** engineers deftly offered another web address "in case of the halting of the site". Israel disrupted **Hamas**'s al-Aqsa TV station, inserting a cartoon showing **Hamas** fighters being blown up coupled with an advisory "You won't succeed."

The website says Israel's ground operation amounts to "swimming in the blood of **women** and children". The PIC says **Hamas** is holding its own, inflicting at least 11 fatalities and dozens of injuries on Israeli troops. "The surprises are just beginning," it suggests. "Disciples ... are waiting for the Zionists with explosive belts" according to one article, while another spoke of the "Nazi occupation army".

What is **Hamas**? The origins and mission

* Who are they?

In Arabic, the word "**hamas**" means zeal, but it is also the Arabic acronym for the Islamic Resistance Movement. The group came into being in 1987 after the eruption of the first intifada.

* How is it organised?

Tunnels - the secret weapon for Hamas Troops may face street guerrillas equipped by a web of underground supply lines

The armed element, the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, carries out suicide bombings - the first was in 1993. The political wing, which romped to victory over Fatah in the 2006 elections, runs local government and services.

* Who are the key people?

The de facto prime minister of Hamas is Ismail Haniyeh. The group's overall leader, Khaled Meshal, lives in exile in Syria. He was poisoned by Israeli secret services in Jordan in 1997, but King Hussein forced Israel to send an antidote to save his life.

* What are Hamas's aims?

In the short term, Hamas wants to drive Israeli forces from the occupied territories. It is committed to the destruction of Israel and, in the long term, wants to establish an Islamic state on all of historic Palestine.

* How is Hamas viewed?

A 2007 Pew survey found that almost two-thirds of Palestinians had a favourable opinion of the group. Iran and Syria both support Hamas, while all other Arab countries formally back the Palestinian Authority led by Mahmoud Abbas. The US and the EU have branded Hamas a terrorist organisation, but have sought an easing of the Israeli blockade of Gaza.

Load-Date: January 5, 2009

Hamas overthrow not Israel's goal; Officials say the main aim of bombing Gaza is to end rocket attacks

The Vancouver Province (British Columbia)

December 31, 2008 Wednesday

Final Edition

Copyright 2008 The Vancouver Province, a division of CanWest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. C19

Length: 526 words

Byline: David Blair, The Daily Telegraph

Dateline: LONDON

Body

As Israel's assault on Gaza continues into the fifth day, much of Hamas's military machine remains intact, including about two-thirds of its entire stock of missiles.

A briefing for Israel's national security cabinet on Sunday assessed that Hamas "still has the ability to launch perhaps 100 rockets a day," according to Mark Regev, the official spokesman for Prime Minister Ehud Olmert. Of an arsenal of about 3,000 missiles in Gaza, Israeli reports suggest that some 2,000 remain.

But Israel's planners face a crucial problem -- they must achieve their military objective before the government succumbs to outside pressure to halt the offensive. The more ambitious their goal, the harder this will be.

Defence Minister Ehud Barak has raised expectations by pledging "all-out war" on Hamas to the "bitter end." This brand of fighting talk gives the impression that Israel's central aim is to topple Hamas from power in Gaza. If so, this would entail a full-scale invasion and probably a campaign lasting for months. If Hamas survived in power -- or returned to government after an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza -- the war would be deemed a failure.

So Israeli officials are carefully lowering expectations. Regev said that "regime change" was not Israel's goal and denied any intention to "reoccupy" Gaza. Instead, the campaign's only aim was to end the rocket attacks on southern Israel and bring a "sustainable situation of quiet." Just as Israel's northern border has been quiet for two years, despite the presence of Hizbollah in Lebanon, so the same can be done with Gaza.

Regev said this "peace and quiet" would be "based on deterrence and that will only be achieved if we continue to inflict painful and surgical blows on the Hamas military machine."

The crucial word here is "deterrence." Israel does not aim to destroy Hamas or overthrow its government in Gaza, nor even totally eliminate its ability to fire rockets. Instead, the aim is to drive home the cost of bombarding Israel. This campaign is designed to deprive Hamas of the will -- not necessarily the means -- to fire its missiles.

As war aims go, this is relatively modest. The question is whether Israel's armed forces will have enough time to achieve it. "A lot depends on what we do and how we do it. If we continue to be as surgical as possible, that gives us more time," said Regev.

Hamas overthrow not Israel 's goal; Officials say the main aim of bombing Gaza is to end rocket attacks

No one can say for certain how many civilians have been among the 360 Palestinians killed so far. About 60 were women or children. Scores of police officers have also been killed -- and many question how they can be called military targets.

If one attack kills a large number of civilians, the entire operation may become untenable, just as the deaths of 106 refugees under Israeli shellfire in Qana, southern Lebanon, forced the end of Operation Grapes of Wrath in 1996.

But whenever this does end, Hamas will probably still be in power in Gaza. Israel hopes the movement will then be deterred from launching any more rockets. Then it would declare victory. If, however, Hamas promptly fires another salvo, having become still more radical and won greater popular support, Israel's campaign will have failed.

Graphic

Photo: Jack Guez, Agence France-Presse; A rocket is fired from the northern Gaza Strip into Israel as seen from the Israeli-Gaza border yesterday. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said the bombardment of Hamas targets in Gaza so far was 'the first of several stages' approved by the Jewish state's security cabinet aimed at stopping the Hamas rocket attacks on Israel. ;

Load-Date: December 31, 2008

End of Document

**Hamas ends truce on Gaza border; Islamic group blames military moves
against group in ending truce**

The Times & Transcript (New Brunswick)

December 20, 2008 Saturday

Copyright 2008 The Times & Transcript. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. D4

Length: 612 words

Byline: THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Body

Hamas formally announced the end of its unwritten, often-breached truce with Israel yesterday, citing the ongoing Israeli blockade as well as military moves against the Islamic group.

The Israeli military said two rockets were fired into southern Israel yesterday morning and two more after sunset. It said troops guarding Israeli farmers in fields adjoining Gaza also came under sniper fire from across the border. No injuries were reported in any of the incidents.

In a statement posted on its website, **Hamas** said Israel had breached agreements by imposing a painful economic blockade on Gaza, staging military strikes into the densely populated coastal strip and continuing to hunt down **Hamas** operatives in the West Bank.

"Since the enemy did not abide with the conditions ... we hold the enemy fully responsible for ending the truce and we confirm that the Palestinian resistance factions headed by **Hamas** will act," the statement said.

There was no immediate Israeli comment about **Hamas**' announcement that it would not extend the ceasefire past its end yesterday.

Israel has said previously that the six-month-old truce, brokered by Egypt, didn't have an official expiration date and that the government was interested in prolonging "understandings" with **Hamas**.

In Washington, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was critical of **Hamas**' move.

"I sincerely hope that there will not be a resumption of the violence because that is not going to help the people of Gaza, it is not going to help the Palestinians, it is not going to help the Palestinian cause," she said.

Hamas seized control of the Gaza Strip in June 2007 from Fatah, a Palestinian faction favoured by Israel and the West. Israel does not officially have direct contacts **Hamas**, which it, the United States and several other list as a terrorist organization.

Though violence and casualties dropped significantly under the ceasefire agreement, the truce has increasingly unravelled since early November, when Israeli soldiers entered Gaza to destroy a tunnel it claimed could have been used in a cross-border raid.

In response, the Palestinians resumed firing rockets at Israel.

Hamas ends truce on Gaza border; Islamic group blames military moves against group in ending truce

On Thursday, Gaza militants fired 11 rockets and six mortar shells toward Israel and Israel staged at least two air strikes against rocket squads. The day before, at least 20 rockets were fired at Israel, wounding two people and causing property damage, the army and police said.

There were protests against the Gaza blockade in several Mideast states Friday.

In Lebanon, thousands of supporters of the militant group Hezbollah swarmed Beirut's southern suburbs, some chanting "Death to America" and "Israel is the enemy of Muslims."

In the southern city of Sidon, about 1,000 Hezbollah supporters staged a sit-in at the main square, halting traffic for about three hours.

About 3,000 Palestinian refugees in Syria joined a demonstration at the Sbeineh camp outside the capital, Damascus.

In the Persian Gulf island state of Bahrain, security forces clashed with thousands of protesters who were demanding that Arab governments take action to end the Gaza blockade.

Witnesses said a number of people, including women and children, were wounded by rubber bullets and others overcome by tear gas. An Interior Ministry spokesman, Maj. Mohamad Bin Dina, denied rubber bullets were used and said tear gas was fired when some demonstrators began destroying public property and throwing stones at police.

Meanwhile, an international group opposed to the Gaza blockade said one of its vessels left Cyprus carrying supplies for the Palestinian territory. The Free Gaza Group has made four previous boat trips to Gaza in defiance of the Israeli blockade.

Load-Date: December 20, 2008

'A time for fighting'; * I srael set to invade * Hundreds dead * Hamas vows revenge

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

December 29, 2008 Monday

Fourth Edition

Copyright 2008 John Fairfax Publications Pty Ltd All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; Pg. 1

Length: 936 words

Byline: JASON KOUTSOUKIS IN JERUSALEM

Body

ISRAELI troops massed along the border with Gaza before what could be a large-scale invasion of the tiny coastal strip, following attacks at the weekend that killed more than 280 Palestinians and wounded 800.

The Israeli Defence Minister, Ehud Barak, vowed the Israeli Defence Forces would expand and deepen their operations in Gaza "as much as necessary".

Israel faces the prospect of a return to suicide bombings within its borders as **Hamas** vowed to avenge weekend attacks against its forces in Gaza - home to 1.5 million Palestinians.

Israel launched the attacks as part of what it said was an attempt to defend itself against the hundreds of rockets launched by Gazan militants since the collapse of a ceasefire earlier this month, and create a "new security reality in the region".

Earlier Mr Barak said: "There is a time for calm and a time for fighting, and now the time has come to fight."

Yesterday the official death toll in Gaza stood at 282, according to Al-Jazeera television, with 800 people reported wounded.

Four people were killed yesterday when Israeli jets targeted a mosque near the main Shifa Hospital, which Israeli officials claimed was being used to store weapons, and the headquarters of the **Hamas**-run al-Aqsa Television was also hit.

Large numbers of armoured vehicles were making their way to the Gaza Strip in preparation for a ground assault as the chairman of Israel's Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee, Tzahi Hanegbi, said there was no way of avoiding a ground assault in order to meet the operation's objectives.

Israel has called up 6500 reservists and a Government spokesman said more would be called up in coming days.

In the bloodiest weekend of fighting since the 1967 Six Day War, 210 targets were struck in Operation Cast Lead, inflaming tensions across the Middle East.

'A time for fighting' * I srael set to invade * Hundreds dead * Hamas vows revenge

The United Nations Security Council met in emergency session yesterday in response to a request by the Arab League, which was likely to end with a call for both sides to cease hostilities.

The Arab League has scheduled a meeting for Wednesday in Cairo, and the Palestinian Authority President, Mahmoud Abbas, flew to Cairo yesterday for talks with the Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak.

Mr Barak rejected calls from the leaders of Russia, Egypt, the European Union and the US that it halt the attacks, telling Israeli Army Radio yesterday that Israel could not accept a ceasefire with Hamas.

He said it would be tantamount to the US accepting a ceasefire with al-Qaeda.

Despite the continued air attacks yesterday, Mr Barak allowed international relief organisations to send medical supplies into Gaza.

With Israelis set to go to the polls on February 10, Mr Barak was quick to appear not to use the offensive for political gain, announcing that he was suspending his election campaign.

The Foreign Minister, Tzipi Livni, who is leader of the ruling Kadima Party, and the Opposition Leader, Benjamin Netanyahu, both issued hawkish statements over the weekend backing the offensive.

In a news conference the Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, said Operation Cast Lead could last several weeks.

"The operation is intended first and foremost to bring about an improvement of the security reality of the residents of the south. It may take some time."

Israel said that most of the dead were Hamas operatives, but Palestinian sources said that at least 20 civilians had been killed, including several children.

The leader of the Hamas Government in Gaza, Ismail Haniyeh, said Palestine had never seen an uglier massacre.

"We say in all confidence that even if we are hung on the gallows or they make our blood flow in the streets or they tear our bodies apart, we will bow only before God and we will not abandon Palestine."

Speaking from Damascus, the Hamas political leader, Khaled Meshal, called on Palestinians to take up arms against Israel.

"This is the time for a third uprising," Mr Meshal told Al-Jazeera television, and called for a resumption of suicide attacks within Israel for the first time since 2005.

Israel intelligence estimates suggest that Hamas has a significant stockpile of weapons including longer range Katyusha and Grad-style rockets capable of striking deeper into Israel.

Hamas launched more than 100 rockets in response to the raids, one of which killed a 58-year-old man near Netivot.

Speaking from Gaza, a Palestinian journalist, Safwat Kahlout, described a scene of horror.

"I have never seen anything like this. So many bodies, so much blood. The attacks have not stopped for 24 hours, just wave after wave of strikes. It is totally horrifying."

Some of the missiles struck densely populated areas as students were leaving school, and women rushed into the streets frantically looking for their children.

"My son is gone, my son is gone," wailed Said Masri, 57, a shopkeeper, as he sat in the middle of a Gaza City street, slapping his face and covering his head with dust from a bombed-out security compound nearby.

In Gaza City's main security compound, bodies of more than a dozen uniformed Hamas police lay on the ground.

'A time for fighting' * I srael set to invade * Hundreds dead * Hamas vows revenge

Civilians rushed people in cars and vans to hospitals because there were not enough ambulances to transport all the dead and wounded.

The US put the onus on the Islamic militants. "**Hamas**'s rocket attacks into Israel must cease if the violence is to stop," said a White House spokesman, Gordon Johndroe.

In Australia the acting Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, called on **Hamas** to stop firing on targets in Israel and urged Israeli authorities to avoid harming civilians in Gaza.

Israel's air strikes were a response to an "act of aggression" by **Hamas**, which had broken the ceasefire, she said.

Graphic

THREE PHOTOS: An injured Palestinian child waits for help at a Gaza City hospital. More than 280 Palestinians were killed and 800 wounded in the Israeli air strikes . Photo: Getty Images/Abid Katib; Smoke billows from the **Hamas** security centre. Photo: Reuters/Suhaib Salem; Rumbings of war . . . Israeli soldiers prepare their tanks near the Sufa crossing between Israel and Gaza. Photo: Getty Images/Uriel Sinai

Load-Date: December 28, 2008

Hamas martyrs fight to recover land lost to Israel; Iranian trainers may have transformed Gaza militants into potent force

Edmonton Journal (Alberta)

January 6, 2009 Tuesday

Final Edition

Copyright 2009 Edmonton Journal, a division of Canwest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A4

Length: 348 words

Byline: Tim Butcher, Daily Telegraph

Dateline: ON ISRAEL-GAZA BORDER

Body

Hamas has up to 20,000 armed men under its command divided between its armed wing, known as the Izzedine Al-Qassam brigades, and paramilitary police, commonly known as Executive Force.

Unlike al-Qaida and its acolytes that work on an ideology of holy war or jihad, the Islam-fuelled militancy of **Hamas** is more focused on recovering land lost to Israel.

Foot soldiers show little fear of death and the group's ideology conveys great respect on what it calls "shaheed" or martyrs, who die for the cause.

There are a smattering of **women** in the police force, but the rest of the police and all members of the armed wing are men. They each carry a Kalashnikov assault rifle and have access to a modest stock of weapons including 4,000 rocket propelled grenades, hundreds of heavy machine-guns and a stock of about 120 tonnes of high explosive.

They have a range of mortars and about 15 BRDM-2 armoured personnel carriers.

But perhaps their most potent weapon is their stock of rockets with which they attack Israel. As well as Qassams -- rockets made mostly in workshops in Gaza -- they have longer range Katyusha and Grad rockets.

The quality of the troops is questionable. In the early days after the founding of **Hamas** on Dec. 14, 1987, the Izzedine al-Qassam brigades evolved to fight not just Israel but other rival Palestinian factions.

Members of Izzedine were entirely self-taught and their fighting ability was limited.

But when **Hamas** was elected to power in January 2006, its leaders moved to create a police force from scratch.

In May 2006, the Executive Force was born and overnight, "police," with black uniforms and hats and carrying Kalashnikovs, appeared manning road junctions in the centre of Gaza City.

It soon matured, earning its stripes in June 2007 when it secured **Hamas** rule over Gaza.

Hamas martyrs fight to recover land lost to Israel ; Iranian trainers may have transformed Gaza militants into potent force

Around this period, a crucial change took place as senior **Hamas** security figures visited Iran for military training.

The worry was the Iranian trainers would have transformed **Hamas** into a potent fighting force.

Israeli troops are currently learning first-hand the extent to which this might be true.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Reuters; Smoke billows from fires raging on the edge of Gaza City after a day of heavy clashes between **Hamas** fighters and Israeli forces on Monday. Israel fended off worldwide calls for a ceasefire as the Palestinian death toll rose to 550. ;

Load-Date: March 20, 2009

End of Document

Israel to 'deepen' Hamas bombing blitz; Set to deploy ground forces if necessary as 6,500 reservists called up

Ottawa Citizen

December 29, 2008 Monday

Final Edition

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

Section: NEWS; Pg. A1

Length: 1289 words

Byline: Ashraf Khalil and Rushdi abu Alouf, The Los Angeles Times; with files from Agence France-Presse; Reuters; Canwest News Service and The Ottawa Citizen

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Israeli warplanes expanded their assault yesterday on the Gaza Strip, launching missile strikes on the network of tunnels to Egypt that serve as a vital lifeline for the besieged enclave.

Other airstrikes targeted a large prison in downtown Gaza City and vehicles that the Israelis said were carrying Palestinian militants.

Israel also destroyed a laboratory building at the Islamic University in Gaza, a significant cultural symbol, **Hamas** said. Israel has accused **Hamas** of using the facilities to develop explosives.

Dozens of tanks and personnel carriers idled at several points near the border after Israel warned it could launch a ground offensive in addition to its massive air blitz.

Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak vowed to "expand and deepen" the bombing blitz, unleashed in retaliation for persistent rocket fire by militant groups. "If it's necessary to deploy ground forces to defend our citizens, we will do so," his spokesman quoted him as saying.

Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, who hopes to become prime minister after a Feb. 10 election, appeared to rule out a large-scale invasion to recapture the territory.

"Our goal is not to reoccupy Gaza Strip," she said on NBC's Meet the Press. Asked on Fox News if Israel was out to topple Gaza's **Hamas** rulers, Ms. Livni replied: "Not now."

Israel's cabinet gave the green light to call up 6,500 reserve soldiers, a senior official told reporters.

Fighters from **Hamas** and other factions launched at least 30 rockets toward southern Israel, according to the Israeli army. That was less than half the number of projectiles launched Saturday as **Hamas** struck back after Israel began its assault.

Israel to 'deepen' Hamas bombing blitz; Set to deploy ground forces if necessary as 6,500 reservists called up

Israeli army Chief of Staff Gabi Ashkenazi reportedly told the cabinet yesterday that 50 per cent of Hamas's rocket-launching capabilities had been destroyed. However, two of the Gazan rockets reached deeper into Israel than previously reported, landing near the coastal city of Ashdod, which is about 30 kilometres north of Gaza.

No serious injuries were reported.

Military spokesman Avi Benayahu said Hamas had not yet responded as strongly as expected, possibly because it was "trying to recover from the blows," but that "it is too soon to eulogize" it.

Hamas accused Israel of "committing a holocaust as the whole world watches and doesn't lift a finger to stop it."

Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhum said it "reserves the right to hit back at this aggression with martyr operations," meaning suicide bombings of the sort that Hamas has not carried out inside Israel since January 2005.

As darkness fell, the situation on Gaza's southern border with Egypt was chaotic. Egyptian border police traded sporadic gunfire with armed men amid reports that a large group of Gazans had tried to breach the border fence that Egypt has kept sealed for more than a year. One Palestinian and one Egyptian border police officer were killed by gunfire.

"About 100 to 150 Palestinians jumped over the border fence to the Egyptian side," said Ahmed Radwan, speaking on the phone from the town of Rafah in southern Gaza. "They are about 300 metres into the Egyptian side, but have been prevented by Egyptian forces from going any further."

The two-day death toll in Gaza climbed to 298, with Palestinian medical officials saying that one-third of the victims were civilians, a statement that could not be confirmed. An estimated 900 people had been injured.

Hamas said 180 of its members were killed and the rest included civilians, among them 16 women and some children.

The International Red Cross said hospitals in the Gaza Strip were overwhelmed and unable to cope.

Ms. Livni said Israel was trying to "target only terrorists and Hamas headquarters. ... But, unfortunately, in a war ... sometimes also civilians pay the price."

The bloodshed, presented in grisly detail by Arab satellite TV, roiled the Arab world, triggering protests in several Arab capitals and in Europe, and incensed Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and in Israel.

In Canada, hundreds of Palestinian-Canadians and their supporters took to the streets in Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa yesterday to protest the Israeli attacks and to urge Prime Minister Stephen Harper to call for a ceasefire in the region.

In Ottawa, about 150 people demonstrated at the Human Rights Monument at the corner of Elgin and Lisgar streets.

About 1,400 people marched in Paris. The demonstrators denounced the Israeli military operation, carrying signs with slogans such as "Stop the massacre of innocents."

In London, police made 10 arrests after a protest outside the Israeli Embassy involving approximately 700 people turned violent.

Ms. Livni urged the international community to put the blame squarely on Hamas.

"I expect the international community, including the entire Arab world, to send a clear message to Hamas: 'It is your fault. It's your responsibility. You're the one who's being condemned'," she said on NBC.

Egypt, which brokered a six-month truce between Israel and Hamas that expired on Dec. 19, said it was trying to negotiate a new ceasefire.

Israel to 'deepen' Hamas bombing blitz; Set to deploy ground forces if necessary as 6,500 reservists called up

And the UN envoy to the Middle East, Robert Serry, called for a new truce with international backing, saying that there was no military solution.

But a senior Israeli official insisted: "We have our goals and our timetable, and we don't seek mediation."

Meanwhile, tension was high across Israel, Global News correspondent Lauren McNabb said yesterday as she remarked on an increased police presence in Jerusalem. She said a major highway leading out of Jerusalem was temporarily shut out of fears of an "imminent terrorist threat."

People in Jerusalem were talking about the military operation with a mixture of sadness and awe, with many pondering "what now?"

But closer to Gaza, Israelis expressed relief that the airstrikes would perhaps bring an end to the shelling of Israeli homes.

Outgoing Prime Minister Ehud Olmert told his cabinet yesterday the operation was necessary "in order to restore normal life and quiet to residents of the south (of Israel) who, for many years, have suffered from unceasing rocket and mortar fire and terrorism designed to disrupt their lives."

Hamas won Palestinian parliamentary elections in January 2006, but was shunned by Israel and all western powers for its refusal to formally accept the Jewish state's right to exist. The terrorist group took full control of Gaza in clashes with the rival Fatah faction after a unity government collapsed in summer 2007. Fatah's Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian Authority president, now controls only the West Bank.

Israel withdrew its troops and settlers from Gaza in 2005. Since then, **Hamas** and other groups have routinely launched rockets and mortar shells toward southern Israeli towns.

Yesterday, Mr. Abbas blamed **Hamas** for bringing this carnage onto itself -- and the enclave's 1.5 million residents.

"We contacted **Hamas** and spoke to them bluntly," Mr. Abbas said during a visit to Cairo, the Egyptian capital. "We pleaded, 'Please do not end the ceasefire'."

Gazans yesterday began digging through the rubble left by the airstrikes and continuing to bury their dead.

In the central Gaza town of Deir al Balah, residents held a communal funeral for 17 residents killed in the air attacks.

"This is something we never even dreamed of," said a Gazan who only gave his first name, Sameh. "We expected an Israeli retaliation, but not like this."

Deir al Balah resident Hakeem abu Mansi, a 31-year-old farmer, and his six-year-old son, Uday, were riding on a donkey cart carrying vegetables when an Israeli missile struck nearby and killed them.

Mr. Abu Mansi's cousin, Nael, described his relative as an illiterate and apolitical farmer. "He didn't know anything in life but his donkey and the vegetables he grew in a rented lot," Nael said.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Ibraheem Abu Mustafa, Reuters; A **Hamas** police officer shouts as a building burns following an Israeli airstrike in the Gaza Strip yesterday. Israeli military spokesman Avi Benayahu said the offensive could 'take many days.' ;

Israel to 'deepen' Hamas bombing blitz; Set to deploy ground forces if necessary as 6,500 reservists called up

Load-Date: December 29, 2008

End of Document

Hamas calls for new intifada as Israeli air strikes kill 229; Bloodiest day in 60-year history of Mideast conflict

The Calgary Herald (Alberta)

December 28, 2008 Sunday

Final Edition

Copyright 2008 The Calgary Herald, a division of Canwest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A3

Length: 903 words

Byline: Nidal Al-Mughrabi, Reuters

Dateline: GAZA

Body

Israeli warplanes pounded the **Hamas**-ruled Gaza Strip on Saturday, killing at least 229 people in one of the bloodiest days for the Palestinians in 60 years of conflict with the Jewish state.

Hamas vowed revenge, including suicide bomb attacks in the "cafes and streets" of Israel, as Israeli air strikes continued late into the night. Israel said the offensive would continue as long as necessary and it may also involve land forces.

Officials said the strikes were in response to the almost daily "intolerable" rocket and mortar fire out of Gaza, which intensified after **Hamas** ended a six-month ceasefire a week ago.

The rockets caused few injuries but Israeli leaders were under pressure to stop the attacks ahead of a Feb. 10 election the right-wing opposition Likud Party may win, according to opinion polls.

On Saturday, an Israeli man was killed by one of 70 rockets fired after the Israeli offensive began, while four others were injured.

"There is a time for calm and a time for fighting, and now the time has come to fight," Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak said in a televised statement. He later ruled out any new truce with **Hamas**, which has been listed as a terrorist organization by Canada, the U. S., the European Union and other western nations.

Outgoing Prime Minister Ehud Olmert warned, "It may take time, and each and every one of us must be patient so we can complete the mission."

Israel Radio said Israeli infantry and armoured forces were reinforced along the border with Gaza after the attacks.

Hamas leader in Gaza, Ismail Haniyeh, said, "Palestine has never seen an uglier massacre," while in Damascus, exiled **Hamas** leader Khaled Meshaal called for a new Palestinian people's uprising, or intifada, against Israel.

"We will not leave our land, we will not raise white flags and we will not kneel except before God," Haniyeh said.

Hamas calls for new intifada as Israeli air strikes kill 229; Bloodiest day in 60-year history of Mideast conflict

Black smoke billowed over Gaza City, where the dead and wounded lay on the ground after Israel bombed more than 40 security compounds, including two where Hamas was hosting graduation ceremonies for new recruits.

More than 700 Palestinians were wounded in all, medics said.

Israel said the operation, dubbed "Solid Lead," targeted "terrorist infrastructure" following days of rocket attacks on south-ern Israel. Army officials said Hamas leaders could also be targeted.

A series of air strikes were launched after darkness fell. Israel telephoned some Palestinians to warn them their homes were targeted and they should leave to avoid being killed. In at least one instance, a home was bombed after the occupants left.

Two Palestinians were killed when a mosque was bombed in Gaza City, Hamas officials and medics said. Israeli military officials said the mosque was used for "terrorist activities" and that, while Israel sought to avoid attacking religious institutions, "anyone responsible for attacks (on Israel) will not find refuge in any facility."

The official said Hamas rockets hit Israeli houses of worship as well, including one on Saturday that damaged a synagogue.

Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, a leading candidate to become Israel's next prime minister, called for international support against "an extremist Islamist organization . . . that is being supported by Iran."

Israel instructed hundreds of thousands of Israelis living up to 30 kilometres from the Gaza border to remain in "safe areas" indoors in case of retaliatory rocket fire.

Backing Israel, the administration of U. S. President George W. Bush, in its final weeks in office, put the onus on Hamas to prevent a further escalation.

"The United States . . . holds Hamas responsible for breaking the ceasefire and for the renewal of violence in Gaza," U. S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said in a statement. "The ceasefire should be restored immediately."

The United Nations and the European Union, in contrast, simply called for an immediate halt to all violence.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said the Israeli air campaign was "criminal" and urged world powers to intervene.

Egypt said it would keep trying to restore the truce.

Saturday's death toll was the highest for a single day in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since 1948, when the Jewish state was established.

"I call upon you to carry out a third intifada," Hamas leader Meshaal said on Al-Jazeera television. The first Palestinian intifada began in 1987 and the second in 2000 after peace talks failed.

Hamas estimated at least 100 members of its security forces were killed, including police chief Tawfiq Jabber and the head of Hamas's security and protection unit, along with at least 15 women and some children.

The Islamist group, which won a 2006 parliamentary election but was shunned by western powers over its refusal to renounce violence and recognize Israel, said all of its security compounds in the Gaza Strip were destroyed or seriously damaged.

Aid groups said they feared the Israeli operation could fuel a humanitarian crisis in the impoverished coastal enclave, home to 1.5 million Palestinians, half of them dependent on food aid.

Gaza hospitals said they were running out of medical supplies because of the Israeli-led blockade. Israel said it would let 10 trucks into Gaza with vital medical supplies and flour today, a Palestinian official said.

Hamas calls for new intifada as Israeli air strikes kill 229; Bloodiest day in 60-year history of Mideast conflict

Israeli analyst Ron Ben-Yishai said the strike was "shock treatment . . . aimed at securing a long-term ceasefire between **Hamas** and Israel on terms that are favourable to Israel."

Graphic

Photo: Mahmoud Hams, AFP-Getty Images; Palestinian men walk over the ruins of destroyed **hamas** offices following israeli air strikes in gaza City on saturday. at least 229 Palestinians were killed. ;

Photo: Ammar Awad, Reuters; Palestinians throw stones at israeli border guards in arab east Jerusalem in protest of the israeli air strikes in gaza. ;

Photo: Abid Katib, Getty Images; A wounded child awaits medical attention at a hospital in Gaza City. as Israel bombed Gazan targets, **Hamas** gunmen fired 70 rockets at Israeli towns. ;

Load-Date: December 28, 2008

Israel devastates Hamas targets Raids strike next to premier's home, level university building. 3-day death toll at 364.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

December 30, 2008 Tuesday

THIRD EDITION

Copyright 2008 St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A1

Length: 805 words

Byline: By Ibrahim Barzak and Matti Friedman The Associated Press Zeina Karam of The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip - Israel obliterated symbols of **Hamas** power on the third day of what the defense minister described Monday as a "war to the bitter end," striking next to the **Hamas** premier's home, and devastating a security compound and a university building.

The three-day death toll rose to 364 on Monday, with some 1,400 reported wounded, according to Palestinian medical officials. The U.N. said at least 62 of the dead were civilians, and medics said eight children under the age of 17 were killed in two strikes overnight.

Israel launched its campaign, the deadliest against Palestinians in decades, on Saturday in retaliation for rocket fire aimed at civilians in southern Israeli towns.

Since then, the number of Israeli troops on the Gaza border has doubled and the Cabinet approved the call-up of 6,500 reserve soldiers.

The strikes have driven **Hamas** leaders into hiding and appear to have gravely damaged the organization's ability to launch rockets, but barrages continued.

One medium-range rocket fired at the Israeli city of

Ashkelon killed an Arab

construction worker there Monday and wounded several others. He was the second Israeli killed since the beginning of the offensive.

On Sunday, **Hamas** missiles struck for the first time near the city of Ashdod, only 25 miles from Israel's heart in Tel Aviv. **Hamas** leaders also have threatened to renew suicide attacks inside Israel. A missile from Gaza struck Ashdod again on Monday, seriously wounding two people.

Palestinian health officials said one Israeli airstrike early Monday killed four Islamic Jihad militants and a child.

Israel devastates Hamas targets Raids strike next to premier's home, level university building. 3-day death toll at 364.

On Monday, the White House released a statement saying that "in order for the violence to stop, Hamas must stop firing rockets into Israel and agree to respect a sustainable and durable cease-fire."

But in Damascus, Syria, a senior exiled Hamas official said there could be no talk of a truce with Israel until the assault ended and Israel reopened the Gaza crossings.

"We need our liberty, we need our freedom, and we need to be independent," the official, Abu Marzouk, said in an English-language interview. "If we don't accomplish this objective, then we have to resist. This is our right."

A six-month truce between Hamas and Israel expired earlier this month, but Hamas refused to extend it, saying Israel had violated its terms.

Civilian deaths

Most of those killed since Saturday were members of Hamas security forces, though the precise numbers remain unclear. A Hamas police spokesman, Ehab Ghussen, said 180 members of the Hamas security forces were among the dead. The reported civilian casualties could intensify international pressure on Israel to end the offensive.

Ehud Barak, the Israeli defense minister, told parliament Israel was not fighting the residents of Gaza. "But we have a war to the bitter end against Hamas and its branches," he said. Barak said that the goal was to deal Hamas a "severe blow" and that the operation would be "widened and deepened as needed."

Israel's intense bombings - more than 300 airstrikes since midday Saturday - reduced dozens of buildings to rubble. The military said naval vessels also bombarded targets from the sea.

At the United Nations, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon again condemned Israel's use of force as excessive and called for an immediate cease-fire.

One Israeli strike destroyed a five-story building in the women's wing at Islamic University, one of the most prominent Hamas symbols in Gaza. Other attacks ravaged a compound controlled by Preventive Security, one of the group's chief security arms, and destroyed a house next to the residence of Ismail Haniyeh, the Hamas prime minister.

Late Sunday, Israeli aircraft attacked a building in the Jebaliya refugee camp next to Gaza City, killing five children and teenagers under age 17 from the same family, Gaza Health Ministry official Dr. Moaiya Hassanain said. In the southern town of Rafah, a toddler and his two teenage brothers were killed in an airstrike aimed at a Hamas commander, Hassanain said. In Gaza City, another attack killed two women.

Gaza's nine hospitals were overwhelmed. Hassanain, who keeps a record for the Gaza Health Ministry, said that some of the more than 1,400 wounded were now being taken to private clinics and even homes.

In Israel, 17 people have been killed in attacks from Gaza since the beginning of the year, including nine civilians - six of them killed by rockets - and eight soldiers, according to Israel's Foreign Ministry.

Protest in Lebanon

In Lebanon, on Monday, tens of thousands of Hezbollah supporters stood in pouring rain to protest Israel's air assault on the Gaza Strip.

The demonstrators thronged a huge square and nearby streets in the militant group's stronghold south of Beirut, carrying Palestinian, Lebanese and yellow Hezbollah flags and banners supporting the Palestinian people.

Graphic

Israel devastates Hamas targets Raids strike next to premier's home, level university building. 3-day death toll at 364.

PHOTO - An Israeli police officer comforts a woman after a rocket fired by Palestinian militants in Gaza hit the southern Israeli town of Sderot on Monday. Ariel Schalit | The Associated Press PHOTO - Samera Baalusha (right) carries her surviving child Mohamad, 15 months, while crying over the body of her daughter Jawaher Baalusha, 4, during a funeral held Monday with relatives in Jabalia, Gaza Strip. Jawaher and four of her sisters were killed during an Israeli air raid while they were sleeping together in their bedroom. Getty Images

Load-Date: December 30, 2008

End of Document

Jewish and Arab MKs trade volleys in Knesset. Barak: 'All-out war' on Hamas; Tibi slams 'rivers of blood'

The Jerusalem Post

December 30, 2008 Tuesday

Copyright 2008 The Jerusalem Post All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 3

Length: 599 words

Byline: GIL HOFFMAN, Shalhevet Zohar contributed to this report

Body

Some 200 kilometers away from the Gaza Strip, the Knesset became a battleground on Monday between Jewish MKs, who unanimously supported the IDF operation there, and Arab MKs, who united against it.

The Knesset endorsed the assault after Arab MKs failed to pass a proposal calling for an immediate cease-fire. Balad MKs boycotted the session while other Arab MKs took turns heckling Defense Minister Ehud Barak, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and opposition leader Binyamin Netanyahu.

United Arab List MK Taleb A-Sanaa was removed from the plenum when he responded to Barak's claim that 300 terrorists had been killed since the fighting began by shouting, "Tell the Knesset how many of them were women and children."

"The panicking in Sderot was unfortunate, but who said the reaction had to be rivers of blood in Gaza?" Ta'al MK Ahmed Tibi said in his speech from the Knesset podium. "I am against harming any citizen. But I admit that when Arabs - people of my nationality - are harmed, it hurts me more." Tibi accused the Jewish politicians who spoke before him of "counting bodies while they count mandates."

Hadash MK Muhammad Barakei added that he was in his one and only homeland, while the Jewish MKs had other homelands to return to.

Israel Beiteinu leader Avigdor Lieberman called the Arab MKs traitors and a "fifth column for the Hamas."

Netanyahu called on all citizens of Israel, Arab and Jewish, to "remain loyal to the state of Israel during this just war against our enemy."

"We stand united in this war," Netanyahu said. "Not every citizen must automatically support every move the government makes, but it is unacceptable for Israeli citizens to support our enemies."

The opposition leader urged Israeli Arabs to condemn fundamentalism in their communities, and said that Israel would act forcefully against Israeli Hamas supporters.

Barak said that Israel would expand its military operation in the Gaza Strip until all its goals were achieved. Barak added that the IDF was targeting Hamas leadership and its allies in Gaza, asserting that the operation would be "all-out war."

Jewish and Arab MKs trade volleys in Knesset. Barak: 'All-out war' on Hamas; Tibi slams 'rivers of blood'

"This operation will be extended and deepened as we find necessary," Barak said. "Our goal is to strike Hamas and stop the attacks on Israel. Hamas controls Gaza and is responsible for everything happening there and for all attacks carried out from within the Strip. The goals of this operation are to stop Hamas from attacking our citizens and soldiers."

Barak said that Israel was making great efforts to prevent civilian casualties while it fights the Hamas leadership and was not preventing humanitarian aid from entering the Gaza Strip. He said he was not sorry for Israel's restraint in previous months and noted that Operation Cast Lead had been planned by the security establishment long ago.

Livni, who spoke after Barak, said the battle was not between Jews and Arabs but between moderates seeking peace and those who support Hamas terrorism. She called upon Arab leaders in Israel to choose a side in that conflict.

"Hamas is an Islamic extremist group that does not serve its people but only itself," Livni said. "It's a terrorist organization funded and trained by Iran. I will not accept any equation between the Hamas that tries to kill children and Israel that defends itself while doing everything possible to prevent harming children."

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert asked Knesset Speaker Dalia Itzik to cancel the special session of the Knesset and he boycotted it when she decided otherwise. Itzik said she saw no reason not to hold a debate in the Knesset when it was going on in the press in any case.

Graphic

2 Photos: Ehud Barak. Ahmed Tibi (Credit: Ariel Jerozolimski/The Jerusalem Post)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

UN ceasefire proposal proves futile; Israel, Hamas reject ceasefire as major new offensive begins

Ottawa Citizen

January 10, 2009 Saturday

Final Edition

Copyright 2009 Ottawa Citizen, a division of CanWest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A9

Length: 553 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, Canwest News Service, with files From Agence France-Presse; And Reuters

Dateline: SDEROT, Israel

Body

A major new Israeli ground offensive in Gaza was still being contemplated yesterday after Israel and **Hamas** rejected a ceasefire call by the United Nations Security Council and continued shooting at each other.

After his war cabinet dismissed the non-binding UN resolution, which passed 14-0 in New York on Thursday with the U.S. abstaining, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said in a statement that his army, air force and navy "would continue operations" against the Palestinian territory.

It was not made public after the cabinet meeting whether Mr. Olmert's war cabinet had voted on or approved a plan to broaden the war by sending more ground troops into Gaza. Thousands of reservists were placed on alert in case such an escalation gets the green light.

Referring to more than 30 rockets and mortars that were fired into southern Israel yesterday, Mr. Olmert said this "proves" the motion was "not practical and will not be honoured in actual fact by the Palestinian murder organizations."

UN chief Ban Ki-moon called Mr. Olmert yesterday to express his disappointment over Israel's defiance of the Security Council's call for an immediate ceasefire.

Mr. Ban "is obviously concerned that the violence is continuing, despite yesterday's resolution, and hopes it will come to a stop very soon," said spokeswoman, Michele Montas.

"The (Security) Council has clearly said what should happen and the parties should comply. There needs to be an immediate, durable and fully respected ceasefire leading to the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza," Ms. Montas quoted the UN chief as saying.

For its part **Hamas** also announced through three mid-ranking officials that it would ignore the move by the Security Council.

Raafat Morra, **Hamas**'s spokesman in Lebanon, said the resolution "does not suit us because it is not in the best interest of the Palestinian people."

UN ceasefire proposal proves futile; Israel , Hamas reject ceasefire as major new offensive begins

Israel has demanded an end to rocket attacks from Gaza. Hamas has, in turn, insisted that all Israeli forces quit the territory and that all its border crossings be reopened.

The UN resolution envisaged a ceasefire that would result in the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza and an unhindered flow of humanitarian aid shipments to the Palestinians, as demanded by Hamas and an end to all rocket attacks and to the smuggling of arms into the territory from Egypt.

After meetings in Tel Aviv yesterday, the UN announced it would reopen humanitarian corridors in Gaza in the near future after receiving fresh assurances of safe passage from Israel for its workers and vehicles. Aid deliveries had been suspended on Thursday after two truck drivers were killed by what the UN said was an Israeli tank attack.

Against most expectations, demonstrations against the Israeli offensive in the West Bank had been fairly muted until yesterday when thousands of worshippers left Friday prayers across the larger and more prosperous of the two Palestinian territories. However, the protests were marred by clashes between supporters of Hamas and Fatah, which continues to run the West Bank.

The death toll in Gaza since fighting began on Dec. 27 has surpassed 800, with women and children making up about 40 per cent of the dead, according to health officials in the enclave. Ten Israeli soldiers have died in the fighting, while three citizens have also been killed.

Graphic

Photo: Saif Dahlah, AFP/Getty Images; Palestinians throw stones at Israeli soldiers during clashes in the West Bank yesterday after Hamas had called for a 'day of wrath' protesting the bombardment of Gaza. ;

Load-Date: January 10, 2009

Israel weighing brief cease-fire; Under deal, Hamas would halt rocket fire and aid would flow

The International Herald Tribune

December 31, 2008 Wednesday

Copyright 2008 International Herald Tribune All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 976 words

Byline: Ethan Bronner and Taghreed el-Khodary - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

With their air attacks on Gaza heading into a fifth day, their gunboats gathering near the Gaza port and their ground forces poised for imminent action, Israeli officials said Tuesday that they were considering a French proposal for a 48-hour cease-fire that would require Hamas to stop its rocket fire.

The idea was in an early stage, the result of a conversation between Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner of France and Defense Minister Ehud Barak of Israel for a break that would at least assure humanitarian relief to the besieged coastal strip. But aides to Barak said he was interested in exploring it and would do so with Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and the rest of the cabinet the coming day.

"The leading option right now is still a ground invasion, but the target of this operation is an improved cease-fire and if that can come without the invasion, fine," a close aide to Barak said, requesting anonymity since he was not his authorized spokesman. "But of course Hamas has to agree and there has to be a mechanism to make it work."

Most of the talk Tuesday, however, was of an expanding military operation. The air force said its warplanes had attacked smuggler tunnels in southern Gaza and had destroyed the home of a top militant leader.

Olmert told President Shimon Peres that the airstrikes were the first of several planned phases, said spokesmen for both officials, though it was also clear that the number of targets available from the air was dwindling, making the likelihood of a ground offensive greater.

In Gaza, Hamas militants issued a tape-recorded statement vowing revenge for the more than 370 Palestinians killed since Saturday, including more than 70 civilians, and warning that a ground invasion would prove painful for the Israel.

Two sisters, aged 4 and 11, were killed in a strike in the north as concern was growing around the world that the assault was taking a terrible toll on civilians.

"It would be easier to dry the sea of Gaza than to defeat the resistance and uproot Hamas, which is in every house of Gaza," said the statement from the military wing of Hamas.

The statement was played on Hamas's television station, which had been shut down by an Israeli missile hit but went back into action by broadcasting from a mobile van.

Israel weighing brief cease-fire Under deal, Hamas would halt rocket fire and aid would flow

It added that if there was a ground invasion, "the children of Gaza will be collecting the body parts of your soldiers and the ruins of tanks."

Hamas continued to fire longer-range rockets at Israel, shooting deep into the city of Ashdod for a second day, as well as northeast into the town of Kiryat Malachi, and straight inland into the outskirts of Beersheba. There were no reports of serious injuries and the number of rockets was down to about 35, a day after three Israelis were killed after 70 rockets and mortars were fired.

Israeli warplanes, returning repeatedly to the same section of Gaza City overnight, pummeled the main government complex with about 17 missiles, locals said. The building had been evacuated since the start of the operation Saturday, which also hit nearly all the group's security facilities, its university and other symbols of sovereignty and power.

The Nakhala family, who live in a building next to the compound, were inspecting the damage Tuesday morning and recounting the panic they felt as the 17 missiles hit.

"We have no shelters in Gaza," lamented the father, Osama Nakhala. "Where shall we go? I also have to worry about my mother who is 80 years old and paralyzed."

His 13-year-old son Yousef was with him, and when asked his view of the situation, he took an unusual stand for Gaza, where Israel is being cursed by most everyone. He said, "I blame **Hamas**. It doesn't want to recognize Israel. If they did so there could be peace. Egypt made a peace treaty with Israel and nothing is happening to them."

His brother Amjad, 16, disagreed and blamed Mahmoud Abbas, president of the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, saying he had sided with Israel.

Gaza was entirely without electricity for the first time, the result of an air attack that hit the system's infrastructure. Repairmen said they were afraid to work because more raids might come.

The few open bakeries and grocery stores had lines outside them as people tried to stock up. But essentials like diapers, baby food, bread, potatoes and fresh vegetables were in short supply, and do costlier than usual.

Israel sent in about 100 trucks with emergency food and medicine, the military reported.

At the Hassouna Bakery, about 100 men and 50 **women** waited in separate lines. Amal Altayan was telling others in the line that she kept her cellphone in her pocket so that if an Israeli missile destroyed her house she would be able to phone for help. The other **women** yelled at her, saying if a missile hit her house, she would be helpless.

Showing familiarity with the kind of information one needs to survive in Gaza these days, Altayan replied, "It depends. If it is an F-16, I will turn into biscuits, but if it is an Apache, I may have a chance."

Israeli says its offensive, which began Saturday, was designed to neutralize the threat posed to southern Israel by **Hamas** rockets.

The military has created a three-kilometer, or two-mile, cordon along the Gaza border, with commanders saying that a ground-force invasion was a distinct possibility, but that no decision had been reached.

Israel has defined its aims relatively narrowly - the crippling of **Hamas**'s ability to send rockets into Israel - but has not made clear if it intends to topple the leadership of **Hamas**, which Israel and the United States have labeled a terrorist organization.

Hamas sought to cast its fighters as martyrs in a continuing battle against Israel, lone resisters in a Palestinian community divided between Gaza, where **Hamas** rules, and the West Bank, run by its rival, Fatah.

*

Taghreed el-Khodary reported from Gaza.

Israel weighing brief cease-fire Under deal, Hamas would halt rocket fire and aid would flow

Load-Date: January 6, 2009

End of Document

Israel, Hamas defy UN resolution; More fighting. UN says it will soon resume aid to Palestinians

The Gazette (Montreal)

January 10, 2009 Saturday

Final Edition

Copyright 2009 The Gazette, a division of CanWest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A4

Length: 507 words

Byline: MATTHEW FISHER, Canwest News Service

Dateline: SDEROT, Israel

Body

A major new Israeli ground offensive in Gaza was being contemplated yesterday after Israel and Hamas rejected a ceasefire call by the United Nations Security Council and continued shooting at each other.

After his war cabinet dismissed the non-binding UN resolution, which passed 14-0 in New York on Thursday with the U.S. abstaining, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said in a statement that his army, air force and navy "would continue operations" against the Palestinian territory.

It was not made public after the cabinet meeting whether Olmert's war cabinet had voted on or approved a plan to broaden the war by sending more ground troops into Gaza. Thousands of reservists were placed on alert in case such an escalation gets the green light.

Referring to more than 30 rockets and mortars that were fired into southern Israel from the narrow coastal strip yesterday, Olmert said this "proves" the UN motion was "not practical and will not be honoured in actual fact by the Palestinian murder organizations."

For its part, Hamas also announced through three mid-ranking officials that it would ignore the move by the Security Council. Hamas has ruled Gaza since staging a bloody coup against the Fatah movement in 2007.

Raafat Morra, Hamas's spokesman in Lebanon, told Agence France-Presse the resolution "does not suit us because it is not in the best interest of the Palestinian people."

Israel has demanded an end to rocket attacks from Gaza, while Hamas has insisted that all Israeli forces quit the territory and that all its border crossings be reopened.

The UN resolution envisaged a ceasefire that would result in the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza and an unhindered flow of humanitarian aid shipments to the Palestinians, as demanded by Hamas, and an end to all rocket attacks and to the smuggling of arms and ammunition into the territory from Egypt.

After night fell yesterday, Israel pressed its current offensive, firing salvos of phosphorus shells into Gaza. This created hazy conditions that may make it easier for its ground forces to operate safely.

Israel , Hamas defy UN resolution; More fighting. UN says it will soon resume aid to Palestinians

After meetings in Tel Aviv yesterday, the UN announced it would reopen humanitarian corridors in Gaza in the near future after receiving fresh assurances of safe passage from Israel for its workers and vehicles. Humanitarian aid deliveries had been suspended on Thursday after two truck drivers were killed by what the UN said was an Israeli tank attack.

The death toll in Gaza since fighting began Dec. 27 surpassed 784 yesterday, with women and children making up about 40 per cent, according to Reuters, which cited health officials in the enclave. Thirteen Israelis have died, including 10 soldiers.

Three Hamas leaders went to Cairo yesterday to discuss a Franco-Egyptian peace proposal that had been discussed 24 hours earlier by a senior Israeli official in the Egyptian capital.

Israeli newspapers have speculated that the joint proposal was foundering over Egypt's refusal to accept international forces on its territory to monitor smuggling tunnels into Gaza.

Graphic

Photo: YANNIS BEHRAKIS, REUTERS; Pushing ahead with its two-week-old offensive, Israeli forces fire a weapons system in the northern Gaza Strip yesterday. ;

Load-Date: January 10, 2009

End of Document

Hamas doubles rocket fire into Israel, as IDF advances

The Leader-Post (Regina, Saskatchewan)

January 13, 2009 Tuesday

Final Edition

Copyright 2009 The Leader-Post, a division of Canwest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. D8

Length: 905 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, Canwest News Service

Dateline: SDEROT, Israel

Body

Hamas responded on Monday to Israeli suggestions that its forces in Gaza were near their breaking point by more than doubling the number of rockets that it fired at the Jewish state from the Palestinian enclave on Sunday.

Much as Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert had predicted on Sunday, **Hamas**'s leader in Gaza, Ismail Haniyeh, said on Monday that his group was "approaching victory."

In his first public comment in days, Haniyeh, who has been in hiding, told the **Hamas**-run television station: "I tell you that after 17 days of this foolish war, Gaza has not been broken and will not collapse."

Olmert decried "the global media" for what he felt was its unbalanced coverage of the war while visiting the southern town of Be'ersheva, which was hit by several rockets fired from Gaza on Monday.

"Now they only speak of Israel's brutality," Olmert said. "For some reason, they do not speak of the Palestinians' incessant murderousness towards us, as well as towards other Palestinians, or of the use of civilians in Gaza as human shields against the IDF."

Yet Israel had only taken strong military action in Gaza after facing seven years of rocket fire, Olmert said.

"In this context, I would like to add that we have not declared war on the residents of Gaza," he said. "We do not want to hurt them. Every civilian, every child who has been hurt as a result of our operations in recent days is a victim whom we regret and would like to have avoided."

"However, we will not renounce our right to defend our citizens and we will not allow them to continue suffering from the threat of rockets and terrorism."

While Olmert and Haniyeh exchanged verbal blows, Israeli forces, backed by fresh reserves sent in on Sunday, continued to slowly and deliberately advance into densely-populated areas of Gaza City during the 17th day of a military operation designed to stop rocket fire from the Palestinian territory. But an all-out Israeli ground assault on Gaza, which has 1.5 million residents, clearly had not yet begun.

Nevertheless, the sounds of heavy and light machines firing could be heard several times inside Gaza from this Israeli town two kilometres from the border. Israeli warplanes attacked several dozen targets within the coastal

Hamis doubles rocket fire into Israel , as IDF advances

enclave and Gazans responded by launching at least 25 rockets toward Israel. Three of the homemade projectiles exploded within a few seconds of each other near where a group of foreign journalists were observing the conflict.

Moishe Smith of Ottawa, president of the International B'nai B'rith, was forced to take refuge in a shelter in Be'ersheva during several rocket barrages while on what he described as a "solidarity" tour of border areas on Monday.

"We sit and read reports of rocket attacks on Sderot and Be'ersheva, but we don't really understand life in the south until you have to run into a shelter," Smith said. "When the red alert was sounded my heart was in my mouth. It is an experience I have never felt before."

The death toll in Gaza since fighting erupted on December 27 rose to at least 910, including 367 women and children, according to Palestinian sources. Israel says 13 of its citizens, including three civilians, have died.

Israel has prevented foreign journalists from entering Gaza, making independent confirmation of these tallies impossible.

But for the first time on Monday a reporter from the Reuters news agency was allowed to embed with Israeli soldiers and file a pool report.

"We are tightening the encirclement of the city," Brig. Eyal Eisenberg said, adding that his troopers were "careful to be constantly on the move."

Asked if he was disappointed at the relatively few firefights his soldiers had experienced with Hamas fighters, he replied: "I think that in these circumstances it is important to preserve a sense of modesty. I'll let the other side tell you how well, or otherwise, they have been turning out to fight."

But a Lt.-Col. Yehuda was not so reticent. Asked the same question, the colonel, who spoke from the balcony of a villa his troops had commandeered, told Reuters: "I think Hamas has already folded."

During a daily three-hour lull in the fighting proposed by Israel and generally observed by both sides, Israel permitted 165 truckloads of food and medicine to enter the territory on Monday.

In other developments, former British prime minister Tony Blair, who is a special envoy to the Middle East for the European Union, the United Nations, Russia and the U.S., said in Cairo that "the elements of a ceasefire are now in place," but that "very hard" work remained to make this become a reality.

Both Israel and Hamas have refused repeated international calls for an immediate ceasefire.

Speaking at his last news conference, outgoing U.S. President George W. Bush defended Israel's right to defend itself.

"I'm for a sustainable ceasefire" that would require Hamas's agreement to halt firing rockets into Israel, Bush said. "There will not be a sustainable ceasefire if they keep firing rockets."

In a decision that underscored how frayed relations have become between Israel and its Arab minority, which mostly consider themselves Palestinians, the Central Elections committee banned two Arab parties from national elections in February.

The move to prevent the Balad and United Arab List from running candidates triggered fierce verbal exchanges between Israeli and Arab Israeli members of the Knesset. It is to be challenged in the Israeli Supreme Court.

Load-Date: January 13, 2009

Hamas doubles rocket fire into Israel , as IDF advances

End of Document

Reason to doubt casualty claims; Arab neighbours send weapons to Hamas and Gaza, but no humanitarian aid

Edmonton Journal (Alberta)

January 2, 2009 Friday

Final Edition

Copyright 2009 Edmonton Journal, a division of Canwest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: OPINION; Pg. A18; Lorne Gunter

Length: 835 words

Byline: Lorne Gunter, Freelance

Body

Among the many civilians injured during this past week's war between Hamas and Israel, 12 were wounded beyond the ability of Gazan doctors and hospitals to treat them.

Where were these victims sent for the specialized care they needed to save their lives? To Cairo? Beirut? Riyadh or Dubai?

No, they were sent to (and willingly received at) hospitals in Tel Aviv.

Indeed, Israel is the default destination for Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza whenever one of them is hurt beyond the capacity of local hospitals to heal them. Many Jewish charities around the world raise hundreds of millions of dollars annually to operate hospitals at which all are treated -- Jew or Palestinian -- for free.

If Israel truly were a heartless oppressor, would its hospitals, doctors and medical staffs so willingly treat members of an "enemy" community?

It may be true -- may be -- that since Israel began Operation Cast Lead against the Hamas government of Gaza last Saturday, 400 Gazans have died. And it may also be true, according to the United Nations, that a quarter of these -- approximately 100 -- have been civilians.

There is good reason to doubt the casualty claims of any terror organization battling Israel. Each knows full well that most western news agencies will uncritically report any death toll they announce, so most pad the numbers. Some even go to elaborate lengths to make their inflated claims appear accurate.

For instance, during the siege of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem in the spring of 2002, Palestinian sources insisted upwards of 60 Palestinians, mostly civilians, had been lost. Bodies were brought from the morgue of a nearby hospital and placed around the inside of the church and in its yard, so that when the siege finally lifted and photographers and TV cameramen were permitted in, there were plenty of corpses to film.

In fact, just eight died during the siege, most of them Palestinian fighters.

Reason to doubt casualty claims; Arab neighbours send weapons to Hamas and Gaza, but no humanitarian aid

Something similar happened at Qana in the summer of 2006, when Israel was battling Hezbollah in South Lebanon. There, Israeli jets accidentally bombed an apartment building -- they believed it housed a missile launching site, when that was actually the building next door.

Hezbollah claimed 57 were killed, many of them women and children. Reporters and emergency crews were kept from the site for more than hour, though, and when they arrived, they found bodies already decomposing, a sign perhaps that fresh graves had been hastily dug up and the corpses in them removed to the apartment rubble for media benefit.

In fact, around 20 were killed.

At Jenin, Hebron and elsewhere, time after time, Palestinians and others seeking Israel's destruction have overstated their losses, especially the civilian ones.

There is plenty of reason to doubt the 400-killed number, then. But let's for a minute assume it is true. Can there be any doubt that were the roles reversed and Hamas had the modern jets and helicopter gunships and 1,000-kilo bombs that only 400 Israelis would have been killed and of those only 100 civilians?

Four hundred dead in these attacks (versus four dead Israelis in Hamas's rocket attacks in the past week) seems disproportionate, even if this is not a numbers game. But would Hamas go to similar pains to kill only combatants and to kill civilians only when they are being used as shields to hide behind by Hamas officials and fighters?

It is unlikely Hamas would be Israel's greatest source of humanitarian aid once bombing began, too. Nevertheless, Israel has been Gaza's.

According to Israel government statistics (which you are welcome to take with a grain of salt), since hostilities began six days ago, nearly 200 trucks carrying more than 6,000 tonnes of supplies, "basic food commodities, medication, medical supplies ... and blood units" have entered Gaza from Israel. Not a single truck has passed in from Egypt (Gaza's only Arab neighbour) nor have ships laden with supplies from Saudi Arabia or Iran docked.

Iran has threatened to send suicide bombers into the region, but no rations or bandages. No doubt Iran and other governments have provided Hamas with weapons since fighting began last weekend, but they have shown little enthusiasm for aid.

Israel has not be entirely saintly in this fight. The killing New Year's Day of Hamas leader Nizar Rayan, along with his four wives and 10 of his children, seems a particularly brutal act, especially when Israel's army has shown itself capable time and again of targeting only the terrorists it wants to kill and leaving nearby civilians unscathed.

Still, the deaths in the past week, civilian or otherwise, would have been avoided if Hamas and its allied Islamic radicals had not provoked Israel by lobbing more than 7,000 rockets and mortars into Israel since 2001 (nearly 2,800 in 2008 alone), killing a total of 28 civilians.

Hamas has time and again shown itself incapable of honouring its peace agreements with Israel. So I cannot see how Israel can stop this fight before Hamas is incapacitated.

lgunter@shaw.ca

Load-Date: January 2, 2009

Gaza militants braced for final offensive as Israel pushes on; Hamas under orders from Iran to spurn ceasefire offers

The Herald (Glasgow)

January 13, 2009 Tuesday

Final Edition

Copyright 2009 Newsquest Media Group All Rights Reserved

The Herald

Section: NEWS; Pg. 13

Length: 686 words

Byline: NIDAL AL MUGHRABI GAZA and IAN BRUCE

Body

ISRAELI Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said Israel would pursue its 17-day-old war in Gaza for as long as it took to stop **Hamas** firing rockets into his country.

As the Palestinian death toll passed 900, troops tightened their grip around urban areas in search of guerrillas.

Troops and tanks, backed by warplanes and helicopters that staged more than 25 air strikes, probed guerrilla defences around Gaza City, wary of snipers and booby traps. **Hamas** fighters kept largely out of sight, firing several rockets into Israel and bracing for an all-out assault.

As diplomats worked with Egypt on a truce plan, an Israeli military spokesman said the army had yet to launch phase three of the war, following the air campaign and ground advance.

However, he added reserve units had moved in to hold positions and free up regular soldiers for thrusts deeper into Gaza City.

Khaled Meshaal, **Hamas**'s government leader in Gaza, made a rare broadcast from a secret location, promising that "victory is at hand".

The bloodshed has burst open faultlines in the map of Middle East diplomacy, with the administration of US President George W Bush in its final week standing firm behind Israel, European governments pressing Israel to call off its attacks and Arab leaders speaking out against the Jewish state.

Saudi Arabia, whose proAmerican stance is far from popular with its people, yesterday accused Israel of "racist extermination" and said it hoped Bush's successor, Barack Obama, would work swiftly to resolve the 60-year-old Palestinian issue.

Palestinian medics say at least 909 people have been killed. Gaza's **Hamas**-run government said about 400 were **women** and children.

Gaza militants braced for final offensive as Israel pushes on Hamas under orders from Iran to spurn ceasefire offers

Israel says seven soldiers and three civilians have been killed since it launched its offensive on December 27.

A Saudi cabinet statement said: "The extermination Israel is launching upon the Palestinian people in Gaza has denuded Israeli leaders of humanity and places their policies in the ranks of racist extermination."

Iran's Revolutionary Guard Council, meanwhile, has threatened to withdraw military and financial support for Hamas if the Palestinian militant regime agrees to a ceasefire with Israel .

Despite efforts by Arab countries and the UN to convene a peace conference Iranian envoys are reported to have visited the exiled Hamas leadership in Syria to warn them not to stop fighting.

Hamas representatives are in Cairo for talks with General Omar Suleiman, head of Egypt's intelligence services, but are now under orders to stall for time without agreeing to call off rocket attacks .

Egyptian diplomatic sources claimed Ali Larijani, the speaker of the Iranian parliament, and Said Jalil, a senior official in Tehran's intelligence network, flew to Damascus to meet Hamas's leadership to derail Cairo's offer to mediate an end the conflict.

An Egyptian foreign ministry official said: "This was an urgent mission sanctioned at high level within Iran to undermine any possible ceasefire.

"We know the Iranians threatened to halt arms supplies to Hamas's military wing and funding to its local leadership in the Gaza Strip if the Palestinians caved in to international pressure ? but it is a cynical manipulation of the Palestinian population in Gaza. They are paying with their lives for Tehran's deterrent strategy."

Meshaal has said Hamas would not consider a ceasefire until Israel ended its assault and lifted its blockade of the Gaza Strip.

Israeli warplanes have repeatedly bombed the Philadelphi corridor along Gaza's nine-mile border with Egypt, sometimes using "bunker buster" munitions to try to collapse the tunnels through which Iranian arms and missiles are smuggled.

A ground assault would allow Israel to use bulldozers and sonar equipment to root out more tunnels. Palestinian tunnel operators estimated hundreds of secret passages had been disabled but many more remained intact.

Holding the corridor could give Israel a bargaining chip in ceasefire talks, diplomats said. Israel has demanded security guarantees from Egypt and Western powers to ensure the tunnels are not rebuilt, but differences remain over how that can be accomplished.

Load-Date: January 13, 2009

Peace is the last thing Hamas want

The Sun (England)

January 5, 2009 Monday

Edition 1

Copyright 2009 NEWS GROUP NEWSPAPERS LTD All Rights Reserved



Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. 8

Length: 682 words

Byline: TREVOR Kavanagh

Body

IMAGES of distraught parents bearing the corpses of their mutilated children make "great" TV.

Great, as in powerful, I mean. They are potent, heartrending evidence of the atrocity that is war.

Sympathy instantly focuses on the innocent victims.

Which, of course, is precisely what the Hamas fanatics who run Gaza want.

For such zealots, global television news is priceless propaganda.

Never forget the difference between Islamist fanatics and those they aim to destroy.

"You love life," they sneer.

"We love death." The world was shocked when a suicide bomber made this chilling boast for the first time after 9/11.

Today it is the common mantra of radical Islamic clerics and terrorists. Shrewdly, they identify our squeamishness as weakness and use it as a weapon of war.

Since we love life, how can we fail to blame the Israelis when their tanks and bombers bring death to impoverished Palestinians? Certainly it is hard to ride to the defence of what looks like utterly disproportionate use of air power against a near-defenceless civilian enclave.

But how would you feel if you lived in a country the size of Wales surrounded by enemies who have vowed to destroy you? Where terrorists, armed and funded by powerful neighbours, are bombarding towns and villages every day with increasingly lethal rockets? And where every attempt at a negotiated peace is rebuffed by suicide attacks on your own innocent women and children? The Israelis have offered to end the fighting if Hamas stops firing rockets.

Peace is the last thing Hamas want

No response.

The last thing Hamas or Hezbollah - or their puppet masters in Iran or Syria - want is peace with Israel.

They want the Jewish state exterminated - just as Hitler wanted to exterminate the Jewish people.

Yes, Gaza is an appalling example of man's inhumanity to man.

Fanatics

But without doubt, this invasion was systematically and skilfully provoked by fanatics elected by the Palestinians to run Gaza.

If they are eager for a short cut to Paradise, why not take a few hundred, a few thousand or a few hundred thousand with them? Saturday's demo by thousands of Muslim men and veiled women would have been more impressive if they'd done the same after London's 7/7 bombings.

Were they the same stooges police escorted through London with placards threatening to slit the throats of anyone who we supported cartoons about Mohammed? These marchers claim the Israeli onslaught cannot be justified by the amateurish bombardment of nearby Israeli towns such as Ashkelon and Sderot with primitive Kassam rockets.

Thousands of these homemade missiles are launched from Gaza, peppering the townships where, ironically, the residents moved for a quiet life.

Instead, as I found during a visit to Sderot last year, the constant fear of incoming missiles is a living nightmare.

New missiles are reaching deeper into Israel. More sophisticated versions are being smuggled by Hezbollah into neighbouring Lebanon.

Soon they will be able to reach the capital, Tel Aviv, and its airport.

It is fair to say that, no matter how provoked, Israel is not above reproach.

The presumption that Jews are the "Chosen People" can make them shockingly arrogant.

There are Israelis who speak with undisguised contempt about their Arab neighbours. Equally, in this Middle East oasis of free speech, Israeli citizens will vehemently attack their own government for any perceived injustice towards Palestinians.

Jews are the first to admit they are paranoid. Having survived the Holocaust, who wouldn't be? They live in constant fear that Iran will carry out its deadly threat to wipe them off the map.

Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is putting his words into deeds, bankrolling, training and arming Hamas and Hezbollah.

After decades of fighting for survival, there is an almost desperate desire for Israel to achieve a peaceful settlement, along the lines of those negotiated with Arab neighbours Jordan and Egypt.

Until then, Israel is fighting for its very life - just as it has been every day since it was born 60 years ago.

DO you agree with Trevor? Have your say at thesun.co.uk/columnists.

Load-Date: January 5, 2009

Comment & Debate: End the siege of Gaza: It was not Hamas that broke the truce - but it is willing to revive it if Israel shows its commitment - Correction Appended

The Guardian - Final Edition

November 21, 2008 Friday

 **Correction Appended**

Copyright 2008 Guardian Newspapers Limited All Rights Reserved

theguardian

Section: GUARDIAN COMMENT AND DEBATE PAGES ; Pg. 42

Length: 629 words

Byline: Azzam Tamimi

Body

For five months, until the first week of November, the Gaza Strip and its neighbouring Israeli towns to the north and the east enjoyed unprecedented peace that was the product of the hudna , or truce, agreed between **Hamas** and Israel through Egyptian mediation. Despite the continuation of the siege that denied the population of Gaza much of what other people around the world may consider life necessities, men, **women** and children could walk the streets of the Strip without fear and spend hours of their free time enjoying the beach. On the other side of the divide, Israel saw tourism flourish.

Then, suddenly, the Israeli government decided to authorise the army to act against perceived threats within what it calls the "security parameter" - a several hundred-metre strip beyond the border between Gaza and Israel.

On November 4 the Israeli army penetrated Gaza, killing six **Hamas** officers under the pretext of having discovered a tunnel close to the Kisufim roadblock. Since then, and despite statements made by spokespeople on both sides that they still wished to observe the hudna , Israel forces have crossed the border several times and **Hamas**, joined later by other Palestinian factions, resumed shelling nearby Israeli towns.

Why did Israeli politicians feel the need to end the peace despite the benefits reaped? Though they blamed **Hamas** for starting the violence, not a single rocket had been fired from the inception of the hudna to the raid on Gaza.

The Israeli military escalation has been accompanied by a further tightening of the siege of Gaza in what can only be seen as another attempt to press the population to turn on **Hamas**. The Israelis seem to cling to a vain hope that the people of the besieged Strip might blame their elected leaders. Clearly, there is no sign of this happening. The reality, however, is that the sanctions have only bolstered the popularity of the movement among Palestinians and support for the cause around the world.

Comment & Debate: End the siege of Gaza: It was not Hamas that broke the truce - but it is willing to revive it if Israel shows its commitment

These tactics have been tried before. Military incursions into Gaza have indeed wrought heavy losses among Palestinians, but the Israelis suffered losses, too, and eventually had to withdraw, leaving an embittered population and a strengthened Hamas movement. Attempts at targeted killings of Hamas leaders did no better. Making martyrs of Palestinian symbols of resistance and defiance can only ever fuel rage. For more than two years the Israeli state, fortified by an unhinged US-led world order, have tried collectively punishing the Palestinians for supporting Hamas. That strategy has only backfired.

Hamas has made its position clear. As Mahmud al-Zahar, a co-founder of the movement, emphasised in a recent TV appearance on the London-based Alhiwar Arabic TV channel, Hamas is willing to abide by the hudna if Israel shows a similar commitment. It would be in the interest of both parties to renew the truce, which is expected to expire next month. However, it should this time involve an end to the siege.

A prisoner-exchange deal before the year end would be a great boost for peace and stability. In exchange for captured Israeli soldier Gilead Shalit, Hamas is asking for the release of 1,000 of its captive men, plus all the women and children, and the parliamentarians and ministers kidnapped in the aftermath of Shalit's capture. With more than 11,000 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli detention, Hamas is not asking for much. Israeli decision-makers should take seriously the warning by Hamas leaders that should Israel opt to go to war they are fully prepared to engage it; instead, they should grasp a chance to build peace.

Azzam Tamimi is director of the London-based Institute of Islamic Political Thought, author of Hamas: Unwritten Chapters and has advised Hamas on media strategy

info@ii-pt.com

Correction

*Due to an editing error the words "by Hamas" were omitted from a sentence in a Comment article headed End the siege of Gaza, page 42, November 21. The sentence should have read: "Though they blamed Hamas for starting the violence, not a single rocket had been fired by Hamas from the inception of the hudna to the raid on Gaza."

Correction-Date: November 25, 2008

Load-Date: November 21, 2008

[Fania Oz-Salzberger] Hamas's zero-sum game in Palestine

THE KOREA HERALD

January 7, 2009 Wednesday

Copyright 2009 The Korea Herald All Rights Reserved

Length: 1021 words

Body

Imagine your next-door neighbor -- with whom you have had a long and bloody feud -- pulling out a gun and shooting into your windows, from his own living room, which is densely packed with women and children. In fact, he's holding his daughter on his lap as he tries to target your own kids. He claims he will not stop until your family is dead. Police are unavailable. What should you do?

One option is to do nothing, or little. You try this for a while. After all, your neighbor is poor and traumatized, there is a sad and complicated history between you, and you bear some of the blame.

But finally, as one shot hits your child's bedroom, you decide that enough is enough. You pull out your far superior gun. You attempt a surgical strike: aim at the shooter's head and try to spare the innocents.

In an abstract sense, this is what Israel is doing right now.

But there is nothing surgical about the blood and agony that have engulfed Gaza in the last week. Try as Israel might to target militants alone, civilian bodies are being pulled from the rubble, because, like our metaphorical gunman's home, militants and civilians inhabit the same urban space in the Gaza Strip.

Gaza City and Rafah are crowded and poor -- and, more than ever before, they double as army camps. Fighters train next to schools, and rockets are stored in the basements of apartment buildings. According to recent reports, Hamas's senior officials are currently hiding in hospitals. Over a million Palestinians, unable to flee to either Egypt or Israel, have for years been ruled by a military junta that prioritizes the killing of Israelis, across the international border, at all costs.

Of course, civilians have always been in the line of fire and conquest, from Troy to Berlin. But no regime has ever used its citizens so deliberately as tools to arouse world sympathy, as hostages to modern sensitivities. While theories of just war instruct us not to hurt non-combatants, Hamas and its military arm have made a conscious decision, banking on global humanitarian concerns, to ensure that Israel hits as many civilians as possible.

Even if Israel's current war against Gaza is a just war -- which is suggested by its attempts at limited and "measured" retaliation after eight years of Hamas rockets followed its unilateral retreat from Gaza -- it is therefore a very dirty war, too. There is a sad zero-sum game between Palestinian suffering and Israeli sovereignty, security, and normal life.

Most Israelis -- even those hoping to see, in their lifetime, an independent and prosperous Palestine -- agree that the attack on Hamas was necessary. Many others would not have liked to see the Israeli army launch a ground invasion into Gaza. Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has rightly allowed convoys of food and medicine into Gaza during the fighting, and Israeli hospitals are treating several injured Gazan citizens.

[Fania Oz-Salzberger] Hamas's zero-sum game in Palestine

Not unreasonably, Israel wants an internationally guaranteed and monitored ceasefire agreement that would put a total stop to **Hamas** assaults against its territory. But, as world opinion awakens from its holiday slumber, it is likely to turn against Israel. After all, Israel is the strong guy, the former occupying power, the better shooter. Its bombardment of Gaza is not "proportional."

Indeed, there is no symmetry of suffering on the two sides of the border. Gazans are worse off than Israelis in every conceivable way. But does that mean that Israel should let them keep shooting at it? Or should Israel respond "proportionally," by firing 10 to 80 rockets, indiscriminately aimed against Gazan homes and schools, every day for the next few years?

Israelis have become used to blanket accusations. It is the kind of message that unites the nation, left and right, in grim resolve. What, Israelis ask, would other countries do? Does the enemy's civilian suffering trump Israel's sovereignty? Does it trump the real, if less bloody, agony and fear of hundreds of thousands Israelis over long years?

Olmert, Ehud Barak and Foreign Minister Tzippi Livni have cast aside their political rivalries in order to orchestrate an answer: Israel must fight off the Gazan rockets.

That said, Israel's unity may be short-lived. It is a democracy, not a one-voice nation, and, with a general election due in February, debate is continuing both within the government and beyond it. If the Gaza campaign turns Lebanon-like, with a humanitarian catastrophe, ongoing bombardment of Israeli civilians, or both, domestic criticism will echo loud and clear.

But even opponents of Olmert's second war must face the blunt fact that **Hamas** is lethal. To the detriment of their own people, its leaders, Haled Mash'al and Ismail Hanieh, want neither peace nor compromise. Like their friend and supporter, President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad of Iran, they want Israel dead. It is as simple as that.

One ray of hope is that moderate Arab leaders, including Egypt's foreign minister, have openly blamed **Hamas** for the current Gazan predicament. Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan are willing to broker peace, and perhaps save the Palestinians from their own worst leadership. Israel has gone a long way since the Arab world set out to kill it off. For the first time, prominent Arab voices acquit Israel of the wholesale blame that some Western critics still lazily throw at it.

For the time being, Israel should strive for the safest truce it can accomplish, provided that **Hamas** stops shooting out of its own crowded living room. But, after the election in February, Israel's next leader must face the moderate Arab challenge. He or she must talk directly to the Arab League, whose proposed peace plan will require tough Israeli negotiation, but is a reasonable start to preventing future wars, including just wars. Give it a chance.

by Fania Oz-Salzberger

Fania Oz-Salzberger is a professor and chair of modern Israel studies at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia, and director of the Posen Research Forum for Political Thought at the Faculty of Law, the University of Haifa, Israel. Her books include "Translating the Enlightenment and Israelis in Berlin." -- Ed.

(Project Syndicate)

Load-Date: January 7, 2009

Al-Qaida-style Salafist extremism gains real power within Hamas armed wing
'The secular era in Gaza has ended without a trace'

The Jerusalem Post

December 3, 2008 Wednesday

Copyright 2008 The Jerusalem Post All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 6

Length: 839 words

Byline: JONATHAN SPYER

Highlight: ANALYSIS. Jonathan Spyer is a senior Research Fellow at the Global Research in International Affairs Center, IDC, Herzliya.

Body

Al-Qaida-type Salafi Islam is rising in popularity within the ranks of Hamas. This trend is particularly noticeable in the movement's armed wing, the Izzadin Kassam Brigades.

Observation of this process shows that attempts to draw a clear dividing line between the "nationalist" Muslim Brotherhood-inspired Islamism of Hamas and the Salafi trend can no longer be sustained. The growth of Salafism within Hamas is part of a larger pattern of increasingly extreme Islamic piety and practice in Gaza.

The existence of Salafism within Hamas is not a new development. Indeed, Hamas leaders have long been aware of the potential threat this outlook represents to their authority. As long ago as December 2001, the Israeli authorities intercepted a document produced by Hamas prisoners in Israeli custody which warned of the spread of al-Qaida-type ideology among Hamas members.

However, supporters of Salafism now appear to be achieving positions of real power within Hamas.

In mid-2006, Izzadin Kassam commander Muhammad Deif was badly wounded by an IDF missile strike and subsequently left the Gaza Strip for a long period of recuperation. His replacement at the helm of the Brigades was Ahmad al-Ja'abari, who carried out his tasks in close cooperation with two allies, Ali Jundiyyeh and Nizar Rayyan. All three of these men are known supporters of Salafism.

Rayyan is considered to be the key tactical planner of the Brigades at the current time. He is believed to have formulated Hamas's operational plan for the takeover of Gaza in July 2007. He is also thought to have formulated Hamas's plan for resisting a major IDF operation into Gaza.

He is in charge of weapons production for the Brigades, and is also believed to command its suicide units. Rayyan maintains close relations with a Saudi Salafi cleric resident in Ramallah who is a supporter of al-Qaida.

One level below, the majority of the five brigade commanders of Izzadin Kassam are also Salafis. Among them, Muhammad as-Sanwar, commander of the Khan Yunis Brigade, is a particularly significant figure. He was among the planners of the Kerem Shalom attack in 2006 in which then-Cpl. Gilad Schalit was kidnapped.

Al-Qaida-style Salafist extremism gains real power within Hamas armed wing 'The secular era in Gaza has ended without a trace'

Deif returned to the Strip via the Sinai-Gaza tunnels in November 2007. Deif himself is known as a very strict Muslim, but the nature of his links to the Salafis are unclear. However, in early 2008, he complained to friends that his own influence in the Izzadin Kassam Brigades had declined, since the "Salafists had taken completely over."

Salafi supporters within Izzadin Kassam are organized, and are known to have made contact with the al-Qaida leadership. As early as 2006, a group of 200 Salafi- oriented Izzadin Kassam members opposed to a cease-fire with Israel made contact with al-Qaida. As a result, an open letter from al-Qaida was sent to Hamas. The letter contained advice for combating the cease-fire.

Friction over the cease-fire resurfaced in June 2008. Salafi elements within the Izzadin Kassam Brigades made clear their opposition to the renewed tahadiyeh (period of calm) with Israel. At that time, an Izzadin Kassam-associated Web site published a list of nine attacks carried out in 2002-2005 for which Hamas had never previously taken responsibility.

The Salafis remain firmly entrenched within Izzadin Kassam at all levels. There have been reports, however, of an internal power struggle, with Deif seeking to replace Ja'abari, or at least to reduce his influence. In July 2008, a group of Salafi members of the Brigades split off to form a new group, al-Jaljaleh (Thunder).

Friction also exists between the Brigades and other Hamas-controlled military organizations, such as the Executive Force in Gaza. The Executive Force, formed after the Hamas election victory in 2006, is responsible for a variety of policing and paramilitary functions in the Strip. On June 25, 2008, the Executive Force sought to arrest a number of Izzadin Kassam members suspected of criminal activity. Ja'abari refused to hand them over, and the men remained at liberty.

This friction notwithstanding, the rise of supporters of al-Qaida ideology within Hamas cannot be seen in a vacuum. Rather, it is an element of a broader process of the Islamization of many aspects of public life taking place in the Gaza Strip.

This may be seen, for example, in the many incidents of women in "immodest" dress being stopped by members of the Executive Force in the weeks following the July 2007 coup. This has led to the near disappearance of non-hijab wearing women from the streets of Gaza. There have also been reports of enforced observance of Ramadan, and harassment of unmarried couples seen together by members of the Force.

All these incidents are signs that the rise to power of Hamas, and within it of extreme Salafi elements, are events of more than simple immediate political significance.

After the July 2007 coup, Rayyan declared that "the secular era in Gaza has ended without leaving a trace." Events in the subsequent 18 months show little to disprove this declaration.

Graphic

Photo: GAZA MILITIAMEN like these of the Popular Resistance Committees increasingly represent the Salafist school of Islam, not a less extreme 'nationalistic' one. (Credit: Hatem Moussa/AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

Israel intensifies Gaza assault, eyes ground invasion Border buildup is on, call-up of reserves gets OK as rocket fire from Hamas decreases substantially.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

December 29, 2008 Monday

FIRST EDITION

Copyright 2008 St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A1

Length: 716 words

Byline: By Ibrahim Barzak and Karin Laub The Associated Press

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip - Israel widened its deadliest-ever air offensive against Gaza's **Hamas** rulers Sunday, pounding a central prison and tunnels used for smuggling, sending more tanks and artillery toward the Gaza border and approving a reserves

call-up for a potential ground invasion.

Israeli leaders said they would press ahead with the Gaza campaign despite enraged protests across the Arab world and Syria's decision to break off indirect peace talks with Israel. Israel's foreign minister said the goal was to halt Gaza rocket fire on Israel for good but not to reoccupy the territory.

With the two-day death toll climbing above 290 Sunday, crowds of Gazans breached the border wall with Egypt to escape the chaos. Egyptian forces, some firing in the air, tried to push them back into Gaza, and an official said one border guard was killed.

Hamas, in turn, fired missiles deeper than ever into Israel, near the Israeli port city of Ashdod, and continues to command some 20,000 fighters.

Yet **Hamas** leaders were forced into hiding, most of the dead were from the **Hamas** security forces, and Israel's military intelligence chief said **Hamas**' ability to fire rockets had been reduced by 50 percent. **Hamas** rocket fire dropped off sharply, from more than 130 Saturday to just over 20 Sunday.

Israel's intense bombings - some 300 airstrikes since midday Saturday - wreaked unprecedented destruction in Gaza, reducing entire buildings to rubble.

'war between states'

Shlomo Brom, a former senior Israeli military official, said it was the deadliest force ever used in decades of Israeli-Palestinian fighting.

"Since **Hamas** took over Gaza (in June 2007), it has become a war between two states, and in war between states, more force is used," he said.

Israel intensifies Gaza assault, eyes ground invasion Border buildup is on, call-up of reserves gets OK as rocket fire from Hamas decreases substantially.

European leaders called on both Israel and Hamas to end the bloodshed.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy spoke Sunday with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who has set up a rival government to Hamas in the West Bank, and condemned "the provocations that led to this situation as well as the disproportionate use of force."

The White House was mum about the situation in Gaza on Sunday after speaking out expansively on Saturday, blaming Israel's retaliatory strikes on Hamas.

In the most dramatic attacks Sunday, warplanes struck dozens of tunnels under the Gaza-Egypt border, cutting off a lifeline that had supplied Hamas with weapons and Gaza with commercial goods. The influx of goods had helped Hamas defy an 18-month blockade of Gaza by Israel and Egypt, and was key to propping up its rule.

Sunday's blasts shook the ground several miles away and sent black smoke high into the sky.

Earlier, warplanes dropped three bombs on one of Hamas' main security compounds in Gaza City, including a prison. Moments after the blasts, frantic inmates scrambled down the rubble. One man, still half buried, raised a hand to alert rescuers.

Gaza's nine hospitals were overwhelmed. Dr. Moawiya Hassanain, who keeps a record for the Gaza Health Ministry, said more than 290 people were killed over two days and over 800 wounded. The Palestinian Center for Human Rights, which keeps researchers at all hospitals, said that it had counted 251 dead by midday Sunday, including 20 children under the age of 16, and nine women.

Israeli leaders gave interviews to foreign television networks to try to win international support.

Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni told NBC that the assault came because Hamas was smuggling weapons and building a "small army."

In Jerusalem, Israel's Cabinet approved a call-up of 6,500 reserve soldiers, in apparent preparation for a ground offensive.

diplomacy takes hit

The diplomatic fallout, meanwhile, was swift.

Syria suspended indirect peace talks with Israel, begun earlier this year. The U.N. Security Council called on both sides to halt the fighting and asked Israel to allow humanitarian supplies into Gaza; 30 trucks were let in Sunday. The prime minister of Turkey, one of the few Muslim countries to have relations with Israel, called the air assault a "crime against humanity."

The carnage inflamed Arab and Muslim public opinion, setting off street protests in the West Bank, in an Arab area of Israel, in several Middle Eastern cities and in Paris.

ISRAELI ISSUE • Leaders have no political vision for how to end the Gaza confrontation. A7

Graphic

PHOTO - An injured Palestinian prisoner reaches for help Sunday after being trapped in the rubble of the central security headquarters and prison in Gaza City. Majed Hamdan | The Associated Press PHOTO - Smoke rises from

Israel intensifies Gaza assault, eyes ground invasion Border buildup is on, call-up of reserves gets OK as rocket fire from Hamas decreases substantially.

explosions following a fresh round of Israeli airstrikes on Sunday in the southern town of Rafah, Gaza. Israel has stated that military action will continue in the Gaza Strip until its citizens are protected from rocket attacks by **Hamas**. Getty Images

Load-Date: December 29, 2008

End of Document

Israel lets Palestinians with passports flee Gaza; UN estimates at least a quarter of the 400 Palestinians killed by Israeli air strikes against Hamas have been civilians

The Times & Transcript (New Brunswick)

January 3, 2009 Saturday

Copyright 2009 The Times & Transcript. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. D1

Length: 783 words

Byline: THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Body

Israel allowed several hundred Palestinians with foreign passports to flee Gaza yesterday, even as its warplanes bombed a mosque it said was used to store weapons and destroyed homes of more than a dozen **Hamas** officials.

The evacuees told of crippling shortages of water, electricity and medicine, echoing a UN warning of a deepening humanitarian crisis in the besieged Gaza Strip in the seven-day-old Israeli campaign. The United Nations estimates at least a quarter of the 400 Palestinians killed by Israeli air strikes on **Hamas** militants have been civilians.

Jawaher Hajji, a 14-year-old U.S. citizen who was allowed to cross into Israel, said her uncle was one of them -- killed while trying to pick up some medicine for her cancer-stricken father. She said her father later died of his illness.

"They are supposed to destroy just the **Hamas**, but people in their homes are dying too," Hajji, who has relatives in Virginia, said at the Erez border crossing between Gaza and Israel.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice accused **Hamas** leaders of holding the people of Gaza hostage and said an end to violence would only be possible once **Hamas** stopped firing rockets into Israel. She said the United States continues to seek a "durable and sustainable" ceasefire.

International calls for a ceasefire have been growing, and French President Nicolas Sarkozy is expected in the region next week. Rice said she had no plans to go to the region.

Israel has targeted **Hamas** leaders in the past but halted the practice during a six-month truce that expired last month. Most of **Hamas** leaders went into hiding at the start of the Israeli offensive on Dec. 27.

Israeli troops in bases in southern Israel are awaiting orders to invade Gaza. But Israel also appears to be open to the intense diplomatic efforts by Arab and European leaders, saying it would consider stopping its punishing aerial assaults if international monitors were brought in to track compliance with any truce with **Hamas**.

Israel began its campaign to try to halt weeks of intensifying Palestinian rocket fire from Gaza. The offensive has dealt a heavy blow to **Hamas** but has not stopped the rockets, which continue to strike deeper and deeper into Israel. Three Israeli civilians and one soldier have been killed in the rocket attacks.

Israel lets Palestinians with passports flee Gaza; UN estimates at least a quarter of the 400 Palestinians killed by Israeli air strikes against Hamas have been....

More than 30 rockets were fired into southern Israel on Friday, slightly injuring four people. Sirens warning Israelis to take cover when military radar picks up an incoming rocket have helped reduce casualties in recent days.

After destroying Hamas' security compounds early in the operation, Israel has turned its attention to the group's leadership. Israeli warplanes on Friday hit about 20 houses believed to belong to Hamas militants and members of other armed groups, Palestinians said.

Israel also bombed a mosque it said was used to store weapons. The mosque was known as a Hamas stronghold and was identified with Nizar Rayan, the Hamas militant leader killed Thursday when Israel dropped a 900-kilogram bomb on his home. Rayan, 49, was ranked among Hamas' top five decision-makers.

The explosion killed 20 people, including all four of Rayan's wives and 11 of his children.

Israel's military said the bombing of Rayan's house triggered secondary explosions from the weapons stockpile there.

Fear of Israeli attacks led to sparse turnout at Friday's communal prayers at mosques throughout Gaza. Still, thousands attended a memorial service for Rayan, with throngs praying over the rubble of his home and the nearby destroyed mosque.

An imam delivered his sermon over a car loudspeaker as the bodies of Rayan and other family members were covered in green Hamas flags. Explosions from Israeli air strikes and the sound of warplanes could be heard in the background.

Following the prayers, mourners marched with the bodies, with many people reaching out to touch and kiss them.

"The Palestinian resistance will not forget and will not forgive," said Hamas legislator Mushir Masri. "The resistance's response will be very painful."

Israel also destroyed homes of more than a dozen Hamas members. Most appeared to be empty, but one man was killed in a strike in the Jebaliya refugee camp in northern Gaza.

Separate air strikes killed five other Palestinians -- including a teenage boy east of Gaza City, and three children -- two brothers and their cousin -- who were playing in southern Gaza, according to Health Ministry official Dr. Moaiya Hassanain.

Maxwell Gaylard, UN humanitarian co-ordinator for the Palestinians Territories, said 2,000 people have been wounded in the past week and a "significant number" of the dead were women and children. "There is a critical emergency right now in the Gaza Strip," he said.

Load-Date: January 3, 2009

ISRAELIS DRIVE INTO GAZA, HAMAS DEFIANT War won't be easy or short, sez Barak, but rocketing must stop

Daily News (New York)

January 4, 2009 Sunday

METRO EDITION

Copyright 2009 Daily News, L.P.



Section: NEWS; Pg. 7

Length: 550 words

Byline: BY ERICA SILVERMAN in Ramallah, West Bank and CHRISTINA BOYLE in New York DAILY NEWS WRITERS With News Wire Services

Body

ISRAELI TROOPS and tanks crossed into the Gaza Strip under the cover of darkness yesterday, signaling the start of a bloody ground offensive that military leaders warned would not be short.

Hamas, which seized control of Gaza a year and a half ago and has been attacking Israel with rockets, responded with defiant threats.

"We will fight till our last breath. Your invasion of Gaza will not be a cakewalk. Gaza will be your cemetery," **Hamas** spokesman Ismail Radwan said.

Israeli officials called up tens of thousands of reservists and warned the incursion would not end quickly.

"It won't be easy and it won't be short," Defense Minister Ehud Barak said in a televised address. "We do not seek war, but we will not abandon our citizens to the ongoing **Hamas** attacks."

The invasion started a week after Israel began slamming **Hamas** targets with air strikes, aiming to end rocket and mortar attacks from Gaza.

A column of military vehicles backed by combat helicopters rolled into northern Gaza as forces marched across the border.

Gun battles could be heard, and the night sky was illuminated by heavy artillery gunfire that sent bright lights streaking over the densely packed neighborhoods.

It was unclear how deeply the forces planned to drive into the strip, but security officials said the objective was not to reoccupy Gaza but to seize areas **Hamas** was using to launch rockets into Israel.

"Residents of Gaza are not the target of the operation," the Israeli Defense Force said in a statement.

ISRAELIS DRIVE INTO GAZA, HAMAS DEFIANT War won't be easy or short, sez Barak, but rocketing must stop

"Those who use civilians, the elderly, women and children as 'human shields' are responsible for any and all injury to the civilian population," the statement said.

More than 400 Palestinians have been killed in a week of air strikes by Israel.

Before yesterday's troop movements, Israeli artillery pounded 40 targets, including a mosque where at least 11 people, including some children, died.

With some 10,000 troops massed on the border ready to charge forward, the army dropped leaflets in downtown Gaza City early yesterday, warning people to stay off the streets.

Many residents spent the day trying to stockpile food and water, but after eight days of fighting, supplies were scarce and bread lines stretched for blocks.

As the invasion began, most people heeded the warnings and the city appeared abandoned with families huddled in their homes around the radio.

The Israeli Army also jammed Al-Aqsa TV, which is run by Hamas, and a 15-minute address was broadcast every hour by an Israeli speaking in Arabic.

"Hamas has abandoned you. Do not let Hamas use your children as human shields," said the broadcast.

Holed up in her Gaza City apartment, high school student Nour Saroor, 17, listened for news with her family.

"We are going to die," she said. "They are going to kill us. I am afraid to die," she said.

There was widespread international concern at the sudden escalation of violence.

British Foreign Secretary David Miliband repeated calls for an "immediate ceasefire" and said the situation caused "alarm and dismay."

The French Foreign Ministry said, "France condemns the Israeli ground offensive against Gaza as it condemns the continuation of rocket firing."

A White House spokesman said President Bush was briefed in the afternoon by officials who have been in contact with the Israelis.

cboyle@nydailynews.com

Graphic

Israeli soldiers massed near border advance into Gaza as first ground operation of conflict gets under way last night. Photo by Reuters Palestinian youngster surveys damage at destroyed home following Israeli air strike on Gaza City yesterday. Photo by Getty Images

Load-Date: January 4, 2009

Aiming at Hamas, but hitting Gazans; Targets intertwined with civilian areas

The International Herald Tribune

January 2, 2009 Friday

Copyright 2009 International Herald Tribune All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 1057 words

Byline: Taghreed El-Khodary - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: GAZA

Body

Marc Santora contributed reporting from the United Nations, New York.

*

A dentist stood at the bed of a doctor, his good friend Ehab Madhoun, 32, who had just died, his shrapnel-pitted body wrapped in a white shroud.

The day before, Madhoun, a general practitioner, was in an ambulance responding to an Israeli strike at the Jabalya refugee camp in northern Gaza. Another missile hit the ambulance. The driver, Muhammad Abu Hasira, died instantly. Madhoun lingered for a day, dying of his wounds on Wednesday in the intensive care unit of Shifa Hospital, where hundreds of people have been brought since Israel began its heaviest assault on Gaza in three decades.

The dentist cried.

"He was just doing his work," said the dentist, who would not give his name. "He's a doctor, and I can't understand why Israel would hit an ambulance. They can tell from the cameras it's an ambulance."

It has always been this way, over years of conflict, that civilians are killed in the densely populated Gaza Strip when Israel stages military operations it says are essential for its security. But six days of Israeli airstrikes have surpassed past operations in scale and intensity; the long-distance bombardment of the Hamas-controlled territory has, however well aimed at those suspected of being militants, splintered families and shattered homes in one of the most densely populated places on Earth.

Among the dead - between 320 and 390, according the United Nations - Palestinian officials say that 38 were children and 25 were women. The UN agency that helps Palestinian refugees said that 25 percent of those killed have been civilians. Israel said it knew of 40 civilian deaths but was still checking.

Israeli officials are coming under increasing pressure to ease conditions for civilians, with tight supplies of electricity, water, food and medicine worsening shortages in an area already largely sealed off from the outside world. Although Israel refused a 48-hour cease-fire on Wednesday suggested by the French to allow critical supplies into Gaza, it has been sensitive enough to the ever-louder complaints to say it would do all it can to allow in supplies.

Aiming at Hamas, but hitting Gazans Targets intertwined with civilian areas

On the issue of civilian casualties, Israeli officials maintain that they do not take aim at civilians and do everything possible - like using precision-guidance systems, up-to-the minute intelligence, leaflets and phone calls to targeted areas - to avoid hitting them.

They say killing and wounding civilians only undermines their primary mission: to stop Hamas from firing rockets into civilian areas of Israel.

"I haven't seen too many tears shed in Paris, London or Berlin over the fact that we have hit Hamas targets," said Mark Regev, a spokesman for the Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert. "So we have many reasons, both moral and political, for doing the utmost to make sure that our strikes are as surgical as possible."

Further complicating matters is the fact that Gaza is densely populated. Hamas facilities are intertwined with buildings where the civilian population of Gaza lives and works. Israelis say Hamas fires rockets at Israel from civilian neighborhoods.

In Gaza, human rights groups say that the new scale of the Israeli operation puts the area's civilians, even those accustomed to conflict, under particular stress. Some of the wounded are afraid to seek treatment at the already overwhelmed hospitals, fearful of heading into a rocket attack.

Large, multi-generational families huddle in their houses, hoarding the shrinking supplies of water, food and gasoline. Despite the cold, many have kept their windows open to prevent them from shattering when bombs explode nearby. Shops are closed except for grocery stores, bakeries and pharmacies.

"Conditions for parents and children in Gaza are dangerous and frightening," Maxwell Gaylard, UN humanitarian coordinator for the Palestinian territories, said in a statement.

"It is absolutely crucial that there is an end to the fighting," he said. "Without it, more civilians will continue to be killed. Without the violence stopping, it is extremely difficult to get food to people who need it; we cannot assess where the most urgent needs are."

In the debate over civilian casualties, there is no clear understanding of what constitutes a military target. Palestinians argue that since Hamas is also the government in Gaza, many of the police officers who have been killed were civil servants, not hard-core militants. Israel disagrees, asserting also that a university chemistry laboratory, which it claims was used for making rockets, was a fair target in an attack this week, even if it could not show conclusively that those inside the laboratory at the time were engaged in making weapons.

The ambiguity was evident at the intensive care ward in Shifa Hospital, where Madhoun's body lay. There were 11 patients.

One was a pharmacist, Rawya Awad, 32, who had a shrapnel wound to the head. Several were police officers. It was impossible to know the identities of many of the others.

But there were several children in another intensive care unit on Tuesday. Among them was Ismael Hamdan, 8, who had severe brain damage and two broken legs, according to a doctor there. Earlier that day, two of his sisters, Lama, 5, and Hayya, 12, had been killed.

The children were taking out the garbage when they were hit, said their mother, Ayda, 36.

"The neighbors ran trying to save Ismael, who was the only one breathing," she said. "They say my kids flew 40 meters before hitting the ground."

Ismael died Wednesday night.

At Kamal Edwan Hospital in Beit Lahiya, in northern Gaza, Mahmoud al-Sheikh, 11, was recovering from wounds he received two days before - he thinks from a rocket fired by an Israeli warplane. Even at his age, he is aware of

Aiming at Hamas, but hitting Gazans Targets intertwined with civilian areas

how fighters and civilians are mixed together in Gaza, saying that the bomb was aimed at the house of his neighbor, Salim Zaqout, whom he identified as a member of **Hamas**.

"But Zaqout and his family evacuated the house a few days ago," Mahmoud said. "Can't Israel see all these houses that are adjacent to Zaqout's? Now Zaqout's house is completely destroyed, but so are other houses that have nothing to do with **Hamas**."

"I have a big hole in my left hand. The doctor told me I'm fine. He filled the hole," Mahmoud said, "but it's hurting. It feels like fire inside it."

Load-Date: January 2, 2009

End of Document

Fears in Gaza of a wider attack; Foreigners are allowed to leave as Israeli jets pound Hamas sites for a 7th day

The International Herald Tribune

January 3, 2009 Saturday

Copyright 2009 International Herald Tribune All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 1000 words

Byline: Isabel Kershner and Taghreed El-Khodary - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Taghreed El-Khodary reported from Gaza; Rina Castelnovo contributed reporting from Ashdod, Israel; Alison Smale from Paris; and Alan Cowell from London.

*

Israeli warplanes bombed targets in Gaza for a seventh straight day Friday and allowed foreigners, many of them married to Palestinians, to leave the beleaguered enclave, raising worries among those left behind that a broader attack, including a possible ground offensive, was approaching.

A day after Israeli bombing killed a senior leader of the militant Islamic group **Hamas**, warplanes pounded Gaza overnight and early Friday, hitting some targets such as government offices that had already been pummeled in previous bombardments.

Israel says its campaign is intended to destroy the ability of **Hamas** militants to fire rockets at southern Israel. But **Hamas** officials said that more missiles were fired on Friday. There were no new reports of Israeli casualties.

Since the Israeli air offensive began last Saturday, **Hamas** has deployed longer-range rockets capable of hitting Israeli cities more than 30 kilometers, or 20 miles, away.

Palestinians whose foreign families were evacuated said about 300 spouses of Palestinians, including **women** from Russia, Romania, Ukraine and Western Europe, began leaving early Friday with the help of diplomats from their countries.

Alla Semaks, a 34-year-old Ukrainian woman married to a Palestinian, said in a telephone interview that she and her four children were among around 300 people in buses at the Erez checkpoint with Israel waiting to leave northern Gaza. Her husband, Mohammed Atawneh, 36, was not leaving because he had only Palestinian identity papers, she said.

"I want to come back when the situation allows it," she said. "I have nothing in Ukraine. My children are very afraid for their father. We fear there will be an Israeli ground offensive."

Fears in Gaza of a wider attack Foreigners are allowed to leave as Israeli jets pound Hamas sites for a 7th day

With Israeli troops and tanks massing along the border with Gaza in preparation for a possible ground invasion, Israel also pursued diplomatic avenues to explain its positions.

The Israeli foreign minister, Tzipi Livni, flew to Paris on Thursday to meet with French leaders who are seeking ways to promote a cease-fire. Before she left, Livni suggested that Israel was seeking more time for its military operation, which officials say is intended to bring an end to the rocket fire from Gaza that has plagued southern Israel for years.

On Thursday, the Israeli Air Force bombed the house of Nizar Rayyan, a senior Hamas leader, killing him along with his four wives and nine of his children, four of them under the age of 18, Palestinian hospital officials said. An Israeli military spokeswoman, Major Avital Leibovich, described Rayyan as one of the "most extreme" figures of Hamas, which controls Gaza. The military said he had helped plan a deadly suicide bombing in Israel in 2004, had sent his own son on a suicide mission against Jewish settlers in Gaza in 2001 and was advocating renewed suicide missions against Israel in retaliation for the current offensive.

Rayyan was known in Gaza as a highly influential figure with strong links to the military wing of Hamas, particularly in northern Gaza, where he lived, and as a popular Hamas preacher who openly extolled and championed the idea of martyrdom.

The Israeli military said in a statement that there were many secondary explosions after the air attack, "proving that the house was used for storing weaponry." It was also used as a communications center, the statement said, and a tunnel that had been dug under the house was used by Hamas operatives.

Most Hamas leaders in Gaza have been in hiding since the Israeli operation began, but Rayyan was said to have refused to leave his home on ideological grounds. In the past, he had been known to gather supporters to stand on the rooftops of other houses in Gaza that Israel had threatened to strike.

While hundreds of thousands of Gazans have received warnings in the form of telephone messages or fliers that their buildings are Israeli targets, Major Leibovich said she could not give details or specify whether Rayyan's family had been warned.

Hamas called on Palestinians in the West Bank and in East Jerusalem to mark Friday as a "day of wrath" by holding marches after noon prayers.

Hamas has so far responded to the Israeli military assault by firing yet more rockets deeper into the country. On Thursday, a rocket fired from Gaza struck an apartment building in the port city of Ashdod, about 20 miles north of the Palestinian territory, causing damage but no serious injuries.

Earlier Thursday, Israeli warplanes and naval forces bombed Hamas security sites, militants' houses and tunnels used for smuggling weapons, as well as symbols of the government like the landmark legislative building and the Ministry of Justice, the Israeli military said.

In Gaza City, a large section of the main street around the destroyed legislative building was filled with rubble.

Medical officials in Gaza said the number of Palestinians killed in the Israeli bombardment had topped 400. While many of the dead were Hamas security personnel, the United Nations said, a quarter of those killed were civilians. Some Israeli officials have put the number of Palestinian civilians killed at closer to 10 percent.

In France, Livni met with President Nicolas Sarkozy and Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner to share information about Israel's intentions and plans, an Israeli official said.

Livni, speaking from Paris, again rejected the idea proposed this week by Kouchner for a 48-hour lull in the fighting for humanitarian purposes.

"There is no humanitarian crisis" in Gaza, she said, "and therefore there is no need for a humanitarian truce."

Fears in Gaza of a wider attack Foreigners are allowed to leave as Israeli jets pound Hamas sites for a 7th day

The European Union has in the meantime issued a statement calling for an "immediate and permanent cease-fire." But as she left for Paris, Livni told Israel Radio that Jerusalem would not agree to a cease-fire at this point.

Sarkozy is now scheduled to stop in Israel on Monday during a tour of the Middle East.

Load-Date: January 13, 2009

End of Document

Gaza siege enters third day; Death toll passes 300 as Israeli jets step up attacks against Hamas in Palestinian territory

Edmonton Journal (Alberta)

December 29, 2008 Monday

Final Edition

Copyright 2008 Edmonton Journal, a division of Canwest MediaWorks Publication Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: NEWS; Pg. A1

Length: 1104 words

Byline: Reuters; Canwest News Service; With files from Global News

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

Israeli warplanes pounded the **Hamas**-ruled Gaza Strip for a third consecutive day today and prepared for a possible invasion after killing at least 307 Palestinians in the air raids.

Israel, which stepped up the air strikes after dark on Sunday, said it launched the campaign on Saturday in response to almost daily rocket and mortar fire that intensified after the Islamist **Hamas** group ended a six-month ceasefire a week ago.

Mark Regev, a spokesman for Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, said the military action would go on until the population in southern Israel "no longer live in terror and in fear of constant rocket barrages."

The operation could "take many days," said military spokesman Avi Benayahu.

Israeli tanks were deployed on the edge of the Gaza Strip, poised to enter the densely populated coastal enclave of 1.5 million Palestinians. Olmert's cabinet approved a call-up of 6,500 reservists, a government official said.

Hamas remained defiant and the group's spokesman Fawzi Barhoum urged Palestinian groups to use "all available means, including martyrdom operations" -- a reference to suicide bombings in Israel.

World oil prices rose as much as \$2 to nearly \$40 a barrel today as analysts said the conflict between Israel and **Hamas** had reminded traders of the geopolitical risk to crude supplies from the Middle East.

The U.N. Security Council called for a halt to the violence, but U.S. President George W. Bush's administration, in its final weeks in office, has put the onus on **Hamas** to renew the truce.

The Israeli offensive enraged Arabs across the Middle East, where protesters burned Israeli and U.S. flags to press for a stronger response from their leaders to the attack on Gaza.

Israel, whose politicians have been under pressure to act over the rocket and mortar attacks ahead of a Feb. 10 election, was feeling little international pressure to halt its offensive, said an Israeli official, who declined to be named.

Gaza siege enters third day; Death toll passes 300 as Israeli jets step up attacks against Hamas in Palestinian territory

Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon expressed Canada's grave concern over the situation and repeated Ottawa's call for calm, a return to a ceasefire and a commitment to the peace process.

Cannon reiterated that "the deliberate and constant targeting of civilians by Hamas was the main reason for these unfortunate events."

Cannon spoke Sunday to several of his counterparts, including U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Palestinian Foreign Minister Riad Malki and Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Abul Gheit and was to speak to his Israeli counterpart.

The Department of Foreign Affairs continues to advise against all travel to Gaza.

Tensions were felt across Israel and as far away as Jerusalem, Global News correspondent Lauren McNabb said Sunday as she remarked on a visible increase in police presence and checkpoints in the streets to conduct ID checks.

Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, who hopes to become prime minister after the February election, appeared to rule out a large-scale invasion to restore Israeli control of the blockaded territory, once dotted with Jewish settlements.

"Our goal is not to reoccupy Gaza Strip," she said on NBC's Meet the Press program. Asked on Fox News if Israel was out to topple Gaza's Hamas rulers, Livni said: "Not now."

Palestinian medical workers said among those killed on Sunday were five young sisters in northern Gaza and three young children in a house near the abandoned home of a Hamas leader in Rafah.

Hamas said 180 of its members had been killed and that the rest of the more than 300 dead included civilians, among them 16 women and some children.

Livni said Israel was targeting militants but "unfortunately in a war ... sometimes also civilians pay the price."

The International Red Cross said hospitals in Gaza were overwhelmed and unable to cope with the casualties.

Hamas said one Israeli air strike destroyed a laboratory building at the Islamic University in Gaza, a major cultural symbol. The Israeli army said the laboratory had been used by Hamas to develop weapons and explosives.

Keeping up pressure on Hamas after bombing that turned Saturday into one of the bloodiest days for Palestinians in 60 years of conflict, on Sunday Israeli aircraft flattened the group's main security compound in Gaza, killing at least four security men.

Israel said during the first two days of the offensive Palestinian militants fired about 150 rockets and mortar bombs at the Jewish state. An Israeli man was killed on Saturday.

Dozens of Gazans crossed into Egypt through holes opened in the border wall by bulldozers and explosives. An Egyptian border guard and a Palestinian youth died in a clash as Egyptian police tried to stop the influx, Egyptian security said. Violence also spread to the occupied West Bank, where Israeli soldiers opened fire at stone-throwing Palestinian protesters. Medical officials said two Palestinians were killed.

Forces loyal to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, whose security units were routed in Gaza when Hamas seized control of the enclave in June 2007, shot and wounded three people at a protest. Arab citizens of Israel also held protests.

She said a major highway leading to Jerusalem was temporarily shut down for fears of a militant making its way there representing an "imminent terrorist threat."

Gaza siege enters third day; Death toll passes 300 as Israeli jets step up attacks against Hamas in Palestinian territory

People in Jerusalem were talking about the incidents with a mixture of sadness and awe, she said, noting that even though the escalation was not entirely unexpected, there was sadness about how quickly the situation had deteriorated, leaving many to ponder "what now?"

But closer to Gaza, Israelis expressed relief the air strikes would perhaps bring an end to the shelling of Israeli homes.

Going into an election, Israeli leaders could not be seen as being indifferent to rocket attacks threatening Israeli security, McNabb noted.

The Israeli offensive sparked protests across the world. In the occupied West Bank, two demonstrators were killed in clashes with police.

In Syria, protesters burned Israeli and American flags as thousands demonstrated in central Damascus.

Security was tight around the U.S. embassy, which lies some two kilometres from the scene of the protest in the Syrian capital.

Demonstrators also burned Israeli flags in the Jordanian capital Amman, where hundreds of people led by Islamist lawmakers gathered to demand the closure of the Israeli embassy.

Protests were carried out in a number of Canadian cities Sunday including Montreal.

British police made 10 arrests as a demonstration outside the Israeli embassy in London turned violent. Riot police moved in after people tore down the barriers keeping them back from the embassy. Other protests took place in Paris and Madrid.

Graphic

Photo: Getty Images; Smokes rises from explosions in Gaza on Sunday ;

Photo: Montreal Gazette, Canwest News Service; Marchers in downtown Montreal on Sunday protest Israeli attacks on Gaza. ; Map: Erin Berney, The Edmonton Journal; Israeli Jets Gaza Strip for Third Day ;

Load-Date: December 29, 2008

Israel takes Israel takes bloody revenge; More than 200 killed in Gaza strikes to halt Hamas rockets

Mail on Sunday (London)

December 28, 2008 Sunday

1ST Edition

Copyright 2008 Associated Newspapers Ltd. All Rights Reserved

Section: Pg. 10

Length: 788 words

Byline: Jane Flanagan, Jonathan Petre

Body

MORE than 200 Palestinians were killed and 400 wounded as Israeli warplanes destroyed dozens of security compounds in massive air strikes across the Gaza Strip yesterday in retaliation for continuing rocket fire on Israeli border towns from militants in the enclave.

As world leaders urged restraint, Israel said the most intense assaults on Gaza for decades were just 'the beginning' and the operation would 'last as long as necessary'.

Defence minister Ehud Barak said: 'It won't be easy and it won't be short. There is a time for calm and a time for fighting and now the time has come to fight.' It was not clear, however, whether Israel was preparing to send ground forces back into the Gaza Strip, which it left in 2005.

Hamas, the Islamist faction that rules the Palestinian territory, immediately vowed revenge and several medium-range missiles were fired into Israel, killing one man and injuring four others. A spokesman said **Hamas** would continue resisting 'until the last drop of blood'.

Black clouds of smoke rose high into the air as missiles fired by scores of F-16 bombers struck more than 50 security installations and bases throughout Gaza, burying many people under rubble.

The strikes caused widespread panic and confusion, as black clouds of smoke rose above the territory, ruled by **Hamas** for the past 18 months. Some of the Israeli missiles struck in densely populated areas as children were leaving school and **women** rushed into the streets frantically looking for their children.

Mothers tried desperately to reach their children through the smoke filled the streets, along with sound of ambulance sirens the cries of grieving relatives.

Shopkeeper Said Masri, 57, who his nine- year- old son out to buy minutes before the air began, sat in the middle of a City street close to a security alternately slapping his and covering his head with dust the bombed-out building.

' My son is gone, my son is gone,' he ' May I burn like the cigarettes, may Israel burn.' Throughout the Strip, medical staff to cope with the wounded dying flooding into hospitals in vans and ambulances.

Israel takes Israel takes bloody revenge More than 200 killed in Gaza strikes to halt Hamas rockets

At Shifa Hospital, Gaza's main medical amenity, beds ran out within and bleeding bodies were up on the floors of the corridors medics fought desperately to help most severe cases. Corpses rolled in blankets also filled hospital awaiting identification.

' We are treating people on the floor, the corridors. We have no more We don't know who is here or to treat first,' said one doctor.

The Gaza Strip has been effectively sealed off from the rest of the world for many months, leaving stocks of surgical equipment, drugs and other essentials very low.

Among those who bore the brunt of the ferocious attack were 40 Palestinian cadets who had gathered for their passing-out parade at the police headquarters in Gaza City.

A **Hamas** general, who was due to take their salute, was among the pile of bodies after a massive explosion - possibly from a laser-guided bomb - tore through the parade ground where families were about to watch the ceremony.

Several of those who rushed to help the dead and injured beat their heads and shouted: 'Allahu akbar' ['God is great'].

The Israeli military authorities said they had targeted '**Hamas** terror operatives' as well as training camps and weapons storage warehouses.

Defending the raids, Israeli foreign minister Tzipi Livni said it had 'no choice' but to defend its citizens.

International reaction was swift.

Gordon Brown, the Vatican, the UN and special Middle East envoy Tony Blair all called for an immediate restoration of calm.

Shadow Foreign Secretary William Hague said: 'We deeply regret the loss of civilian life in Gaza today. We call on the Israeli government to show restraint. At the same time, we call on **Hamas** to stop the rocket attacks which are an unacceptable threat to Israel's security, so that the ceasefire, which **Hamas** failed to renew, can be urgently restored.'

The EU condemned the 'disproportionate' use of force and called for an immediate halt to air strikes and Palestinian attacks in and around Gaza. And the US urged Israel to avoid civilian casualties and called on **Hamas** to cease its missile attacks.

The Arab world reacted with shock, with Egypt summoning the Israeli ambassador in Cairo to express its condemnation of the strikes, saying it held Israel responsible for the dead and injured and calling for new efforts to restore the truce with **Hamas**. The Arab League scheduled an emergency meeting today.

The air strikes followed days of continuing rocket and mortar fire from Gaza into Israeli border towns following the end of a fragile sixmonth truce. Israel declared a state of emergency in its communities within a 12-mile range of Gaza, putting the area on a war footing..

Graphic

INNOCENT VICTIM: A wounded child waits to be treated by doctors at Gaza's main Shifa Hospital AFTERMATH: A pall of smoke hangs above Rafah as locals pick their way through the debris from one missile attack

Israel takes Israel takes bloody revenge More than 200 killed in Gaza strikes to halt Hamas rockets

Load-Date: December 28, 2008

End of Document

Obama ready to open channel to Hamas

Guardian.com

January 9, 2009

Copyright 2009 Guardian Unlimited (© Guardian Newspapers Limited) All rights reserved

theguardian

Length: 906 words

Highlight: In an exclusive story that has been picked up around the world, Suzanne Goldenberg reports in the Guardian today that Barack Obama is prepared to move away from George Bush's regime of isolating Hamas and instead establish a channel to the organisation.

Body

In an exclusive story that has been picked up around the world, Suzanne Goldenberg reports in the Guardian today that Barack Obama is prepared to move away from George Bush's regime of isolating Hamas and instead establish a channel to the organisation.

The report signals a completely new step in US foreign policy which, as Goldenberg writes, would "represent a definitive break with the Bush presidency's ostracising of the group".

Sources close to Obama's transition team have told the Guardian that, while there are no discussions about Obama approving direct diplomatic negotiations with Hamas, he is being urged to make "low-level or clandestine approaches".

Obama has been criticised thus far for his approach to the crisis in Gaza as he has not made any comment on Israel's military campaign, citing the fact that until he takes office it would be imprudent to send out foreign policy signals when he is not authorised to do so.

Goldenberg points out that in the 11 days left before his inauguration, Obama needs to make sure he has the chance to set his own foreign policy agenda, instead of being forced into reactionary mode because of the crisis in Gaza.

Last night, a UN resolution calling for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire was agreed upon and passed. The US, represented by the secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice, abstained.

Guardian: Obama camp ready to open up dialogue with Hamas

Guardian: If the president-elect engages with Hamas it would cause him all kinds of problems, warns Middle East expert Aaron David Miller

Losing interest means missing the point

The FT says the Bank of England has entered "unchartered territory" with its interest rate cut to 1.5% yesterday, the lowest since the bank was founded in 1694.

Obama ready to open channel to Hamas

The response across the board in the papers this morning is critical. David Wighton, business and city editor at the Times, writes: "The Bank of England missed the point yesterday. Not because it cut base rates to 1.5%, instead of the 1% many pundits had expected, but because lowering interest rates will do little to revive the flagging economy. Rates have already been slashed from 4.5% to 2% in the past two months and the economy has continued to weaken at an alarming pace."

Or, as the Telegraph puts it, "Since the Bank of England's creation in 1694, the cost of borrowing has never been as low as it is today. It is a measure of the depth of the recession into which we have plunged that, in the space of nine months, interest rates have been cut further and faster than any time in history."

Daily Telegraph: Government must act to prevent deeper recession

Times: This will do little to revive the flagging economy

Does mother know best?

The papers are awash with questions of maternal responsibility following the appearance of a svelte, smiling Rachida Dati, the French justice minister, dashing out of hospital five days after giving birth by caesarean section.

The Guardian has many of its women writers standing on various sides of the debate. The piece, in G2, begins with Madeleine Bunting's concerns about the high bar Dati sets for other women.

"The problem with Dati's astonishing example is that it sets a new bar in the already immensely fissile public consensus about how a woman is to combine mothering and her career. Even more enlightened bosses - those who have come to accept that having babies is not something one squeezes in around ones career - will sneak a look at Dati's example with admiration and conclude that this is what commitment looks like."

The issue is also examined in one of the paper's leaders.

"She was supposed to be the very symbol of how merit and graft made everything possible in France. Or so President Sarkozy said on appointing Rachida Dati ... Today however, Ms Dati is a symbol of something else: the acute dilemmas women face in reconciling family and work."

Guardian: Just five days off

Guardian: French lessons

You broke my heart, now give me my kidney

A broken-hearted surgeon in the midst of divorce proceedings from his wife of 18 years is asking that she now return the kidney that he donated to her. Richard Batista, 49, from Long Island, has gone to court over the issue of the organ he donated eight years ago to save his wife Dawnell. He claims she had an affair, prompting the separation.

"There is no deeper pain you can ever express than to be betrayed by the person you devoted your life to. I saved her life, but the pain is unbearable." His lawyer, Dominic Barbara, said Batista wanted \$1.5m (£988,000) compensation for the kidney.

"In theory we are asking for the return of the kidney. Of course, he wouldn't really ask for that, but the value of it. This has never been done before in the state of New York."

The Times: Have the divorce, I want my kidney back

Daily Telegraph: Surgeon demands 'kidney' from estranged wife

The strong, smoky taste of squirrel crisps

Obama ready to open channel to Hamas

New on the shelves from today: cajun squirrel flavoured crisps. Emerging from a competition by Walkers for new flavours, the "strong, smoky taste" of the squirrel crisps is just one of the new offerings.

According to the Mail's page three, the flavours have been chosen from more than a million entrants. Also available are chilli and chocolate (chocolate flavour muted and little traces of chilli), fish and chips (which come with a very strong fish flavour) and builders' breakfast (smoky bacon and ketchup).

Daily Mail: Will snack lovers go nuts for squirrel flavoured crisps?

Load-Date: January 9, 2009

End of Document

We must adjust our distorted image of Hamas; Gaza is a secular society where people listen to pop music, watch TV and many women walk the streets unveiled

The Times (London)

December 31, 2008 Wednesday

Edition 1, Ireland

Copyright 2008 Times Newspapers Limited All Rights Reserved

THE TIMES

Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. 19

Length: 980 words

Byline: William Sieghart

Body

Last week I was in Gaza. While I was there I met a group of 20 or so police officers who were undergoing a course in conflict management. They were eager to know whether foreigners felt safer since Hamas had taken over the Government? Indeed we did, we told them. Without doubt the past 18 months had seen a comparative calm on the streets of Gaza; no gunmen on the streets, no more kidnappings. They smiled with great pride and waved us goodbye.

Less than a week later all of these men were dead, killed by an Israeli rocket at a graduation ceremony. Were they "dangerous Hamas militant gunmen"? No, they were unarmed police officers, public servants killed not in a "militant training camp" but in the same police station in the middle of Gaza City that had been used by the British, the Israelis and Fatah during their periods of rule there.

This distinction is crucial because while the horrific scenes in Gaza and

Israel play themselves out on our television screens, a war of words is being fought that is clouding our understanding of the realities on the ground.

Who or what is Hamas, the movement that Ehud Barak, the Israeli Defence Minister, would like to wipe out as though it were a virus? Why did it win the Palestinian elections and why does it allow rockets to be fired into Israel? The story of Hamas over the past three years reveals how the Israeli, US and UK governments' misunderstanding of this Islamist movement has led us to the brutal and desperate situation that we are in now.

The story begins nearly three years ago when Change and Reform - Hamas's political party - unexpectedly won the first free and fair elections in the Arab world, on a platform of ending endemic corruption and improving the almost non-existent public services in Gaza and the West Bank. Against a divided opposition this ostensibly religious party impressed the predominantly secular community to win with 42 per cent of the vote.

We must adjust our distorted image of Hamas Gaza is a secular society where people listen to pop music, watch TV and many women walk the streets unveiled

Palestinians did not vote for Hamas because it was dedicated to the destruction of the state of Israel or because it had been responsible for waves of suicide bombings that had killed Israeli citizens. They voted for Hamas because they thought that

Fatah, the party of the rejected Government, had failed them.

Despite renouncing violence and recognising the state of Israel Fatah had not achieved a Palestinian state.

It is crucial to know this to understand the supposed rejectionist position of Hamas. It won't recognise Israel or renounce the right to resist until it is sure of the world's commitment to a just solution to the Palestinian issue.

In the five years that I have been visiting Gaza and the West Bank, I have met hundreds of Hamas politicians and supporters. None of them has professed the goal of Islamising Palestinian society, Taleban-style. Hamas relies on secular voters too much to do that.

People still listen to pop music, watch television and women still choose whether to wear the veil or not.

The political leadership of Hamas is probably the most highly qualified in the world. Boasting more than 500 PhDs in its ranks, the majority are middle-class professionals - doctors, dentists, scientists and engineers.

Most of its leadership have been educated in our universities and harbour no ideological hatred towards the West. It is a grievance-based movement, dedicated to addressing the injustice done to its people. It has consistently offered a ten-year ceasefire to give breathing space to resolve a conflict that has continued for more than 60 years.

The Bush-Blair response to the Hamas victory in 2006 is the key to today's horror. Instead of accepting the democratically elected Government, they funded an attempt to remove it by force; training and arming groups of Fatah fighters to unseat Hamas militarily and impose a new, unelected government on the Palestinians. Further, 45 Hamas MPs are still being held in Israeli jails.

Six months ago the Israeli Government agreed to an Egyptianbrokered ceasefire with Hamas. In return for a ceasefire, Israel agreed to open the crossing points and allow a free flow of essential supplies in and out of Gaza. The rocket barrages ended but the crossings never fully opened, and the people of Gaza began to starve. This crippling embargo was no reward for peace.

When Westerners ask what is in the mind of Hamas leaders when they order or allow rockets to be fired at Israel they fail to understand the Palestinian position. Two months ago the Israeli Defence Forces broke the ceasefire by entering Gaza and beginning the cycle of killing again..

In the Palestinian narrative each round of rocket attacks is a response to Israeli attacks. In the Israeli narrative it is the other way round.

But what does it mean when Mr Barak talks of destroying Hamas? Does it mean killing the 42 per cent of Palestinians who voted for it? Does it mean reoccupying the Gaza strip that Israel withdrew from so painfully three years ago? Or does it mean permanently separating the Palestinians of Gaza and the West Bank, politically and geographically? And for those whose mantra is Israeli security, what sort of threat do the three quarters of a million young people growing up in Gaza with an implacable hatred of those who starve and bomb them pose? It is said that this conflict is impossible to solve. In fact, it is very simple. The top 1,000 people who run Israel - the politicians, generals and security staff - and the top Palestinian Islamists have never met.

Genuine peace will require that these two groups sit down together without preconditions. But the events of the past few days seem to have made this more unlikely than ever. That is the challenge for the new administration in Washington and for its European allies.

William Sieghart is chairman of Forward Thinking, an independent conflict resolution agency

We must adjust our distorted image of Hamas Gaza is a secular society where people listen to pop music,
watch TV and many women walk the streets unveiled

The political leadership boasts more than 500 PhDs in its ranks

Load-Date: July 27, 2009

End of Document