

Date and Time: Friday, May 3, 2024 4:33:00PM EEST

Job Number: 223447142

## Documents (100)

1. Israel to free Palestinians after deal for film of captive soldier

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

2. Goldstone's sorry search for symmetry

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

3. Israel Releases First Palestinian Detainee In Prisoner-Video Exchange Deal

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

4. With growing despair comes rising piety More and more Palestinians in Gaza are embracing their Muslim faith amid hard times in the territory

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

5. Netanyahu cautious on prisoner swap 'There is still no deal, and I do not know if there will be one,' he says

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

6. In Israel's Sderot, a reprieve from rockets, but not fear Israel's offensive in Gaza largely stopped the Hamas rocket fire. But residents are reluctant to let down their guard.

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

7. Gaza should suspend dress code order: HRW

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

8. Israel Receives Video of Captured Soldier in Exchange for Release of Prisoners

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

9. Schalit prisoner swap could bring freedom for 'next leader' of Fatah Nearly 1,000 Palestinians may be released Middle East

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

10. Israel to Free 20 Palestinian Women in Return for Proof Abducted Soldier Is Alive

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

#### 11. Israeli soldier appears well despite captivity

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

#### 12. Israel 's right to defend citizens is a just cause

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

#### 13. 'Goldstone report - the terrorists' Magna Carta'

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

#### 14. Israel ordered to release 20 Palestinian prisoners

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

#### 15. Palestinian reconciliation through the ballot box

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Dec 31, 2009

16. Netanyahu Plays Down Talk of a Prisoner Exchange

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

17. Talking of conscience - when will Israel get one?

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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Dec 31, 2009

18. Pakistan: Reconciliation through ballot box

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

19. Prisoners swapped for captured soldier's video Israel

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

20. Wear the headscarf, Gaza women lawyers told

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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Dec 31, 2009

#### 21. World - Video swap to see 20 freed from prisons

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

# 22. WE'LL SWAP 19 WOMEN PRISONERS FOR 1 VIDEO OF HOSTAGE FIRST PIC OF SEIZED ISRAELI IN

3YRS

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

23. 'A necessary operation'

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

24. The downs, and less downs, of enjoying Ramadan in occupied Gaza City

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

25. As the world sees it...

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

# 26. <u>Video gives first glimpse of captive Israeli soldier Sergeant seems healthy; 19 Palestinians released in deal</u> to get recording

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

#### 27. Fatah to vote for its executive body, assembly

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

#### 28. Letters - Goldstone Report on Gaza was guided by politics - not by human rights

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Dec 31, 2009

#### 29. OPINION: The slippery slope -Uri Avnery

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

#### 30. World - 300,000 Gazans live in 'abject poverty'

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

#### 31. Proof of life: hostage soldier appears on video after three years in captivity Israel

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

#### 32. IDF 'does not target civilians'

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

#### 33. Israel rejects EU advocacy of Jerusalem as shared capital

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

#### 34. Goldstone report undermines faith in international law

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

#### 35. Soldier tape spurs Israeli release of prisoners

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

#### 36. A member of the Goldstone panel speaks



Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

#### 37. VIDEO SHOWS ISRAELI SOLDIER

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

#### 38.\_YEAREND SPECIAL: Gaza remains under siege, more delays in Palestinian truce

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

#### 39. Prisoners freed for Shalit tape Israel releases 19 Palestinian women

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

#### 40. Jerusalem blasts Red Cross for its report slamming Israel

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

#### 41. Columnist's False Premise On Israel

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

42. Israel sees video of captured soldier

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

43. The smearing of human rights organizations

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

44. 20th female prisoner in Schalit video deal released to Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

45. Israel Releases 19 Palestinian Prisoners For Captured Troop's Video

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

46. Anti-democratic interests hijack UN 's human rights agenda

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

#### 47. Israel swaps Palestinian women for soldier tape

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

#### 48. We cannot ignore Gaza horror

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

#### 49. Israel frees Palestinian women in video swap

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

#### 50. Reports about Israel 's belligerence are untruths

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

## 51. Scars of conflict still raw in Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

## 52. Israel frees Palestinian women after Gilad Shalit video

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

#### 53. ISRAELI SOLDIER KIDNAPPED THREE YEARS AGO IS ALIVE

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

#### 54. Gaza conflict brought accusations of war crimes against both sides

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

#### 55. While media reports hint agreement is near, obstacles still remain

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

#### 56. Judeh to hold talks with Turkish FM

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

#### 57. Israel in firing line over blitz on Gaza Report to UN expected to condemn conduct of the war



Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

58. One for one

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

59. Israel offers to free prisoners for video of captured soldier

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

60. Our irredeemable international system

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

61. Swap to yield videotape of Israeli soldier

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

62. Rights group acknowledges Palestinians used civilians as human shields in Cast Lead. Human Rights

Watch: Action still doesn't justify army response \* Group's report due today on alleged killing by IDF of 11

Palestinians holding white flags

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

63. International: Video shows captured Israeli soldier looking well

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

64. Female prisoners freed following video release

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

65. GAZA ONE YEAR ON To mark the anniversary of the offensive which left hundreds of innocent civilians dead, Donald MacIntyre revisits the scene of one of the most horrifying conflicts of our time

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

66. UN 's bias binds Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

67. Israel gets video of captive soldier Sergeant seems healthy; 19 Palestinians released in deal to get recording

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

#### 68. Fatah hopes its revival will restore lost trust

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

#### 69. Female lawyers ordered to wear headscarves

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

#### 70. Bereaved mothers: Bring home Schalit 'at any cost'

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

#### 71. Abbas needs to remain credible Analysis

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

#### 72. Video shows kidnapped Israeli soldier well

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

73. New development in Schalit case is small but important step, says Peres. French ambassador pledges to work for soldier's release and 'move quickly' on Iran sanctions

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

74. After the bombing, drug addiction strikes Gaza Under siege and grappling with joblessness, factional violence and the aftermath of war, Gazans are turning to pills as they seek to escape reality. Donald Macintyre speaks to a mental health group struggling to help addicts

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

75. High Court upholds gov't ban on family visits to Gazans jailed in Israel

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Dec 31, 2009

76. THEIR OWN WORST ENEMIES

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

77. An underworld of tunnels brings life to the cut-off world of Gaza

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

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Dec 31, 2009

78. Israeli soldier footage released

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

79. Grim omens as US envoy pursues Mideast peace

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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80. Palestinians face bleak future as frustrated leader threatens to quit

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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81. Furor Sends Palestinians Into Shift on U.N. Report

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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82. Anti- Israel ? Big surprise

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

83. No rest for Gaza's Sinai smugglers

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

84. Israel used human shields in Gaza, claims Amnesty International; 'Hideous' injury from flechettes,

phosphorus

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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85. Fatah 'old guard' seen determined to keep out younger representatives

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

86. Abbas essential to Middle East hopes

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

87. Abbas says peace deal is possible in 6 months if settlements are frozen for that time

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

88. Israel 's war on humanity

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type Narrowed by

News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

89. News in brief

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

90. Cannes should can this

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

91. The people's eyes are bright, discerning and not amused

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

92. Security and Economic Revival Raise Hopes in the West Bank

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009



93. News in brief

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to

Dec 31, 2009

94. Gaza health officials report first 5 cases of swine flu, UN warns of vaccine shortage

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

95. It looks like law, but it's just politics

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

96. Israel to free women for video proving Shalit is alive Father of Israeli corporal held hostage for three years

praises German negotiators

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

97. World datelines

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

98. Guardian Weekly: International News: Video message from Shalit



Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

99. Goods Flood Gaza's Tunnels, Turning Border With Egypt Into a Shopping Mecca

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Dec 31, 2009

100. Prosecuting SA citizens in foreign armies welcomed

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

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# Israel to free Palestinians after deal for film of captive soldier

#### The Irish Times

October 1, 2009 Thursday

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Section: WORLD; Other World Stories; Pg. 13

Length: 414 words

Byline: MARK WEISS in Jerusalem

# **Body**

ISRAEL IS set to release 20 Palestinian <u>women</u> prisoners tomorrow in return for a one-minute video released by <u>Hamas</u> in Gaza providing proof that Gilad Shalit, the Israeli soldier captured by militants in 2006, is alive and well.

<u>Hamas</u> representatives in Gaza said the video clip, which has already been viewed by German mediators, will also contain details showing it was made recently.

Militants holding the corporal, who was seized during an audacious cross-border raid, have refused Israeli demands for Red Cross access to him.

Three letters written in captivity by the soldier have been transferred to his family, but this will be the first video footage of Gilad Shalit, now aged 23, made since his capture.

Both sides expressed hope the release will mark the first step towards a larger prisoner swap, under which Israel is expected to free hundreds of Palestinian detainees in exchange for Shalit.

Israel yesterday released the names of the <u>women</u> prisoners proposed for release in order to allow opponents of the deal to appeal to the country s High Court. However, the judicial branch has always rejected such appeals in the past.

Nineteen of the <u>women</u> were from the West Bank and one from Gaza. Fourteen of them were accused of attempted murder, but none was sent to prison for attacks which resulted in Israeli fatalities.

Most of them were due to end their prison terms by next year at the latest. Four of the <u>women</u> were members of <u>Hamas</u>, five were from the rival Fatah, three were members of Islamic Jihad and the others were from smaller Palestinian factions.

<u>Hamas</u> deputy politburo chief Moussa Abu Marzouk said the deal is an important step that lays the groundwork for the release of all the Palestinian prisoners .

The Shalit family put out a statement welcoming the deal as a significant achievement. We wish to stress that although this is a first step in the right direction, the family will not rest until Gilad is freed after almost 1,200 days in which he has been held in a *Hamas* prison. Both sides must continue the determined process that has recently begun until the final result is quickly achieved, the statement concluded.

#### Israel to free Palestinians after deal for film of captive soldier

Egyptian security sources stressed that efforts will continue, via Egyptian and German mediators, to bring about a comprehensive prisoner swap between Israel and *Hamas*.

News of the video deal came just hours after Israeli jets targeted smuggling tunnels on the border between Gaza and Egypt, killing two Palestinians and wounding six others.

Load-Date: October 1, 2009

**End of Document** 



# Goldstone's sorry search for symmetry

The Jerusalem Post September 30, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 13

Length: 1022 words

Byline: ELIHU RICHTER

**Highlight:** The judge neglected to apply the lessons of his Rwanda tribunals to incitement to genocide by <u>Hamas</u> and its enabler, Iran. Right of Reply. The writer is head of the Genocide Prevention Program at Hebrew University-Hadassah School of Public Health and Community Medicine and associate director at Institute on the Holocaust and Genocide, Jerusalem, and head of World Genocide Situation Room at Genocide Prevention Now (GPN).

## **Body**

I can prove the phoniness of Judge Goldstone's claim in his Jerusalem Post op-ed September 22 in which he claimed that had the Israeli government submitted its case to his Commission, the latter could have been encouraged to move in a new direction, "beneficial to Israeli interests." The implication of Goldstone's statement is that Israel, not the Commission, is responsible for the latter's errors of omission and commission.

I personally submitted a nine-page, annotated and referenced brief to the Commission last July. Goldstone's claim that the Commission was driven by the evidence is refuted by the fact that the Mission ignored my brief and its attached evidence. Subsequently, I have published additional evidence showing that the high male-<u>female</u> ratio of fatalities among Palestinians in Gaza argues for the combatant status of many whom human rights organizations classified as non-combatants, and supports other investigations making the same point.

The punch lines of my brief were:

"Between June 1, 2008, and Jan 29, 2009, the UN's executive organs, the Security Council and the Human Rights Council, remained silent in the face of [*Hamas*' and Iran's] incitement, [to genocide], ignoring their responsibilities under the UN Genocide Convention. This silence persisted despite the precedents from previous genocides, notably Rwanda, that such hate language is a warning sign, predictor, and catalyst of genocide....

If the Commission fails to call for criminal prosecution of the known facts concerning the cruel and inhuman mistreatment of Gilad Schalit, the <u>Hamas</u> rocket and terror attacks directed against civilians, and the incitement and hate language by <u>Hamas</u> and Iran, it will recycle the culture of impunity for such violations of human rights to life, respect for life and human dignity. By failing to pursue these actions, it will itself have become a complicit bystander to these crimes...."

IN SUPPORT of the above points, I submitted Elena Bonner's eloquent statement on behalf of Gilad Schalit, data on Israel providing more medical permits to Gazans during a period of increasing rocket attacks, and documentation of <u>Hamas</u>' and Iran's incitement to genocide using the dehumanizing metaphors of Mein-Kampf type hate language. Iran, as is well known, is a supplier, enabler, instructor and enabler of <u>Hamas</u>, and its government is now the world's epicenter for incitement to genocide.

#### Goldstone's sorry search for symmetry

The Goldstone Commission ignored all the above. In short, the Commission was not driven by the evidence, but by its preset agenda and rigged mandate.

Judge Goldstone, in his past capacity as Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal Rwanda (ICT-R), knows that incitement to genocide is a crime against humanity, as specified by the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide and the Rome Statute of the international Criminal Court.

The ICT-R presided over the trials of six Rwandan journalists and public figures who were found guilty of genocidal incitement on Rwanda's one radio station. Later, the Supreme Court of Canada upheld the conviction of Leon Mugasera, a Rwandan official who fled to Canada, even though his incitement preceded the genocide in Rwanda by several years - a noteworthy precedent for prosecuting Ahmadinejad and *Hamas*. In May, the UN Gazette reported the trial of Dominique Ntawukulilyayo, the former prefect of Butare, had opened before the ICT-R in Arusha. Ntawukulilyayo faced three counts of genocide, including incitement to genocide, and the charges included failing to prevent, aiding and abetting and, in some cases, even ordering genocidal killings in areas under his jurisdiction. This man was arrested in France in late 2007 and extradited to the ICT-R a year ago.

Just last week, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei repeated his statement that Israel is a cancerous tumor, and Ahmadinejad again used the UN as a platform to promote his demonization of Israel. Both over the years have repeatedly used dehumanizing metaphors of Mein Kampf and Nazi propaganda, e.g. cancer, microbes, filth, disease - the worst form of incitement.

Genocide scholars and experts on international criminal law recognize that state sanctioned incitement to genocide is an early warning sign, predictor, promoter and catalyst of genocide. But Goldstone, despite the Rwandan precedent, has been loudly silent on proposals such as the Responsibility to Prevent Petition of Professor of Irwin Cotler, calling for the indictment of Ahmadinejad for his incitement to genocide, Iran's illegal pursuit of nuclear weapons and brutal suppression of human rights, and he has been a bystander to <u>Hamas</u> incitement to genocide.

IN HIS search for the appearance of false symmetry between Israel - a society committed to life, live and let live, and <u>Hamas</u> - an authoritarian, repressive terror organization committed to death, Judge Goldstone has advanced the use of "asymmetric lawfare" on behalf of the asymmetric warfare waged by genocidal terrorists ("armed organizations" in his report). Judge Goldstone's ignoring of state-sanctioned incitement and hate language by <u>Hamas</u> and its benefactor, Iran, is the equivalent of a traffic cop ignoring radar evidence that a driver is doing 190 kph on a city street and has a blood alcohol concentration of 0.30%.

Judge Goldstone has been negligent in failing to apply the lessons of the Rwanda tribunals - his tribunals - to incitement to genocide by <u>Hamas</u> and Iran, its enabler. He should endorse the call of Michael Ignatieff, the leader of the Canadian Liberal Party, to indict all those Iranian leaders who are using Mein Kampf type language to incite to genocide, and do the same for **Hamas** and Hizbullah.

He has become a bystander - the worst thing one can say about a professional dealing with incitement to genocide - and the defense attorney for genocidal terror. My prediction is that infamy will be his destiny.

A last point: What counts is not whether the rulings of the Commission are or are not "beneficial to Israel's interests," but whether they serve justice, life and respect for life for all, everywhere, now and tomorrow.

They do not.

# **Graphic**

Photo: JUDGE RICHARD Goldstone presents his report to the Human Rights Council in Geneva yesterday, urging the international community to end 'the culture of impunity' in the Mideast. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

**End of Document** 



# Israel Releases First Palestinian Detainee In Prisoner-Video Exchange Deal

RTT News (United States)
October 1, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 354 words

# **Body**

(RTTNews) - Israel has released the first of the 20 Palestinian <u>women</u> prisoners it had agreed to free in exchange for a recent videotape that would prove Gilad Shalit, an Israeli soldier abducted by <u>Hamas</u> militants in 2006, to be still alive, according to Israeli media reports.

The reports said the 15-year-old Bara Malki was released late Wednesday. She is said to have returned to returned to her home in the Jalazone refugee camp near the West Bank city of Ramallah, following her release.

Malki was serving a 11-month prison sentence when she was released. She was imprisoned for attempted murder and an attack on a police officer, and was due to be released in November.

Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit was captured by <u>Hamas</u> militants in a cross-border raid in June 2006. He has not been seen since his capture by <u>Hamas</u> militants.

The Israeli cabinet Wednesday agreed to release 20 Palestinian <u>women</u> prisoners in exchange for a recent videotape confirming Shalit was still alive. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu&apos;s office said in a statement on that the deal was proposed by international mediators as a "confidence-building measure."

<u>Hamas</u> confirmed the deal, when a spokesman for the armed wing of the organization told reporters at a press conference in Gaza that 19 of the Palestinian <u>women</u> prisoners would be released in the West Bank, while the 20th one will be released from Gaza along with the child she bore in prison.

Israel, holding about 10,000 Palestinians as prisoners, Wednesday said it would continue with negotiations for Shalit's release, though that it expects the talks to be "long and arduous." The Palestinian militants are said to be demanding the release of 1,000 prisoners in exchange for Shalit's release.

Previous Egyptian-mediated negotiations between Israeli officials and <u>Hamas</u> militants on a prisoner exchange scheme ended dead-locked after the two sides failed to agree on the number of Palestinian prisoners to be released in exchange for the release of Shalit.

For comments and feedback: contact editorial@rttnews.com

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Load-Date: April 17, 2010



# With growing despair comes rising piety; More and more Palestinians in Gaza are embracing their Muslim faith amid hard times in the territory

#### The Toronto Star

September 12, 2009 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A16

Length: 508 words

Byline: Linda Gradstein, SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Dateline: GAZA CITY

# **Body**

Five times a day, the Muslim call to prayer echoes through the dusty streets of Gaza.

During the holy month of Ramadan, many Palestinians here are even more careful to observe Islamic precepts, going to the mosque every day to pray and fasting from sun-up to sundown.

Gazan society has always been religiously conservative. But lately it's become even more so.

Analysts here say the growing piety is at least partially connected to a feeling of hopelessness on the part of many Gazans.

An Israeli-imposed economic boycott on Gaza after <u>Hamas</u> won Palestinian elections in 2006 means it is almost impossible to leave the territory. Egypt has closed its border with Gaza for most of that time as well, and many feel trapped.

"People are becoming more and more desperate," said Hassan Abu Jarad, a professor of linguistics at Gaza's Al-Aqsa University.

"They are angry at everybody, at Israel, at (Palestinian President Mahmoud) Abbas and at Hamas."

Many turn to Islam as a solution for their troubles. In the densely populated Gaza Strip, there are few entertainment outlets. The mosque and classes in religion become a social as well as a religious outlet.

The overwhelming majority of Gazan girls and <u>women</u> wear hijab, or a head scarf covering their hair, and increasing numbers are wearing niqab, a burqa-like garment that covers everything but the eyes.

There have been several reports about <u>Hamas</u> imposing an Islamic dress code in schools, insisting girls wear a head scarf and a jilbab, a long coat-like dress. But <u>Hamas</u> senior official Ahmed Yusuf says it has not imposed any dress code and has no intention of doing so.

"Every Muslim knows there is no compulsion in religion," said Yusuf in an interview in his office in Gaza City. "No one will say you have to wear the head scarf or the special clothes. We leave it to our Islamic culture and our family values. The family will convince their kids to wear what they should to meet the basic Islamic values."

With growing despair comes rising piety More and more Palestinians in Gaza are embracing their Muslim faith amid hard times in the territory

Israel has also tried to challenge <u>Hamas</u>'s authority with its economic boycott on the Gaza Strip. While essential foods and some fuel are allowed in, hundreds of consumer goods, including tea, shoes, <u>women</u>'s clothes, and stationery are in short supply.

Last winter, Israel attacked Gaza after thousands of rockets fired from Gaza landed in southern Israel. In three weeks of fighting, almost 1,400 Palestinians were killed. The Israeli human rights group B'Tzelem this week issued a report claiming the majority of those killed were civilians. The Israeli army says most of the dead were *Hamas* fighters.

In that fighting some 4,000 homes were completely destroyed and another 17,000 partially damaged. Although the international community pledged \$7 billion (U.S.) for reconstruction efforts, Israel has so far refused to allow cement or iron to enter Gaza.

United Nations figures say more than 1 million people in Gaza out of a total of 1.5 million are still completely dependent on food aid.

"People are disappointed, dismayed and disillusioned," said Haider Eid, a professor at al-Aqsa University.

# **Graphic**

MAHMUD HAMS afp getty images Palestinian schoolgirls, clad in head scarves, began classes in Gaza City amid reports *Hamas* had imposed a more conservative dress code.

Load-Date: September 12, 2009

**End of Document** 



# Netanyahu cautious on prisoner swap; 'There is still no deal, and I do not know if there will be one,' he says

The International Herald Tribune November 25, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 782 words

Byline: Isabel Kershner

Dateline: JERUSALEM

# **Body**

#### **ABSTRACT**

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Tuesday that talks were still underway expectations of an imminent deal with *Hamas* to exchange an Israeli soldier captured in 2006 for hundreds of Palestinian security prisoners.

#### **FULL TEXT**

Seeking to lower expectations of an imminent deal with the Islamic group <u>Hamas</u> to exchange a captured Israeli soldier for hundreds of Palestinian security prisoners, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Tuesday that no agreement had yet been reached.

"There is still no deal, and I do not know if there will be one," Mr. Netanyahu said as he toured the national police headquarters here.

His remarks came as <u>Hamas</u> leaders gathered in Cairo for critical talks mediated by Egyptian and German officials on the terms of a possible exchange, and may have been partly intended as last-minute brinkmanship by the Israeli side.

Mr. Netanyahu also addressed domestic criticism of the strict censorship that Israel has imposed on the details of the talks, leading to charges that the leadership is muzzling public debate.

The deal that seems to be taking shape puts many Israelis in a predicament. While there is a strong public desire to see the soldier, Staff Sgt. Gilad Shalit, return, the prospect of releasing Palestinian prisoners convicted of masterminding suicide bombings and other terrorist acts is repugnant to many and a source of profound concern.

A mass prisoner release credited to <u>Hamas</u> could also have far-reaching implications for regional politics and stability, though it is not clear how dramatic the impact would be.

Should there be such a swap, Mr. Netanyahu said, "we will not be sparing with a public discussion. We will not do it as a fait accompli. We will allow the cabinet ministers and the public in general to discuss the issue."

Netanyahu cautious on prisoner swap 'There is still no deal, and I do not know if there will be one,' he says

Sergeant Shalit was seized by <u>Hamas</u> and other Palestinian militant groups in a cross-border raid in June 2006 and was dragged into Gaza. He was 19 at the time. Several weeks ago, Israel released 20 Palestinian <u>women</u> from its jails in exchange for a videotape of the Israeli soldier proving that he was alive.

The video was seen here as a sign of progress after years of public campaigning and unsuccessful negotiations for his release.

Likewise, for the Palestinians, the prisoner issue is a highly emotional one, with tens of thousands having passed through Israeli jails over the past four decades.

But the Palestinians are now at a delicate juncture, split between <u>Hamas</u>-ruled Gaza and the Fatah-dominated Palestinian Authority, whose powers are now confined to the West Bank.

A prisoner release orchestrated by <u>Hamas</u> would probably pose a new challenge for the Western-backed authority and its president, Mahmoud Abbas. The possibility that a deal could include the release of Marwan Barghouti, a popular Fatah leader, could also shake things up within Fatah.

Mr. Barghouti was sentenced by Israel to five life terms in 2004 for involvement in the killing of civilians. A leader of Fatah's so-called young guard, he is often touted as a potential successor to Mr. Abbas, who recently declared that he did not intend to run for another term as president.

Reflecting the awkwardness that a deal on Sergeant Shalit might pose for the Abbas government, Salam Fayyad, the prime minister and a political independent, made no direct mention of it in a speech he made Tuesday at an international conference in the West Bank town of Jericho on the rights of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails.

Yet he called for the "immediate release" of "pillars" of the prisoner community, including Mr. Barghouti and Ahmad Saadat, a leader of the leftist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine who was convicted of ordering the assassination of an Israeli cabinet minister in 2001. And repeating a point often made by Mr. Abbas, Mr. Fayyad said there would be no final agreement with Israel until all Palestinian prisoners were freed.

Ghassan Khatib, a spokesman for the Palestinian Authority, said the authority "welcomes the release of any prisoner," but that the emerging Shalit deal was "not something to talk about."

"There is a great deal of uncertainty and the negotiations are secret, in addition to the fact that they are not being done by the Palestinian Authority," he said. He acknowledged that *Hamas* was bound to gain from any such deal.

Earlier Tuesday, Israel's minister of industry and trade, Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, told Army Radio that a prisoner exchange deal was "moving toward completion in the very near future." Mr. Ben-Eliezer was in Turkey on a mission to patch up Turkish-Israeli relations, which deteriorated sharply after Israel's deadly military offensive against *Hamas* in Gaza last winter.

Load-Date: November 24, 2009



# In Israel's Sderot, a reprieve from rockets, but not fear; Israel's offensive in Gaza largely stopped the Hamas rocket fire. But residents are reluctant to let down their guard.

The Christian Science Monitor September 2, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 531 words

Byline: Joshua Mitnick Correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor

# **Body**

During nearly a decade of intermittent attacks from Gaza, Mivtzah Kadesh Street became infamous in this battered town as a frequent target for rockets as well as a bombed-out backdrop for visits from foreign VIPs expressing solidarity. Now, eight months after Israel's Gaza offensive to punish *Hamas* for attacks, Sderot's wrecked homes have been largely rebuilt. But after eight years of being on constant alert for unpredictable rocket attacks, it has not been as easy for Sderot's 19,000 residents to restore their peace of mind. Yehudit Barkai, a field worker in Sderot for Natal, the Israel Trauma Coalition, compares Sderot's experience with America's. "9/11 happened once.

It was terrible, but it was only once," says Ms. Barkai, who says that many in Sderot suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. "We're talking about eight years." Sderot's experience is unique even for Israel: No other town here has endured such sustained stress for such a long period of time. Though casualties have been relatively low, the fear of attacks has taken a toll in this town less than three miles from the Gazan border. "Every small noise can reawaken the fear," says Aliza Amar, a mother of four who last summer hosted then-presidential nominee Barack Obama in her wrecked home. "Anytime a door slams or a car alarm goes off you still hear the 'code red' alert." "I would leave if I had more money," says Shula Sasson, a mother of five who lives next door and spent a week in the hospital because of mental trauma from the rocket barrages. Since the last missile hit Sderot in May, there has been only one attempted attack, in which a "code red" alarm was sounded but no rockets hit the town. But amid Israeli press reports that Hamas is rearming with smuggled weapons, even kids here utter the mantra that it's merely "the calm before the storm." In the town center, the signs of conflict can be seen in the roadside billboards that advertise air conditioners for in-home safe rooms. A cross-border mortar attack last week with no casualties is considered a bad omen. And so, families that rented flats in neighboring areas to escape the missile barrage have not yet returned. Children do not venture far from home, and adults forgo evening outings. At the Diyo restaurant, that means owner Haim Cohen has only recovered 30 percent of his business since the war, an offensive he nevertheless supported. "Now that they [Gazans] took a big hit, they'll think 1,000 times before shooting more rockets." Across the street at Yaffa's hair salon, a group of women listen to the recounting of a recent nightmare in which someone is badly wounded by Qassam rocket shrapnel. "It was a bad period of helplessness. We're trying to be optimistic and get back to normal," says Levana Sasporta, a grandmother in the salon. "But you can't be complacent. There [is] no [assurance] it won't happen again." But unlike most residents here, she empathizes with Gazans. "I don't support killing Arabs," says Mrs. Sasporta, who says her son fought in the Gaza war and was "torn" between the destruction there and the attacks in Israel. "They are God's creation as well." Related: Why Gaza's moderates are losing hope

In Israel 's Sderot , a reprieve from rockets, but not fear Israel 's offensive in Gaza largely stopped the Hamas rocket fire. But residents are reluctant to le....

Load-Date: February 19, 2010

**End of Document** 



# Gaza should suspend dress code order: HRW

#### AlArabiya.net

September 3, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 725 words

# **Body**

<u>Hamas</u> authorities in Gaza should suspend all orders that violate personal freedoms, including imposition of an Islamic dress code for <u>female</u> students, Human Rights Watch said today.

Human Rights Watch has received reports from Gaza residents that since the school year opened in late August, schools have been turning away <u>female</u> students for not wearing a headscarf or traditional gown, on the basis of new unofficial orders to schools from <u>Hamas</u> authorities. They are being told they must wear a jilbab, a long traditional gown, and a headscarf. Previously, the uniform typically required for <u>female</u> public school students was a long denim skirt and shirt. The new orders appear to have been issued without any legal basis. "No one should be forced to wear religious clothing, including the headscarf, to receive an education" said Nadya Khalife, the <u>women</u>'s rights researcher for the Middle East and North Africa at Human Rights Watch. "These new orders are simply arbitrary."

The Center for <u>Women</u>'s Legal Research and Consulting in Gaza reported that <u>Hamas</u> authorities have given orders to school administrators and teachers to pay attention to girls' dress, especially in secondary schools. The center's executive director, Zeinab Ghonaimy, told Human Rights Watch that a school administrator slapped one <u>female</u> student in front of her schoolmates for not wearing the jilbab.

"Physically assaulting students and humiliating them in front of their peers is simply unacceptable, whatever the reason, and especially to force them to wear certain religious clothing in violation of their religious freedom," said Khalife.

That these rules appear to target only <u>female</u> students suggests that they are discriminatory as well as a violation of religious freedom, Human Rights Watch said. It also is inconsistent with the Palestine Basic Law, which guarantees freedom of thought, conscience, and expression. Asma Jahangir, the UN special rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, and her predecessor, Abdelfattah Amor, have both criticized rules that require the wearing of religious dress in public.

A "virtue" campaign

In July 2009, <u>Hamas</u> officials initiated what they called a "virtue" campaign, saying they were concerned about increasing "immoral" behavior in Gaza. A Gaza resident told Human Rights Watch that <u>Hamas</u> police questioned

#### Gaza should suspend dress code order: HRW

<u>women</u> seen socializing with men in public places to determine whether the men were close relatives. Another resident told Human Rights Watch that, on the night of July 9, <u>Hamas</u> police beat up three young men for swimming without shirts.

The Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR), describing the crackdown, said, "There are indicators of interference in people's personal lives." A Gaza resident said the "virtue" campaign appeared to have ended in late August, but <u>Hamas</u> has now shifted focus to a "virtuous" dress code for school girls.

Human Rights Watch has criticized the governments of Germany, France, and Turkey for violating religious freedoms by banning religious symbols in schools and denying Muslim <u>women</u> the right to choose to wear headscarves in schools and universities. By the same token, <u>women</u> and girls should be free not to wear religious dress. Amor, the former special rapporteur, urged that dress should not be the subject of political regulation. Jahangir, the current special rapporteur, said that the "use of coercive methods and sanctions applied to individuals who do not wish to wear religious dress or a specific symbol seen as sanctioned by religion" indicates "legislative and administrative actions which typically are incompatible with international human rights law".

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) guarantees people's rights to freedom of religion, including stating that "no one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his [or her] freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his [or her] choice." As the de facto governing power, <u>Hamas</u> has repeatedly committed itself to respect international human rights standards, including in March 2007 in the program of the National Unity Government.

"<u>Women</u> themselves, not the state, should decide what they wear," said Khalife. "Schools can mandate uniforms, but only if the rules are clearly set out in writing and are not arbitrary or disrespectful of students' freedom of religion."

Load-Date: September 4, 2009

**End of Document** 



# <u>Israel Receives Video of Captured Soldier in Exchange for Release of</u> Prisoners

The New York Times
October 3, 2009 Saturday
Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 4

Length: 744 words

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

**Dateline: JERUSALEM** 

## **Body**

Thin and wan, but lucid and very much alive, Gilad Shalit, the captured Israeli soldier whose fate has gripped Israel for more than three years, appeared in a video on Friday holding a Palestinian newspaper dated Sept. 14.

Israel obtained the DVD on Friday in a deal brokered by German and Egyptian mediators. In return, Israel released 19 Palestinian <u>women</u> from its jails and was to release a 20th on Sunday. Prison officials said most were near the end of their terms and no longer considered dangerous.

The DVD offered Israel its first glimpse of the young man since June 2006, when he was seized in a cross-border raid by <u>Hamas</u> and other Palestinian militant groups and dragged, injured, into Gaza. Friday's exchange was the most tangible sign of progress so far in the years of talks on his release, for which <u>Hamas</u> is demanding freedom for up to 1,000 Palestinian prisoners, including many convicted of deadly terrorist acts.

In the short video, Sergeant Shalit, now 23, appears thin but healthy. Cleanshaven, dressed in khaki military-style clothes and sitting against a plain light-colored wall, he holds up a copy of a *Hamas*-published newspaper dated Sept. 14, 2009.

"Hello, I am Gilad, son of Noam and Aviva Shalit, brother of Hadas and Yoel, who lives in Mitzpe Hila," Sergeant Shalit says in Hebrew. "My ID number is 300097029."

Reading from a piece of paper in a voice that breaks at times, he says: "I have been hoping and waiting for the day of my release for a long time. I hope the current government under Benjamin Netanyahu will not waste the chance to finalize a deal, and I will therefore be able to finally have my dream come true and be released."

The soldier sends his love to his family, and, with an embarrassed half smile, says the military wing of <u>Hamas</u> is treating him "excellently." He then rises and takes a few paces to show he is physically intact.

Prime Minister Netanyahu and Defense Minister Ehud Barak were among the senior officials who first saw the video, along with military officials who checked its authenticity. A copy was flown by helicopter to northern Israel, where the Shalit family watched it privately at home. They decided to allow it to be made public, and it was broadcast on all Israeli television channels in the afternoon.

#### Israel Receives Video of Captured Soldier in Exchange for Release of Prisoners

Noam Shalit, the soldier's father, told reporters outside the home that, despite the initial impression that Gilad was in relatively good condition, the family was deeply worried. "We cannot forget that he has been suffering and rotting in <u>Hamas</u> prison nearly 1,200 unbearably long days and nights," he said. He added that the family expected "this ordeal to end and for Gilad to return home very soon."

In a country where 18-year-olds are conscripted for military service, many Israelis feel intimately involved with the case. Activists calling for a deal on Sergeant Shalit's release have held a constant vigil outside the prime minister's official residence.

But with memories of bloody Palestinian suicide bombings and attacks still fresh, the price for Sergeant Shalit's freedom is a subject of fierce debate. Friday's release was the first since the conservative Mr. Netanyahu came into power in March.

<u>Hamas</u> hailed the deal as a great political achievement. Of the 19 prisoners released, 18 returned to the West Bank and were received by the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, at his headquarters in Ramallah.

But the largest celebration was reserved for Fatima Younis Zaq, the only one from Gaza. Ms. Zaq, who is in her 40s, is affiliated with the extremist group Islamic Jihad. She was arrested in May 2007 at the Erez crossing on her way into Israel, and was still awaiting sentencing for planning a suicide bombing.

Ismail Haniya, the prime minister of the <u>Hamas</u> government in Gaza, and other leaders greeted her as she returned with an infant son who was born in jail, her ninth child. "This is a day of victory for the resistance and steadfastness," Mr. Haniya said.

Imprisonment is an emotional issue in Palestinian society, and -- with some 11,000 Palestinians in Israeli jails -- one that has touched almost every family over the decades of Israeli control.

<u>Hamas</u>, possibly with an eye to increasing its popularity in the West Bank before elections expected next year, has recently been projecting a sense of flexibility. <u>Hamas</u> leaders have made upbeat statements about a possible reconciliation with Mr. Abbas and his Fatah party.

http://www.nytimes.com

# **Graphic**

PHOTOS: Gilad Shalit, left, an Israeli soldier seized in 2006, in a video. A Palestinian woman, in the light head scarf at right, was among 20 prisoners who are being released in exchange for the video.(PHOTOGRAPHS BY REUTERS

DARREN WHITESIDE/REUTERS)

Load-Date: October 3, 2009



# Schalit prisoner swap could bring freedom for 'next leader' of Fatah; Nearly 1,000 Palestinians may be released Middle East

The Times (London)

November 24, 2009 Tuesday

Edition 1, National Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 33

Length: 994 words

Byline: James Hider; Sheera Frenkel

#### **Body**

Israel and the Palestinians are close to reaching agreement on a prisoner swap that could mean freedom for an Israeli soldier held for more than three years in exchange for the release of nearly a thousand Palestinian militants.

Gilad Schalit, the young Israeli corporal captured by <u>Hamas</u> in a cross-border raid in June 2006, could be freed as early as Friday, when Palestinians observe Eid al-Adha - a traditional period for amnesties.

Among those expected to be released by Israel is Marwan Barghouti, a leading candidate to succeed the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, who has threatened to step down over a lack of progress in the peace process. Barghouti, the leader of the Fatah young guard, is serving multiple life sentences for murder and attacks on Israelis during the last intifada.

Seen as a more militant leader, Barghouti is one of the few figures who may be able to bridge the bitter divide between <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah. He has been in an Israeli jail since 2002. Despite his popular backing among the Palestinians, he is a pragmatic figure who is viewed by many Israelis as a potential successor to President Abbas, since he has the credibility to forge a peace deal.

<u>Hamas</u>'s official newspaper said the swap could go ahead in the middle of next week. A <u>Hamas</u> delegation was due to leave Gaza today for Egypt to finalise details of the prisoner swap.

The exchange, facilitated by Egypt with aid from German negotiators, would probably be in two stages.

In the first, Galid Schalit, now 23 and promoted during his detention to the rank of sergeant, would be handed over to the Egyptians in return for the first tranche of prisoner releases. In the second stage, he would be transferred to Israel, resulting in further releases of Palestinian prisoners.

His parents, Noam and Aviva, were being briefed by government officials as press speculation grew that a deal was close, but his father said yesterday that the family had received no official notice of an impending release.

Schalit prisoner swap could bring freedom for 'next leader' of Fatah Nearly 1,000 Palestinians may be released Middle East

Ayman Taha, a <u>Hamas</u> official in the Cairo delegation, said that "details" were still being negotiated, but that serious progress had been made. An Egyptian official said that the main question was where to place the released Palestinian prisoners.

Israel wants to ensure that they will be exiled outside the Palestinian territories, where they can be kept under supervision by local authorities. "There will be some public outcry over the identity of some of these prisoners. To pre-empt this, Israel wants to make sure that they are not allowed to return to their violent activities," said an Israeli official.

Israel would probably make an exception in Barghouti's case. If he were to play a leading role in the Palestinian Government, he would be expected to live on the West Bank.

This is not the first time that both sides have geared up for an exchange, only to see hopes shattered at the last minute. However, reports were given credence yesterday by <u>Hamas</u>'s confirmation of a unilateral moratorium on rocket-firing into Israel. One Israeli newspaper said that some Palestinian prisoners had written to their families saying they would soon see them again.

A prisoner exchange would provide a huge boost for <u>Hamas</u>, isolated and under blockade in the Gaza Strip for more than two years. Unlike Fatah, which has negotiated with Israel, yet won no serious benefits, <u>Hamas</u> has continued to urge armed resistance.

Securing the liberty of hundreds of militants would bolster its domestic prestige, damaged by its economic isolation and the increasing imposition of Islamist restrictions on the population it controls.

Sergeant Schalit's release would come as an enormous relief to the Israeli authorities. His captivity has tortured a military that prides itself on never leaving a man behind, dead or alive, and struck at the heart of every family in a nation where military service is compulsory.

There are, though, some who fear that the price being paid is too high - especially some of the families of victims of violence perpetrated by those now slated to go free.

The tentative ceasefire between <u>Hamas</u> and Israel may have other motives, too. With Western attempts to defuse Iran's nuclear programmehaving stalled, it is believed that Tehran has told its proxies on Israel's northern and southern border, Hezbollah and <u>Hamas</u>, to keep their powder dry for now, to threaten the Jewish state with three-way retaliation if it strikes Iran's nuclear facilities.

Egyptian sources said that a ton of explosives bound for Gaza had been intercepted - another indication that *Hamas* is rearming after its war with Israel almost a year ago.

Online

Breaking news on the prisoner swap timesonline.co.uk/mideast

Prisoner exchanges

Oct 2009 20 Palestinian women freed in return for a "proof-of-life" video of Gilad Schalit

June 2008 Lebanon hands over the bodies of two Israeli soldiers. Israel frees five Lebanese prisoners - including one convicted of killing a child - and Palestinian prisoners and the bodies of Lebanese Hezbollah militants

Jan 2004 Israel delivers to Hezbollah 436 Arab prisoners and the bodies of 59 Lebanese fighters for a civilian, Elchanan Tenenbaum, and the bodies of three Israeli soldiers

July 1996 Israel frees 65 prisoners for the return of the bodies of two soldiers from Lebanon

Sept 1991 Israel exchanges 51 prisoners for proof that one of its soldiers held in Lebanon is dead

Schalit prisoner swap could bring freedom for 'next leader' of Fatah Nearly 1,000 Palestinians may be released Middle East

May 1985 Israel exchanges 1,150 Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners for three Israeli soldiers

Nov 1983 Israel swaps 4,600 Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners for six Israeli soldiers

Negotiated solutions are not always possible. The whereabouts of Guy Hever, an Israeli soldier who went missing in the Golan Heights in 1997, are unknown. Ron Arad, kidnapped in 1986, is still missing, as are the soldiers Zachary Baumel, Tzvi Feldman and Yehudah Katz

Estimates of Palestinians in Israeli custody vary.

Rights groups say that 335 are held without trial

Sources: Associated Press, Reuters, Times database

# **Graphic**

Marwan Barghouti: has been in jail since 2002

Noam Schalit has waited more than three years for his son's return - but some Israelis feel that the price being paid for his freedom might be too high

ILAN MIZRAHI FOR THE TIMES

Load-Date: November 26, 2009



# Israel to Free 20 Palestinian Women in Return for Proof Abducted Soldier Is Alive

The New York Times
October 1, 2009 Thursday
Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 6

Length: 578 words

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

**Dateline: JERUSALEM** 

#### **Body**

Israel said Wednesday that it would release 20 Palestinian <u>women</u> from its jails in exchange for a videotape of a captured Israeli soldier that would prove that he was alive.

The soldier, Gilad Shalit, was seized by the Islamic group <u>Hamas</u> and other Palestinian militant groups in 2006 in a cross-border raid and taken into Gaza.

The prisoner release offer, announced Wednesday by the office of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, was the first significant sign of progress in negotiations about him since Mr. Netanyahu took office in March.

Israeli and Palestinian officials said the exchange was expected to take place on Friday.

"Israel will receive updated and unequivocal proof of Gilad Shalit's well-being and status," Mr. Netanyahu's office said in a statement, describing the deal as a result of an Egyptian initiative meant to build confidence before the "decisive stages of negotiation" for the release of the soldier, who has been promoted to staff sergeant from corporal during his captivity. The prime minister's office added that the negotiations were "still expected to be long and arduous."

In Gaza, Mahmoud Zahar, a senior <u>Hamas</u> official, said the deal was "small and symbolic" but could pave the way to a more comprehensive agreement.

"We are offering a report explaining the situation of the soldier in return for the release of 20 <u>women</u> prisoners," he said as he entered a Red Cross office in Gaza City on Wednesday.

According to a list issued by Israeli prison officials, the <u>women</u> to be freed were all due to finish their terms within two years, meaning that they were not convicted of serious offenses or were in any way close to release.

Mr. Zahar said the prisoners included four from <u>Hamas</u>; five from Fatah, the rival mainstream Palestinian group; three from the more extremist Islamic Jihad; and one from the leftist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. He said the others were not affiliated with any group. Only one of the <u>women</u> is from Gaza; the rest are from the West Bank.

<u>Hamas</u> has demanded the freedom of 1,000 Palestinian security prisoners from Israeli jails in return for Sergeant Shalit's release. Many prisoners on the **Hamas** list have been convicted of deadly terrorist attacks.

Ehud Olmert, the prime minister when Sergeant Shalit was seized, had been under intense public pressure to resolve the issue before the end of his term, but negotiations via Egyptian mediators failed to produce his release.

Israeli officials said at the time that Israel had agreed to release some 325 prisoners from a list of 450 demanded by *Hamas* in the first stage of a deal. Israel also insisted that some of those released would go into exile.

Mr. Netanyahu appointed a new chief negotiator, and the Egyptian mediation efforts were supplemented by German mediation.

Sergeant Shalit, now 23, was last seen publicly being dragged alive into Gaza in 2006. A year later, <u>Hamas</u> released an audiotape of the soldier believed to be authentic. His family has also received at least two letters written in what family members said was his handwriting.

A video would be the first sign he was alive since Israel's three-week military offensive in Gaza, which ended in mid-January.

The Israeli president, Shimon Peres, said the deal announced Wednesday was a "positive step" in the negotiations. But he added, "The road to his release is still long and not simple, and we do not want to create any illusions."

http://www.nytimes.com

# Graphic

PHOTOS: Israel said Wednesday that for video of a captive soldier, Gilad Shalit, shown in an undated photo, it would release 20 Palestinian <u>women</u>, including Fatima Yunis Zaq, a terrorism suspect. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ASSOCIATED PRESS

MAHMUD HAMS/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES)

Load-Date: October 1, 2009



#### Israeli soldier appears well despite captivity

therecord.com

October 3, 2009 Saturday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A8

Length: 468 words

Byline: Amy Teibel, The Associated Press

**Dateline: JERUSALEM** 

#### **Body**

In the first glimpse of him since his capture more than three years ago, a thin but healthy-looking Israeli soldier said in a video released Friday that he is being treated well by his Palestinian captors and appealed to Israel's leader to bring him home.

Israel received the two-minute video of Sgt. Gilad Schalit from <u>Hamas</u> militants after it released 19 <u>female</u> Palestinian prisoners earlier Friday in an exchange that is the first tangible step toward defusing a key flashpoint in Israeli-Palestinian hostilities.

The images of Schalit were the first to be released since his capture 3 1 / 2 years ago by <u>Hamas</u>-linked militants in the Gaza Strip.

Dressed in olive drab military fatigues, Schalit sat in a chair in front of a bare wall reading a prepared statement tucked behind an Arabic-language newspaper, displayed to show the date, Sept. 14.

At one point, he rose from the chair and walked toward the camera and back, apparently to demonstrate he could stand on his own. He smiled several times during the video.

Speaking lucidly and reading clearly in Hebrew, he sent his love to his parents, recalled in detail a 2005 visit his family paid to his military base and appealed to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu "not to squander this opportunity" to bring him home.

"I read the paper to find material and hope to find any material about my release and my imminent return home," he said.

Schalit, 23, said he was in good health and that his captors were treating him "excellently."

He was clean-shaven and his hair was closely cropped, but he was not wearing glasses, as he did before his capture.

Schalit's father, Noam, described the images as "authentic and up-to-date" but warned viewers not to be fooled by the soldier's apparently sound physical state.

#### Israeli soldier appears well despite captivity

"It must be remembered, despite first impressions from the small screen . . . that Gilad has been suffering in a <u>Hamas</u> cell for close to 1,200 days and 1,200 long nights," he said in statement that he read to reporters on Friday evening.

The video's arrival in Israel, together with the Palestinian prisoners' triumphant return home to a flag-waving and cheering crowd, gave hope to each side that a wider, long-awaited prisoner swap was in the offing.

<u>Hamas'</u> exiled leader, however, threatened to capture more Israeli soldiers in order to exchange them for more Palestinian prisoners.

Speaking in Damascus, Syria, Khaled Mashaal, said those who were able to capture Schalit and hold him safely for more than three years are capable of capturing "Schalit and Schalit and Schalit until there is not even one prisoner in the enemy's jails."

<u>Hamas</u> is demanding freedom for 1,000 Palestinian prisoners as their price for Schalit, whose capture and drawnout captivity has touched a raw nerve in a country where most families have loved ones in the military.

#### **Graphic**

Israeli soldier Sgt. Gilad Schalit appears in a video after being held captive for more than three years in the Gaza Strip. *Hamas* Video, The Associated Press

Load-Date: October 3, 2009



#### Israel's right to defend citizens is a just cause

The Sunday Independent (South Africa)

October 25, 2009

E1 Edition

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Section: Pg. 9

Length: 483 words

# **Body**

Moshoeshoe Monare's article refers.

The writer states that no one should deny Israel's right to defend its citizens against missiles fired at them by the *Hamas* from Gaza. Then he contradicts himself by querying whether Israel's action was just and proportionate.

Where is the logic in stating that Israel has the right to self-defence and then querying the justice thereof? Monare is a fortunate man; he has never endured an aerial bombardment on a daily basis, let alone for eight years, with 15 seconds to find shelter.

If he had then he would just insist that it stop, without any thoughts about proportionality.

Next he laments "the amnesia of critics about the atrocities and sufferings in Gaza". He writes of "Israel's bloody prosecution of its war against *Hamas*".

He does not dwell on those 12 000 missiles fired at men, <u>women</u> and children over an eight-year period, the cause of the Israeli retaliation. Never does he draw attention to the fact that those poor sufferers in Gaza saw fit to bombard Israeli civilian settlements during times when children were either going to or coming out of school, times when they were not in their shelters. Neither does he point out that every single one of those missiles was fired with the intention of killing, maiming and destroying.

The only reason that <u>Hamas</u> did not achieve their atrocious objective of killing the greatest possible number of Israelis was the fact that Israel provided shelters for its citizens, something that <u>Hamas</u> did not do and which constitutes a war crime and atrocity in itself. After launching missiles for all those years they had to know that there was going to be retaliation. But then, dead Palestinians are some of the strongest weapons in the <u>Hamas</u> propaganda arsenal.

I give credit to Monare for his spot-on analysis of Gaza's impact on world opinion by bringing the tragedy into our living rooms via live TV. The Palestinians lost this war as have the Arabs lost every one of their wars against Israel, but on the field of propaganda and distortion they reign supreme.

The settlement of Sderot in Israel proper was targeted with about 4 000 missiles. I have been there and seen the effect on both the town and its people, especially the little children. Had that also been shown on a daily basis on live TV, then perhaps we would see Israel's retaliation in a different light.

#### Israel 's right to defend citizens is a just cause

Monare asks whether we have forgotten the screaming, dying children, bloodied <u>women</u> and bombed schools in the name of stopping <u>Hamas</u>. During the Blitz of England German bombs killed 51 509 civilians. Churchill then promised the British people that every bomb would be returned TENFOLD. By the end of the war Allied bombing had killed 269 618 German men, <u>women</u> and children while 6 386 313 had been made homeless.

Had you and your family lived through that period in London, Monare, would you have complained about proportionality?

Don Krausz

Killarney

Load-Date: October 25, 2009



#### <u>'Goldstone report - the terrorists' Magna Carta'</u>

The Jerusalem Post October 30, 2009 Friday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 13

Length: 3061 words

Byline: PROF. DANIEL FRIEDMANN

**Highlight:** EXCLUSIVE. Goldstone: A rebuttal. Former justice minister Daniel Friedmann takes aim at the UN Human Rights Council's fact-finding mission to Gaza, and in so doing exposes a mission that, he says, was created with a dubious mandate, populated by biased members, influenced by <u>Hamas</u> observers, and conducted with a disregard for Israeli evidence and witnesses. The author is a professor of law (emeritus) and a former justice

minister of Israel.

#### **Body**

'I don't think there has ever been a time in the history of warfare when any army has made more efforts to reduce civilian casualties and deaths of innocent people than the IDF is doing today in Gaza," Col. Richard Kemp, former commander of the British forces in Afghanistan, said during an interview with the BBC during Operation Cast Lead in Gaza in January.

Kemp later appeared before the UN Human Rights Council on October 2009 and reiterated: "[T]he Israeli Defense Forces did more to safeguard the rights of civilians in a combat zone than any other army in the history of warfare. Israel did so while facing an enemy that deliberately positioned its military capability behind the human shield of the civilian populationÉ

"The [...] IDF took extraordinary measures to give Gaza civilians notice of targeted areas, dropping over 2 million leaflets, and making over 100,000 phone calls. Many missions that could have taken out <u>Hamas</u> military capability were aborted to prevent civilian casualties. During the conflict, the IDF allowed huge amounts of humanitarian aid into Gaza [...] the civilian casualties were a consequence of <u>Hamas</u>' way of fighting. <u>Hamas</u> deliberately tried to sacrifice their own civilians..."

This is a fair description of what happened. But to see how white is turned into black, how truth is twisted, justice perverted and falseness prevails, take a good look at the Human Rights Council and its Goldstone report.

A commission created in sin gives birth to an aberration

Israel has suffered from terrorism since its establishment, long before it was blamed for having conquered territories from which attacks against it were launched. The war of terror changed phases, becoming more and more sinister. From "simple" murder of <u>women</u> and children, it turned into airplane hijackings, murdering hostages, suicide bombers and global terror - including the mass murder of members of the Israeli team during the Olympic Games in Munich. During the past eight years a new mode of terror has developed - that of firing rockets on civilian targets from the Gaza Strip. Some 12,000 rockets have been fired, terrorizing hundreds of thousands of Israelis and causing tremendous damage to the economy.

#### 'Goldstone report - the terrorists' Magna Carta'

None of these actions triggered UN intervention. Moreover, other countries involved in the war against terror elsewhere in the world - such as in Iraq, Sri Lanka, Chechnya, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Turkey - have remained immune to fact-finding missions by the Human Rights Council, despite the thousands of civilians killed or wounded in these conflicts, and the hundreds of thousands who have been displaced. Israel, the victim of incessant rocket attacks and endless acts of terror, has been singled out for special treatment.

The Human Rights Council's obsession with targeting Israel is common knowledge. Since its establishment in 2006, five out of its 11 special sessions have been devoted to matters involving the Jewish state. Yet in its resolution to establish the fact-finding mission in Gaza, the council outdid itself. Employing extremely biased wording, the council's charge directed its mission "to investigate all violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law by the occupying power, Israel, against the Palestinian people... particularly in the occupied Gaza Strip, due to the current aggression..."

Israel is thus declared culpable even before the investigation begins.

Many states on the council refused to support this one-sided resolution, including the member states of the European Union, Switzerland, Canada, Korea and Japan.

The council never changed its outrageous mandate, but its president stated the mission's mandate in more moderate terms: "To investigate all violations of international human rights and international human rights law that might have been committed [...] in the context of the military operation in Gaza..."

Despite the reworded resolution, it seems that the mission acted in the spirit of its original mandate.

The composition of the mission

The prejudicial nature of the mission led several distinguished individuals, including former high commissioner for human rights Mary Robinson, to refuse invitations to chair it. Justice Richard Goldstone was, however, happy to comply. Other members of the mission included Hina Jilani of Pakistan, a country that has no diplomatic relations with Israel, and Prof. Christine Chinkin, who was one of the signatories of a letter, published in the Sunday Times on January 11, 2009, and entitled, "Israel's bombardment of Gaza is not self-defense - it's a war crime."

The amazement at Chinkin's appointment is dwarfed by the way Goldstone justified the refusal to disqualify her. In an interview on Israel TV, he was asked about Chinkin serving on the mission. He had no qualms explaining that "it is not a judicial inquiry. It's a fact-finding mission." Further, he said that he found Chinkin "to be an intelligent, sensible, even-handed person," and he was "satisfied that she's got a completely open mind."

"She is one of four people on the committee," he continued, adding that he did not "believe that any prima facie views she might have held at an earlier stage is going to [...] affect [...] the report."

Goldstone thus justified an appointment that militates against basic rules of fairness, due process and natural justice. His untenable reasoning, which would have failed a first-year law student, casts grave doubts about the justice himself.

Moreover, Goldstone's claim that he was leading "a fact-finding mission" is refuted by the report, which is highly judicial, replete with purported legal analysis of international law, detailed legal findings and reaching judicial determinations on "war crimes."

The inescapable conclusion is that the whole report is invalid and cannot form a basis for any decision or action.

It is also not surprising that Goldstone's report became what it is - a complete aberration.

The mission's general approach

The report makes every effort to downplay <u>Hamas</u> crimes. <u>Hamas</u> and other terrorist entities are described by the benign term "Palestinian armed groups." In some cases, the mission simply declines to examine <u>Hamas</u> misdeeds.

One example of this inaction regards Shifa Hospital in Gaza. Despite ample grounds indicating that a <u>Hamas</u> command center was located in the hospital, the report states that it did "not investigate the case of Al-Shifa hospital and is not in a position to make any finding with regard to these allegations" (p. 466).

Clear evidence unfavorable to <u>Hamas</u> is either discarded or "reinterpreted." For instance, during the operation, Islam Shahwan, spokesman for the <u>Hamas</u> police force, stated that "police officers received clear orders from the leadership to face the [Israeli] enemy." However, this clear admission as to the role of the <u>Hamas</u> police takes on new meaning when the mission uncritically accepts Shahwan's explanation that his intention was that in the event of an invasion, the police would continue to uphold public order and ensure the movement of essential supplies (p. 414). A statement by the commander of <u>Hamas</u>'s Executive Force (p. 410) that his group acted as "resistance fighters" received similar benign interpretation (p. 416).

Reliable evidence supporting the Israeli position received completely different treatment.

In an effort to explain its targeting of sensitive locations, Israel submitted to the mission photographic evidence showing the launching of rockets from within or near residential buildings, schools, mosques and hospitals. However, the mission had no qualms in discounting them on the grounds that it could not determine whether the photos showed what is alleged, and that many photos related to firing of rockets from Gaza before the operation (p. 449).

The mission even denied requests to invite witnesses such as Col. Kemp, who was likely to support the Israeli position. The explanations offered by Goldstone for this unbalanced treatment are not much stronger than those he provided for keeping Chinkin on the mission.

Much of the evidence gathered by the mission was most likely tainted. Members of the mission were accompanied during their visit to Gaza by <u>Hamas</u> officials, a group which deliberately and consistently pursues a policy of disinformation. It is highly improbable that the mission could get a true picture of <u>Hamas</u>'s misdeeds and of what really happened. Indeed, the report admits that the witnesses interviewed appeared "reluctant to speak about the presence or conduct of hostilities by the Palestinian armed groups" - a reluctance which "may have stemmed from a fear of reprisals" (p. 438).

This behavior by the Islamic group has been aptly described by Kemp:

"Hamas, like Hizbullah, are expert at driving the media agenda. Both will always have people ready to give interviews condemning Israeli forces for war crimes. They are adept at staging and distorting incidents."

The scope of this article does not allow for a full exposition of all the falsenesses and distortions included in the report. However two examples will be briefly discussed - that of the civilian casualties and that of the use of human shields by *Hamas*. In addition, a few words will be devoted to the damage suffered by the Gazan infrastructure.

The civilian casualties

According to the IDF 1,166 Palestinians were killed in the operation, and the great majority, 709 of them, were members of the *Hamas* and other terrorist groups. An additional 295 were civilians. It is unclear whether the remaining 162 (all male) fatalities were involved in the fighting. It is also not clear how many of the noncombatants were killed by *Hamas* fire, a possibility which was even raised by the mission (p. 361).

The mission did not bother to inquire about the number of civilian casualties, nor about the ratio between civilian and combatant casualties in recent wars, which could indicate the degree of care taken by the IDF to avoid civilian casualties as compared to other armies in the world.

One of the most vicious, false accusations leveled by the report against Israel is that civilians were deliberately targeted. This falseness is based on the fact that the IDF receives legal advice and possesses advanced technology, and that its operations are carefully planned. In addition, the misinterpretation of statements made by Israeli officials (p. 61 and p. 1182-1188) further twisted the mission's conclusion, which runs contrary to a large body of available evidence.

#### 'Goldstone report - the terrorists' Magna Carta'

It is well known that a number of Israeli soldiers were killed in the operation by friendly fire. According to the reasoning of the mission, these casualties must have been killed on purpose. Moreover, the mission's reasoning applies to all other armies engaged in the war against terror, in which thousands of noncombatants have been killed. The Americans, the British, NATO, the Russians and the Turks all employ sophisticated weapons, and their operations are all carefully planned. Does this mean that the civilians killed in their operations were intentionally targeted, as well?

The mission disregarded the fact that Israel has a clear policy of protecting civilians. It also disregarded the myriad of statements made by the IDF regarding this policy and its implementation in the Gaza operation. Kemp, whose evidence the mission declined to hear, also described this.

Israel made great efforts to issue warnings to the civilian population through thousands of telephone calls, leaflets and radio broadcasts. While the mission acknowledged these facts (p. 37), it immediately attempted to show that the actions were insufficient. Regardless, these warnings clearly refute the unfounded allegation that there was a purposeful intention to target civilians.

#### The use by *Hamas* of human shields

It is common knowledge that <u>Hamas</u> uses civilians as human shields. Even the mission could not escape the facts that <u>Hamas</u> fires rockets from urban areas (p. 446-447), that its gunmen mingle with the civil population and that "members of Palestinian armed groups were not always dressed in a way that distinguished them from civilians" (p. 481). The use of human shields is openly admitted by a <u>Hamas</u> member who states that:

"[*Hamas*] created a human shield of *women*, children, the elderly and the mujahideen, against the Zionist bombing machines" (p. 475).

Nevertheless the mission incredibly states that it has not been able to obtain any direct evidence that the firing of rockets from urban areas "was done with the specific intent of shielding the rocket launchers from counterstrokes by the Israeli armed forces" (p. 480). Similarly "the mission found no evidence that Palestinian combatants mingled with the civilian population with the intention of shielding themselves from attack" (p. 481).

A more blatant example of a double standard can hardly be imagined. False accusations against Israel are made in the absence of evidence or even contrary to the evidence, while the innocence of the terrorists is presumed even in the face of convincing evidence of guilt.

#### Damage to Infrastructure

The mission also discusses the destruction of infrastructure in Gaza, notably a flour mill, a wall of one of the raw sewage lagoons, and chicken farms that "reportedly supplied over 10 percent of the Gaza egg market." (p. 51) The discussion is replete with harshly- worded language denouncing Israel, and ends with a malicious conclusion as to Israel's culpability. Apparently, the mission did not even bother to hide its prejudice against Israel. The destruction of the flour mill was "wanton," and the mission has no scruples in jumping to the conclusion that this was done "for the purposes of denying sustenance to the civilian population" (sic.) which "may constitute a war crime" (p. 50). Such a conclusion, of course, is contrary to the clear evidence available to the mission that during the operation, as well as before and after, Israel allowed ample supply of food to be brought into Gaza, and that Israel did and continues to do its best to prevent a shortage of essential supplies in the Strip.

In this respect, the report seems to be in line with the propaganda of <u>Hamas</u>, which created the false impression of total destruction in the area.

Such findings may be contrasted with a report by British journalist, Tim Butcher, which was published in the Telegraph, on January 20, 2009. Mr. Butcher who arrived in Gaza shortly after the end of the operation, says: "I knew Gaza well before the attacks [É] One thing was clear. Gaza City 2009 is not Stalingrad 1944. There had been no carpet bombing of large areas, no firebombing of complete suburbs. Targets had been selected and then hit,

often several times, but almost always with precision munitions [...] for the most part, I was struck by how cosmetically unchanged Gaza appeared to be."

No less important is the fact that the great majority of infrastructure installations in Gaza were not hit and remained unscathed. A conspicuous example is the power plant in Gaza. It is obvious that had Israel intended to destroy infrastructure, the plant would have been targeted. It was not. Even in the case of the flour mill, the mission concedes that "no other buildings in the industrial compound belonging to the Hamadas (owners of the mill) were damaged at the time of the strikes" (p. 924). This is in line with the clear policy of Israel to avoid damaging civilian property. To the extent that the mill and few other installations were destroyed, it was presumably either a result of a mistake or because they were suspected as being used for military purposes. The mission clearly could not get reliable evidence clarifying this matter, as the reluctance of a witness to give evidence detrimental to *Hamas* which "may have stemmed from a fear of reprisals" (p. 438) already demonstrated. In any, event the evidence clearly suggests the absence of any intention by Israel to destroy civilian infrastructure.

#### Iran and the failure to investigate

The mission failed to examine highly relevant topics such as the use of Shifa Hospital in Gaza as a <u>Hamas</u> command center, and the use of mosques to store weapons. The mission also failed to investigate the major role played by Iran in supporting and instigating terror, such as by training gunmen and supplying weapons and rockets intended to be used against civilians. Is Iran's involvement in line with international law? Such an investigation would have enabled the mission to better understand what it terms "the blockade" - the closure imposed by Israel on the Gaza Strip which attempts to prevent illegal arms smuggling while simultaneously allowing for the influx of food and other essential supplies.

#### The recommendations

I shall not elaborate upon the mission's biased recommendations which are not devoid of a ludicrous aspect. "The mission recommends that Palestinian armed groups undertake forthwith to respect international humanitarian law, in particular by renouncing attacks on Israeli civilians" (p. 1770). This recommendation is a plea to fundamentalist terrorists for whom terror against civilians is their raison d'tre, who regard suicide bombers and murderers as heroes. Is this recommendation, which seems like recommending to the Mafia to respect the law, a lip service to objectivity, naivete, or evidence of complete detachment from reality?

One wonders whether this kind of recommendation should not also be sent to the Taliban and al-Qaida. Why should they be deprived of Goldstone's learned advice?

#### The aftermath

Goldstone's report is well on its way to becoming the Magna Carta of the terrorists, who will regard it as their guardian angel. But the world community cannot allow international law to be hijacked by terrorists, nor appropriated by biased scholars or naive jurists who are detached from reality. International law must be interpreted, implemented and developed to deal with terror launched from populated areas behind human shields.

The report is likely to damage the cause of peace and increase violence in the area, while the operation in Gaza brought a lull in rockets attacks against civilians. But the terrorists may now feel that they can renew the terror since the report gives them immunity. The report also strengthens extremism, thus hindering efforts by the Palestinian Authority - whom the extremists strive to topple - to make peace with Israel.

#### **Graphic**

3 photos: A <u>HAMAS</u> gunman trains in the Gaza Strip. According to a <u>Hamas</u> police spokesman, "police officers received clear orders from the leadership to face the [Israeli] enemy" during Operation Cast Lead. Daniel

# 'Goldstone report - the terrorists' Magna Carta'

Friedmann. 'Truth is trusted, justice perverted.' Richard Goldstone. 'Detached from reality'? (Credit: Bloomberg. Ariel Jerozolimski. AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



#### Israel ordered to release 20 Palestinian prisoners

Edmonton Journal (Alberta)
October 1, 2009 Thursday
Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A15

Length: 388 words

Byline: Isabel Kershner, New York Times

**Dateline: JERUSALEM** 

# **Body**

Israel said Wednesday that it would release 20 Palestinian <u>women</u> from its jails in exchange for a videotape of a captured Israeli soldier that would prove that he was alive.

The soldier, Cpl. Gilad Shalit, was seized by the Islamic group <u>Hamas</u> and other Palestinian militant groups in 2006 in a cross-border raid and taken into Gaza.

The prisoner release offer, announced on Wednesday by the office of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, was the first significant sign of progress in negotiations on Shalit since Netanyahu took office in March.

Israeli and Palestinian officials said the exchange was expected to take place on Friday.

"Israel will receive updated and unequivocal proof of Gilad Shalit's well-being and status," Netanyahu's office said in a statement, describing the deal as a result of an Egyptian initiative meant to build confidence ahead of the "decisive stages of negotiation" for Shalit's release. The prime minister's office added that the negotiations were "still expected to be long and arduous."

In Gaza, Mahmoud Zahar, a senior <u>Hamas</u> official, said the deal was "small and symbolic" but could pave the way to a more comprehensive agreement.

"We are offering a report explaining the situation of the soldier in return for the release of 20 <u>women</u> prisoners," he said as he entered a Red Cross office in Gaza City on Wednesday.

According to a list issued by Israeli prison officials, the <u>women</u> to be freed were all due to finish their terms within two years, meaning that they were not convicted of serious offences or were in any way close to release.

Zahar said the prisoners included four from <u>Hamas</u>; five from Fatah, the rival mainstream Palestinian group; three from the more extremist Islamic Jihad; and one from the leftist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. He said the others were not affiliated with any group. Only one of the <u>women</u> is from Gaza; the rest are from the West Bank.

<u>Hamas</u> has demanded the freedom of 1,000 Palestinian security prisoners from Israeli jails in return for Shalit's release. Many prisoners on the <u>Hamas</u> list have been convicted of deadly terrorist attacks.

#### Israel ordered to release 20 Palestinian prisoners

Ehud Olmert, the prime minister when Shalit was seized, had been under intense public pressure to resolve the issue before the end of his term, but negotiations via Egyptian mediators failed to produce his release.

Load-Date: October 1, 2009



#### Palestinian reconciliation through the ballot box

Daily News Egypt
October 26, 2009 Monday

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Length: 844 words

#### **Body**

BRUSSELS: Cursed as they are with bad leadership, the sad saga of the Palestinian people fluctuates between tragedy and farce. As if contending with a crushing occupation, embargoes, closures and the complete physical separation of the West Bank and Gaza were not enough, over the past couple of years, they have also seen the two parties supposedly representing them descend into petty and bloody factionalism.

To top it all off, one party is pragmatic and moderate but has failed to deliver peace or improve life for Palestinians. Instead, it has become aloof to the population, is rotten to the core with corruption and is widely perceived, with all the international funds flowing into its coffers and the American general Keith Dayton wielding significant control over the Palestinian Authority's (PA's) security forces in the West Bank, to have become a kind of mercenary force for the Israeli occupation.

But the frying pan of the Fateh-run Palestinian Authority may prove to be nothing compared with the fire and brimstone of the Islamic Resistance Movement (<u>Hamas</u>). <u>Hamas</u> may be less corrupt - for now - but it is ideologically fanatical, has been working hard to purge dissent in Gaza, is already restricting the freedom of Palestinians on the Strip, especially <u>women</u>, and, given its ideological rejection of Israel as a Jewish state, is far less willing to compromise with the Israelis. Of course, Israel and the international community did nothing to engage with <u>Hamas</u>'s early overtures towards moderation and, instead, punished Gaza, causing the party to harden its position and rhetoric.

With this poison and bitterness filling the air, it was perhaps optimistic to expect Egypt's efforts - despite the country's long experience as a mediator - to broker a truce between the two parties to reach fruition, especially since US president Barack Obama's shift in rhetoric has not yet been matched by any shifts in reality.

The talks ostensibly broke down because of <u>Hamas</u>'s anger over the PA's delay in endorsing the Goldstone report into Israeli war crimes in Gaza, which also criticizes <u>Hamas</u> - albeit to a lesser extent - for targeting Israeli civilians. The party went so far as to accuse Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas of betraying the victims of the Israeli offensive.

However, given how fundamentally the two factions differ and how <u>Hamas</u> appears to want to take over the helm of the Palestinian cause, it could just as well have been anything else. So, even if Egyptian diplomats manage to pull a rabbit out of the hat, any deal could quickly run against the rocks, particularly as trust of both Fateh and the

#### Palestinian reconciliation through the ballot box

Egyptians - who are perceived as agents of America and collaborators with Israel by certain segments of the Palestinian and wider Arab population - is low.

It is abundantly clear that Abbas, whose position keeps changing with the winds, has lost the plot and the only parties who continue to support his presidency are the Americans and Israelis. But this support is misguided. The presence of a weak and unpopular Palestinian president may serve the interests of extremists, for whom the prospect of continued Palestinian infighting is convenient, but it does little to forward the long-term prospects for peace.

To my mind, it is time for Abbas - who was once respected as a key architect of the Oslo accords and hammered out a workable blueprint for comprehensive peace with Yossi Beilin, which was derailed by the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin - to go, in dignity, and make room for the people to decide.

Abbas has already said repeatedly that the only way out of the impasse with <u>Hamas</u> is through the ballot box. But instead of delaying elections till the middle of next year, as Egypt has proposed, they should go ahead as scheduled in January - or earlier, if possible. In the meantime, Abbas should resign and hold his position only in a caretaker capacity until a new president is elected.

In addition, the issues facing the Palestinians are too controversial and complex to be left to any one party to decide. I believe that a series of referenda - financed by the international community - should be conducted on crucial questions of war and peace: negotiation vs. confrontation; violence vs. non-violence; two states or one; civil rights or national rights; Jerusalem, refugees, etc. A similar exercise should also be carried out among Israelis to crystallize what kind of future they desire.

Equipped with such clear expressions of popular will, Israeli and Palestinian negotiators can engage with a clear mandate, assuming that both sides' vision for the future is compatible or, at the very least, reconcilable.

Personally, I hope neither Fateh nor *Hamas* win the elections. The Palestinians deserve a change of guard.

Egyptian by birth, Khaled Diab is a Brussels-based journalist and writer. He writes on a wide range of subjects, including the EU, the Middle East, Islam and secularism, multiculturalism and human rights. His website is <a href="https://www.chronikler.com">www.chronikler.com</a>. This article was written for the Common Ground News Service (CGNews).

Load-Date: October 29, 2009



#### Netanyahu Plays Down Talk of a Prisoner Exchange

The New York Times

November 25, 2009 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 14

Length: 804 words

Byline: By ISABEL KERSHNER; Michael Slackman contributed reporting from Cairo.

**Dateline: JERUSALEM** 

#### **Body**

Seeking to lower expectations of an imminent deal with the Islamic group <u>Hamas</u> to exchange a captured Israeli soldier for hundreds of Palestinian prisoners, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel said Tuesday that no agreement had yet been reached.

"There is still no deal, and I do not know if there will be one," Mr. Netanyahu said as he toured the national police headquarters here.

His remarks came as <u>Hamas</u>'s leaders gathered in Cairo for talks mediated by Egyptian and German officials on the terms of a possible exchange, and they may have been partly intended as last-minute brinkmanship by the Israelis.

Mr. Netanyahu also addressed domestic criticism of the strict censorship that Israel had imposed on the details of the talks, which has led to charges that the government is muzzling public debate.

The deal that seems to be taking shape puts many Israelis in a predicament. While there is a strong public desire for the return of the soldier, Staff Sgt. Gilad Shalit, the prospect of the release of Palestinian prisoners convicted of masterminding suicide bombings and other terrorist acts is repugnant to many and a source of profound concern.

A mass prisoner release credited to <u>Hamas</u> could also have far-reaching implications for regional politics and stability, though it is not clear how significant the impact would be.

Should there be such a swap, Mr. Netanyahu said, "We will not be sparing with a public discussion."

"We will not do it as a fait accompli. We will allow the cabinet ministers and the public in general to discuss the issue."

The Israeli soldier was seized by <u>Hamas</u> and other Palestinian militant groups in a cross-border raid in June 2006 and was taken to Gaza. He was 19 at the time. Several weeks ago Israel released 20 Palestinian <u>women</u> from its jails in exchange for a videotape of Sergeant Shalit that proved he was alive.

The video was seen in Israel as a sign of progress after years of public campaigning and unsuccessful negotiations for his release.

#### Netanyahu Plays Down Talk of a Prisoner Exchange

Likewise, the prisoner issue is highly emotional for the Palestinians, with tens of thousands having passed through Israeli jails over the past four decades.

But the Palestinians are now at a delicate juncture, split between <u>Hamas</u>, which rules Gaza, and the Fatah-dominated Palestinian Authority, whose power is now confined to the West Bank.

A prisoner release orchestrated by <u>Hamas</u> would very likely pose a new challenge for the Western-backed authority led by President Mahmoud Abbas. A deal that includes the release of Marwan Barghouti, a popular Fatah leader, could also shake things up within Fatah.

Mr. Barghouti was sentenced by Israel to five life terms in 2004 for involvement in the killing of civilians. A leader of Fatah's so-called young guard, he is often suggested as a potential successor to Mr. Abbas, who recently declared that he did not intend to run for another term as president.

Reflecting the awkwardness that a deal for Sergeant Shalit might pose for the Abbas government, Salam Fayyad, the Palestinian prime minister and a political independent, made no direct mention of it in a speech on Tuesday at an international conference in the West Bank town of Jericho on the rights of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails.

Yet he called for the "immediate release" of "pillars" of the prisoner population like Mr. Barghouti and Ahmad Saadat, a leader of the leftist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine who was convicted of ordering the assassination of an Israeli cabinet minister in 2001. And repeating a point often made by Mr. Abbas, Mr. Fayyad said there would be no final agreement with Israel until all Palestinian prisoners were freed.

Ghassan Khatib, a spokesman for the Palestinian Authority government, said that the authority "welcomes the release of any prisoner," but that the emerging deal was "not something to talk about."

"There is a great deal of uncertainty and the negotiations are secret, in addition to the fact that they are not being done by the Palestinian Authority," he said. He acknowledged that <u>Hamas</u> was bound to gain politically from any such deal.

The German foreign minister, Guido Westerwelle, declined to comment on the status of the negotiations during a visit here on Tuesday. "I can simply express the hope that the talks will lead to a good and humane solution," he said during a stop in the West Bank, according to The Associated Press.

Earlier on Tuesday, Israel's minister of industry and trade, Benjamin Ben-Eliezer, told Army Radio that a prisoner exchange deal was "moving toward completion in the very near future." Mr. Ben-Eliezer was in Turkey on a mission to patch up Turkish-Israeli relations, which deteriorated sharply after Israel's military offensive against <u>Hamas</u> in Gaza last winter.

http://www.nytimes.com

Load-Date: November 25, 2009



#### Talking of conscience - when will Israel get one?

The Sunday Independent (South Africa)

October 18, 2009

E1 Edition

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Section: Pg. 9

Length: 447 words

# **Body**

DON KRAUSZ'S letter (October 11) refers. It seems Krausz has difficulty seeing things from Laurence Berman's perspective, and the sentiment he expresses shows him to be a Zionist. If he saw things from an unbiased point of view, as Judge Richard Goldstone - a Zionist and supporter of Israel - did, the atrocities committed by Israel in the Gaza massacre and over the past 61 years will become apparent.

He seems to have difficulty believing any statistics quoted by Berman, even citing them as "being supplied by <u>Hamas</u>". I wonder if he would find it hard to believe the Amnesty International (AI) report on Gaza after the slaughter of more than 1 400 Palestinians (including 400 children) in December 2008/January 2009?

UN ambulances were never used by armed gunmen (<u>Hamas</u>). In the history of <u>Hamas</u> rule, only one (unsuccessful) attempt was made to take control of an ambulance. In response, Israel systematically targeted UN schools, shelters, convoys and hospitals. Such a blatant collective punishment is in contravention of Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, among the many other international laws and UN legislature Israel has arrogantly ignored.

The report by AI says Israeli tanks strapped Palestinian children to the front of tanks as they advanced into Gaza.

Krausz found it appropriate to collectively punish the 1.5 million people of Gaza to defend Israel's borders. I would like to know how an occupying force and the oppressor can justify their actions of "self-defence" against an indigenous population.

And in any case, it is difficult to define Israel's borders today. With constant settler expansion into Palestinian land, one cannot be blamed for not knowing where this ever-growing illegitimate state ends.

It is laughable for Krausz to try to convince us that Israeli men, <u>women</u> and children were protected by Israeli shelters from the treacherous bombs of <u>Hamas</u>.

As Professor Norman Finkelstein rightly said on his recent visit to South Africa, you can put people in bomb shelters, but not homes, schools, synagogues, hospitals and shops. How does Israel explain the fact, as quoted in the AI report, that during the Gaza massacre only one Israeli house was nearly destroyed by rockets? This is compared to 2 400 homes flattened in Gaza.

How is <u>Hamas</u> supposed to adequately provide shelter for Gazan citizens who elected them into government, when they had been starved of resources and aid since the first day they were put in power? Surely Krausz does not expect such a miracle from a government so severely crippled.

# Talking of conscience - when will Israel get one?

I find it ironic that Krausz should talk about a conscience when the nation he so ardently supports is clearly lacking one.

Aayesha Soni

**Brixton** 

Load-Date: October 17, 2009



#### Pakistan: Reconciliation through ballot box

Right Vision News
October 1, 2009 Thursday

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**Length:** 825 words **Dateline:** Pakistan

#### **Body**

Pakistan, Oct. 31 -- CURSED as they are with bad leadership, the sad saga of the Palestinian people fluctuates between tragedy and farce. As if contending with a crushing occupa-tion, embargoes, closures and the complete physical separation of the West Bank and Gaza were not enough, over the past couple of years, they have also seen the two parties supposedly representing them descend into petty and bloody faction-alism. To top it all off, one party is pragmatic and moderate but has failed to deliver peace or improve life for Palestinians.

Instead, it has become aloof to the population, is rotten to the core with corruption and is widely perceived, with all the international funds flowing into its coffers and the American Gen. Keith Dayton wielding significant control over the Palestinian Authority's (PA's) se-curity forces in the West Bank, to have become a kind of mercenary force for the Israeli occupation. But the frying pan of the Fateh-run Palestinian Authority may prove to be noth-ing compared with the fire and brimstone of the Islamic resistance movement (*Hamas*). *Hamas* may be less corrupt - for now - but it is ideologically fanati-cal, has been working hard to purge dissent in Gaza, is already restricting the freedom of Palestinians on the Gaza Strip, especially women, and, given its ideological rejection of Israel as a Jewish state, is far less willing to com-promise with the Israelis. Of course, Israel and the international community did nothing to engage with *Hamas*' early overtures toward moderation and, instead, punished Gaza, causing the party to harden its position and rhetoric. With this poison and bitterness filling the air, it was perhaps optimistic to expect Egypt's efforts - despite the country's long experience as a mediator - to broker a truce between the two parties to reach fruition, especially since US President Barack Obama's shift in rhetoric has not yet been matched by any shifts in reality. The talks ostensibly broke down because of *Hamas*' anger over the PA's delay in endorsing the Goldstone Report into Israeli war crimes in Gaza, which also criticizes *Hamas* - albeit to a lesser extent - for targeting Israeli civilians. The party went so far as to accuse Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas of be-traying the victims of the Israeli offensive. However, given how fundamentally the two factions differ and how *Hamas* appears to want to take over the helm of the Palestinian cause, it could just as well have been anything else. So, even if Egyptian diplomats manage to pull a rabbit out of the hat, any deal could quickly run against the rocks, particularly as trust of both Fateh and the Egyptians - who are perceived as agents of America and collaborators with Israel by certain segments of the Palestinian and wider Arab population - is low. It is abundantly clear that Abbas, whose position keeps changing with the winds, has lost the plot and the only parties who continue to support his presidency are the Americans and Israelis. But this support is misguided. The presence of a weak and unpopular Palestinian president may serve the interests of extremists, for whom the prospect of continued Palestinian infighting is convenient, but it does little to forward the long-term prospects for peace. To my mind, it is time for Abbas - who was once respected as a key architect of the Oslo Accords and hammered out a workable blueprint for comprehensive peace with Yossi Beilin, which was derailed by the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin - to go, in dignity, and make room for the people to decide. Abbas has already said repeatedly that the only way out of the impasse with *Hamas* is through the ballot box. But instead of delaying elections till the mid-dle of next year, as Egypt has proposed, they should go ahead as

Pakistan: Reconciliation through ballot box

scheduled in January - or earlier, if possible. In the meantime, Abbas should resign and hold his position only in a caretaker capacity until a new president is elected. In addition, the issues facing the Palestinians are too controversial and com-plex to be left to any one party to decide. I believe that a series of referenda - financed by the international community - should be conducted on crucial ques-tions of war and peace: Negotiation vs. confrontation; violence vs. nonviolence; two states or one; civil rights or national rights; Jerusalem, refugees, etc. A similar exercise should also be carried out among Israelis to crystallize what kind of future they desire. Equipped with such clear expressions of popular will, Israeli and Palestinian negotiators can engage with a clear mandate, assuming that both sides' vision for the future is compatible or, at the very least, reconcilable. Personally, I hope neither Fateh nor <u>Hamas</u> win the elections. The Palestinians deserve a change of guard Published by HT Syndication with permission from Right Vision News. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at <a href="https://doi.org/10.1016/journal.o

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Load-Date: October 30, 2009



#### Prisoners swapped for captured soldier's video; Israel

The Times (London)
October 1, 2009 Thursday
Edition 1, Ireland

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 5 **Length:** 309 words

Byline: Sheera Frenkel

#### **Body**

Video footage of an Israeli soldier held hostage for three years by Palestinian militants is to be released tomorrow in exchange for 20 *women* prisoners.

Pictures showing Corporal Gilad Schalit alive and the release of prisoners held in Israeli jails mark the first significant progress in negotiations to free him. Corporal Schalit was captured by militants with links to <u>Hamas</u> and taken into Gaza during a cross-border raid in June 2006.

Israel said that the videotape was a confidence-building measure, although negotiations were likely to remain difficult. "It is important for the entire world to know that Gilad Schalit is alive and well and that <u>Hamas</u> is responsible for his wellbeing and his fate," Binyamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, said.

A spokesman for the Popular Resistance Committee, a Palestinian militant group linked with the capture of Corporal Schalit, said that the video lasted for about a minute and was filmed recently. Several letters and an audio recording have also been released by his captors.

In an interview several weeks ago Noam Schalit, his father, told The Times: "There has been no breakthrough until now, although I can say that negotiations are more intensive and effective since the Germans took over."

He added that there was nothing he had seen yet that made him optimistic that he would see his son soon.

Officials involved in the negotiations say that <u>Hamas</u> has demanded that Israel should release more than a thousand Palestinian prisoners in exchange for Corporal Schalit. An Israeli team has made a list of possible prisoners but many groups, including the Bereaved Family Forum, have asked Israel not to release people involved directly in terror attacks.

The list of 20 prisoners to be released tomorrow has been confirmed by Palestinian officials. The <u>women</u> come from factions including <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah.

Load-Date: October 1, 2009



#### Wear the headscarf, Gaza women lawyers told

Yorkshire Post July 26, 2009 Sunday

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Yorkshire's National Newspaper

# YORKSHIRE POST

Length: 258 words

**Highlight:** Gaza's top judge yesterday ordered <u>female</u> lawyers to wear Muslim headscarves when they appear in court, the latest sign that the Islamic militant group <u>Hamas</u> is increasingly imposing its strict interpretation of Islamic law on residents of the coastal strip.

#### **Body**

Supreme court chief justice Abdul-Raouf Halabi said <u>female</u> lawyers would be required to wear a headscarf and a long, dark-coloured cloak under their billowing black robes from September.

He said his order was designed to ensure that <u>women</u> dressed in accordance with Islamic law, which requires <u>women</u> to cover up in public, wearing loose garments and only showing their hands and faces.

"Showing a woman's hair is forbidden (in Islam)," said the *Hamas*-appointed chief justice.

"We will not allow people to corrupt morals. This (dress code) will improve work in the courts."

<u>Hamas</u> seized power in Gaza in June 2007 and vowed never to impose its conservative values on others. But it has taken a series of steps in recent months that appear to be aimed at forcing residents to accept its Islamic-oriented social agenda.

Police have pressured shop owners to cover scantily clad mannequins, and men relaxing on the beach have been ordered to cover up.

The <u>Hamas</u> government formally says it is not imposing Islamic law on the territory's 1.4 million residents. Instead, it says it is simply ensuring that residents behave in line with the territory's conservative culture.

Subhiya Juma, a *female* lawyer, said the judge's decision would affect only 10 or so lawyers as the vast majority of the 150 *female* lawyers already covered their hair.

Ms Juma, who does not wear a headscarf, said the point wasn't the number of <u>women</u>, but that freedoms were being eroded.

"This is dangerous - it's a clear violation of the law, it is taking away our personal freedoms," she said.

Load-Date: July 27, 2009



#### World - Video swap to see 20 freed from prisons

Morning Star

October 1, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 208 words

#### **Body**

Israel has announced that 20 Palestinian <u>women</u> will be released from prison this week in exchange for a videotape proving that an Israeli soldier held in the Gaza Strip is still alive.

Tank crewman Gilad Schalit was seized by <u>Hamas</u>-linked fighters in a cross-border raid in June 2006 and has not been seen since his capture.

The swap is to take place on Friday.

A statement from Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's office said that a forum of senior Israeli Cabinet ministers had approved the deal, suggested by Egyptian and German mediators as a "confidence-building measure."

Sergeant Schalit's full release could defuse a central point of contention and might help to ease a crippling Israeli blockade on the Gaza Strip.

The deal was to be carried out, the statement said, "ahead of the decisive stages in the negotiations for the release of Gilad Schalit and based on the Israeli government's commitment to work with determination to bring him home quickly."

<u>Hamas</u> is demanding that Israel releases hundreds of prisoners, many of whom are serving lengthy sentences, in exchange for the soldier.

In Gaza, <u>Hamas</u> spokesman Osama Muzini confirmed the deal, which he said was struck after German mediators asked for information on Sgt Schalit's health.

Load-Date: October 1, 2009



# <u>WE'LL SWAP 19 WOMEN PRISONERS FOR 1 VIDEO OF HOSTAGE; FIRST</u> PIC OF SEIZED ISRAELI IN 3YRS

# The Mirror October 3, 2009 Saturday Scots Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 20

Length: 294 words

**Byline: RYAN PARRY** 

# **Body**

A VIDEO of an Israeli soldier held captive for three years was yesterday exchanged for the freedom of 19 Palestinian <u>women</u> prisoners.

The footage of 23-year-old Sergeant Gilad Shalit - in which he briefly smiles - was the first glimpse of him since he was snatched by Islamic militants *Hamas* in June 2006.

Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu was among the first to watch the grainy video.

Sgt Shalit's parents Noam and Aviva watched a copy privately at home. A spokesman said: "This is a difficult moment...the family is strong and reserved as usual."

The soldier's voice sounded shaky but he appeared healthy as he read from an Arabic-language newspaper dated September 14.

He also read a lengthy statement in Hebrew and said: "I have been hoping and waiting for a long time for the day I will be released." The two-minute film also showed Sgt Shalit standing for a few seconds.

He was seized in a cross-border raid by *Hamas* and other militants and taken to Gaza.

The swap, brokered by German and Egyptian diplomacy, could be a step towards more prisoner releases and freedom for Shalit.

Mr Netanyahu's spokesman said: "Although the path to release is still long and difficult, the knowledge he is healthy encourages us."

Radical group <u>Hamas</u> hailed the deal as a great political achievement. Of the prisoners released, 18 returned to the West Bank and were received by Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas at his Ramallah HQ.

The largest celebration was reserved for Fatima Younis Zaq, 45, the only one from Gaza. She returned to a hero's welcome along with an infant son who was born in jail, her ninth child.

# WE'LL SWAP 19 WOMEN PRISONERS FOR 1 VIDEO OF HOSTAGE FIRST PIC OF SEIZED ISRAELI IN 3YRS

<u>Hamas</u> is demanding the release of up to 1,000 Palestinians held in Israeli prisons in exchange for Sgt Shalit's freedom.

11,000 NUMBER OF PALESTINIANS HELD IN ISRAELI PRISONS

# **Graphic**

BEFORE Shalit, aged 19 JOY Fatima Zak, left, and in West Bank yesterday ALIVE Captive Sgt Shalit smiles briefly in video

Load-Date: October 3, 2009



# 'A necessary operation'

The Jerusalem Post August 4, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 13

Length: 1192 words

**Byline:** YAAKOV KATZ

Highlight: In an exclusive interview, Givati Brigade commander Col. Ilan Malka maintains that despite humanitarian

groups' allegations of Israeli war crimes in Gaza, his troops did their best to avoid harming innocent civilians

#### **Body**

The day after Operation Cast Lead ended in mid-January and amid growing international criticism of the alleged lax rules of engagement during the fighting, the IDF decided to hold a press conference to respond to the accusations.

The venue chosen was a small IDF base located adjacent to the Sde Teiman airstrip just northwest of Beersheba. The officer chosen to give the briefing was Col. Ilan Malka, commander of the Givati Brigade, who had left Gaza the night before after spending two weeks deep inside the Strip commanding dozens of daily operations against *Hamas*.

Malka, 41, a graduate of the National Defense University in Washington, is part of the new generation of IDF brigade commanders who came of age in the post-Second Lebanon War era.

If during the 2006 war some brigade commanders stayed back in Israel, overseeing the fighting from secure bunkers, during Cast Lead, Malka and his counterparts from the Golani, Paratrooper and 401st brigades were all on the battlefield with their men.

At Sde Teiman, Malka stood before reporters in front of weaponry IDF troops had captured during the operation, including anti-aircraft cannon, Kassam launchers and antitank missiles.

"We did not exaggerate in our use of firepower," Malka maintained. "I will not send 10 soldiers into a house that is suspected of being booby trapped so they can all [be blown] up inside. If <u>Hamas</u> wants to protect the family inside, it shouldn't have booby trapped the home."

Seven months later, numerous international NGO reports accusing Israel of perpetrating war crimes in Gaza have not succeeded in changing Malka's mind about Cast Lead, which he calls a "necessary operation" in an exclusive interview with The Jerusalem Post.

MALKA, THE first commander of Givati to have "been raised" in the brigade - established in 1984 - will soon take up his new post as chief operations officer of Central Command.

"If <u>Hamas</u> had fought with us in open fields and orchards, we would have fought with it there," he says. "But when they fire an RPG at you from inside a house and you then find an IED [improvised explosive device], grenades and machine guns inside, what does this mean?"

#### 'A necessary operation'

But, Malka says, things were not that clear and in a vast majority of engagements, his troops held their fire, at their own risk, to avoid harming innocent civilians.

"The moment we found weaponry in the house, we began sweeping it with selective fire," he said. "You can sweep a house slowly, but then you will lose soldiers. Therefore we took many steps to prevent our soldiers from getting hurt."

Those steps mostly paid off. While 10 soldiers were killed during the two-week ground operation, Malka reveals that initial IDF predictions were that each battalion would lose six or seven.

<u>Hamas</u>, like Hizbullah, knows that Israel's weak point is when fighting in urban centers amidst innocent <u>women</u> and children, he says, referring to cases when mothers were sent to blow themselves up next to troops or children were sent down a street to retrieve a dead terrorist's weapon.

"<u>Hamas</u> tried to bring out our weak side, and that is why it hides behind the civilian population," he says. "The Gaza urban centers are the playing field that it chose and where it believes that it can cause Israel damage internationally and achieve something of a victory."

Under Malka's command, the Givati Brigade penetrated the deepest into Gaza City. In a meticulously planned mission launched two days before the cease-fire went into effect, the brigade's reconnaissance battalion swept into the Tel el-Hawa neighborhood and took over two 15-story buildings in search of *Hamas* operatives.

The operation put soldiers just 500 meters away from the home of senior <u>Hamas</u> leader Mahmoud a-Zahar and a kilometer from Shifa Hospital, where most of the <u>Hamas</u> leadership, including Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, were believed to be hiding. Forty Palestinian gunmen were reportedly killed during the maneuver, which entailed climbing hundreds of stairs and sweeping dozens of apartments.

According to Arab media reports, following the operation, <u>Hamas</u> decided to fire the commander of its Gaza City Brigade who fought against Malka and Givati. Despite this, Malka has no doubt that, like the IDF, <u>Hamas</u> is also preparing for the next round, which he says could erupt at a moment's notice.

"They are rearming with new weaponry, and they are also studying the way we operated during Cast Lead to be able to stop us next time around," he says. "If this time tanks were sent in first to clear the way for the infantry, they will likely next time try to plant IEDs to stop them."

Malka admits to being surprised by the number of tunnels that <u>Hamas</u> had dug under the streets of Gaza. He says that before the operation he warned his troops to be extra careful when maneuvering throughout Gaza due to intelligence regarding the high threat of kidnappings.

Malka's brigade made headlines in March when the head of the Rabin pre-military academy leaked soldiers' accounts of the operation to the press. Some of the testimonies included accounts of killing Palestinian civilians, permissive rules of engagement and the intentional destruction of property. One account was by an infantry squad commander who told of an incident when a Givati company commander ordered his troops to shoot and kill an elderly Palestinian woman who was walking on a road near the troops.

Following the reports, which made international headlines, the Judge Advocate-General's Office launched an investigation and found that they were based on hearsay without any corroborating evidence.

LAST MONTH, Breaking the Silence issued a damning report of the operation which included testimonies from 26 unnamed soldiers who claimed the IDF used Gazans as human shields, improperly fired incendiary white phosphorous shells over civilian areas and used overwhelming firepower that caused needless deaths and destruction.

Malka says he was not surprised by the reports and was familiar with most of the stories beforehand. "I knew who was there and who gave the approval to open fire," he says. "Nevertheless we decided to look into everything again and discovered that the troops operated according to procedure in all of the cases."

#### 'A necessary operation'

The one incident which took Malka by surprise and which he describes as a "slap in the face" was the arrest of two soldiers from the Givati Brigade for stealing a Palestinian's credit card and using it to withdraw cash from ATMs in Israel. That investigation was launched after Ahmed Rafia, a resident of Gaza City, filed a complaint with the IDF's Gaza Coordination and Liaison Administration regarding the theft. Rafia, whose account is at the Bank of Palestine, told CLA officers that his card was stolen and that NIS 1,600 was withdrawn from ATMs in Israel following the conclusion of the operation.

"These soldiers were weeds that we uprooted from our midst," Malka says, adding that he believes it is important to talk to soldiers before, during and after operations about the importance of military ethics and morals. "Even though when you are in a battle, you have missions, it is still important to maintain ethical rules of engagement."

# **Graphic**

2 photos: GIVATI BRIGADE commander Col. Ilan Malka briefs troops before going into the Gaza Strip as part of Operation Cast Lead. MALKA WORKS with his troops in Gaza. (Credit: IDF)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



#### The downs, and less downs, of enjoying Ramadan in occupied Gaza City

The Daily Star (Lebanon)

September 17, 2009 Thursday

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**Length:** 958 words

Byline: Daily Star Staff

#### **Body**

Gazans have been learning to adapt to <u>Hamas</u> rule and a stifling border blockade, both now in their third year. Their skills of improvisation are particularly challenged during Ramadan, when devout Muslims fast from food, drink and sexual concourse dawn to dusk. Coca-Cola, for instance, is a Ramadan favorite in Gaza.

Diaa Hadid

Associated Press

OCCUPIED GAZA CITY: Gazans have been learning to adapt to <u>Hamas</u> rule and a stifling border blockade, both now in their third year. Their skills of improvisation are particularly challenged during Ramadan, when devout Muslims fast from food, drink and sexual concourse dawn to dusk. Coca-Cola, for instance, is a Ramadan favorite in Gaza, but is banned by Israel's blockade on the <u>Hamas</u>-ruled territory, which only allows in humanitarian aid and basic foods.

That helps make Ramadan peak season for the territory's smugglers, who throughout the year haul everything from mo-tor-cycles to detergent through tunnels under the border with Egypt. During Ramadan, demand is particularly high for soft drinks and chocolates - sweet treats consumed after iftar, the fast-breaking evening meal, which Israel also bans.

Smugglers also beef up imports of shoes, clothes and toys, bought in larger quantities for Aid al-Fitr, the three-day holiday capping Ramadan when families traditionally buy new clothes and other gifts.

Tunnel boss Jihad says he imports over 100,000 cans of soda a day during Ramadan, particularly cola - double the amount he normally hauls. Ji-had, who asked that his last name not be used, has 32 people working from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m., six days a week, using an electric pulley to move the goods.

Most of the smugglers observe the fast, adding to the challenges of working in the unstable underground passages. More than 100 men have died in tunnel collapses since Israel and Egypt imposed a border blockade on Gaza in June 2007, after *Hamas* gunmen disarmed Fatah security forces in the coastal territory.

The downs, and less downs, of enjoying Ramadan in occupied Gaza City

With the Islamic militant <u>Hamas</u> increasingly silencing opponents, some Gazans resort to subtle acts of defiance. Choosing a Ramadan lantern is one. The multi-colored, brightly painted, battery-powered lanterns are hung in homes as a symbol of the season.

This year's best-seller is yellow, the color of <u>Hamas'</u> political rival, Fatah, said Taha, a Gaza City toy vendor. Green, the color of <u>Hamas</u>, isn't in much demand. "Customers tell me: 'I want yellow, I don't want any other color!'" said Taha, 21. "Now I've got a whole bunch of green lamps I can't sell."

The lack of demand for green isn't necessarily a sign of dwindling support for *Hamas*, lantern sellers said.

Hamas loyalists are free to wave their own green flags, so they don't need green lanterns to make a statement.

Gaza's few leftists are snapping up Taha's pink lamps - the closest to their signature color red. "But nobody wants the blue lanterns," Taha said. "They aren't factional."

Gaza's artisans are making a comeback as residents resort to their traditional ways to survive the blockade.

Sabri Atallah's pottery workshop is thriving. Using local clay, he makes building bricks and roof tiles. In a month when Gazans obsess over lftar, there's a surge in demand for clay pots, which are used to bake Gaza's signature dish of shrimp, tomatoes, nuts and chili peppers.

Attallah's workshop buzzes with barefoot young men in rolled up trousers hauling clay, tending his kiln and working on pottery wheels. The bustle is in stark contrast to the deserted factories across Gaza. Virtually all have been forced to close because of the blockade, which prevents the import of raw materials and the export of manufactured goods.

"We only turn to Gaza products when we can't buy things from abroad," said Attallah, 56. "But we should be proud of what we have."

Shifa, Gaza's largest and chronically overburdened hospital, is normally a hive of haggard doctors, bearded male nurses in flip-flops and noisy families crowing around patients. During daylight hours of Ramadan, though, Shifa's hallways are eerily quiet. Patients and visitors are fewer, and the fasting staff is too tired to make much noise.

Ahmad Fayoumi, head of ad-missions in the internal medicine department, says he sees around an average of 150 patients during the day in Ramadan - half the usual number.

"Because people aren't eating, their bodies are resting," says Fayoumi. "Diabetics don't have insulin problems, blood pressure goes down and the heart rests."

The evenings make up for the daytime calm. For many fasters, iftar is a time to gorge on fatty meats, spicy rice and syrup-drenched fried pancakes stuffed with cheese, a Ramadan favorite. Fayoumi says the sugar-and-fat laden meals bring mostly middle-aged patients back to the hospital with high blood sugar or heartburn.

"I'd call it a poor use of food," Fayoumi said. "The body should be slowly prepared for food. Start with a date. Drink some milk. Pray. Then eat."

The <u>women</u> in Gaza City's shrinking middle class jostle to have their hair done by Ramzi, a coiffeur so famous here he's reverently referred to by only his first name. But Ramadan is a challenging time, both for the hairdresser and his customers.

Devout Muslim <u>women</u> believe its forbidden for any man, apart from their husband, father and brothers, to see their hair. It's a ruling that most wealthy Gazan <u>women</u> ignore - except in Ramadan, when even the most-casual Muslims may become a little more devout.

At the moment, Ramzi's shop is empty. "It's expected," he said, rolling his eyes as he folded tin foil pieces he uses to color hair. "For the first 20 days of Ramadan, everybody becomes religious."

The downs, and less downs, of enjoying Ramadan in occupied Gaza City

He says his customers will troop back soon to prepare for Eid al-Fitr. "In the last 10 days [of Ramadan]," he said, "they beg Ramzi to fix them up."

Load-Date: September 16, 2009



### As the world sees it...

The Independent (London)
October 19, 2009 Monday
First Edition

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Section: COMMENT; Pg. 28

Length: 331 words

### **Body**

#### **Goldstone Report**

#### AL-JUMHURIYAH (EGYPT)

We are waiting for US President Barack Obama's position on the Goldstone Report which accuses Israel and its military leaders of committing war crimes against Palestinians in Gaza. Will the man of the Nobel Peace Prize and his country stand by the victims at the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and at the UN Security Council, or will he protect the aggressors? (Muhammad Abu-Al-Hadid)

#### AL-QUDS (PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES)

We hope that the vote on the Goldstone report will end this shameful phase of wrangling and accusation between [Fatah and *Hamas*]. However, as we have learned from experience, there is a big gap between hope and bitter reality. Our leaders on both sides do not want face up to their responsibilities. (Editorial)

#### AL-RAYAH (QATAR)

Some Western bodies and even some Palestinians do not want the UNHRC to condemn Israel over its Gaza operation, particularly after Israel warned that it would not negotiate with the Palestinians if such a resolution was passed. Palestinians should ease their tensions and give the international community a chance to bring Israel to account. (Editorial)

#### HA'ARETZ (ISRAEL)

<u>Hamas</u> fighters carried out a massacre of Fatah supporters in Gaza and the entire world watched as the functionaries of Fatah were tossed to their deaths from the rooftops. Not one Islamic country demanded <u>Hamas</u> stop the massacre. How is it that no Goldstone panels were set up to examine the destruction <u>Hamas</u> sowed in Gaza or the murderous attacks that the terrorist organizations perpetrated on <u>women</u> and children in the heart of Israel? (Yoel Marcus)

MA'ARIV (ISRAEL)

#### As the world sees it...

The Americans understand that Israel is under heavy pressure and that Goldstone could be the final nail in the coffin of Obama's initiative. They also understand that (Palestinian leader) Mahmud Abbas is also under heavy pressure and that it is impossible to demand of him now anything that can be interpreted as surrender to a US or an Israeli diktat. (Shmuel Rosner)

Load-Date: October 18, 2009



# Video gives first glimpse of captive Israeli soldier; Sergeant seems healthy; 19 Palestinians released in deal to get recording

# The International Herald Tribune October 3, 2009 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 8

Length: 709 words

Byline: ISABEL KERSHNER

Dateline: UNITED NATIONS

### **Body**

#### **ABSTRACT**

Israel received a video showing the Israeli soldier held captive by <u>Hamas</u> for more than three years, Gilad Shalit, in apparently good health, on Friday after releasing 19 Palestinian <u>women</u> from jail, with one more to be released shortly to complete the deal.

#### **FULL TEXT**

Israel received a video Friday showing Gilad Shalit, the Israeli soldier held captive by <u>Hamas</u> for more than three years, in apparently good health, after releasing 19 Palestinian <u>women</u> from jail, with one more to be released shortly to complete the deal.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Ehud Barak were among the senior officials who first saw the video, along with military officials, who checked its authenticity. A copy was flown to northern Israel where the Shalit family watched it and decided to allow the video to be made public. It was broadcast on Israeli television Friday.

In the video, he holds up a copy of a Palestinian newspaper dated Sept. 14. "I am reading the paper in order to find information regarding myself, hoping to find some information from which I would learn of my release and upcoming return home," he says.

The video is Israel's first glimpse of Sergeant Shalit since June 2006, when he was seized in a cross-border raid by *Hamas* and other Palestinian militant groups and taken into Gaza.

The exchange was the most tangible sign of progress so far in years of negotiations, first via Egyptian mediators and more recently via Germans, for the soldier's release, and a tentative first step toward a larger deal - though Israeli officials said earlier that the negotiations were likely to remain long and arduous.

<u>Hamas</u>, the Islamist group that controls Gaza, hailed the deal as a great political achievement. Of the 19 prisoners released, 18 returned to the West Bank and were received by the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, at his headquarters in Ramallah.

Video gives first glimpse of captive Israeli soldier Sergeant seems healthy; 19 Palestinians released in deal to get recording

But the largest celebration was reserved for Fatima Younis Zaq, 45, the only one from Gaza. Ms. Zaq, who is affiliated with the extremist group Islamic Jihad, was arrested in May 2007 at the Erez crossing on her way into Israel. She was charged with having undergone military training and planning a suicide bombing, but had not yet been sentenced. She returned to Gaza on Friday to a hero's welcome along with an infant son who was born in jail, her ninth child.

Ismail Haniya, the prime minister of the <u>Hamas</u> government in Gaza, and other leaders greeted Ms. Zaq. "This is a day of victory for the resistance and steadfastness," Mr. Haniya said.

The former prime minister of Israel, Ehud Olmert, authorized the release of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners to bolster Mr. Abbas after <u>Hamas</u> routed his forces and took over Gaza in 2007. But until Friday, no prisoners had been released since the more conservative Mr. Netanyahu came into power in March.

After months of apparent stagnation, <u>Hamas</u> now seems eager to project a more proactive image. Its leaders have been making upbeat statements about a possible reconciliation with Mr. Abbas and his mainstream party, Fatah.

The Islamic group is demanding the release of up to 1,000 Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails in exchange for Sergeant Shalit. There are up to 11,000 Palestinians in Israeli prisons.

In a startling shift, the Palestinian delegation to the U.N. Human Rights Council has dropped its efforts to forward a report accusing Israel of possible war crimes to the Security Council, under pressure from the United States, Neil MacFarquhar reported from the United Nations, quoting diplomats.

The Americans argued that pushing the report would derail the Middle East peace process they were trying to revive, diplomats said Thursday.

"We don't want to create an obstacle for them," Ibrahim Khraishi, the Palestinian ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, where the Human Rights Council is based, said by telephone. "We want to get a strong resolution to deal with the report in a good manner to get a benefit from it."

The report - produced by a panel of investigators led by an internationally respected jurist, Richard Goldstone - found extensive evidence that both Israel and Palestinian militant groups had taken actions amounting to war crimes during the war in Gaza last winter.

Load-Date: October 7, 2009



## Fatah to vote for its executive body, assembly

AlArabiya.net

August 8, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 627 words

## **Body**

The 6th conference of the leading Palestinian party, Fatah, will vote on Sunday for a new executive body and assembly, in a test of its ability to renew itself and regain the lost trust of the Palestinian people.

The movement led by the late Yasser Arafat for 40 years is seeking to throw off a reputation for corruption and cronyism that led in 2006 to a stunning election loss to its Islamist rival *Hamas*, which opposes peace with Israel.

*Hamas* seized Gaza in a civil war a year later, splitting the Palestinian polity.

The congress of 2,355 delegates in Bethlehem -- Fatah's first in 20 years -- began last Tuesday and was marked by reformists' charges of vote-buying and nepotism by the "old guard." Candidates

Ninety-six candidates, six of them <u>women</u>, are standing for election to the 21-member central committee and 617 party members including 50 <u>women</u> will vie for the 80 places open in a 128-seat Revolutionary Council, the body's parliament.

Voting will last for 10 hours. Results from the complex ballot papers are expected to take about a day.

If stalled peace talks with Israel resume, Fatah's leader, the Western-backed Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, will be Israel's main interlocutor, a position <u>Hamas</u> is certain to continue challenging however successful this convention.

Holding Fatah's first meeting on Palestinian soil in 44 years of existence is part of efforts to underpin his personal authority as the voice of all Palestinians.

Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak deplored Fatah's anti-Israel rhetoric but stressed that "it must be understood there is no Middle East solution other than a comprehensive, broad settlement including us and the Palestinians."

"I very much recommend that (Abbas), after the congress, prepare to enter such a settlement, and that President Obama lead the way to a comprehensive regional settlement," he said.

"Genuine change"

Abbas, 74, won unanimous endorsement by a show of hands on Saturday, telling the congress it must mark a new beginning.

"We've had many launches and setbacks. Sometimes we have reached the edge of the abyss but we have always emerged stronger," he said to applause.

#### Fatah to vote for its executive body, assembly

All eyes were on the competition for leadership places by members of the younger generation of Fatah members, who say the top ranks of the movement are long overdue for an overhaul.

It would be a mark of genuine change, said one member of the "old guard," if two-thirds of the seats on the Central Committee and Revolutionary Council went to younger members.

But expectations must not be too high, Fatah veteran and Central Committee candidate Sami Musallam said.

"The chance of new faces coming into the Central Committee, I believe, are pretty slim. However I expect new faces to be well represented in the Revolutionary Council."

Reformist Sabry Saydam said: "The most important thing is to display the unity of Fatah, and that will be the sign that we are back to being the movement that served the Palestinian people in the past."

Internal divisions

Fatah cannot afford to perpetuate internal divisions on top of its fundamental schism with <u>Hamas</u>, which marks "one of the darkest chapters in the Palestinian struggle ever," said Sabry Saydam, vice-president of the congress and an adviser to Abbas.

Fatah is dominant in the West Bank, separated from the <u>Hamas</u>-run Gaza Strip by Israeli land. Together the territories would form a future Palestine in a peace deal with Israel -- except that they are now governed by two hostile rivals.

<u>Hamas</u> stopped 300 Fatah members leaving Gaza to attend the Bethlehem convention, creating a procedural headache. But on Friday a message to Bethlehem from 299 Gaza delegates said they would vote by phone or email if necessary to play their part in choosing the two main party executive bodies.

Load-Date: August 9, 2009



# <u>Letters - Goldstone Report on Gaza was guided by politics - not by human</u> rights

#### Irish News

November 4, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: Pg. 22

Length: 380 words

## **Body**

Fergal Hallahan's column on the Goldstone Report published by the Gaza Fact Finding Mission ('War Criminals behind Gaza massacre must face justice', October 23) was as one-sided as the report he was commenting on.

The Goldstone Report published on September 15, and the resolutions it reached gave serious reasons for concern to many states on the United Nations Security Council which refused to support it - including the member states of the European Union, Switzerland, Canada, Korea and Japan.

It also troubled many distinguished individuals, including our own former high commissioner for human rights Mary Robinson, who refused invitations to head the fact-finding mission and admitted

that it was "guided not by human rights but by politics".

Among many of the troubling discrepancies found in the report were the following:

- Throughout their visits to Gaza, the mission members were continuously accompanied by *Hamas* officials.
- All the witnesses were pre-screened and selected, and none were asked questions relating to any Palestinian terrorist activity or the location of weaponry and terrorists in civilian areas.
- The report all but ignored the deliberate terrorist strategy of operating in the heart of densely populated civilian areas which dictated the arena of battle.

Even when the <u>Hamas</u> terrorists mixed among civilians, the report rejected the notion that there was an intention to put the civilian population at risk.

- Even though there were many widely reported instances in the international press of the abuse of civilian facilities by terrorist groups, and the statements of <u>Hamas</u>' own leaders praising <u>women</u> and children who acted as human shields, the report repeatedly stated that it could find no evidence of such activities.

This, despite its admission that those interviewed were "reluctant to speak about the presence or conduct of hostilities by the Palestinian armed groups".

There are many more examples of the distortion of and basic misrepresentation of facts in this report.

Letters - Goldstone Report on Gaza was guided by politics - not by human rights

In an article in The Guardian, Sir Harold Evans, former editor of The Sunday Times and and one of the UK's most respected journalists, condemned the Goldstone Report, describing it as "half-baked" and designed to exonerate the real aggressor, *Hamas*.

UNA MARRON, Saul, Co Down.

Load-Date: November 4, 2009



## **OPINION: The slippery slope -Uri Avnery**

Daily Times (PK)
October 20, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 1486 words

Dateline: Pakistan

## **Body**

Pakistan, Oct. 20 -- It is, of course, all the fault of Judge Richard Goldstone. He is to blame for it, as he is to blame for all the other ills that are befalling us now.

He is to blame for the trouble we are having at the UN, both in New York and in Geneva. For the conspiracy to bring our political and military leaders to trial in The Hague. For the ongoing crisis between us and Turkey. For the many initiatives throughout the world to organise a boycott of Israel.

Now he is to blame also for the existential danger facing Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen).

When the Goldstone report was submitted to the UN Human Rights Council, our government decided to do all it could to prevent even a debate about it. The debate was, of course, demanded by the Palestinians. When the report was published, the Palestinian representative in Geneva did the obvious: he demanded that the report be debated with a view to submitting it to the Security Council, which in turn would submit it to the international court in The Hague.

What came next could have been foreseen. The Israeli government exerted heavy pressure on the US. The US exerted heavy pressure on Mahmoud Abbas. Abbas gave in and instructed his representative in Geneva to withdraw his request for a debate.

In any other matter, this would have passed quietly. But since the subject was the Gaza War, Palestinian public opinion exploded. Throughout the war, every Palestinian in the West Bank saw on Al Jazeera and the other Arab networks every day, every hour, the atrocities of the war, the mangled bodies of <u>women</u> and children, the destroyed schools and mosques, the white phosphorus bombs.

For the <u>Hamas</u> leaders, Abbas' order to withdraw the request was a gift from Allah. They fell over Abbas with unabated fury. "Traitor", "Collaborator", "Subcontractor of the Zionist murderers" were the more moderate epithets. They found an echo with many Palestinians who are not necessarily <u>Hamas</u> supporters.

Abbas' legal standing is shaky. According to one version, his term of office expired long ago. According to another, it will expire in a few months. Whatever the case may be, he will be compelled to hold elections soon. In this situation, he cannot remain indifferent to an upsurge of public opinion against him. So he drew the logical conclusion: he instructed his Geneva representative to renew his request for a debate on the Goldstone report. This ended yesterday with a resolution to refer the report to the UN General Assembly.

The frustrated Israeli government reacted angrily. The orchestrated media declared Abbas an "ungrateful" person, even a hypocrite. After all, didn't he urge the Israelis during the Gaza War to intensify their attacks on the Gaza

#### OPINION: The slippery slope -Uri Avnery

population, in order to topple <u>Hamas</u>? This accusation poured oil on the flames. For Palestinians, it meant that Abbas was not satisfied with the atrocities perpetrated by the Israelis and demanded more. It is hard to imagine a more damaging allegation.

As if this was not enough, the Israeli media reported that Jerusalem had delivered an "ultimatum" to the Palestinian Authority: if the request for a debate were not withdrawn, Israel would not authorise the frequency allocation for a second Palestinian cellular telephone company, "al-Wataniya", whose partners, it was gleefully reported, include Abbas' sons. Such a frequency allocation is worth hundreds of millions of dollars. Even in such a matter, the Palestinians are totally dependent on the Israeli occupation authorities.

The whole affair starkly illuminates the impossible situation in which the Palestinian Authority finds itself. They are between hammer and anvil - indeed, between several hammers and an anvil.

One hammer is Israeli. The Palestinian Authority is completely dependent on the occupation masters. As the telephone affair illustrates, nothing can move in the West Bank without Israeli approval.

Another hammer is American. The Palestinian Authority subsists on money donated by the US and its European sidekicks. The security forces of the Palestinian Authority are being trained by the American general, Keith Dayton. Washington treats Mahmoud Abbas as it treats the Afghan President Hamid Karzai and the Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki. He is "our SOB". He exists as long as we want him to, he disappears if we let go.

In a clash between Washington and Jerusalem, Ramallah would benefit. But as the Goldstone episode shows, the US and Israel are, for the time being, fully coordinated. Abbas has no choice but to dance to the tune of the Israeli flute.

The anvil is Palestinian. At the moment, the Palestinian public is passive. It is tired, worn down, frustrated, in despair. But the Goldstone affair shows that below the surface, a volcano is brewing.

Abbas' initial order to withdraw the request for a debate on the Goldstone report also obstructed the efforts to overcome the split among the Palestinian factions.

The Egyptians are spreading news about a forthcoming internal Palestinian agreement and leaking its contents. It is hard to believe that anything will come of it. <u>Hamas</u> is supposed to relinquish its sole rule of the Gaza Strip, and it is hard to believe that they will do so. Abbas is supposed to confront <u>Hamas</u> in free elections - and this, too, is hard to imagine. It is even harder to believe that the Americans would risk allowing such elections. They have already announced that they are doing their best to prevent the reconciliation.

The Israeli media gleefully report that the hatred between Fatah and <u>Hamas</u> is stronger than their hatred towards the Israelis. That is not a unique phenomenon. When we were fighting against the British regime in Palestine, David Ben-Gurion gave orders for Irgun fighters to be turned over to the British police, and only the almost inhuman restraint of Menachem Begin prevented a fratricidal war. The Irish freedom fighters killed each other with abandon when the British offered a compromise. Such things have happened in many places.

If the Palestinians will have to choose, they are not to be envied. On the one side, <u>Hamas</u> is seen as an uncorrupt movement, true to the fight against the Israeli occupation. But the fundamentalist religious restrictions that they are now imposing on the Gazans, especially on the <u>women</u>, are abhorrent to many Palestinians. On the other side, while the Palestinian Authority is seen by many as corrupt and collaborationist, it is also seen as the sole body that can attract American support for the Palestinian cause.

Today <u>Hamas</u> does not offer any real alternative in practice, since they, too, are observing a cease-fire with Israel. Yet the hope that Abbas could bring peace is fading.

How does our government treat this situation?

Innocents may say: Israel is interested in the elimination of the extremist <u>Hamas</u> and the strengthening of the moderate Abbas, who is working for peace with Israel. That is self-evident.

#### OPINION: The slippery slope -Uri Avnery

If so, why is the Israeli government preventing Abbas from attaining any political achievement, even a symbolic one? Why did Ariel Sharon call him a "plucked chicken"? Why do the Israeli media repeat every day that Abbas is "too weak to make peace"?

What is stopping Netanyahu from freeing a thousand Palestinian prisoners as a gesture for Abbas, while he is negotiating with <u>Hamas</u> about the release of a thousand prisoners in return for the captured soldier Gilad Shalit? Why does he present Abbas with conditions whose acceptance would mean political suicide? (For example: to recognise Israel as "the state of the Jewish nation".) Why is the enlargement of the settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank proceeding at a frantic pace, under the nose of Abbas?

The political and military leadership of Israel is not composed of stupid people. Far from it. When they do things whose consequences can clearly be foreseen, one has to assume that it is these results that they want, even when they maintain the opposite. When so many of the government's actions reinforce <u>Hamas</u> and weaken Abbas, isn't that why they are doing it?

And indeed: Abbas is dangerous to the present Israeli policy. He enjoys the support of President Obama, who is pressuring Israel to start negotiations for "two states for two peoples", which entails withdrawal from the West Bank and the dismantling of most settlements. That means an end to 120 years of Zionist expansion and a fundamental change in the very essence of Israel itself.

<u>Hamas</u> in power over all the Palestinian people would deflect these "dangers". No American pressure for a compromise. No need for negotiations. No need for "restraint" of settlement activity or for a compromise over Jerusalem. The occupation could go on undisturbed.

This may lead to disaster in the future. But who cares about the future? Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Times. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at <a href="httsyndication@hindustantimes.com">httsyndication@hindustantimes.com</a>

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Load-Date: October 20, 2009



## World - 300,000 Gazans live in 'abject poverty'

# Morning Star October 3, 2009 Saturday

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**Length:** 398 words **Byline:** Tom Mellen

## **Body**

The number of Gazans surviving in conditions of abject poverty has tripled this year to one in five residents, the UN refugee agency warned on Thursday.

UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) head John Ging observed that the rise in poverty was a "predictable consequence" of the Israeli-Egyptian border blockade.

"The suffering, the impoverishment, the misery of the people here in Gaza continues to rise because of a manmade crisis. A political failure," Mr Ging declared.

Gaza's economy has buckled under the blockade, which was imposed after patriotic Islamist group <u>Hamas</u> quashed a coup bid by Western-backed Fatah forces in 2007, following <u>Hamas</u>'s resounding victory in the 2006 Palestine National Authority elections.

The blockade's toll on Gaza residents has been compounded by Israel's winter offensive in the strip that has destroyed housands of homes, government buildings and businesses and killed over 1,400 Palestinians, the majority civilians.

UNRWA, which provides services, including emergency food rations, to 750,000 of Gaza's 1.4 million residents, explained that those who are unable to feed their families are considered "abject poor" and receive extra support.

Mr Ging emphasised that lifting the internationally condemned blockade is the only way to stop Gaza's rising poverty and appealed for more funding to help his agency meet the growing need.

Israel said that they feared that easing the blockade would benefit <u>Hamas</u> and that they wouldn't reopen the border until the group, which refuses to renounce its right to armed resistance in the face of Israeli occupation, releases Israeli Sergeant Gilad Shalit, who was captured more than three years ago.

Israel's release of Palestinian <u>women</u> detainees on Friday in exchange for a video confirming that Sgt Shalit is alive and well has been described by Tel Aviv as a "confidence-building measure."

Both <u>Hamas</u> and Israel appear eager to wrap up a deal, but Israeli officials have predicted that negotiations for a final agreement will be long and difficult.

n A Palestinian man was killed on Friday when an underground tunnel linking Gaza to Egypt collapsed on him as he attempted to bring vital supplies into the coastal enclave.

Israeli jets have repeatedly bombed the tunnel areas, making collapses increasingly common.

Gaza Health Ministry official Dr Moaiya Hassanain said that 127 people had died in the tunnels since 2007.

Load-Date: October 5, 2009



# Proof of life: hostage soldier appears on video after three years in captivity; Israel

The Times (London)
October 3, 2009 Saturday
Edition 1, Ireland

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 3 Length: 976 words Byline: James Hider

## **Body**

"Hello, this is Gilad, son of Noam and Aviva Schalit, brother of Hadas and Yoel who live in Mitzpe Hila. My ID number is 97027." With those words, delivered on a videotape that had been bought with the release of 19 Palestinian <u>women</u> prisoners, Corporal Gilad Schalit appeared yesterday for the first time since he was captured by <u>Hamas</u> three-and-a-half years ago.

Looking healthy but tired, his hair still cut in a short military fashion and his face shaved, the Israeli corporal who has spent 1,195 days in captivity at a hidden location in the Gaza Strip held up an Arabic newspaper with the date of September 14, 2009. It was the first concrete proof of life that his family has received since he was snatched in a cross-border raid by militants.

"As you can see I am holding today's Falasteen newspaper published in Gaza," he said, smiling nervously at the camera as he read from a sheet of paper held over the newspaper. "I read the newspaper in order to find information about myself, and in hopes of reading about information of my return home and my imminent release."

In the video, which lasts for about two-and-a-half minutes, Corporal Schalit, 23, wore dark, military-style clothing and sat in a plastic chair with a plain grey wall behind him to give Israeli Intelligence no possible indication where the footage might have been filmed.

"I hope the current Government headed by Binyamin Netanyahu doesn't waste this opportunity to reach an agreement and, as a result, allow me to fulfil my dream and be released," he said in the film, which was released after it had been shown to the Prime Minister, the head of the army and his family.

Since he was captured in June 2006 Israel has fought two wars, one in Lebanon and one in Gaza this year, and ushered in a new Government.

The video was released after German and Egyptian mediators brokered an exchange of the proof-oflife film for the release of 20 **women** Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails. Nineteen of the **women**, mostly serving shorter

Proof of life: hostage soldier appears on video after three years in captivity Israel

sentences for abetting Palestinian militant groups, were released to scenes of celebration in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The twentieth will be released tomorrow after the Israeli prison service released one of the designated detainees a day early for good behaviour.

The Israelis had to find another eligible prisoner at the last minute. Eighteen of the <u>women</u> were released in the West Bank, which is controlled by Fatah and one - who had given birth to a boy - was returned to Gaza, which is run by <u>Hamas</u>.

The rival Palestinian leaders in each territory greeted the prisoners and the <u>Hamas</u> leader, Ismail Haniya, described it as a moment of Palestinian unity.

Corporal Schalit has become a cause célÈbre for Israel since being taken in a raid. Palestinian fighters dug a tunnel under the Israeli border fence and attacked the small base where he was posted. Two other Israeli soldiers and two Palestinian militants were killed in the fighting.

His captors, a mixed group of militant organisations led by <u>Hamas</u>, have refused any access to their prisoner, even to the Red Cross. They have handed over letters from him and an audiotape in a move brokered by former US President Jimmy Carter.

His father has campaigned for his son's fate not to be forgotten, even camping in the street outside the residence of the Prime Minister and enlisting the aid of Nicolas Sarkozy, the French President. The soldier's parents agreed that the footage could be shown on television after they watched the video of their son in their home in Galilee, in northern Israel.

Corporal Schalit addressed his family. "I wish to send my best wishes to my family and tell them that I love them and miss them greatly, and hope for the day I'll see them again. Dad, Yoel and Hadas, do you remember the day you arrived at my base in the Golan Heights, on December 31, 2005? We toured around the base and you took a picture of me on a Merkava tank and on one of the old tanks at the entrance to the base. Later we went to a restaurant in one of the Druze villages and on the way we took pictures on the side of the road, against the backdrop of the snowy Hermon Mountain."

Such memories in hostage videos are often used to attest to the identity of the captive.

With a slight look of amusement Corporal Schalit read a statement praising his captors from the armed wing of *Hamas*.

"I want to tell you that I feel well in medical terms, and that the Mujahidin from the al-Qassam Brigades are treating me excellently. Thank you very much and goodbye," he said as the video ended.

The release of the film is seen as a tentative step towards freeing the soldier, although officials warn that could still take months. In the past <u>Hamas</u> has demanded the release of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners as part of an exchange, including some serving time for killing Israeli civilians.

The release of Corporal Schalit could end Israel's blockade of Gaza, which has lasted almost four years.

The trade in prisoners

In 1985 Israel agreed to release more than 1,150 Palestinian prisoners in return for three soldiers captured in Lebanon

Israel was forced to free Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, spiritual leader of <u>Hamas</u>, in 1997 after two Mossad agents were caught by Jordan on a mission to kill a <u>Hamas</u> leader

Page 3 of 3

Proof of life: hostage soldier appears on video after three years in captivity Israel

In 2004 a deal to release more than 400 Hezbollah militants in exchange for a businessman and the bodies of three soldiers went ahead despite a suicide bomber killing 10 Israelis on the day of the prisoners' release

In 2006 Israel and Hezbollah exchanged the remains of a drowned Israeli civilian found by fishermen in Lebanon for a captive Lebanese fighter and the bodies of two comrades

Hezbollah handed over the bodies of two captured Israeli soldiers last year in exchange for five Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners, whose capture started a war between Israel and Hezbollah in 2006

Source: Times database

# **Graphic**

The film of Gilad Schalit was traded for 19 prisoners

**HAMAS** VIDEO / AP

Load-Date: October 3, 2009



## IDF 'does not target civilians'

Irish Examiner
August 20, 2009 Thursday

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Section: OPINION Length: 392 words

## **Body**

I would like to state clearly that the soldiers of Israel's Defence Forces do not shoot unarmed civilians deliberately. Every soldier serving in a combat unit is fully briefed about his obligations under International Human Rights Law and about the importance of distinguishing between civilians and combatants. Obviously civilians are not to be targeted. Where any incidents of wrongdoing are alleged, the matter is fully investigated. The Israeli legal system is independent and has consistently earned international respect and recognition for its jurisprudence and independence. It has achieved some landmark rulings on balancing security with the protection of human rights, and has been cited favourably by foreign courts, such as the European Court of Justice.

Human Rights Watch's report relies on a very problematic methodology, which is its reliance on uncorroborated testimony from people who are not free to speak out against the <u>Hamas</u> regime or tell the truth about the <u>Hamas</u> tactic of using civilians as human shields.

Despite its declared noble intention of protecting human rights, there is unfortunately, a systematic pattern of anti-Israel bias in their reporting. Earlier this year, a Human Rights Watch report on Israel's use of drones in Gaza was discredited as speculation rather than fact by Jane's Air-Launched Weapons.

Furthermore, one must question the reliability and objectivity of Human Rights Watch, when one considers their public admission of fundraising in Saudi Arabia in May, during which they manifested their bias against Israel.

It is ironic that a human rights group would fundraise in Saudi Arabia , a country known for its harsh treatment of <u>women</u>, homosexuals and non-Muslims. We invite readers of your paper to read The Operation in Gaza Factual and Legal Aspects, which can be downloaded from Israel's Foreign Ministry website and which documents <u>Hamas'</u> exploitation of Gaza's civilian population as human shields. Such examples can be viewed even on Youtube.

Contrary to the tactics of <u>Hamas</u>, which deliberately and indiscriminately targets Israeli civilians and puts the lives of Palestinians in danger, the IDF does its utmost to avoid the loss of life of civilians in combat areas while carrying out their duty to protect the lives of their fellow citizens.

Derek O'Flynn

Press Officer

Embassy of Israel

Dublin 4

Load-Date: August 20, 2009



## Israel rejects EU advocacy of Jerusalem as shared capital

#### The Irish Times

December 2, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: WORLD; Other World Stories; Pg. 13

Length: 706 words

Byline: ARTHUR BEESLEY and MICHAEL JANSEN

## **Body**

SWEDEN S EU presidency has proposed a division of Jerusalem in any peace accord between Israel and the Palestinians, prompting a frosty response from Israel s foreign ministry.

In a document circulated to EU foreign ministers, Sweden explicitly says East Jerusalem should be the capital of an independent Palestinian state as part of a two-state solution to the stalemate in the Middle East peace process.

The proposal, leaked to the Israeli newspaper Haaretz, is included in draft conclusions to be adopted by EU foreign ministers after a meeting in Brussels early next week. The draft says: The European Union calls for an urgent resumption of negotiations that will lead, within an agreed timeframe, to a two-state solution with an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable state of Palestine, comprising the West Bank and Gaza and with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side in peace and security with the state of Israel. The draft reflects the outcome of a preliminary diplomatic engagement between EU members.

The Palestinian Authority did not formally comment on the draft as it does not react officially to speculation in the Israeli press, Palestinian media chief Ghassan Khatib told The Irish Times. He said this proposal is not new.

When Israel decided to expand [the Jerusalem area settlement of] Gilo, the EU presidency came out with a statement that includes the idea that Jerusalem should be the capital of two states. This signified progress in the position of the presidency. But I don t know whether the EU [as a whole] can agree on this position. Nevertheless, this is a positive development on this matter. It will encourage Israel to abide by [international] legitimacy.

As Israel campaigns to have the reference removed or watered down, the draft will be discussed by EU ambassadors tomorrow and may well be reworked before ministers themselves meet.

A division of Jerusalem would be in keeping with Irish policy on the Middle East. With the current stance of Germany and the Netherlands unknown, however, it is unclear whether the draft would be supported by all EU members.

It is open to the ministers to adopt the draft or change it. Still, diplomats see the leak as a reflection of Israeli fears the EU would proceed to make such a reference as a means of stepping up pressure on prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu to return to the talks table. As it stands, the draft marks a nuanced change to the EU s position on Jerusalem because it deals directly with establishing East Jerusalem as the Palestinian capital.

#### Israel rejects EU advocacy of Jerusalem as shared capital

The current EU policy states that a solution should allow the city to become the shared capital of the two states. A spokesman for EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton, who took office yesterday, said there had been no change to the bloc s policy.

The process being led by Sweden harms the European Union s ability to take part as a significant mediator in the political process between Israel and the Palestinians, said Israel s foreign ministry.

After the important steps taken by the government of Israel to enable the resumption of negotiations with the Palestinians, the European Union must now exert pressure on the Palestinians to return to the negotiating table. Steps like those being led by Sweden only contribute to the opposite effect.

Meanwhile, <u>Hamas</u> and Israel have identified 400 Palestinian prisoners to be released in exchange for Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, captured by <u>Hamas</u> s affiliates in 2006. Debate is focused on 50 detainees demanded by <u>Hamas</u>, including West Bank Fatah leader Marwan Barghouti, Popular Front head Ahmad Sadat, several members of <u>Hamas</u> s military wing involved in major bomb attacks on Israelis, and three <u>women</u> who organised operations which killed Israelis. In addition to the prisoners on <u>Hamas</u> s list, Israel is to set free another 530 as a gesture to the Palestinian people. This would show that Israel is ready to address Palestinian concerns, since an estimated 800,000 Palestinians have been incarcerated during Israel s 42-year occupation and 9,000-10,000 are currently in jail.

A German mediator has been shuttling between the parties to clinch the deal which <u>Hamas</u> minister Fathi Hamad said should be implemented this month.

Load-Date: December 2, 2009



## Goldstone report undermines faith in international law

The Toronto Star
October 22, 2009 Thursday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. A27

Length: 659 words

Byline: Ed Morgan, Special to The Star

## **Body**

The Report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on Gaza has now been endorsed by the UN Human Rights Council as documenting Israeli war crimes.

But from a legal point of view, the Goldstone report is full of more holes than the tunnel-riddled strip along the Gaza-Egypt border.

Despite its 574-page girth and the heaviness of its potential impact, the actual evidence compiled against Israel is rather thin. Justice Richard Goldstone himself has worried that the UN action on the report is being treated as conclusive when it was never intended that way. "If this was a court of law, there would have been nothing proven," Goldstone told a reporter.

Among its most damning findings, the report states that Israeli forces indiscriminately attacked universities, mosques and civilian areas. Its pages are full of testimony from witnesses, or partial witnesses or, more accurately, non-witnesses who heard stories from their brother-in-law who knows someone who was almost there. As Goldstone has described it, "We had to do the best we could with the material we had."

A careful read through the seemingly weighty report reveals that, legally, they didn't have much.

For example, the report describes the Israeli attack on Gaza's Islamic University, stating: "These were civilian, educational buildings and the mission did not find any information about their use as a military facility."

Anyone with a normal university campus in mind would agree, unless they were in the habit of watching Palestinian television. The Islamic University was previously featured as the site of clashes between Fatah and <u>Hamas</u> gunmen, with Fatah soldiers identifying it as a weapons laboratory for the new and improved Qassam rockets that <u>Hamas</u> fires by the thousands into Israel. Palestinian Authority television had a full display of the weapons cache found in the Islamic University at the time.

The report also condemns the destruction of several mosques in Gaza by Israeli fire, finding no basis for the Israeli allegations that mosques were used as launching points for *Hamas* attacks and as weapons storage facilities. Again, anyone with a normal image of a house of worship in mind would have to agree.

But the "fact-finding" mission did not seem to gather all of the facts. Israeli soldiers testifying at Tel Aviv's Rabin Academy after the war displayed first-hand photographs - not hearsay accounts from a friend of a friend - showing weapons stored in Gaza mosques and <u>Hamas</u> gunmen using mosques as firing platforms. Goldstone has

#### Goldstone report undermines faith in international law

complained that the Israelis did not cooperate with the mission, but the IDF testimony is publicly available for anyone, including the UN's "fact finders," to see.

Finally, the report condemns Israel for the many civilian deaths in Gaza. In response to Israeli accounts - again, well photographed - that *Hamas* forces concentrated themselves in civilian populated areas, the report put its head in the sand: "The mission notes that those interviewed in Gaza appeared reluctant to speak about the presence of or conduct of hostilities by the Palestinian armed groups."

But if they couldn't get locals to talk, and if they didn't want to look at Israeli evidence, they could have paid attention to <u>Hamas</u> spokesman Fathi Hammad, who when interviewed described his organization as being at one with the people of Gaza: "This is why they have formed humans shields of the <u>women</u>, the children, the elderly and the mujahideen, in order to challenge the Zionist bombing machine."

Now that's a war crime.

There are many tragedies in Gaza that deserve proper investigation, including death and destruction on both sides. But the biggest tragedy of the Goldstone report is the damage done to international law. Goldstone, a renowned jurist, has wasted his reputation on a deeply flawed and biased report. It will undermine faith in the rule of international law for any who, apparently unlike the members of the UNHRC, actually take the time to read it.

### **Graphic**

FABRICE COFFRINI AFP Getty Images Former South African judge Richard Goldstone delivers his report on Gaza last month at the UN office in Geneva.

Load-Date: October 22, 2009



## Soldier tape spurs Israeli release of prisoners

Financial Times (London, England)

October 3, 2009 Saturday

London Edition 1

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Section: WORLD NEWS; Pg. 5

**Length:** 235 words **Byline:** Vita Bekker

## **Body**

Israel released 19 Palestinian <u>female</u> prisoners yesterday as part of a deal with <u>Hamas</u> in which the Jewish state received a video proving that an Israeli soldier abducted by the Islamist group in 2006 is alive.

The exchange was the first concrete sign of progress in long-running negotiations towards an agreement between Israel and <u>Hamas</u> that could see Staff Sergeant Gilad Shalit swapped for hundreds of Palestinians held in Israeli jails.

Mr Shalit, now 23, was captured in a cross-border raid in June 2006 by Palestinian militants and taken into the Gaza Strip, territory now controlled by <u>Hamas</u>. He was one of three soldiers abducted on the eve of the 2006 Lebanon war. The dead bodies of the other two soldiers were returned to Israel in return for Lebanese prisoners.

In the video aired by Israeli television, Mr Shalit appears thin and has dark circles under his eyes. He is shown reading from a written statement in Hebrew that he holds atop a Palestinian newspaper bearing the date of September 14.

In a calm voice, he says that he is "well" and is being treated "excellently". He adds that he hopes the current government "does not waste this opportunity to reach an agreement and as a result, allow me to fulfil my dream and be released".

Friday's handover could also signal a possible easing of Israel's crippling blockade on Gaza, which it imposed on the impoverished coastal territory after the abduction.

Load-Date: October 2, 2009



## A member of the Goldstone panel speaks

The Toronto Star
October 15, 2009 Thursday

Copyright 2009 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: OPINION; Pg. A25

Length: 643 words

### **Body**

She's a prominent supreme court lawyer in Pakistan. She and her sister, both lifelong human rights activists, have been attacked for defending Christian and Hindu minorities, and promoting <u>women</u>'s rights. They have lived under police protection and at times house arrest for angering the authorities.

Asma Jahangir has been the UN rapporteur on freedom of religion.

Hina Jilani is the UN rapporteur on human rights. In 2006 she was a member of the UN commission of inquiry on Darfur. Its report, rejected by Sudan as biased but backed by the U.S., led to the International Criminal Court's arrest warrant against Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir on war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Jilani was also part of the UN panel led by South African judge Richard Goldstone that has accused Israel and *Hamas*, but mostly Israel, of war crimes, and possibly crimes against humanity in Gaza. Hailed by rights groups and several states, the report has been condemned by Israel and the U.S. as biased. They pressured Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas into derailing it at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva.

That led to a storm of protest, forcing him to recant and muster the support of China and 17 others in the 47-member council to tackle it today and tomorrow. The Security Council debated it yesterday.

It's against this backdrop that I reached Jilani on the phone Tuesday in her native Lahore.

Of the American double standards, she said: "Yes that's true. But I'm not really that concerned with what an individual country's political and special interests may demand it to be. But I do have very high expectations of multilateral bodies, like the UN, to restore some credibility to their ability to hold people accountable. Without accountability and justice, there can be no peace.

"My expectation at that time (Darfur) and also now is that the Security Council would make sure that it takes steps in order to make the international justice system more credible and that (it) be more consistent in the way it applies its power and its sanctions."

The Goldstone panel asked both Israel and <u>Hamas</u> to hold their own internal investigations into alleged war crimes. Failing that, it urged the Security Council to turn the issue over to the International Criminal Court at The Hague.

Jilani said the panel was aware of Israel's record of ignoring international law and discriminating against Palestinians internally. And that Israel had held probes that had effectively whitewashed its military actions in Gaza. Yet the panel wanted the council to give Israel a chance to hold transparent and credible investigations.

#### A member of the Goldstone panel speaks

The panel was also cognizant that "there's no equivalence between what a state does and what non-state actors (like *Hamas*) do."

Yet Israel has "absolute responsibility as an occupying force toward the civilian population, a responsibility that has very clearly been violated." Israel has kept the Palestinians "under an extremely repressive occupation for 40 years" and, then, launched the war on Gaza - "a step too far."

On the other hand, "we have no doubt that the actions taken by the armed groups, including <u>Hamas</u>, against the population of southern Israel amount to war crimes because they targeted and killed and caused suffering to civilian populations in those areas ...

"We don't believe that you can take advantage of being a non-state actor and commit violations and gross violations of human rights."

So the panel called for accountability from *Hamas* as well.

Of Abbas's initial decision to shelve the report, Jilani said: "I think it was a very ill-considered move on his part. I've been in Gaza. I've met the victims, as I've met the victims from southern Israel of rocket attacks from <u>Hamas</u> and other groups. And I know what the victims' expectations are.

"I think it'd be very cruel to not give credence to their voices."

hsiddiq @ thestar.ca

Load-Date: October 15, 2009



### **VIDEO SHOWS ISRAELI SOLDIER**

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

October 3, 2009 Saturday

SOONER EDITION

Copyright 2009 P.G. Publishing Co.

Section: WORLD; WORLD BRIEFS; Pg. A-4

Length: 559 words

## **Body**

JERUSALEM -- In the first glimpse of him since his capture more than three years ago, a thin but healthy-looking Israeli soldier said in a video released yesterday by <u>Hamas</u> that he is being treated well by his Palestinian captors and appealed to Israel's leader to bring him home.

Israel received the two-minute video of Sgt. Gilad Schalit from <u>Hamas</u> militants after it released 19 <u>female</u> Palestinian prisoners earlier yesterday in an exchange that is the first tangible step toward defusing a key flash point in Israeli-Palestinian hostilities.

The images of Sgt. Schalit were the first to be released since his capture 3 1/2 years ago by <u>Hamas</u>-linked militants in the Gaza Strip.

Scores of bodies found

MINGORA, Pakistan -- Scores of badly tortured bodies have been found dumped in Pakistan's Swat valley, raising concerns that the Pakistani army is conducting a campaign of extra-judicial killings and brutality aimed at suspected Taliban militants that could sully the army's successful campaign against them.

At least two mass graves for executed Taliban have been discovered, according to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, an independent organization. Separately, an Internet video emerged yesterday that appeared to show Pakistani soldiers, likely in Swat, beating prisoners, including elderly men. Abbas reverses course

Abbas reverses course

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip -- Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas drew scathing criticism at home yesterday for his decision to suspend a campaign to have Israeli officials prosecuted for war crimes over last winter's military offensive against *Hamas* in Gaza.

Mr. Abbas' reversal came under heavy U.S. pressure and means no further international action is likely for at least six months.

At issue is a recent U.N. report that alleges both Israel and *Hamas* committed war crimes in three weeks of fighting.

Lawmakers visit Honduras

#### VIDEO SHOWS ISRAELI SOLDIER

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras -- Four U.S. Republican lawmakers met with Honduras' interim president yesterday in a challenge to Washington's condemnation of the coup that brought him to power.

The brief, amicable visit with the leaders of the coup that ousted President Manuel Zelaya highlights a divide in Washington, where the Obama administration is working to reinstate Mr. Zelaya but many conservatives side with the government installed after soldiers arrested the president and flew him into exile.

South Carolina Sen. Jim DeMint, the leader of the delegation, said before the trip that even calling Mr. Zelaya's overthrow a coup is "ill-informed and baseless."

EU's future in the balance

DUBLIN -- The future of the European Union hung in the balance yesterday as Ireland's voters decided once again whether to ratify a treaty aimed at making the 27-nation body more decisive and effective.

No professional pollsters or media organizations conducted exit polls. Official results come today.

Typhoon nears Philippines

MANILA, Philippines -- Filipinos braced yesterday to be whipped by powerful winds and pelted with rain from a second typhoon in eight days, fleeing by the tens of thousands from low-lying areas and suspending cleanup operations in the flooded capital.

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo declared a nationwide "state of calamity" and ordered mass evacuations of six provinces in the path of Typhoon Parma, which was expected to hit the main island of Luzon midafternoon today.

Load-Date: October 6, 2009



# YEAREND SPECIAL: Gaza remains under siege, more delays in Palestinian truce

# Daily News Egypt December 22, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 906 words

## **Body**

The onset of 2009 came hot on the heels of Operation Cast Lead, the Israeli offensive on the Gaza Strip which began with airstrikes on Dec. 27, 2008 before Israeli ground troops moved in on Jan. 3 this year.

A six-month ceasefire had ended Dec. 18, 2008 between <u>Hamas</u> and Israel, and on Dec. 24 <u>Hamas</u> resumed rocket attacks on Southern Israel after the Israeli Defense Forces had killed seven of its members in an airstrike.

The offensive lasted 22 days and caused the death of around 1,400 Palestinians, the majority of them civilians (over 1,000) and including more than 100 **women** and 300 children. Israel casualties numbered 13, three of them civilians.

Aside from the high civilian death toll, Israel was also severely criticized for the use of white phosphorous in urban areas, which is considered illegal by the United Nations.

Egypt also came under a hailstorm of criticism for its role during the attack. First there was the visit of then Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni to Cairo two days before the offensive - where she effectively announced Israel's intention to attack Gaza - with the infamous picture of her and Egyptian counterpart Ahmed Aboul Gheit arm in arm.

Then there was Egypt's refusal to open the Rafah border crossing during the war. However, throughout the duration of the offensive, medical aid was transported into Gaza via the Rafah crossing and injured Palestinians were allowed through the crossing to be treated in Egypt's hospitals.

"We in Egypt are not going to contribute to perpetuating the rift (between <u>Hamas</u> and the Palestinian Authority) by opening the Rafah crossing in the absence of the PA and EU observers in violation of the 2005 deal," President Hosni Mubarak said at the time.

Protests erupted across the Arab world as well as within Egypt against the Israeli offensive and the continued closure of the Rafah border crossing. However, there were other Egyptians who were more supportive of the regime's stance during the war.

#### YEAREND SPECIAL: Gaza remains under siege, more delays in Palestinian truce

Israel announced a unilateral ceasefire after 22 days. By then, US President Barack Obama had announced that George Mitchell would be special envoy to the Middle East.

In March, Egypt hosted a Gaza reconstruction conference in Sharm El-Sheikh that was attended by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Quartet Middle East envoy Tony Blair.

Billions were pledged in aid by donor countries, mainly from the EU, but many stressed the need for a political solution and others voiced concern over possible further destruction to Gaza following reconstruction attempts.

In September, the UN fact finding mission on the Gaza offensive headed by Richard Goldstone released its report, in which it held Israel responsible for a plethora of violations under international law.

The report concluded that there was strong evidence that war crimes and crimes against humanity were committed in the conflict. Although it also held <u>Hamas</u> responsible for some violations, the report concluded that Israel had acted with impunity and disregard for international law during its attack.

#### Mediation on all fronts

Throughout the rest of the year, Egypt - represented by Intelligence Chief Omar Suleiman - continued mediation efforts between <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah, in an attempt to form a new unity government. Egypt had set a June deadline for an agreement to be reached, but when it seemed that they were no closer to an agreement, the deadline was postponed indefinitely.

On a separate but parallel tack, Egypt - again represented by Suleiman - worked alongside Germany to arbitrate between <u>Hamas</u> and Israel over the release of captured Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit (taken in 2007) in exchange for a number of Palestinian prisoners.

Rumors abounded that the deal was on the verge of completion, only for officials from both sides to come out and refute them. It was reported that Israel was balking at the release of Fatah leader Marwan Barghouti, incarcerated since 2002 and serving five consecutive life sentences.

The year 2009 came to an end with Palestinian unity talks still at an impasse, Gaza still under siege and the Rafah border crossing still closed, being opened only intermittently and arbitrarily.

However, there was a twist in the tale come December, when it emerged that Egypt was building an iron wall beneath the border with Gaza in an effort to bring an end to smuggling activities that have provided a lifeline to the besieged Gazans.

Although Egypt denied it at first, photographs soon surfaced of the digging taking place as well as a section of the dug up wall that had already been built.

Eventually, Egypt did admit to the building of the new barrier, but stated that it was merely reinforcing the existing barrier separating the Egyptian side of Rafah from the Palestinian one in an attempt to protect Egypt's sovereignty.

The construction of the underground wall came under fire, both literally and politically. Reports claimed that shots were fired from the Gaza side of the border at Egyptians installing the barrier, with no injuries. Later, *Hamas* staged a protest against the construction of the wall, with its spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri calling it an "unjustifiable situation".

During the same week, Egypt rejected a request by international activists to organize a march to the Gaza Strip via Egypt to mark one year since an Israeli attack on the enclave. The Gaza Freedom March organizers, however, vowed to move forward with their plans to march to the border on Dec. 31.

Load-Date: December 23, 2009



## Prisoners freed for Shalit tape; Israel releases 19 Palestinian women

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)
October 3, 2009 Saturday
Second Edition

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Section: NEWS; International News; Pg. 16

Length: 404 words

Byline: JASON KOUTSOUKIS, MIDDLE EAST CORRESPONDENT, JERUSALEM

## **Body**

A VIDEOTAPE of captured Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit was handed over to Israeli authorities last night in exchange for the release of 20 *female* Palestinian prisoners.

The videotape was the first image of Shalit released by the militant Palestinian nationalist movement <u>Hamas</u> since his capture in June 2006.

After viewing the tape and verifying its authenticity, the chief of staff of the Israel Defence Forces, Lieutenant-General Gabi Ashkenazi, ordered the release of 19 *female* Palestinian prisoners.

Israeli prison authorities are still selecting the 20th prisoner to be released after it was discovered that one of the **women** selected for early release had already been released from prison on Wednesday.

Following their release, the prisoners will be honoured with an official state reception led by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas at his presidential compound in Ramallah in the West Bank.

According to the Israeli newspaper Haaretz, the exchanged tape shows Shalit in civilian dress against the background of a banner emblazoned with the logo of *Hamas*' military wing.

An anonymous source quoted by the newspaper said the video was about a minute long and was made about two months ago.

The newspaper added that <u>Hamas</u> officials gave the tape to Egyptian intelligence when they visited Egypt on Monday, and a German mediator watched it there.

"The tape clearly shows that the captive soldier enjoys a good health and show[s] no sign of wounds," the newspaper quoted a source as saying.

Shalit's family were also expected to receive a copy of the tape late last night.

Shalit's father, Noam, said he would prefer that the tape not be aired, at least initially, but he has reportedly agreed to accept whatever decision the Prime Minister's office makes on showing the tape.

#### Prisoners freed for Shalit tape Israel releases 19 Palestinian women

Israeli authorities are now confident that a deal to secure Shalit's release can be put together in the first half of next year. Among the issues to be resolved is <u>Hamas'</u> demand that Israel release 44 Palestinian prisoners convicted of mass murders.

Meanwhile, in a surprising development, the Palestinian delegation to the United Nations Human Rights Council dropped its efforts on Thursday to forward a report accusing Israel of possible war crimes to the Security Council after pressure from the United States.

Diplomats said the Americans believe that pushing the report by South African judge Richard Goldstone could derail the Middle East peace process.

# **Graphic**

PHOTO: An undated picture of Gilad Shalit before his capture. PICTURE: REUTERS

Load-Date: October 4, 2009



# Jerusalem blasts Red Cross for its report slamming Israel

The Jerusalem Post June 30, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 540 words

Byline: JUDY SIEGEL and HERB KEINON

## **Body**

Israel rejected as "scandalous" a highly critical report released by the International Committee of the Red Cross on Monday marking six months since Operation Cast Lead, saying it was inconceivable that the document would chastise Israel for the situation in Gaza while ignoring the continued detention of IDF soldier Gilad Schalit or the "intransigent belligerence" of *Hamas*.

According to the report, residents of the Strip are "living in desperation" due to their "daily struggle for existence."

"Gazans still cannot rebuild their lives," the report reads. "Most people struggle to make ends meet. Seriously ill patients face great difficulty obtaining the treatment they need. Many children suffer from deep psychological problems. Civilians whose homes and belongings were destroyed during the conflict are unable to recover," the ICRC maintained.

"During the 22 days of the Israeli military operation, nowhere in Gaza was safe for civilians. Hospitals were overwhelmed with casualties, including small children, <u>women</u> and elderly people. Medical personnel showed incredible courage and determination, working around the clock to save lives in extremely difficult circumstances.

"Meanwhile, daily rocket attacks launched from Gaza put thousands of residents at risk in southern Israel. Medical workers in Israel provided care for the traumatized population and treated and evacuated casualties," the Red Cross report said.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Yigal Palmor said it was "scandalous" that the report "completely ignored the detention of an Israeli hostage under absolute isolation for three years, and in breach of every elementary human right."

Palmor said the Red Cross had failed miserably in its responsibility to visit prisoners. "What is more, it evades the question of his [Schalit's] inhuman detention and of the role of that case in bringing about the current crisis," said.

Palmor said the crisis in Gaza had been brought on by "the <u>Hamas</u> junta," and that the Red Cross knew perfectly well "what <u>Hamas</u> needs to do to dramatically improve the situation."

Disregarding Schalit and <u>Hamas</u> in a report on the Gaza Strip, Palmor said, "does not add to the credibility of the Red Cross's important mission, nor does it contribute to finding a real solution to the Gaza problem."

The "bread and butter" of the Red Cross mission was to visit prisoners, and its failure to visit Schalit reflected poorly on the organization, Palmor said.

#### Jerusalem blasts Red Cross for its report slamming Israel

According to the ICRC report, "Israel's military operation left thousands of homes partly or totally destroyed. Whole neighborhoods were turned into rubble. Schools, kindergartens, hospitals and fire and ambulance stations were damaged by shelling. This small coastal strip is cut off from the outside world. Even before the latest hostilities, drastic restrictions on the movement of people and goods imposed by the Israeli authorities... Insufficient cooperation between the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah and the <u>Hamas</u> administration in Gaza had also hit the provision of essential services."

The authors claimed that even though \$4.5 billion worth of goods have been promised the Palestinians in Gaza, little will come of the aid as the transfer of goods into the Strip is severely limited by Israel.

## **Graphic**

Photo: DUTCH DEVELOPMENT Aid Minister Bert Koenders runs by children at an UNRWA summer camp on the beach in Gaza City yesterday. (Credit: Hatem Moussa/AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



## Columnist's False Premise On Israel

Intelligencer Journal/New Era (Lancaster, Pennsylvania)

November 19, 2009 Thursday

Copyright 2009 Lancaster Newspapers, Inc.

Section: A; Pg. 9 Length: 273 words

Byline: Letters

Dateline: Lancaster, PA

## **Body**

#### To the INTELL Editors:

Helen Thomas, in her Nov. 12 column, "Obama and the Israelis," starts off with a false premise. She omits the fact that Israel conquered the Arab land she is accused of annexing and actually gave it, Gaza, back to the Palestinian Arabs, an unheard of action in human history.

Israel conquered Gaza because she was attacked and is still being attacked by <u>Hamas</u> after being attacked for years by Arafat's and now Abbas's Fatah terrorist group. Israel wants peace. So far only Israel respected the cease-fires. The Palestinians, backed by Iran weaponry, continue launching rockets at Israel.

Helen Thomas needs to read Joan Peters's "From Time Immemorial" to understand that most of the Israelis are refugees escaping persecution from Arab countries; that the British encouraged Arabs from surrounding areas to immigrate into "Palestine" while keeping Jewish Holocaust survivors out, causing their death.

Israel occupies only 17 percent of the intended Jewish National Homeland in the Palestinian region under British mandate as agreed upon in the Balfour Declaration.

Instead, Churchill, interested in Arab oil, hoped to placate the Arabs by giving them the larger part, Jordan, which is the real Palestine. That did not work; they wanted it all.

<u>Hamas</u> kills Palestinians who want peace. It uses Arab <u>women</u> and children as human shields by placing rocket launchers in their midst. <u>Hamas</u> and Hizbollah sends its own <u>women</u> and children as suicide bombers to destroy Israel. Even the Koran says Mecca and Medina are the Arab holy cities and Jerusalem is the Jewish people's and has been since time immemorial.

Liliane Stern

**Ephrata** 

Load-Date: November 19, 2009



## Israel sees video of captured soldier

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

October 3, 2009 Saturday

Third Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; International News; Pg. 17

Length: 395 words

Byline: Jason Koutsoukis HERALD CORRESPONDENT

## **Body**

JERUSALEM: Video of the captured Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit was handed over to Israeli authorities yesterday in exchange for the release of 20 *female* Palestinian prisoners.

It was the first image of Sergeant Shalit released by the militant Palestinian nationalist movement *Hamas* since his capture in June 2006.

After verifying the footage, the chief of staff of the Israel Defence Forces, Gabi Ashkenazi, ordered the release of 19 **female** Palestinian prisoners. A 20th was still being chosen after it was discovered that one woman on the list had been released on Wednesday.

The released prisoners will have a state reception led by the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, at his compound in Ramallah in the West Bank.

Haaretz reported that the video showed Sergeant Shalit in civilian dress in front of a banner of *Hamas*'s military wing. It quoted an unnamed source as saying it was about a minute long and was made about two months ago.

It said <u>Hamas</u> officials gave the video to Egyptian intelligence officers when they visited Egypt on Monday, and a German mediator watched it there.

"The tape clearly shows that the captive soldier enjoys good health and show[s] no sign of wounds," the Israeli newspaper quoted a source as saying.

Sergeant Shalit's family â€" which has received three letters and an audiotape from him, but never video â€" was expected to be given a copy.

Sergeant Shalit's father, Noam, said he would prefer that the video not be aired, at least initially, but he has reportedly agreed to accept whatever decision the Prime Minister's office makes on showing the images.

Israeli authorities are now confident that a deal for Sergeant Shalit's release can be reached in the first half of next year. Among issues to be resolved is <u>Hamas</u>'s demand that Israel release 44 Palestinian prisoners convicted of mass murders.

#### Israel sees video of captured soldier

In other developments, the Palestinian delegation to the United Nations Human Rights Council on Thursday responded to US pressure and dropped its efforts to forward to the Security Council a report accusing Israel of possible war crimes in Gaza last northern winter.

Diplomats said the Americans believed that pushing the report by a South African judge, Richard Goldstone, could derail the Middle East peace process.

The report found extensive evidence that both Israel and Palestinian militant groups had taken actions amounting to war crimes.

Load-Date: October 3, 2009



## The smearing of human rights organizations

The Jerusalem Post July 23, 2009 Thursday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 16

Length: 988 words

**Byline: LARRY DERFNER** 

Highlight: RATTLING THE CAGE

## **Body**

From the way the Prime Minister's Office is denouncing Human Rights Watch, you'd think the New York-based human rights organization was an anti-Semitic, pro-<u>Hamas</u> propaganda machine that was financed by the Saudis. In a news feature last Friday titled "Israel vs. Human Rights Watch," The Jerusalem Post's Herb Keinon quoted Ron Dermer, director of policy planning for the Prime Minister's Office, giving Israel's official view of all these human rights reports, especially from HRW, about Operation Cast Lead.

"The reports of these organizations are an attempt to undermine Israel's legitimate right to self-defense," Dermer said, adding that those who are attacking Israel for defending itself against terrorists using civilians as human shields are playing *Hamas*'s game. "Every NGO that participates in this adds fuel to the fire and is serving the cause of *Hamas*."

(In other words, you're either with us - all the way, no matter what we do - or you're with the terrorists. And remember, Israel values the right to dissent.)

The catalyst for this campaign was the discovery that in May, HRW officials went fund-raising in Saudi Arabia. Meeting with a group that included an important Saudi cleric, they described HRW's work in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere, including its reports on Operation Cast Lead and the opposition it faces from "pro-Israel pressure groups," according to a story in the Saudi Arab News.

"Grossly immoral," said Gerald Steinberg, head of NGO Monitor, an organization whose sole activity is to tear down human rights organizations that are critical of Israel. (It was NGO Monitor that first picked up on the Arab News item.) Said Prime Minister's Office spokesman Mark Regev: "A human rights organization raising money in Saudi Arabia is like a *women*'s rights group asking the Taliban for a donation."

Sinister, isn't it? Now we know why Human Rights Watch writes all those terrible things about the way we treat Palestinians - because it's bought and paid for by the Islamofascists!

But before we lobby Congress to list HRW as a terrorist front, let's see if it really is as one-sided against Israel as we think. Let's see what it has to say, for instance, about Saudi Arabia.

"Human rights conditions remain poor in Saudi Arabia," begins HRW in its 2009 report. Some highlights:

Foreign workers in the kingdom "suffer a range of abuses and labor exploitation, sometimes rising to slavery- like conditions."

#### The smearing of human rights organizations

Migrant domestic workers "endure a range of abuses including forced confinement in the workplace, food deprivation and psychological, physical and sexual abuse."

Regardless of nationality, "detainees, including children, are commonly the victims of systematic and multiple violations of due process and fair trial rights, including arbitrary arrest and torture and ill-treatment in detention. Saudi judges routinely sentence defendants to thousands of lashes, often carried out in public. In 2008, the kingdom carried out 88 executions as of mid-November."

"Official tolerance for incitement to violence contrasted with intolerance toward dissident opinion."

"Saudi Arabia systematically discriminates against its religious minorities."

Incidentally, this report was published in January - months before HRW's fund-raising trip. Whoever those potential donors were, they probably weren't the Saudis who hold the whips. The kingdom's regime, I imagine, is not a big fan of Human Rights Watch.

Continuing on the issue of whether HRW is biased against Israel, let's look at a report it published in April about *Hamas*'s attacks on its own people during Operation Cast Lead. Titled "Under Cover of War," it begins:

"This 26-page report documents a pattern since late December 2008 of arbitrary arrests and detentions, torture, maimings by shooting and extradjudicial executions by alleged members of <u>Hamas</u> security forces." One of the many examples given is an attack by four armed, masked men on the al-Najjar family, in which they killed the father and wounded 10 others.

"The victims ranged in age from a 12-year-old girl, Ahlam Hisham al-Najjar, who was shot in the leg, to Zakkia al-Najjar, 70, Ahlam's grandmother, who was shot in both legs. 'After the gunmen left, I saw a sea of blood,' said Amar Hisham al-Najjar, 25. He told Human Rights Watch that the gunmen shot his father Hisham in the chest, the abdomen and the legs."

The report doesn't let Fatah off, either, and makes it clear that Palestinian-on-Palestinian violence didn't begin with Operation Cast Lead: "Internal political violence in Gaza and the West Bank is not new. Over the past three years, <u>Hamas</u> and its chief rival, Fatah, which controls the West Bank, have carried out arbitrary arrests of each other's supporters and subjected detainees to torture and ill-treatment."

So much for Human Rights Watch's "serving the cause of <u>Hamas</u>." So much for its "grossly immoral" relationship with Saudi Arabia. The truth known to everyone outside the right-wing echo chamber is that HRW, like Amnesty International, like the International Committee for the Red Cross - all of which have slammed Israel's actions in Operation Cast Lead - are impartial, credible sources of information. They go after everybody - Israel, Saudi Arabia, <u>Hamas</u>, Fatah, Iran, Syria, the US, Britain - whoever and wherever human rights are being violated.

Can the same thing be said about NGO Monitor? NGO Monitor doesn't have a word of criticism for Israel, nor a word of acknowledgment, even grudging, for any detail in any human rights report that shows Israel to be less than utterly blameless. In fact, on the subject of Israel's human rights record, NGO Monitor doesn't have a word of disagreement with the Prime Minister's Office.

So who's one-sided in this? Who's got the "agenda"? Who's believable and who's not? In any country but this one, the answer's so obvious there's nothing to discuss. But this country, unfortunately, lies deep inside the right-wing echo chamber.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



## 20th female prisoner in Schalit video deal released to Gaza

The Jerusalem Post October 5, 2009 Monday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 3

Length: 257 words

Byline: Jerusalem Post staff

## **Body**

The last Palestinian woman to be released as part of the deal to trade 20 security prisoners for a video of kidnapped soldier Gilad Schalit made her way to the Gaza Strip through the Erez crossing on Sunday afternoon.

Israel released 19 of the <u>women</u> on Friday morning, 18 to the West Bank and one to Gaza. Sunday's release of Ruda Habib came after it turned out that another prisoner released on Wednesday was finishing her sentence anyway and would therefore have been released regardless of the deal.

Meanwhile, the London-based newspaper Asharq Alawsat on Sunday quoted a senior Jerusalem official who said that Israel knows the whereabouts of Schalit.

The official said that the government knew where Schalit was taken immediately after his kidnapping, that it had consistently known where he was being held and that *Hamas* was aware of this.

Israel has avoided carrying out a rescue operation in order to prevent Schalit from being harmed, the official reportedly said.

Furthermore, <u>Hamas</u> has wrecked the chances of an Israeli military maneuver by booby trapping the location where Schalit is being held and placing bombs nearly half a kilometer around the hideout, he was quoted as saying.

The source told Asharg Alawsat that Schalit's captors planned to kill him if Israel tried to free him by force.

The Jerusalem Post could not confirm the report.

On Saturday, Noam Schalit, the captive soldier's father, told the press that despite the release of a videotape the previous day, the status of the diplomatic efforts to free his son was unclear.

## **Graphic**

Photo: <u>HAMAS</u> PRIME MINISTER Ismail Haniyeh welcomes released prisoner Ruda Habib at a Gaza City press conference yesterday. (Credit: Hatem Moussa/AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



## Israel Releases 19 Palestinian Prisoners For Captured Troop's Video

RTT News (United States)
October 2, 2009 Friday

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Length: 289 words

## **Body**

(RTTNews) - Nineteen <u>female</u> Palestinian prisoners were released from Israeli jails Friday in exchange for a recent videotape that would prove Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, abducted by <u>Hamas</u> militants in 2006, still alive, according to Israeli media reports.

Israel's share of the deal started late Wednesday, with the release of 15-year-old Bara Malki. She returned to her home in the West Bank.

18 prisoners left Israeli prisons Friday afternoon. The 20th prisoner will be released Sunday.

The 23-year-old IDF troop appears healthy with trimmed hair and spoke coherently in a two-minute video tape, which is said to have been recorded on September 14.

Shalit was captured by <u>Hamas</u> militants in a cross-border raid in June 2006. Nearly three years of Egyptian-brokered talks have failed to produce a deal for his release.

The Israeli cabinet Wednesday agreed to release 20 Palestinian <u>women</u> prisoners in exchange for a recent videotape confirming Shalit was still alive. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu&apos;s office said in a statement that the deal was proposed by international mediators as a "confidence-building measure."

Israel, holding about 10,000 Palestinians as prisoners, said it would continue negotiations for Shalit's release, though it expects the talks to be "long and arduous." Palestinian militants are said to be demanding the release of 1,000 prisoners in exchange for Shalit.

Previous Egyptian-mediated negotiations between Israeli officials and <u>Hamas</u> militants on a prisoner exchange scheme ended dead-locked after the two sides failed to agree on the number of Palestinian prisoners to be released.

For comments and feedback: contact editorial@rttnews.com

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Load-Date: April 17, 2010



## Anti-democratic interests hijack UN's human rights agenda

The Australian

October 6, 2009 Tuesday

1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 10

**Length:** 436 words **Byline:** Vic Alhadeff

## **Body**

This vital institution is being seriously undermined, writes Vic Alhadeff

ISRAELI foreign minister Abba Eban once jested that if a resolution was tabled at the UN that the world is flat -- and that Israel flattened it -- it would pass by a majority of 170-5 with 17 abstentions.

An estimated 5.4 million people have been killed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo since 1998, with 38,000 more dying every month. Yet not only are most people unaware of this, the worst toll since World War II, but there has been no hint of a General Assembly emergency session to discuss it, let alone condemn it.

The UN is mandated with the moral authority to adjudicate on matters of international concern, yet an alarming number of its agencies are headed by countries whose human rights records range from questionable to appalling, including Libya, Zimbabwe, Algeria, Sudan, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Burma.

The Human Rights Council has studiously avoided condemning the brutalities in Darfur, Chechnya and Sri Lanka, but has directed 26 out of 32 resolutions condemning human rights violations against Israel.

When an NGO urged Islamic authorities to outlaw honour killings, <u>female</u> genital mutilation and the stoning of <u>women</u>, Egypt, Iran and Pakistan objected to the initiative as an ``attempt to link bad practices" to Islam. The council duly ruled ``evaluation of a religious creed" inadmissible.

When it convenes, the council dedicates one agenda item to abuses by Israel and another agenda item to the other 191 UN countries. What hope of sensible debate when the starting premise is skewed?

The Goldstone report in its 575 pages blithely ignored <u>Hamas</u>'s ideology -- which declares that Israel will exist only until Islam obliterates it. Nor did its executive summary breathe a word about the 10,000 rockets <u>Hamas</u> fired into Israel in eight years. And even though <u>Hamas</u> MP Fathi Hamad admitted <u>Hamas</u> ``created a human shield of women, children, the elderly", Goldstone did ``not consider it to constitute evidence".

There have been more than 400 anti-Israel resolutions in the General Assembly -- more than against all other UN nations combined -- and six emergency sessions on Israel. None on Rwanda, Darfur or the maltreatment of <u>women</u> in Iran, Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan.

#### Anti-democratic interests hijack UN 's human rights agenda

The institution of the UN is vital. The extent to which it has been hijacked has reached crisis point, however. The imperative to tackle human rights issues is thus subsumed by anti-democratic agendas. It falls to the democracies among us to haul this once-august body back on track.

Vic Alhadeff is chief executive of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies.

Load-Date: October 5, 2009



## Israel swaps Palestinian women for soldier tape

#### AlArabiya.net

October 1, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 618 words

## **Body**

Israel on Friday received a video recording of a soldier held by the Palestinian Islamist group <u>Hamas</u> for the past three years, Israeli officials said.

The handover was carried out as Israel released 19 Palestinian <u>women</u> prisoners in its part of the exchange, Reuters Television reported from the West Bank border as Red Cross jeeps carried the <u>women</u> across to freedom. The video

The video showing Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit alive was aired on Israeli television on Friday.

Looking gaunt, the clean-shaven 23-year-old read from a piece of paper, at times smiling or repressing a grin, as he sat on a chair against a white wall.

"I want to send my regards to my family and tell them that I love them and miss them and yearn for the day I will see them again," said Shalit, with his hair cut short and holding a copy of a Gaza newspaper dated September 14, 2009.

"I hope that the government headed by Benjamin Netanyahu will not waste now an opportunity to reach a deal," he said, referring to the Israeli prime minister.

"I feel well and the mujahedeen of the (Ezzedine) al-Qassam Brigades are treating me very well," he said, referring to the armed wing of the Palestinian Islamist movement <u>Hamas</u> which rules Gaza.

"I have been waiting a long time for the day I am released."

At the end of the two-minute, 40-second recording, Shalit got up and walked toward the camera to illustrate that he was in good health.

A positive move

The swap is the most positive move in three years of efforts to free Shalit, captured in June 2006 in a cross-border raid by Palestinian militants

Brokered by German and Egyptian mediators, it could be a step towards a broader deal for his liberation, in return for the release of hundreds of *Hamas* prisoners.

#### Israel swaps Palestinian women for soldier tape

The International Committee of the Red Cross has not visited Shalit and only a few letters and an audio cassette from him have reached his family, which has waged a vocal campaign to get him freed

Officials had said that the German mediator has already viewed the recording and believes it showed Shalit in recent weeks. Shalit's family was expected to view the videotape before its release to the public.

"Israel will receive updated and clear proof on the health and condition of Gilad Shalit. This proof of life will be handed to Israel by the mediators in the form of a videotape that has recently been filmed," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office had said when announcing the deal on Wednesday.

10,000 Palestinian prisoners

Israel holds more than 10,000 Palestinian prisoners. <u>Hamas</u> is negotiating for the release of hundreds of its members in exchange for Shalit, including militants behind deadly attacks who Israel has said in the past it would not free.

Netanyahu's office stressed that the latest development did not herald an imminent release of Shalit, but was meant as a confidence-building measure ahead of "decisive stages in the negotiations," and warned that the talks were still expected to be "long and arduous."

All but one of the Palestinian <u>women</u> due to be released are from the West Bank and none has been directly implicated in killing Israelis.

The <u>women</u> include members of <u>Hamas</u>, Fatah, Islamic Jihad and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

A 15-year-old Palestinian girl who was on the initial list of prisoners to be released in the swap was freed on Wednesday after a parole board shortened her sentence in a development unconnected with the prisoner swap.

The teenager was serving 11 months for attempted murder and an attack on a police officer.

About 11,000 Palestinians are held in Israeli prisons, 60 of them <u>women</u>, including those to be released on Friday, and 320 are under 18 years old, according to the prisons service.

Load-Date: November 17, 2009



## We cannot ignore Gaza horror

The Sunday Independent (South Africa)

October 18, 2009

E1 Edition

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Section: Pg. 10

Length: 659 words

## **Body**

Critics of former judge Richard Goldstone's report on the Israeli assault in Gaza are deliberately missing the point.

No one should deny Israel's right to self-defence and its use of military force to punish anyone firing rockets into its villages, killing its citizens.

Israel was not on trial for waging the war, but whether the war was within the confines of the rules of engagement. Was it just and proportionate? Surprisingly, the Goldstone report has triggered criticism, and critics have suddenly developed amnesia about the atrocities and sufferings in Gaza. Or perhaps they believe that arguing the technical modalities of Goldstone's investigations absolves Israel's bloody prosecution of its war against *Hamas*.

Even before the Goldstone report, it was clear that the war did not follow Israel's meticulous tactical planning and its intention to minimise civilian fatalities, or avoid the calamitous mess it created in Lebanon three years ago. I say "minimise" because casualties of war, or so-called collateral damage, are unavoidable in any conflict.

The human horror of the Gaza tragedy confronted us in our living rooms through live TV footage.

Israel's own human rights organisation, B'Tselem, contradicted the Israel Defence Forces' massaged statistics of civilian killings.

"Israeli security forces killed 1 387 Palestinians during the course of the three-week operation. Of these, 773 did not take part in the hostilities, including 320 minors and 109 <u>women</u> over the age of 18. Of those killed, 330 took part in the hostilities, and 248 were Palestinian police officers, most of whom were killed in aerial bombings of police stations on the first day of the operation. For 36 people, B'Tselem could not determine whether they participated in the hostilities or not.

"Palestinians killed nine Israelis during the operation: three civilians and one member of the security forces by rockets fired into southern Israel, and five soldiers in the Gaza Strip. Another four soldiers were killed by friendly fire," said B'Tselem on September 9.

The media also published the human cost of Operation Cast Lead.

On January 5, The Washington Post quoted Christopher Gunness, the spokesman for the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, as saying "too many civilians have already died. <u>Women</u> and children and babies are dying."

#### We cannot ignore Gaza horror

The London Guardian on January 13 quoted the Red Cross rebuking the Israeli army "after the army moved a Palestinian family into a building and shelled it, killing 30. The surviving children clung to the bodies of their dead mothers for four days while the army blocked rescuers from reaching the wounded."

The Economist, in a December 30 leader article, said: "The onslaught on Gaza has been shocking, and the television images of civilian suffering wrench the heart. But however deplorable, Israel's resort to military means to silence the rockets of *Hamas* should have been no surprise. This war has been a long time in the making."

In its September 17 leader it criticises the Goldstone report, citing some technical flaws. This is tosh. Have we forgotten the screaming, dying children, bloodied **women** and bombed schools in the name of stopping **Hamas**?

Some critics of Goldstone even shifted the goalposts, quibbling that the UN Human Rights Council, which mandated the probe of the Gaza war, is discredited and hates Israel.

I agree that we should not simply pick on Israel, expecting it to uphold the highest moral standards of conducting war, while turning a blind eye to how civilians suffered in other conflicts. However, Goldstone is right about Operation Cast Lead. It should be equated to terror. The proportionality and assault scale could not be defended.

Both Israel and <u>Hamas</u> must shoulder responsibility. The latter should have thought of the consequences of its actions before firing rockets into Israel - more so because <u>Hamas</u> operates within civilian structures, thus endangering people's lives.

Load-Date: October 18, 2009



## Israel frees Palestinian women in video swap

Yorkshire Post

October 3, 2009 Saturday

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Yorkshire's National Newspaper

## YORKSHIRE POST

Length: 273 words

Byline: Wire copy

Highlight: Israel has freed 19 Palestinian women prisoners in exchange for a video proving a captured soldier was

still alive and well.

## **Body**

The exchange yesterday was the first tangible step toward defusing a key flashpoint in Israeli-Palestinian hostilities.

An Israeli official who saw the video of Sergeant Gilad Schalit said the 23-year-old looked good and spoke lucidly. It was the first glimpse of Schalit since his capture in 2006. Before yesterday the only signs of life had been three letters and an audio tape.

In the video Schalit held up an Arabic language newspaper dated September 14, 2009 - <u>Hamas</u>'s proof the footage was taken recently. It was not clear if Schalit was reading from a text or speaking off the cuff, although no notes could be seen in the video.

The Palestinian prisoners' triumphant return home to a flag waving and cheering crowd, together with the video's arrival in Israel, gave hope to each side that a wider, long-awaited prisoner swap is now in the offing.

<u>Hamas</u> is demanding freedom for hundreds of Palestinian prisoners as their price for Schalit, whose capture in a bloody cross-border raid has touched a nerve.

The deal could also herald an end to a crippling, Israel-led blockade of Gaza, which has prevented the territory from rebuilding after Israel's winter war.

Israel imposed the blockade after <u>Hamas</u>, a violent group backed by Iran and Syria, seized power in Gaza two years ago. Israel has made it clear that it will not ease the embargo before the serviceman is freed.

About 200 people waving Palestinian flags greeted vans carrying 18 of the <u>women</u> into the West Bank. Later they were greeted by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in his walled compound.

The women had been jailed for relatively minor offences and were close to release.

Load-Date: November 9, 2009



## Reports about Israel's belligerence are untruths

The Sunday Independent (South Africa)

October 11, 2009

E1 Edition

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Section: Pg. 9

Length: 317 words

## **Body**

THE letters by AW Badrodien and Laurence Berman of October 4 refer.

Badrodien writes of "Israel's continued assault on Al Aqsa". Israel has had access to that mosque since 1967, a period of 42 years. If there were the slightest truth in Badrodien's assertion that the place was under assault, then surely nothing would have remained of it by now.

Berman also echoes Palestinian propaganda, and perhaps mendacity is a better word. He quotes casualty figures given by a so-called Israeli rights group.

Was that Israeli group able to ascertain these figures itself? That is rather unlikely, in which case the statistics must have been supplied by <u>Hamas</u>. That may satisfy the likes of Berman, but they have been disputed by Israeli sources.

He states that 773 of those who died did not take part in hostilities. Anyone who has watched videos taken during the fighting will have seen armed men in civilian clothing jumping in and out of UN ambulances that were transporting them. Remove their weapons and ammunition, how can one know whether they were belligerents or not?

Does Berman dispute that civilian settlements in Israeli territory were under bombardment by <u>Hamas</u> for many years?

Does he question the fact that such terrorism continued even after Israel withdrew its army and settlers in 2005? Is he prepared to admit that under such circumstances Israel was compelled to act to defend its citizens?

And should he not acknowledge that the disproportion between the Israeli and Palestinian casualty figures was due to Israel having safeguarded its men, <u>women</u> and children by providing shelters for them as I saw when I visited Sderot in July last year? <u>Hamas</u> did not do this for its citizens, despite knowing that Israeli retaliation was imminent. So who is responsible for such criminal neglect, Mr Berman? And where do you stand in the face of such evidence if you have any conscience?

Don Krausz

Johannesburg

Load-Date: October 10, 2009



## Scars of conflict still raw in Gaza

Financial Times (London, England)

December 24, 2009 Thursday

Asia Edition 1

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Section: WORLD NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 756 words

Byline: Tobias Buck in Gaza City

Highlight: News analysis

The Israeli blockade continues to make it hard for Palestinians to rebuild their lives, writes Tobias Buck

## **Body**

Until the day the soldiers came, Majed Abdullah al-Atamneh counted himself a fortunate man. He owned six houses on the eastern fringes of Abed Rabbo village in the northern Gaza Strip, three taxis and several acres of land planted with olive and lemon trees. All his sons and their families lived in the family compound, 56 men, <u>women</u> and children in total.

"I was like a millionaire," the 60-year-old says, as he surveys the mountain of concrete rubble that marks the spot where his house once stood. To one side there is a small two-room house built of mud bricks. It was completed only last week and will now serve as his new home after long months living in tents.

Mr Atamneh's fortunes ran out in January this year, when Israeli soldiers poured across the border in the early days of the ground offensive that marked the decisive escalation of the three-week Gaza war. The family was told to leave the compound, and all the buildings inside were blown up. Many more buildings were destroyed in the area, which was used by the Israeli army as an entry point for troops and tanks fighting inside the strip.

It is almost exactly one year since the Israeli army and air force fired the first shots of a bloody war on the <u>Hamas</u>-controlled Gaza Strip that was aimed at weakening the Islamist group, and ending the firing of rockets from Gaza on nearby Israeli towns and villages. The war left about 1,400 Palestinians dead and pulverised much of the strip's paltry infrastructure as well as thousands of homes. Today, much of the rubble and the piles of concrete and twisted metal have been cleared from the streets of Gaza. The bitterness and the hatred of Israel that is felt by many of its residents, however, continue to fester.

"In 1948 we were expelled from our village [inside present-day Israel] and were forced to live in tents. Sixty-one years later the Israelis forced us to live in tents once again," laments Mr Atamneh.

Indeed, the suffering of ordinary Gazans during the war has been compounded in the months since by the absence of any meaningful reconstruction, and the lack of building materials and aid shipments to the strip. Even before the conflict, Israel imposed a tight embargo on the territory, refusing to let anything other than basic humanitarian supplies enter Gaza, home to 1.5m Palestinians.

#### Scars of conflict still raw in Gaza

Ibrahim Radwan, the deputy minister of housing in the <u>Hamas</u> government, says his department has been able to clear the rubble and secure some 700 housing units that were threatening to collapse. Beyond that, however, the government has neither the money nor the materials to start rebuilding. The cost of rebuilding destroyed and damaged residential property alone runs to about \$1bn (EUR700m, £630m), Mr Radwan estimates. His ministry's entire budget for 2009 was just \$350,000.

Immediately after the war, there was a burst of diplomatic activity and countless calls for Israel to open the Gaza borders in order to allow reconstruction materials to enter. However, as a group of human rights organisations pointed out earlier this week, the early pressure has yielded no results.

Kate Allen, the UK director of Amnesty International, said: "The wretched reality endured by 1.5m people in Gaza should appal anybody with an ounce of humanity . . . All states must insist that the Israeli government end its blockade and let the people of Gaza rebuild their lives."

Israel says it is committed to preventing a humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, but refuses to allow in goods or materials that it says would strengthen *Hamas* or pose a security risk to the Jewish state.

While the Gaza war has led to a sharp rise in criticism of Israel, the offensive does appear to have achieved one main goal: the number of rocket attacks has decreased significantly since the guns fell silent, and <u>Hamas</u> officials say they are keen to maintain calm for the time being.

In other ways, however, it is less clear what Israel has gained. Islamist rule in Gaza looks to be as secure as ever and, according to all accounts, <u>Hamas</u>' military wing has rebuilt its depleted arsenals and is busy learning the military lessons of the January war.

Finally, there are the fresh seeds of hatred sown by the death and destruction visited on Gaza a year ago. Mr Atamneh, for one, says the war is likely to teach a cruel lesson to a new generation of Palestinians: "When my grandson asks me, 'Who destroyed our house?' I will tell him that it was the Israelis. He will be obliged to go and join *Hamas* and become a fighter - to take revenge."

See Editorial Comment

Load-Date: December 23, 2009



## Israel frees Palestinian women after Gilad Shalit video

Guardian.com

October 2, 2009 Friday

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Length: 306 words

Byline: Rory McCarthy, guardian.co.uk

## **Body**

#### **ABSTRACT**

Nineteen female prisoners released after Hamas hands over minute-long video of captured Israeli soldier

#### **FULL TEXT**

Israeli officials received a video today showing a soldier captured by Palestinian militants near Gaza more than three years ago and in return released 19 **female** Palestinian prisoners. Officials said the video showed the soldier, Gilad Shalit, looking healthy.

Red Cross cars carried the Palestinian <u>women</u> into the West Bank as part of the exchange for information about Shalit, 23, the Israeli soldier who is still being held by Gaza by <u>Hamas</u> militants. Another woman will be released into Gaza on Sunday.

The video, thought to be about a minute long, was seen by the Israeli army chief Gabi Ashkenazi and was to be watched by Binyamin Netanyahu, the prime minister. A copy was to be flown by helicopter to the home of Shalit's parents, who would decide if the video would be released publicly.

In the past, letters and audio recordings from Shalit have been handed over, but the Red Cross has not been allowed to visit him.

Israel has said the deal was suggested by mediators as a "confidence-building measure". But Israeli officials have also warned there is much to negotiate before Shalit is released.

Israel has launched a series of military raids in Gaza over the past three years that have left hundreds of Palestinians dead and has imposed a severe economic blockade, in part, it says, because Shalit is still being held.

<u>Hamas</u> said it will release Shalit in return for the release of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails, but the two sides have failed to reach agreement.

The <u>female</u> prisoners were serving sentences of less than two years and were not convicted of direct involvement in the killing of Israelis. More than 7,000 Palestinians are held in Israeli jails, nearly 400 of them without charge.

Load-Date: October 2, 2009



## ISRAELI SOLDIER KIDNAPPED THREE YEARS AGO IS ALIVE

DAILY MAIL (London)
October 3, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 451 words

**Byline: FROM MATTHEW KALMAN** 

## **Body**

AFTER more than three years with little news, the parents of an abducted Israeli soldier have finally received proof that their son is alive.

A short video of Gilad Shalit was released by his terrorist captors yesterday after Israel freed 20 *female* Palestinian prisoners.

Shalit, who was abducted from an Israeli army post near the Gaza border in June 2006, read from a prepared text and held a a copy of a *Hamas* newspaper, Falasteen, dated September 14.

In a direct plea to Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu he said: 'Do not waste this chance to reach a deal so that as a result I can finally realise my dream and be released.

'I feel well, from a health point of view, and the mujahideen of the Qassam Brigades are treating me excellently.'

Turning to his family, 23-year-old Shalit says: 'I love them and I miss them very much.'

Wearing a military uniform, he appeared in good health but was clearly reading from a script.

The video was broadcast with the agreement of Shalit's family after it was received in exchange for the release of the Palestinian <u>women</u> from Israeli jails in a complex swap organised by Egypt, Germany and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Ever since his abduction Shalit has been denied visits by the Red Cross - a contravention of international law - and his family have received only three handwritten notes, a voice recording and a still photograph.

Ismail Haniyeh, head of the <u>Hamas</u> government in Gaza, hailed the exchange as 'a triumph for the resistance' and said he hoped it would be 'the prelude to an honourable deal' where Shalit would be exchanged for up to 1,000 Palestinian prisoners held by Israel, including more than 40 conin Jerusalem victed of mass murder. But last night Israeli officials rejected the demands.

The released Palestinian <u>women</u> were arrested for their involvement in planning terror attacks, including failed suicide bombings, against Israel.

Fourteen were convicted of attempted murder and the youngest was only 13 when she was arrested.

<u>Hamas</u> has claimed it scored an important victory in forcing Israel to pay a heavy price just for a sign that Shalit was still alive.

#### ISRAELI SOLDIER KIDNAPPED THREE YEARS AGO IS ALIVE

However, Israeli experts said most of the <u>women</u> were due for release anyway and only five came from <u>Hamas</u>. There are 40 more <u>women</u> among more than 7,000 prisoners still held by Israel.

The video of Shalit was first seen by a German mediator in Egypt on Monday. He showed it to Israeli negotiator Hagai Hadass in Tel Aviv yesterday morning.

After confirming that it proved Shalit was still alive and contained indications it had been filmed recently, Hadass gave the order for the prisoners to be released into the custody of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Load-Date: October 2, 2009



## Gaza conflict brought accusations of war crimes against both sides

Guardian.com

September 15, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 875 words

## **Body**

#### **ABSTRACT**

Israel disputes casualty figures indicating that half of Palestinians who died were not taking part in hostilities

#### **FULL TEXT**

Israel's three-week war in Gaza brought a wave of international criticism. About 1,400 people died and accusations of possible war crimes have been levelled against both the Israeli military and the Palestinian militant groups in Gaza, notably <u>Hamas</u>. The latest and most prominent inquiry, led by Richard Goldstone, a respected South African judge, was conducted for the UN human rights council.

Israel said it was responding to rocket fire from Gaza which had begun again after what was supposed to be a sixmonth truce broke down with violations on both sides. It was the latest, and most devastating, in a series of Israeli military raids and bombing missions in Gaza since *Hamas* won the Palestinian elections in early 2006. In that time hundreds of Palestinians have died and Israel has imposed a series of economic restrictions that now amount to a major blockade of the Gaza strip. Over the past eight years, militant rockets and mortars from Gaza have killed 20 people inside Israel.

According to <u>B'Tselem</u>, a leading Israeli human rights group, 1,387 Palestinians died in the January war in Gaza. The group, which compiled the figures after months of research by field workers, said that more than half of the dead, 773 people, were not taking part in hostilities. Among them were 320 children and 109 <u>women</u>. On the Israeli side, three civilians were killed by Palestinian rockets and 10 soldiers died, four of whom were killed accidentally by their own troops.

The Israeli military, however, disputes those figures and says only 295 civilians were killed out of a total of 1,166 deaths. The military says it has a list of named fatalities, but has refused to publish it or to pass it to rights groups such as B'Tselem for checking.

Human rights groups such as <u>Amnesty International</u> and <u>Human Rights Watch</u> have carried out their own investigations of the conduct of the war and made serious accusations against both sides.

Amnesty said Israel's attacks breached the laws of war and its failure to investigate properly was a sign of its intention to avoid accountability. Much of the destruction was "wanton", with direct attacks on civilians and civilian

#### Gaza conflict brought accusations of war crimes against both sides

property, violating laws prohibiting indiscriminate or disproportionate attacks and prohibiting collective punishment. White phosphorus was repeatedly used "indiscriminately over densely populated residential areas", in violation of international law, it said.

The pattern of Israeli attacks showed "elements of reckless conduct, disregard for civilian lives and property and a consistent failure to distinguish between military targets and civilians and civilian objects," it said. Israeli troops also obstructed access for ambulances and medical staff and in some cases used civilians as "human shields".

Amnesty said Palestinian militant groups fired rockets and mortars directly at civilian communities in southern Israel, in violation of international law, and used empty homes and properties as combat positions, endangering the civilians around them - but it found no evidence of <u>Hamas</u> using civilians as "human shields", a claim Israel has made repeatedly.

Human Rights Watch made similar accusations, again finding that Israel illegally used white phosphorus and also that it unlawfully shot at civilians who were waving white flags. Israel's military investigation into soldiers' conduct was not credible, it said. Human Rights Watch also said <u>Hamas</u> fired indiscriminately at civilians in Israel, a violation of international law.

In May, a first UN inquiry (pdf) accused the Israeli military of "varying degrees of negligence or recklessness" and said the UN should press claims for reparations for deaths and damage. It looked at nine separate cases in which UN property was damaged and UN staff and other civilians were hurt or killed. It found the Israeli military took "inadequate" precautions towards UN premises and said the deaths of civilians should be investigated under the rules of international humanitarian law.

For its part, Israel has denied the allegations made against its military during the Gaza war, which it calls Operation Cast Lead, and has insisted its accusers are biased against Israel. The Israeli government refused to take part in the Goldstone inquiry.

In July, the Israeli foreign ministry published a 164-page <u>report (pdf)</u> defending its conduct of the war. It said Israel had "both a right and an obligation" to take military action against <u>Hamas</u> to stop rocket and mortar fire into southern Israel. Israel's military operations were "necessary and a proportionate response", it said. Although civilians died, Israel insists it did not violate international law.

Israeli military investigations are continuing. Earlier this month it emerged that officers have started taking witness testimony from some Palestinians in Gaza whose relatives were killed and injured, notably one incident in Izbet Abed Rabbo where two young girls were apparently shot dead by Israeli troops and a third seriously injured.

<u>Hamas</u> does not deny that it fired rockets at civilians in southern Israel and says it is fighting against the Israeli occupation.

Load-Date: September 15, 2009



## While media reports hint agreement is near, obstacles still remain

## The Jerusalem Post November 24, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 3

Length: 646 words

Byline: YAAKOV KATZ Highlight: ANALYSIS

## **Body**

The rapid pace of recent media reports leaves no doubt that something is afoot with regard to Gilad Schalit and his possible release.

However, even if the media reports are correct, judging by past prisoner swaps, including the most recent one in July 2007 with Hizbullah, the process is still only in its initial stages and there are several major hurdles left to overcome.

Once the details of a deal are finalized between <u>Hamas</u> and Israel - the number of prisoners to be released and the way the deal will be carried out - the proposal will still need to be brought to the cabinet for approval. While government ministers are currently refusing to speak about the Schalit negotiations, judging by some of their past remarks, the vote may not go as smoothly as Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu might prefer.

Take Strategic Affairs Minister Moshe Ya'alon as an example. In an extensive interview with The Jerusalem Post earlier this year he asked: "From experience, we also know that terrorists who are released return to terrorism and cause more bloodshed. Do we want to cause bloodshed by releasing hundreds of terrorists?"

Other cabinet members, such as Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz, Infrastructures Minister Uzi Landau and even Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, have all, at one point or another, expressed opposition to mass-prisoner releases in exchange for captive soldiers.

This does not even take into account the potential opposition from Israeli security chiefs. In the July 2008 swap with Hizbullah, Shin Bet (Israel Security Agency) chief Yuval Diskin and Mossad chief Meir Dagan came out against the deal, which included the release of live Hizbullah captives for two dead Israeli soldiers.

On the other side was Chief of General Staff Lt.-Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi who, according to media reports at the time, slammed his fist on the cabinet table and said that the nation needed to do everything in its power to win its soldiers' return.

Despite the opposition that the deal may encounter it will likely pass since, given what appears to be immense public support for the release it will be difficult to envision ministers putting their political careers on the line and voting against the proposal.

Once this happens, the defense establishment will need several days to complete preparations.

Due to the heavily-imposed military censorship, the media have not been allowed to divulge at the moment whether Schalit will be released to Egypt or Israel, how he will get there and what the format of the release of prisoners will be - will the exchange take place simultaneously or will Schalit be released first and then the prisoners, or the opposite.

This will depend on how determined <u>Hamas</u> is to go through with the deal, something that the Israeli defense establishment is not completely convinced about yet. The release a few months ago of <u>female</u> prisoners in exchange for a videotape of Schalit was aimed on the one hand at obtaining a sign of life, and on the other at ensuring that the <u>Hamas</u> members Israel has been talking with - through Egyptian and German mediation - are the right address and can actually deliver.

The ban on publication of details of the deal has so far prevented a public debate on some of the critical issues. These include, according to some reports, the unprecedented release of a significant number of Israeli- Arabs, as well as some of the most notorious terrorists Israel has known, such as former Tanzim leader Marwan Barghouti and PFLP leader Ahmed Sadat.

Once they surface, these issues will draw additional questions for Israelis to ponder, such as the effect the deal will have on the Palestinian political map - it will likely strengthen <u>Hamas</u> and weaken Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas - and most importantly the possibility that it will motivate terror groups to continue making every effort to kidnap another soldier.

## **Graphic**

Photo: Gilad Schalit in a video released by *Hamas* in October. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



## Judeh to hold talks with Turkish FM

The Jordan Times
September 10, 2009 Thursday

Copyright 2009 The Jordan Times. All Rights Reserved Syndigate.info, Al Bawaba.com

# THE JORDAN TIMES

Length: 997 words

## **Body**

AMMAN - Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh and his Turkish counterpart Ahmet Davutoglu will meet today to discuss bilateral relations, Mideast peace coordination between the two countries and the latest regional developments.

Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Nassar Habashneh told The Jordan Times on Wednesday that the two officials will hold a press conference today on "efforts to bring about peace to the region".

The top Turkish diplomat has cancelled a visit to Israel, the Israeli foreign ministry said yesterday, over what media reports said was a refusal to let him visit the *Hamas*-run Gaza Strip.

Davutoglu "has let us know that he will not come in October to participate in an annual conference organised by President Shimon Peres", a ministry official told AFP on condition of anonymity.

"We regret this decision, as the Turkish minister is always welcome in Israel and we had prepared for him a series of meetings at the highest levels," the official added.

The Israeli media said the visit was cancelled because Israel had refused to allow Davutoglu to enter the <u>Hamas</u>-run Gaza Strip from its territory unless he promised not to meet the Islamist rulers of the Palestinian enclave.

Tensions between Israel and Turkey, long one of its most important Muslim allies, skyrocketed during Israel's deadly assault on Gaza at the turn of the year.

#### UN

Also Wednesday, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon denounced Israel's plans to build new Jewish settler homes in the occupied territories as "contrary to international law". Ban "noted with deep concern" an Israeli decision on Monday to approve further construction in settlements in the occupied territory, a statement issued by his office said.

"Such actions and all settlement activity are contrary to international law and the roadmap," it said, referring to the international plan for a two-state solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

"The secretary general urges Israel to respond positively to the important efforts under way to create the conditions for effective Palestinian-Israeli negotiations and reiterates his call on Israel to stop all settlement activity, including

#### Judeh to hold talks with Turkish FM

natural growth, and dismantle all outposts erected since March 2001 in the occupied Palestinian territory," Ban stressed.

Israel on Monday gave the go-ahead to build hundreds of new homes in settlements in the occupied West Bank, defying warnings that the move jeopardises any resumption of Middle East peace talks.

'320 minors killed

in Gaza war'

Israel's Gaza offensive killed 1,387 Palestinians, with more than half of them, including 320 minors, not having taken part in the fighting, an Israeli human rights group said on Wednesday.

B'Tselem said 773 of the Palestinians killed in the December-January offensive "did not take part in the hostilities", a figure that conflicts with the Israeli army's insistence that most of the casualties were fighters.

B'Tselem said 252 children under the age of 16 and 111 <u>women</u> were among those killed, while the military put the figures at 89 and 49 respectively.

Sixty-eight Palestinians aged 16 to 18 who did not take part in the fighting were among the fatalities, who also included 19 minors in the same age group "who took direct part in the hostilities", the rights group said.

"The extremely heavy civilian casualties and the massive damage to civilian property require serious introspection on the part of Israeli society," a B'Tselem statement said, calling on Israel to conduct an "independent and credible" investigation.

It said that 330 of those killed took part in the fighting and 248 were police officers, most of them killed when police stations were bombed on December 28, the first day of the three-week offensive.

The group said that for 36 fatalities, it could not determine whether or not they had participated in hostilities.

The Israeli military, which put the Palestinian death toll at 1,166, includes the police among the 709 "terror operatives" it says were killed in the offensive. The Gaza force has been under the command of <u>Hamas</u> since the Islamist movement seized control of the enclave in June 2007.

B'Tselem said its figures were obtained by researchers who "visited homes and gathered death certificates, photos and testimonies" for all the children killed.

The Israeli military had no immediate comment but had previously stressed that its objective during Operation Cast Lead "was to target the <u>Hamas</u> terror organisation and not the citizens of the Gaza Strip". Gaza emergency medical services say 1,382 Palestinians were killed in the offensive, 447 of them under the age of 18.

The B'Tselem report said Palestinians killed nine Israelis, including three civilians, while another four soldiers were killed by friendly fire.

#### Hamas

The political leader of the Palestinian Islamist movement <u>Hamas</u>, Khaled Mishaal, said his group produces and smuggles weapons, during a visit to Sudan on Wednesday.

"Your brothers in Palestine, despite the blockade and the closing of border passages... despite the fleets from East and West, despite all of this, we buy arms, we manage to produce arms and we smuggle arms," he said in a recording of a speech to young members of President Omar Bashir's ruling party.

The Damascus-based leader of *Hamas*, who arrived in Khartoum on Tuesday, did not elaborate on the type of arms produced or the suppliers of weapons.

#### Judeh to hold talks with Turkish FM

An air raid by foreign aircraft on a convoy of trucks in eastern Sudan in January killed 119 people, the country's news agency Suna reported in May, giving an official death toll for the first time.

The convoy had been transporting illegal immigrants to Egypt, General Abdul Rahim Mohammad Hussein told a parliamentary committee investigating the attack, Suna said.

But Time Magazine has reported that the convoy was carrying rockets and Iranian explosives bound for the Gaza Strip during an Israeli offensive against Palestinian militants.

Citing two senior Israeli security officials, the magazine said Israeli fighter-bombers had carried out the attack.

Load-Date: November 23, 2009



# <u>Israel in firing line over blitz on Gaza; Report to UN expected to condemn</u> conduct of the war

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)
September 12, 2009 Saturday
First Edition

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Section: NEWS; International News; Pg. 20

Length: 681 words

Byline: JASON KOUTSOUKIS, MIDDLE EAST CORRESPONDENT, JERUSALEM

## **Body**

SOUTH African judge Richard Goldstone is expected to condemn strongly Israel's conduct of the war against <u>Hamas</u> when he hands down a long-awaited report on the conflict to the United Nations next week.

Justice Goldstone's report to the UN's Human Rights Council will focus on allegations that Israel was responsible for war crimes.

The report is also expected to criticise <u>Hamas</u> for bombarding Israel with 12,000 rockets and mortar shells between 2000 and 2008, including nearly 3000 rockets and mortar shells last year alone.

Israel refused to co-operate with Justice Goldstone's 15-member commission of inquiry, arguing that the Human Rights Council was singling out Israel when it could be investigating serious human rights abuses in places such as Darfur and Sri Lanka.

The conflict began on December 27 and ended on January 18. As part of his investigation, Justice Goldstone was forced to enter Gaza in June through the border with Egypt. He said he was shocked by the devastation the conflict caused.

According to a report published this week by the Israeli human rights group B'Tselem, Israeli military strikes resulted in the deaths of 1387 Palestinians. Of these, 773 were considered to be innocent civilians, including 320 minors and 109 **women** over 18.

A further 330 victims were classified as having been active fighters belonging to <u>Hamas</u> or other militant groups operating in Gaza.

The organisation said it could not determine the role played by 36 victims.

Nine Israelis were killed during the conflict, including three civilians, while a further four Israeli soldiers were killed by friendly fire.

Israel has so far conceded 1166 Palestinian deaths as a result of the conflict, of whom it believes only 295 were not involved in the conflict.

Israel in firing line over blitz on Gaza Report to UN expected to condemn conduct of the war

"The extent of civilian fatalities does not, in itself, prove that Israeli violated the laws of war," said B'Tselem spokeswoman Sarit Michaeli this week.

"However, the figures must be considered within the context of the numerous testimonies given by soldiers and Palestinians during and after the operation, which raise grave concerns that Israel breached fundamental principles of international humanitarian law and caused excessive harm to civilians."

In a far-ranging report published at the end of July, Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs launched a kind of writ of defence against international criticism of its conduct during Operation Cast Lead. The 160-page document stated that responsibility for the conflict rested mostly with the militant Islamic resistance movement <u>Hamas</u>, and that **Hamas**' incessant rocket fire forced Israel to act in self-defence.

Yet despite the Israeli Government's general denial that it broke international law, military sources told The Age this week that the Military Advocate General's office was pursuing about 100 inquiries related to the conduct of its forces during the conflict.

"In 15 instances in which a deviation from normal operational activities was discovered, the Military Advocate General has ordered the opening of criminal investigations," a military spokesman said.

Investigations that have reached the criminal stage are focused on allegations of pillage of various Palestinian communities by Israeli soldiers, the violent mistreatment of Palestinian prisoners and the use of Palestinians, including minors, as shields.

It was also revealed this week that Israeli military police have also opened a criminal investigation into allegations that an Israeli soldier or soldiers shot dead two sisters without provocation and critically wounded a third sister.

The office of the Military Advocate General is still awaiting the results of field investigations into other incidents before deciding whether to recommend criminal investigations.

Among those incidents is the now notorious strike on a residential building in the Zeitun area that allegedly killed 48 members of the Samouni family on January 4.

Other allegations relate to numerous uses of white phosphorous shells on civilians, tank shells allegedly fired at civilians waving white flags, and the shooting of other innocent civilians.

## **Graphic**

PHOTO: Richard Goldstone: Shocked.

Load-Date: September 11, 2009



## One for one

The Jerusalem Post November 26, 2009 Thursday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 15

Length: 786 words

Byline: Charley J. Levine

Highlight: Somewhere between zero and 1,000 lies this sane, compelling formula. The writer is a media and public

affairs consultant based in Jerusalem.

## **Body**

This country urgently needs a policy regarding captive exchanges. Once, we had one: It was no negotiations with terrorists. Period. That has morphed today into absurd horse-trading of the "any price" variety, including 20 *female* terrorists for a videocassette.

Hopefully one day very soon Gilad Schalit will be released. That will be a wonderful occasion, and it's too late to reformulate our policy this time around. Because freeing hundreds of criminals encourages future kidnappings, however, the policy must indeed be changed immediately following Schalit's return.

Israel must give its answer - unequivocally and in advance - to <u>Hamas</u> leader Khaled Mashaal, who tellingly observed recently in Damascus: "We are capable of capturing Schalit and Schalit and Schalit until there is not even one prisoner in the enemy's jails."

This challenge is daunting precisely because it sets Israelis not against <u>Hamas</u> but rather each person against himself. We are profoundly torn. Each of us is a parent or grandparent who would pay any price to gain the release of a child. Thankfully, our society views Gilad Schalit not as expendable cannon fodder but precisely as our own flesh and blood.

But each of us is also a potential victim of terror, a potential kidnappee. As such, we realize fully that surrendering to extortionists' wild demands may secure a videotape or the remains of long-deceased MIAs or even a live soldier but at the crystal-clear cost of encouraging many more attempts by <u>Hamas</u> to kidnap other Jews. This is an untenable position in which we dare not wallow passively.

REFLECTING THIS latter perspective, I recently had a very difficult conversation with two fathers in Tel Aviv, each of whom had lost a child to terrorists. They oppose the release of any Palestinian prisoners for any Israeli. They know their position is an unpopular albeit principled one, and they asked my advice on how to communicate it persuasively to the public.

It was my unenviable task to tell them it just wouldn't fly. Emotionally, pitted against the release of a real, live young Israeli, rejection of negotiations just cannot capture public support.

Yet neither is the public in love with the idea of releasing up to 1,000 hardened criminals, many with blood on their hands.

#### One for one

One for one. The thought came to me in a flash. Somewhere between zero and 1,000 lies this wholly sane, compelling formula.

Think about it: We do in fact oppose negotiating with terrorists. Trading any terrorist for any Israeli is a disgusting thought. Yet there is a compelling logic to the principle of "one for one," which is intellectually intuitive and could not be morally clearer.

On the same day Schalit comes home, Israel should announce its new unyielding and ironclad policy: We will do everything possible to prevent future kidnappings, and our policy remains not to reward terrorists for their crimes. However, the most we will ever agree to under any circumstances in any future exchange will be one. We can negotiate over the who in such a case, but never on the how many. This should be codified by legislation.

I know this, too, will raise questions. Some will argue, with justification, that releasing even one evil person to win the release of an innocent is one too many. There can be no moral equivalency between the terrorist and the one defending against the terrorist.

Others will say we dare not tie the government's hands, so no stratagem should be written in stone. If we need to free five bad guys at some point, or 50 or 500, then let the leaders make that determination as the situation warrants.

That is precisely my point: It is the situation that is not written in stone, while the principles must be. Not very long ago, civilians in Jerusalem's Gilo neighborhood were being constantly shot at. Buses were being blown up in the streets of Tel Aviv and Haifa. Rockets were pouring onto the homes in Sderot. Suicide bombers seeped into our cities, seemingly unchecked.

These bloody attacks have largely ceased. Effective intelligence contributed mightily, but so did changes in public policy. Many fires were quashed as a result of wise, effective counter-measures. Changes were implemented, and they worked.

<u>Hamas</u> has managed to kidnap one solitary soldier and hold him. It's not an easy thing to do. Further attempts will follow, but a new policy of "one for one" will dampen the Palestinians' penchant for even trying. If they know that even a successful kidnapping will result at very most in only one, not 1,000 released prisoners, they will abandon the tactic.

What the security wall has become to untold dozens of would-be mass murderers, "one for one" can be to those who plot future kidnappings.

We absolutely must stand firm.

## Graphic

Photo: FOOTAGE OF captive IDF soldier Gilad Schalit holding a Palestinian newspaper dated September 14, 2009, filmed by his <u>Hamas</u> captors. Schalit was captured in June 2006 in a cross-border raid by <u>Hamas</u> that killed two other soldiers and wounded three.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



## Israel offers to free prisoners for video of captured soldier

The Gazette (Montreal)
October 1, 2009 Thursday
Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A14

Length: 327 words

Byline: ISABEL KERSHNER, New York Times

**Dateline: JERUSALEM** 

## **Body**

Israel said yesterday it would release 20 Palestinian <u>women</u> from its jails in exchange for a videotape of a captured Israeli soldier that would prove that he was alive.

The soldier, Gilad Shalit, was seized by the Islamic group <u>Hamas</u> and other Palestinian militant groups in 2006 in a cross-border raid and taken into Gaza.

The prisoner release offer, announced yesterday by the office of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, was the first significant sign of progress in negotiations about him since Netanyahu took office in March.

Israeli and Palestinian officials said the exchange was expected to take place tomorrow.

"Israel will receive updated and unequivocal proof of Gilad Shalit's well-being and status," Netanyahu's office said in a statement, describing the deal as a result of an Egyptian initiative meant to build confidence ahead of the "decisive stages of negotiation" for the release of the soldier, who has been promoted to staff sergeant from corporal during his captivity. The prime minister's office said the negotiations were "still expected to be long and arduous."

In Gaza, Mahmoud Zahar, a senior <u>Hamas</u> official, said the deal was "small and symbolic," but could pave the way to a more comprehensive agreement.

"We are offering a report explaining the situation of the soldier in return for the release of 20 *female* prisoners," he said as he entered a Red Cross office in Gaza City yesterday.

According to a list issued by Israeli prison officials, the <u>women</u> to be freed were all due to finish their terms within two years, meaning they were not convicted of serious offences or were close to release.

Zahar said the prisoners included four from <u>Hamas</u>; five from Fatah, the rival mainstream Palestinian group; three from the more extremist Islamic Jihad; and one from the leftist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. He said the others were not affiliated with any group. Only one of the <u>women</u> is from Gaza; the rest are from the West Bank.

Load-Date: October 1, 2009



## Our irredeemable international system

The Jerusalem Post September 18, 2009 Friday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 24

Length: 1919 words

Byline: CAROLINE B. GLICK Highlight: COLUMN ONE

## **Body**

Our international institutions are irredeemably corrupted. From the United Nations to the International Criminal Court and their affiliate and subordinate bodies, these institutions are rotten at their core.

It isn't that they don't function. They function just fine. The problem is that through their regular functioning, they advance goals antithetical to those they were established to achieve. Instead of promoting global security, human rights, freedom and international peace, they facilitate war and aggression, human suffering and tyranny.

The UN General Assembly is now convening its 64th session. As they do every year, heads of state from across the globe are descending on the Big Apple to participate in the proceedings. As they convene, their agenda will demonstrate the failings of the UN. On the one hand, they will consider the UN Human Rights Council's latest broadside against Israel, which comes this week in the form of the UNHRC's 575-page report of its probe of Israel's behavior in its military campaign against the *Hamas* terror regime in Gaza this past December and January.

On the other hand, they will not give the slightest consideration to the fact that Iran is about to become a nuclear power, in contempt of its international obligations, and so is poised to become the gravest threat to international security in the past 25 years. Moreover, they will pay no attention to the fact that as it sprints toward the nuclear finishing line, the Iranian regime is engaged in a systematic and brutal repression of its political opponents, who since the stolen June 12 presidential election have been clamoring for freedom and democracy.

Both in its treatment of Israel and in its treatment of the Iranian regime, the UN demonstrates that its practices are an inversion of its stated mission. Despite its leaders' and supporters' repeated claims to the contrary, the UN stands shoulder to shoulder with tyrants and aggressors against democrats and democracies seeking to advance the causes of freedom, human rights and international security.

MANY ISRAELIS reacted angrily to the UNHRC's probe of Israel's prosecution of Operation Cast Lead, claiming that its final report presents Israel - a liberal democracy - as the moral equivalent of <u>Hamas</u> - an illegal terrorist organization dedicated to the commission of genocide against Israelis. Yet in their anger, they missed the real problem with the report.

As Prof. Avi Bell from Bar Ilan University law school notes, Richard Goldstone's report does not present Israel and *Hamas* as moral equivalents. Rather, it presents Israel as terrorist and *Hamas* as a legitimate government.

#### Our irredeemable international system

The Goldstone Report does not accept as fact that <u>Hamas</u> is a terrorist organization and that consequently, in accordance with binding UN Security Council resolutions, all UN member states are required to work to disband it and give no quarter to its members and supporters. Instead it treats <u>Hamas</u> - which is charter-bound to a policy of genocide against Jews and rose to power through a campaign of murder and intimidation - as the legitimate governing authority in Gaza, which, the report's authors irrationally claim, is simultaneously governed by an Israeli occupation four years after Israel withdrew its civilians and military forces from the area. In the UNHRC's parallel universe, <u>Hamas</u> is the only lawful actor in town. Israel - and the Palestinian Authority under Fatah - are guilty of illegally persecuting <u>Hamas</u> by arresting its members.

<u>Hamas</u>, which is working to establish a terrorist Islamic theocracy in Gaza, is not seen as systematically violating human rights and freedom. Israel is. Since it downplayed the 12,000 rockets, mortars and missiles that <u>Hamas</u> and its terror affiliates in Gaza have shelled southern Israel with during the eight years preceding Operation Cast Lead, the Goldstone Commission was unable to understand the overwhelming popularity the operation enjoyed among the Israeli public. Consequently, their report attributed that public support to Israel's abrogation of the civil liberties of the operation's opponents.

In contrast, the Goldstone Report downplays the importance of <u>Hamas</u>'s systematic persecution of <u>women</u>, Christians and its political opponents.

And so it goes. For 575 pages, rather than promote the cause of human rights as one would expect from the UN's Human Rights Council, the Goldstone Report promotes a fiction of Israeli criminality and <u>Hamas</u> victimization. That is, it promotes the cause of human rights abusers against human rights defenders.

Many Israelis have expressed disgust with Goldstone, a South African Jew who purports to "love Israel."

This is a reasonable reaction, for Goldstone indeed disgraced himself by leading this commission. But the fact is that the report would have drawn the same conclusions based on the same lies regardless of who led the commission. By its very nature, the UNHRC is incapable of doing anything else. Like the UN itself, it is a body dominated by dictatorships and supported by leftist elites who love them. Its political agenda, of supporting dictatorships on the one hand and attacking Israel on the other, is indistinguishable from that of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

THEN THERE is Iran. Before he flies to New York for his annual visit, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad intends to finish off his political opponents back home.

Friday is Jerusalem Day in Iran. Jerusalem Day is the day the regime organizes mass demonstrations throughout the country calling for Israel's destruction. The regime's democratic opponents, who since the stolen June 12 election have been doggedly maintaining their protests against Ahmadinejad, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and the police state they run, are planning to use the day to stage renewed protests. Aware of their intention, Khamenei warned that anyone demonstrating for anything other than Israel's destruction will be severely punished. Reports abound of the regime's plan to use the day to arrest opposition leaders Mir Hossain Mousavi and Mehdi Karoubi, who both ran against Ahmadinejad in June.

Friday would be a good day to arrest them. After all, now that the US has agreed to hold negotiations with Ahmadinejad's representatives next month about whatever Iran would like to discuss, the Americans have lost any residual leverage they still held over Iran. Today it is Ahmadinejad, not the US or the UN Security Council, who sets the agendas and conditions for meetings. And Ahmadinejad can be certain that in light of this, no one will utter a peep if on the eve of his trip to America, he arrests or even murders his chief political opponents.

In the weeks following the election, before the regime began its crackdown and arrested, killed, tortured and raped thousands of its opponents, many of the demonstrators held signs demanding to know where the UN was. Why, they wished to know, was no one at the UN supporting them in their demands for democracy and human rights? Why was there no international community standing at their side as they sought to bring down the most dangerous regime on earth - a regime that has made genocide a strategic goal and is steadily working to acquire the means to commit genocide through nuclear war even as it murders its own people?

#### Our irredeemable international system

And that's the thing of it. The same UN that appoints a new commission to criminalize Israel seemingly on a weekly basis, has been a major facilitator of Iran's nuclear weapons program.

First, for three years, from 2003 until 2005, the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency ignored mountains of evidence that Iran is pursuing nuclear weapons and refused to refer the issue to the Security Council. Then, after the IAEA finally referred the issue to it, the Security Council failed to pass anything but the mildest of sanctions against Iran. Worse than doing nothing to prevent Teheran from acquiring nuclear weapons, these Security Council sanctions actually facilitated the Iranian program. While passing ineffective sanctions, the council gave the appearance of addressing the issue and so made it impossible for individual states to convince other states to adopt harsher, and perhaps more effective measures - like for instance cutting off trade with Iran or divesting from companies that trade with Iran - outside the Security Council.

DUE TO the UN's unvarnished belligerence toward it, in recent years a consensus has formed in Israel that there is nothing to be gained from cooperating with this openly and dangerously hostile body. Reflecting this consensus, Israel's leaders, from former prime minister Ehud Olmert to Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu to President Shimon Peres, are united in their condemnation of the Goldstone Report.

For a time during president George W. Bush's first term in office, the US also recognized that the UN and the UN-based international system is irredeemably corrupt. Bush and his senior advisers spoke of the need to build international coalitions of willing governments to advance the causes of international security, human rights and freedom that the UN and its affiliated bodies are inherently incapable of advancing. Although this policy received public support at home, it provoked fierce opposition among the US foreign policy elites in Washington and in the media and among their allies on the political Left.

Due to their criticism, by his second term in office, Bush agreed to give the UN a leading role in dictating US foreign policy. He subordinated American policy to the Security Council on the issue of Iran's nuclear weapons program and cooperated with the UN as it advanced its openly anti-Israel agenda, even increasing US funding of such anti-Israel groups as UNRWA.

Bush's eventual surrender to the establishment set the course for what under President Barack Obama has become a cornerstone of US foreign policy. Unlike Bush, Obama has enthusiastically embraced the notion that the UN should by rights have a leading role in international affairs. He has also accepted the UN's basic notion that in the interest of world peace, the US and its democratic allies should bow to the desires of despots and dictators.

So it is that this week he abandoned US allies Poland and the Czech Republic in his bid to appease Russia. So it is that his administration has sided with ousted Honduran president Manuel Zelaya, who, with the support of Venezuelan dictator Hugo Chavez, sought to undermine Honduran democracy against Honduras's lawful government and democratic defenders. So it is that the administration has sided with the genocidal mullahs in Teheran over their democratic opponents. So it is that the administration has adopted the view that Israel is to blame for the absence of peace in the Middle East and embraced as legitimate political actors Palestinian terror groups that refuse to accept Israel's right to exist.

Until Obama came along, Israel could afford not to make too much of the fact that its enemies control the UN- led system of international institutions, because it could trust that the US would use its Security Council veto to prevent these forces from causing it any real harm. This is no longer the case. With the Obama administration fully on board the UN agenda, Israel and other threatened democracies like Honduras, Poland, the Czech Republic, South Korea and Japan will have to loudly proclaim the UN- based international system's inherent moral, political and legal corruption and seek ways to undermine and weaken its power.

caroline@carolineglick.com

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



## Swap to yield videotape of Israeli soldier

The International Herald Tribune
October 1, 2009 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 346 words

**Byline: ISABEL KERSHNER** 

**Dateline: JERUSALEM** 

## **Body**

#### **ABSTRACT**

Israel said Wednesday it would release 20 Palestinian <u>women</u> from its jails in exchange for a videotape of a captured Israeli soldier that would prove that he was alive.

#### **FULL TEXT**

Israel said Wednesday that it would release 20 Palestinian <u>women</u> from its jails in exchange for a videotape of a captured Israeli soldier that would prove that he is alive.

The soldier, Cpl. Gilad Shalit, was seized by the Islamic group <u>Hamas</u> and other Palestinian militant groups in 2006 in a cross-border raid and taken into Gaza.

The prisoner release offer, announced Wednesday by the office of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, was the first significant sign of progress in negotiations on Corporal Shalit since Mr. Netanyahu took office in March.

Israeli and Palestinian officials said the exchange was expected to take place Friday.

"Israel will receive updated and unequivocal proof of Gilad Shalit's well-being and status," Mr. Netanyahu's office said, describing the deal as the result of an Egyptian initiative meant to build confidence ahead of the "decisive stages of negotiation" for the release of Corporal Shalit. The prime minister's office added that the negotiations were "still expected to be long and arduous."

In Gaza, Mahmoud Zahar, a <u>Hamas</u> official, said that the deal was "small and symbolic," but that it could pave the way to a more comprehensive deal.

"We are offering a report explaining the situation of the soldier in return for the release of 20 <u>women</u> prisoners," Mr. Zahar said as he entered a Red Cross office in Gaza City on Wednesday.

According to a list issued by Israeli prison officials Wednesday, the <u>women</u> to be released were all due to finish their terms within two years, meaning that they were not convicted of serious offenses or were in any way close to release.

### Swap to yield videotape of Israeli soldier

Corporal Shalit, now 23, was last seen publicly as he was dragged alive into Gaza in 2006. A year later, <u>Hamas</u> released an audiotape of the soldier believed to be authentic; his family has also received at least two letters written in what family members said was his handwriting.

Load-Date: September 30, 2009



Rights group acknowledges Palestinians used civilians as human shields in Cast Lead. Human Rights Watch: Action still doesn't justify army response \*
Group's report due today on alleged killing by IDF of 11 Palestinians holding white flags

The Jerusalem Post

August 13, 2009 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 1149 words

Byline: DAN IZENBERG, YAAKOV KATZ and HERB KEINON

**Highlight:** Lead Story

## **Body**

For the first time, an international human rights organization has publicly declared that there is evidence to indicate that war crimes were committed by Palestinians in the Gaza Strip who allegedly used civilians as "human shields" during Operation Cast Lead.

The statement was made to The Jerusalem Post by Bill Van Esveld, the Jerusalem-based researcher for Human Rights Watch (HRW), following a report on the military operation in Gaza issued last week by the Foreign Ministry.

However, Van Esveld stressed that the fact that Palestinians may have used civilians as human shields during the fighting did not justify what HRW believes to have been war crimes committed by Israel.

Until now, neither of the two major international human rights groups, Amnesty International and HRW, had acknowledged one of Israel's main accusations against <u>Hamas</u>, one which it has used to explain the heavy damage the IDF inflicted on Palestinian civilians and civilian infrastructure during the fighting.

Last week HRW presented a report in which it stated that members of <u>Hamas</u> and other groups in Gaza had perpetrated war crimes by deliberately firing at Israel's civilian population. The organization also charged that the groups had put Palestinian civilians at risk by firing from within residential areas in the Gaza Strip.

However, the organization stopped short of declaring that <u>Hamas</u> fighters had committed war crimes by deliberately endangering the civilian population in the hopes that Israeli forces would not shoot back to prevent civilian casualties.

In last week's report, entitled "Harm to Civilians From Palestinian Armed Groups' Rocket Attacks," HRW wrote, "Deliberately using civilians to deter attacks on military targets amounts to 'human shielding,' which is a war crime. Human Rights Watch either could not determine, or the evidence did not indicate, that militants launched rockets from areas close to civilians with the intention of deterring Israeli forces from counterattacking."

Rights group acknowledges Palestinians used civilians as human shields in Cast Lead. Human Rights Watch:

Action still doesn't justify army response \* Group's r....

The report did mention, however, that another organization, The International Crisis Group, had interviewed three <u>Hamas</u> fighters in January who said they "often fired [rockets] in close proximity to homes and from alleys, hoping that nearby civilians would deter Israel from responding."

The Foreign Ministry report included additional evidence that war crimes had been committed. It quoted a report by Newsweek correspondent Rod Nordland on January 20 in which he wrote, "Suddenly there was a terrific whoosh, louder even than a bomb explosion. It was another of <u>Hamas</u>' homemade Qassam rockets being launched into Israel - and the mobile launchpad was smack in the middle of the four [apartment] buildings, where every apartment was full."

Van Esveld added that the fact that the rocket launcher was located in the middle of four residential buildings proved intent on the part of those who fired the rockets.

On Thursday, HRW is due to hold a press conference to present its new report on Cast Lead and specifically the alleged killing of 11 Palestinians who were holding white flags - a sign that they are civilians - by IDF soldiers.

According to the HRW, most of the 11 were <u>women</u> and children and they were killed in seven different incidents during Cast Lead.

HRW said it conducted extensive investigations into each of these incidents by visiting the attack sites, examining ballistic evidence, collecting medical records, and interviewing multiple witnesses, at least three people separately for each attack. In one case, forensic pathologists examined a survivor.

In each of these incidents, the evidence strongly indicates that, at the least, Israeli soldiers failed to take feasible precautions to distinguish between civilians and combatants before attacking. At worst, the soldiers deliberately fired on persons known to be civilians.

Gerald Steinberg, the director of NGO Monitor who saw excerpts of the report, said there was a fundamental problem with HRW's methodology.

"HRW had no people in Gaza during the war, so therefore everything they have to say is by definition based on hearsay and speculation - it is all based on secondary and tertiary reports," he said.

"A Palestinian says he took a white flag out, and says Israelis shot him. We don't know if that was part of tactics <u>Hamas</u> used, like Hizbullah did in Lebanon. Remember, <u>Hamas</u> used ambulances to smuggle in and launch rockets. HRW doesn't know," Steinberg said.

Steinberg said that all the organization's reports on Gaza were based on what Palestinians said, or what other NGOs reported, or on what some journalists - who for the most part were also not in Gaza during the war - heard about afterward.

"This is a basic methodological problem," he said. "If you are looking for a target, you will find people who will tell you what you are looking for."

Steinberg said that HRW made similar allegations about the IDF firing at people waving white flags after the Second Lebanon War, but that these turned out to be false.

He said that in one instance HRW alleged that there was no Hizbullah presence when the IDF allegedly killed three people, and wounded 14 other people who were waving a white flag while fleeing in a van from the village of Kafra.

"Independent analysis showed that Hizbullah admitted flying white flags to prevent IDF attacks, 17 rockets were fired from within Kafra village houses, and Hizbullah regularly transported arms in vans," he said.

Rights group acknowledges Palestinians used civilians as human shields in Cast Lead. Human Rights Watch:

Action still doesn't justify army response \* Group's r....

"The release of a third lengthy publication condemning Israel over Gaza within the space of a few months, is reflective of HRW's Israel obsession," Steinberg said, adding that a critical report of <u>Hamas</u> issued last week for firing on civilians in the western Negev was a "fig leaf."

Steinberg said the "white flag" report was edited by Joe Stork, who, he said, was anything but an impartial observer of the Israeli-Arab conflict.

Steinberg said that Stork, one of the founders of the Middle East Research Information Project (MERIP) has "a long history of anti-Israel incitement.

"MERIP's line was in many ways more radical than Yasser Arafat and the PLO's. He is not someone with any credentials in universal human rights, and this reflects the core disease eating away at Human Rights Watch, including its recent fund-raising activities in Saudi Arabia."

The IDF said it would release an official response to the new HRW report Thursday but added it was already investigating several similar allegations, including an incident that occurred on January 13 when four civilians were reportedly killed even though they were waving a white flag.

Another incident took place on January 4, when a tank crew allegedly fired a shell at a group of civilians that were carrying white flags.

The incidents were brought to the IDF's attention by HRW as well as other NGOs and even Palestinians themselves.

The IDF is conducting over 100 investigations of soldiers involved in Operation Cast Lead.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



## International: Video shows captured Israeli soldier looking well

The Guardian - Final Edition
October 3, 2009 Saturday

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Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 21

Length: 546 words

Byline: Rory McCarthy, Jerusalem

## **Body**

Gilad Shalit, an Israeli soldier captured near Gaza more than three years ago, appeared unhurt and in good health in a video recording received by the Israeli government yesterday.

Shalit spoke, walked briefly towards the camera and held a newspaper that was less than three weeks old.

Although it was not the first proof that he is alive - there have been audio recordings and letters in the past - it was the first time he has been seen on video.

The film, obtained in return for the release by Israel of 20 **female** Palestinian prisoners, suggests that German intelligence officers, who joined mediation efforts this summer, are making progress in the case. However, Israeli officials said that there was still considerable negotiation to go before Shalit was freed.

In the tape, which lasts around two and a half minutes, Shalit, 23, sits on a plastic chair against a plain wall indoors. "Hello. This is Gilad, son of Noam and Aviv Shalit, brother of Hadas and Yoel, who live in Mitzpe Hila," he says. He gives his Israeli identity card number and appears to be in good health, although he has a sallow complexion and dark rings under his eyes.

He wears a green military-style uniform and holds a copy of Falasteen, a Palestinian Arabic newspaper published in Gaza. "I read the newspaper in order to find information about myself, and in hopes of reading about information of my return home and my imminent release," he says, reading from a text. "I hope the current government headed by Binyamin Netanyahu doesn't waste this opportunity to reach an agreement and as a result, allow me to fulfil my dream and be released."

Shalit sends his love to his family and says is hoping "for the day I'll see them again". He says he feels well and that the "mujahideen from the al-Qassam Brigades are treating me excellently". Shalit is being held by <u>Hamas</u>, and the al-Qassam Brigades are the <u>Hamas</u> militant wing.

The tape was delivered by a German mediator to Israel early yesterday and was watched by security officials and the army chief, Gabi Ashkenazi, as well as Netanyahu. Then 19 **female** prisoners were released, driven by Red Cross vehicles into the occupied West Bank. A 20th prisoner will be released into Gaza tomorrow.

International: Video shows captured Israeli soldier looking well

Israel has said the deal was suggested by mediators as a "confidence-building meas ure", particularly given that Red Cross staff have not been allowed to visit Shalit. But Israeli officials have warned that there is still a long way to go. "Although the path to his release is still long and difficult, the knowledge that he is healthy encourages us all," Netanyahu said.

Israel has launched a series of military raids in Gaza over the past three years that have left hundreds of Palestinians dead and has imposed a severe economic blockade, in part it says because Shalit is still being held. <u>Hamas</u> says it will release Shalit in return for the release of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails, but the two sides have so far failed to reach an agreement on a deal.

The <u>female</u> prisoners were all serving short sentences and were not directly involvement in the killing of Israelis. More than 7,000 Palestinians are held in Israeli jails, nearly 400 without charge.

Ben White

Why Fatah and *Hamas* appear ready to shake hands

guardian.co.uk/commentisfree

Load-Date: October 3, 2009



## Female prisoners freed following video release

#### Irish News

October 3, 2009 Saturday

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Section: Pg. 25

Length: 383 words

## **Body**

Israel freed 19 Palestinian <u>women</u> prisoners in exchange for a video proving that a captured soldier was still alive and well yesterday.

The exchange was the first tangible step toward defusing a key flashpoint in Israeli-Palestinian hostilities.

An Israeli official who saw the video of Sergeant Gilad Schalit (23) said he looked well and spoke lucidly.

It was the first glimpse of Mr Schalit since his capture in 2006. Before yesterday the only signs of life had been three letters and an audio tape.

In the video Mr Schalit held up an Arabic language newspaper dated September 14 2009 - <u>Hamas</u>'s proof the footage was taken recently.

It was not clear if Mr Schalit was reading from a text or speaking off the cuff, although no notes could be seen in the video.

The Palestinian prisoners' triumphant return home to a flag-waving and cheering crowd, together with the video's arrival in Israel, gave hope to each side that a wider, long-awaited prisoner swap is now in the offing.

<u>Hamas</u> is demanding freedom for hundreds of Palestinian prisoners as their price for Mr Schalit, whose capture in a bloody cross-border raid has touched a nerve in a country where most families have loved ones in the military.

Yesterday's deal could also herald an end to a crippling Israel-led blockade of Gaza which has prevented the territory from rebuilding after Israel's winter war there.

Israel imposed the blockade after <u>Hamas</u> seized power in Gaza two years ago. Israel has made it clear that it will not ease the embargo before the serviceman is freed.

About 200 people waving Palestinian flags greeted vans carrying 18 of the women into the West Bank.

The prisoners, wearing the headscarves of devout Muslim <u>women</u>, blew kisses to the crowd through the vehicles' open windows.

Later the prisoners were greeted by Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas in his walled compound.

The <u>women</u> had been jailed for relatively minor offences and were close to release. Only a few were members of militant groups and most were assigned supporting roles such as helping bombers reach their targets.

#### Female prisoners freed following video release

Israel's lead negotiator in prisoner swap talks viewed the video first in Tel Aviv to determine its authenticity.

The video was then transferred to Jerusalem where Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and defence minister Ehud Barak saw it.

Load-Date: October 5, 2009



# GAZA ONE YEAR ON; To mark the anniversary of the offensive which left hundreds of innocent civilians dead, Donald MacIntyre revisits the scene of one of the most horrifying conflicts of our time

Independent Magazine
December 12, 2009
First Edition

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Section: INDEPENDENT MAGAZINE; Pg. 18

Length: 4891 words

Byline: Donald MacIntyre

## **Body**

Hilmi Samouni still hopes at some point - "inshallah" - to go back to his old job as a kitchen assistant in the Palmyra, Gaza City's best known shwarma restaurant. But unlike his 22-year-old brother Khamiz, who is working once again in a car paint shop, and his 20-year-old cousin Mousa, on a two-year accountancy diploma course at Al Azhar University, Hilmi, who is 26, found that he couldn't cope when he returned to the Palmyra after the war. "Everyone there was very supportive," he says, "but I couldn't do good work." Unlike Mousa, who also lost his parents, and Khamiz, Hilmi saw the bodies not only of his father Talal and his mother Rahme but also of his wife Maha, age 20, and their only son, six-month-old Mohammed, among the 21 killed in the shelling of the warehouse in which they had been ordered by Israeli troops to gather. It still bothers Hilmi that he has no pictures of any of them; they were burnt when the family home was fired on the day before.

Now Hilmi mainly potters round the house, set amid devastated orchards and chicken coops in the southern Gaza City district of Zeitoun. The graffiti in English and Hebrew on the interior walls, left by the men of the Israeli army's Givati brigade, are the only relics of their two-week occupation of the building - a gravestone drawn beside the words "Gaza we were here"; "One down and 999,000 to go"; "Death to Arabs". Has the family deliberately kept the graffiti visible? "Yes, but anyway we didn't have paint to cover them," he says. One of Hilmi's duties is to help look after his dauntingly self-possessed 11-year-old sister Mona, who turns the pages of artwork inspired by her memories of the morning of 5 January 2009. "This is me cleaning the face of mother who is dead. This is my father who was hit in the head and his brains came out. This is my dead sister-in-law. This is my sister taking the son from my sister in law..."

The warehouse shelling commemorated in Mona's artwork was one of the worst of many attacks on civilians in Gaza by Israeli forces between 27 December and 18 January. The Israeli military offensive had been a long time coming but still the multiple Saturday-afternoon bombing raids with which it began came as a surprise. The stated purpose was to halt the rocket and mortar attacks - 470 of which had spread undoubted fear through the border communities of southern Israel since an Israeli raid on <u>Hamas</u> ended an uneasy but largely effective five-month ceasefire in early November 2008.

But if the timing was a surprise, the unprecedented ferocity of the onslaught on <u>Hamas</u>-controlled Gaza was even more so. More than two weeks into the war, the Israeli foreign minister Tzipi Livni would boast in a radio interview

that "Israel ... is a country that when you fire on its citizens it responds by going wild - and this is a good thing". Whether, as Judge Richard Goldstone's UN-commissioned report on Operation Cast Lead charged, Israel "targeted" the civilian population, or whether, as some soldiers have since attested, the military simply subordinated the preservation of Palestinian lives to those of its own troops, the figures tell their own story of the extent to which "a country" went "wild". Though disputed by the military, exhaustive research by the respected Israeli human-rights agency B'Tselem put the total death toll at 1,387, of whom 773 were civilians. In the same period, four Israelis were killed in Israel by rocket fire, and nine soldiers in Gaza, four from friendly fire. Because the borders were closed, there was no flow of refugees out of Gaza of the sort that would have followed an equivalent onslaught elsewhere.

That early-morning bombardment of Wael Samouni's half-finished warehouse - where some 100 of his extended family, including his young relative Hilmi, had been sheltering - is one of more than 20 events being investigated by the Israeli military police. Last month, pointing out that so far only one soldier has faced trial over his conduct of the war - for stealing a Palestinian's credit card - B'Tselem complained that since the Army itself was doing its own investigating, any indictments would be directed only against "the lower echelon" and that an independent inquiry capable of attributing blame to "senior officers" and government policy-makers in the "political echelon" was needed.

Either way, there is no sign as yet of an investigation into a separate incident early the previous day, the first of the ground invasion. Israeli soldiers, their faces camouflaged in black, some with branches round their helmets, stormed into the house behind Hilmi's home, where his uncle, Atiya Samouni, a 46-year-old farmer, was taking refuge with his two wives and 15 children.

The family say that the house's front door had deliberately been left open so the advancing troops would see there were children inside. According to their account, Atiya, who spoke some Hebrew, walked with his hands up to the open door of the children's room - where the family was huddled - to show himself to the soldiers who were by now in the adjacent living room. His four-year-old son Ahmad followed him, crying out "Baba, Baba" - "Daddy" - and Atiya told him: "Don't be afraid." But as Atiya started to speak to the soldiers he was shot dead. The troops then began shooting into the children's room, to screams from the adults of "katan" and "ktanim" - "little one(s)" in Hebrew. Five of the children were hit; Ahmad was shot twice in the chest, fatally.

Eleven months later, the widowed Zeinat Samouni seems cheerful at first, pressing visitors with a hospitable smile to take one of the round flatbreads she is baking for the imminent Muslim festival of Eid al Adha in the one room she now shares with her seven surviving children. But she cannot stop crying as she describes how they left the house - and the body of her husband - with an older son carrying the heavily bleeding Ahmad to the house of another relative. As evening came, she gave Ahmad, his face now yellowing, bread dipped in water; "It was like feeding a bird," she recalls. The family called an ambulance but were told that it was too dangerous for it to approach the area. Ahmad died in the early hours of Monday morning. "If we'd been able to get an ambulance, I think he would be alive now," she says.

Zeinat's daughter, 10-year-old Amal, carries everywhere in her pocket two worn photographs of her dead father and brother. "I want to look at them all the time," she says, almost a year after they were killed. "My house is not beautiful without them." Amal was also injured and says her head and right eye still hurt. But the psychological trauma for Amal is compounded by the fact that she ran off before her mother and siblings left the house after the shooting. Four days later, she was found, partly buried under rubble, dehydrated and in shock, one of 15 other survivors in the immediate area when Red Cross ambulances were finally allowed to get close enough to bring them out. At school, Amal's favourite subjects are Arabic and English. "I don't know much English, but I like it," says the girl, who wants to be a doctor when she grows up.

Of Atiya's children with his other wife, Zahawa, the most affected is Kannan, now 13, who still limps from the gunshot in his left thigh. Before the war, he was a keen midfielder but he no longer plays football. For him, too, the impact has not only been physical, however. In the months after the shooting, he had nightmares - and was several times found crying in his sleep or shouting, "They want to shoot my father". "He won't go to the toilet on his own," his mother says, adding that he is easily scared - for example, by the sound of gunfire from a nearby *Hamas* police-

training camp. Kannan, too, has a sketchbook - his drawing encouraged by the counsellor who saw him for four months after the war. It depicts the shooting of his father ... children frightened of aeroplanes overhead ... a destroyed Mosque.

EVEN FOR THE SAMOUNIS, however, life goes on. Kannan's family should soon be able to grow six rows of lettuces, peppers and tomatoes on a small plot of land, thanks to a Red Cross irrigation repair project - two wells were destroyed during the military occupation of Zeitoun. It's not enough produce to sell, as they had before, but it's a start. His cousins have also been lent an acre of land, producing olives, figs and vegetables.

Down the road, 22-year-old Rami Samouni, whose brother Hamdi was killed by Israeli forces along with the 18,000 chickens in his coop, is helping to rebuild the destroyed house of his cousin Arafat. The rebuilding is partly funded by the 4,000-euro compensation from the <u>Hamas</u> government earmarked for anyone who lost their home in its entirety, along with \$5,000 from the rival Palestinian Authority in Ramallah, discreetly channelled by the UN Development Programme to ensure that no political stigma attaches locally to its beneficiaries. Rami, who will graduate next year with an education degree from Al Azhar University, sees the reconstruction as a metaphor. "You have to have hope. If you consider yourself sick, you're going to be sick. You die if you don't rebuild. Our enemies want us to give up and stop life. We have to move on." Despite his talk of "enemies", Rami says more than once in our conversation that he would accept a solution based on the 1967 borders, with Israel and a Palestinian state existing side-by-side.

Elsewhere, too, there is varied but pervasive evidence of the famous Gazan resilience, even where the damage is worst. A year on, there are few bleaker sights than the rubble still left by last winter's large-scale dynamiting and bulldozing of houses in the northern Gaza districts of Abed Rabbo and Atatra. All but a small minority of those made homeless by the war are renting homes or lodging with relatives. But in Atatra, where much of the destruction occurred during the last days of the war, a few are still living in tents. It seems to be the <u>women</u> here who are holding things together. The house of Arifa abu Leila, the 40-year-old mother of nine children, was destroyed after the family was forced to leave by Israeli soldiers. Now, under canvas, the family has only a hosepipe and a large plastic bowl for washing. She says the family never got the 4,000 euros from the <u>Hamas</u> authorities and muses the reason may be because her husband "used to be in <u>Hamas</u> but then he left it a long time ago". But when her husband Saleh arrives, he denies adamantly that he was ever in <u>Hamas</u>.

Their neighbour, 30-year-old Majda Ghabin, has a significantly more positive reason for living in a tent. With the money he received for his house - destroyed after he was forced out of it, arrested by Israeli troops, and held in Israel for five days during the war - he has rehabilitated his land and invested in carrots, cheaper to care for than the strawberries he used to farm. "I thought it was better to keep working than to find another house," he explains. "That way I can make some money and maybe build a house in the future."

Over in the Abed Rabbo district, east of Jabalya and closer to the Israeli border, the wreckage has even generated its own micro-economy. At 6.30 each morning, Saber Abu Freih and his 60-year-old mother Ghazala arrive at what was once their house, partly to sift - so far in vain - through the rubble to find the jewellery they left behind 11 months ago and partly to load a donkey cart with blasted masonry needed to make new breeze-blocks for small-scale construction. A day's work may bring around 100 shekels (£16) to be shared with his six brothers. "We are clearing the land, collecting stones that will be used for building at the same time," he says cheerfully. "We may only get 10 shekels [£1.60] a cartload. But what can we do?"

Donkey carts like this one head for the nearby Al Shobaki concrete works to be ground down and made into building blocks. Here, the owner, Abdel Salem al Shobaki, succinctly describes the business spiral of his company since the works was started during the height of the Intifada in 2003 as "excellent to good to bad to unbelievable". The "bad to unbelievable" period, which began in mid-2007, reflects the recent political history of Gaza. Having won the 2006 electoral contest for control of the Palestinian parliament, to the consternation of just about everyone, possibly including <u>Hamas</u> itself, the militant Islamic faction rapidly found itself at odds, not only with Israel and the international community, which united in demanding that it recognise Israel as it had consistently failed to do, but also with the Fatah Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who unlike his political co-habitants had long renounced

violence and long embraced the idea of a two-state solution. Despite the mounting tensions through 2006, exacerbated by the abduction of the Israeli corporal Gilad Shalit and the ensuing military conflict, a short-lived Saudi-brokered coalition with Fatah was established in February 2007. In June of that year, however, the coalition broke down amid savage internecine fighting on Gaza's streets which was decisively won by *Hamas*, who seized control in Gaza. Abbas "sacked" the *Hamas* prime minister Ismail Haniyeh, leaving the putative future Palestine split between the West Bank under his own control, and Gaza under that of *Hamas*. And Israel imposed a total economic siege which at a stroke halted Gaza's once- vibrant manufacturing and agricultural sectors - which often exported to Israeli trading partners - by closing the borders to all but the inward passage of basic humanitarian goods. It is a policy for which Gaza's population of 1.5m has been paying the price ever since.

Among much else, it left Mr Al Shobaki short of a crucial commodity that he used to import regularly from Israel. Ever since June 2007, he says, he's had "4,000 tons of gravel but no cement". Then two months ago, Mr Al Shobaki - who says he actually pays 15-20 shekels (£2.40-£3.20) for a good cartload of war rubble - was finally able to procure enough cement to start the works going again, thanks to the tunnels through which it is smuggled from Egypt. Gazans are often sceptical about the quality of Egyptian cement - a joke doing the rounds is that a new *Hamas*-affiliated mosque on Gaza City's beach road has remained uncompleted because the imams are holding out for Israeli cement. But the real problem is the price. Mr Al Shobaki pays 1,400 shekels (£220) a ton for Egyptian cement through the tunnels - compared to the 380 shekels (£60) or so he paid when the crossings were open and it came from Israel. "First I'd like to see reconciliation between Fatah and *Hamas*," he says, "and then I'd like to see the crossings open. Anyone who says that the Israeli economy and Gaza's are not connected is stupid. They are one economy." Nevertheless, the tunnels have allowed him to restart production - though at next-to-no profit. For most Gazans, they are now the only tangible contact with the outside world.

A LARGE TENT CITY stretches along Gaza's southern border in Rafah, on the old Philadelphi Road which until 2005 was the Israeli-controlled no-man's land between Egypt and Gaza. Overlooked by the watchtowers of Egyptian security rising above the border fence on the south side and the apartment blocks raddled by Israeli shelling from the years of the Intifada on the Palestinian side, the tents protect the entrances to hundreds of smuggling tunnels. These tunnels have served as Gaza's lifeline since June 2007 - and have continued to do so despite the almost-daily Israeli bombing raids during Operation Cast Lead and the 117 deaths of workers, mostly from natural tunnel collapses, in the past year. Now the tunnels are among the Israeli Air Force's retaliatory targets of choice every time a Qassam rocket is launched into southern Israel in breach of the undeclared but - most of the time - effective ceasefire.

Today, as the late-November sun sets over the Mediterranean to the west and a solitary F16 flies high overhead, an earthmover has been at work for several hours beginning the repairs to a tunnel entrance destroyed that morning. Surveying the wreckage, tunnel worker Abu Yusef recalls that he once earned 300 shekels (£48) a day as a gardener in Israel when the crossings were open, and would willingly do so again rather than risk his life for a third of that. "If there was other work, I wouldn't look at a tunnel again," he says.

One of the wrecked tunnel's owners, who answers only to the name of Abu Hassan, estimates that it will cost almost £40,000 to repair the tunnel but it will - eventually - be worth it. Reeling off the goods he transports through the tunnels - "clothes and food, Galaxy chocolate, empty cola bottles, biscuits" - he acknowledges: "It will take me five months to cover the repair costs - before I would have done it in a month." For business is down, largely because the market is saturated by the tunnels themselves. Supervising the arrival of a bamboo consignment and explaining that his tunnel also handles "clothes and sheep", Mohammed, a 27-year-old from Khan Younis, says "it's not like it used to be - there are a lot of products in Gaza. Gaza is full of bamboo."

Every diplomat familiar with the area believes that <u>Hamas</u> is actually benefiting from the tunnel economy created by the siege. It's not just the 10,000 shekels (£1,600) each operator has to pay the <u>Hamas</u>-controlled Rafah municipality, ostensibly for "regulation and health and safety" - but which has not prevented 32 children and young people under the age of 18 being killed in the tunnels this year. One prominent Gaza businessman says that <u>Hamas</u> also brings in consumer goods through its own secret tunnels - the ones Israel believes it uses to import weapons - and then enlists tame traders to distribute the goods and share the profits with the faction. All of which

can only make a mockery of the idea that the Israeli-imposed blockade hurts <u>Hamas</u> rather than the civilian population.

Thanks to the tunnels, the shops are fuller than at any time since June 2007, probably making the gift exchanges at this year's Muslim festival of Eid al Adha a little cheerier than last year, with plentiful Egyptian goods - at least for those who can afford to buy. A good imported box of chocolates costs around 150 shekels (£24) compared with just 60 shekels (£10) when it came from Israel, a sweater three times its old price of 50 shekels (£8). But this year's Eid also signified something else: a deep reluctance on the part of many Gazans to wallow in their post-war grief and loss. True, a livestock trader in Jabalya estimated that only 35 per cent of Gazan families would be able to afford one of the traditional sheep for Eid - Sudanese, Libyan or Egyptian this year because imported through the tunnels. But in the vibrant pink feathers and the cloth flowers sported in the hair by perfectly turned-out little girls in the ruins of Atatra, or the parties of young middle-class Gazan <u>women</u> - their heads stylishly covered - crowded into the fashionable seafront Al Deira hotel, you could see a determination to make the best of the festival.

The celebratory mood was certainly reinforced by the hope of an imminent prisoner exchange for the release of Gilad Shalit - and the prospect, whether bankable or not, that it would be followed by Israel's at-least-partial lifting of the siege. But what neither the Eid celebrations nor the constant if costly flow of consumer goods through the tunnels can disguise, however, is the scale and impact of Gaza's de-development. Jadwat Khoudary, one of Gaza's most prominent businessmen, points out that even in "normal" times - without the present dire need for massive post-war reconstruction - Gaza's daily requirement was for around 1,500 tons of cement. The expensive cement coming through the tunnels amounts to around 150 tons, enough for a relatively few individual families to repair their war-damaged homes. And he gives a striking example of Gaza's Alice in Wonderland economics from one of his companies, which unlike many hundreds of others has - just - managed to keep going. It used to manufacture flexible foam, used in mass-produced cushions. But because the chemical raw materials are no longer available from Israel, the firm is now producing just 5 per cent of what it did, cutting and shaping ready-made flexible foam imported through the tunnels. He has laid off more than 200 workers; most of those who found jobs went "either to the *Hamas*: internal police, the [regular] police, the [*Hamas*-run] Ministry of Works or muncipalities belonging to *Hamas*. How can I blame them if I cannot pay them salaries?" he says.

We are talking on the eve of the Eid in his popular - but now, in the late afternoon, empty - beachfront restaurant. "Why do you think there's no one here?" he asks. "Because most people are fasting before the Eid. Twenty years ago, only 1 per cent would have done that. Now it's about 90 per cent." Although <u>Hamas</u> had issued no edicts on this issue, Khoudary believes the phenomenon results from messages handed down from the mosques since <u>Hamas</u> came to power. He sees this, and the similar turn-round in those going to the Mosque to pray regularly, as evidence of the Islamic <u>Hamas</u>'s "credibility in the street" - one which the winter war of 2008-09 has done nothing to diminish.

Certainly you can see the weakening of secularism on Gaza's streets. More <u>women</u> are covering their heads; there is a greater sprinkling of them wearing the once rarely-seen nakab, the garment covering the whole face except for the eyes. And the greatest internal pressure on <u>Hamas</u> is not Fatah, which has been effectively repressed in Gaza, but from more extreme Islamist groups. To Khoudary, these developments are the function of what he calls "a mental siege" in which lack of contact with the outside world is turning Gaza inwards. To take a single example, there has been a complete halt to the once-steady flow of many hundreds of students a year, often to pursue postgraduate studies, abroad or in Israeli universities. Now Israel has used the closure to stop students even travelling to the West Bank, let alone to Israel or foreign countries. Thanks to the tunnels, says Khoudary, and provided you can afford it, "you can order anything you want in 36 hours. But the mental siege is the most dangerous and harmful siege." He asks why Israel fosters a climate which in the long run will encourage extremist groups "worse than the Taliban". "Israel is so stupid," he says. "They are punishing the wrong people."

NO ONE HERE HAS done more to try to ease this "mental siege", within the constraints of total closure, than John Ging, the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNWRA) director of operations and the man responsible for the education and welfare of Gaza's almost one million refugees. Ging, a former Irish Army officer, is a brave man; he was at the UNRWA headquarters when its warehouse was destroyed under Israeli white-phosphorus shelling attack during the

third week of Operation Cast Lead. In March 2007, when lawlessness in Gaza was at a peak from which it has now declined thanks to <u>Hamas</u> policing, Ging's UN convoy was ambushed and 18 bullets fired into his armoured vehicle by Palestinian gunmen seeking to abduct him. Two months later, one of his bodyguards was injured f when a UN school he was visiting came under fire. Even more extreme elements within <u>Hamas</u> - though never the de facto <u>Hamas</u> government itself - have issued threatening critiques of the highly successful summer games UNRWA ran for 250,000 children, of Ging's warning to UNRWA's Palestinian staff to leave their politics at the door when they come to work, and - most recently - of his bold determination to include holocaust studies in the UNRWA school human-rights curriculum.

Yet what gives Ging his high credibility in Gaza is his tireless championing of the civilian population in the face of what he repeatedly calls the "failed and flawed" policies of isolating it. The end of the war, he says, left Gazans "worse than before" because of the "unfulfilled hope" that it would also mark the end of "that era of collective punishment ... that had been their daily life for so long". For the war had at least finally generated an international realisation "that it was the civilian population that was paying a devastating price not only in loss of life but [also] in their living conditions".

But rather than an end to isolation, Ging says, the traumatised Gazans have seen that "daily life continues to deteriorate and, as they listen and they read of more talk of war, they see the peace process is in further peril".

Ging acknowledges that this is not a "typical human emergency" made visible by "emaciated bodies and an overwhelmed medical service" - though he points out that 80 per cent of Gazans are dependent on food aid, that the medical services are overloaded but somehow coping, and that the water and sewage infrastructure is on the brink of crisis with 80m cubic litres of raw sewage pumped daily into the Mediterranean, 80 per cent of the drinking water below WHO minimum standards and 60 per cent of people with only irregular access to water. Instead, he says, "the problem here is the destruction of a civilised society and what the impact of that will be for the solution to this conflict".

As a man for whom belief in international law is a driving passion, he has sought to combat this trend with a humanrights curriculum in UN schools which is anything but routine, less than a year after a war about which the Goldstone report accused mainly Israel but also <u>Hamas</u> of war crimes. Ging is convinced about the positive response of Gazan civilians. "You only have to talk to them," he argues, to know that "they are not terrorists, they are not violent people. They are deeply civilised people ... not withstanding the provocative nature and injustice of their circumstances."

Their aspirations are not, he says, "vengeance or revenge or violence or destruction - their aspirations are the same as any civilised person on this planet. They want the space to live, basic fundamental freedoms of human rights. They understand the difference between right and wrong and sanctions against those who are in violation of the law, but their claim - which I fully support - is that the innocent should not be sanctioned."

Like Jadwat Khoudary, Ging is fearful however of the extremism that the "devastatingly" negative conditions of Gaza threaten to breed, including among school pupils. "How do we motivate them to achieve their academic potential when their mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters have no job and no prospect of a job? They listen every day to rhetoric, very destructive, which capitalises on their physical experience which is very negative - and tries to attach that to violent activity as being the way out of those circumstances." UNRWA, says Ging, aims to counter that through education. But, he adds, "the most important support is to change the circumstances".

THE UN GIRLS' PREPARATORY School A in Zeitoun, the very neighbourhood where calamity overtook the Samouni family, helps to illustrate the point. Three of its pupils were killed during the war, 25 injured and many more were made homeless by the destruction. Late last month, it staged a varied day of activities to reinforce another Ging initiative - one that perhaps would not go amiss in many British schools - the Respect and Discipline programme. They ranged from a parade - "We call it 'military' because we want the discipline of soldiers without the violence," explained teacher Soha Sohoor - to a playlet set in court in which teenage girls acted the parts of a female lawyer, teacher, doctor, engineer and housewife successfully defending themselves against a judge's

draconian anti-woman ruling. Afterwards, four articulate 14-year-olds discussed issues ranging from domestic violence and the impact of the winter war to the determination of all four to go to university. All said they favoured a two-state solution based on 1967 borders.

Shaima Remlawi, who is learning English, wants to be an international interpreter but also sees herself campaigning for <u>women</u>'s rights - particularly against early marriage and fathers who discourage their daughters from completing their education. "I will not marry until I am more than 20," she declared. Afrian Naim wants to be a journalist, "so I can give the message of the Palestinians all over the world." Islam Aqel wants to become both a professor and a "novelist who can write books that everyone can read." And Ahlam Al-Haj Ahmed said: "I want to be a journalist writing about the sufferings of the Palestinian people. But I want to be effective in society, to be a member of the PLC [the Palestinian Parliament], not in Fatah or <u>Hamas</u> but as an independent, so I can tell the others when they are doing well and when they are not doing well." It's hard not to be impressed with these girls, brimming with healthy ambition. But hard also not to wonder - without that "change in circumstances", an end to Gaza's siege, mental and physical - how long it will be before their dreams crash into irrevocable disappointment.

"It's urgent that we change," says Ging. "Because time is against us. A whole generation is growing up." \*

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## UN's bias binds Gaza

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## **Body**

It's outrageous to insist that only the West must comply with the laws of war, argues Jim Molan

RICHARD Goldstone, a prominent South African jurist, claims in The New York Times that he hesitatingly accepted his UN mandate to investigate the three-week December-January war between <u>Hamas</u> and Israel because he was taking on something ``deeply charged and politically loaded". Many states considered this mandate one-sided. Prominent individuals offered the view that it was more about politics than human rights. Goldstone was wise to hesitate, but he took the mission that will forever bear his name.

The Goldstone report was the product of the Gaza fact-finding mission, which could never have been a judicial mission, given the inclusion of publicly biased members. Still, despite a lack of co-operation from key parties, notably Israel, Goldstone's mission reached the conclusion that Israel was guilty of directing its military operations, at least in part, ``at the people of Gaza as a whole". The reaction has been to drive all parties even further into their corners and has contributed very little clarity to the big issues.

Goldstone claims he has a deep belief in the law of war and that civilians ``should to the greatest extent possible be protected from harm". He states that Israel ``could have done more to spare civilians" who died from ``disproportionate attacks". The Israeli military, he claimed, repeatedly ``failed to adequately distinguish between combatants and civilians, as the law strictly requires". And he concludes that Israel should have refrained from attacking ``clearly civilian buildings and from actions that might have resulted in a military advantage but at the cost of too many civilian lives".

The way that Goldstone frames these statements in his article should lead us to question how he confidently reached a guilty verdict. The law of war is rightly full of the kind of restricting concepts mentioned above. A formal example is Article 51(5)(b) of Protocol I, which prohibits ``an attack which may be expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, damage to civilian objects, or a combination thereof, which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated".

Is this modified and reasonable statement the discrimination that the judge says "the law strictly requires"?

The just war principles emerged as society moved towards a less dark age, and include conflict that is morally justified. We can all have an opinion on how just the Israeli attack on <u>Hamas</u> was, but it remains an opinion shaped by our prejudices. Jurists of the just war era even differentiated between the commentator and the statesman,

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acknowledging that the statesman has an obligation to deal with threats to their citizens, not just talk about them. Goldstone is no statesman in this sense, he is the commentator.

The law of war is a body of rules regulating the conduct of states and combatants engaged in armed hostilities, drawing heavily from the Hague and Geneva conventions, as well as numerous agreements that limit the means and conduct of hostilities. This body of law often speaks in terms of attacker and defender.

When I was involved in military operations in the second year of the Iraq war, working with the US military, I found it useful to reduce the legal regime to several key concepts. Every offensive action I took had to be necessary for military reasons, not result in unnecessary suffering, was amenable to distinction between military and civil people and property, and did not cause destruction or suffering disproportionate to the expected military gain, even against legitimate military targets. I satisfied myself that I achieved these and I satisfied the system that scrutinised every action I took. I probably never will convince those who have on occasions publicly, ignorantly and incorrectly associated me with war crimes.

Our adversary in Iraq consistently ignored all humanitarian law as well as the laws of war, particularly the blatant abuse of medical facilities and places of worship. Our adversary's major strategy was to blow the arms and legs off innocent <u>women</u> and children at times calculated to fit the need of the world's media networks. This was an immorality of strategy that was breathtaking, exercised not just once or twice, but over years. Despite the nature of our enemy, we realised that our right to injure even our enemy was limited.

But the defender also has obligations. He cannot exploit these laws by deliberately commingling his fighters with civilians, as <u>Hamas</u> admits it did. This violates the most basic principle of the law of war. However, should our opponents do this, the attacker is not relieved of all legal obligations: we still had to comply with proportionality principles and refrain from attacks likely to result in civilian damage excessive in relation to military gain.

Let us not forget that it is very common for our adversaries, be they al-Qa'ida or <u>Hamas</u>, to exploit legal constraints for their strategic or tactical gain. Proportionality is always an issue, but to see <u>Hamas</u> as David to the Israeli Goliath, and to then feel undue empathy for David while blaming everything on Goliath, is to distort the complexity of each position. For example, I would argue that to comply with the law of war it is essential that if a combatant possesses the precision-guided munitions that the report seemed to see as unfair, he is obligated to use those because they discriminate.

Inherent in the principle of protecting the civilian population is a requirement that civilians not be used to render areas immune from military operations. A party to a conflict that chooses to use its civilian population for military purposes violates its obligation to protect its own civilians. It should not complain (but of course it will) when inevitably, although regrettable, civilian casualties result.

With experience of having to tread through this legal and moral minefield while acting as an agent of the statesman who has an obligation to act, I was looking forward to how Goldstone was going to react to questions such as: How much discrimination is enough? How much of the inevitable killing of innocents is too much? How do we equate our complex war aims with the use of military force against a terrorist organisation that flouts the rule of law? How do you assess in legal terms the proportionality of a war between a terrorist force and one of the world's most advanced militaries? If one side uses backyard rockets is the other side not allowed to use precision-guided missiles? Do three Israelis killed and hundreds wounded by backyard rockets equal 1000 Gazans killed by Israeli actions? Given the legal regime recognises the difficulty of military decision-making amid the fog of war, and thus obligates planners and commanders to base decisions on information reasonably available at the time, how did the report handle this issue?

On these and many other questions, the Goldstone report is strangely silent, a luxury that I did not have in Iraq, and a luxury that the Israeli commanders probably did not have in Gaza.

The Goldstone report is an opinion by one group of people putting forward their judgments, with limited access to the facts, and reflecting their own prejudices. The difference in tone and attitude in the report when discussing Israeli and *Hamas* actions is surprising.

#### UN 's bias binds Gaza

I probably do not need to state for most readers that as a soldier who has run a war against an opponent not dissimilar to <a href="#"><u>Hamas</u></a>, facing problems perhaps similar to those faced by Israeli commanders, my sympathies tend to lie with the Israelis. I can hold and openly declare those prejudices even while I acknowledge that within institutions that may be overall just and moral, there can be individuals or small groups who act outside the law. They must be dealt with, and in my war, they were.

But having stated my prejudice, I think I may be more honest than Goldstone, who seems to pass off his prejudices in a report that cannot be based on fact, and uses judicial language and credibility to do so. It comes down to equality of scepticism: if you refuse to believe anything the Israelis say, then you have no right to unquestioningly accept what *Hamas* says.

Goldstone is a former chief prosecutor for war-crime tribunals on Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. Perhaps it is easier to come to a judicial decision with some integrity in such circumstances, than it is to examine the Israeli and <u>Hamas</u> roles in the last Gaza war. This kind of report, with all its biases, is one of the reasons why the US did not subject its military to the International Criminal Court. But Australia did.

As George Walden recently wrote in Britain's The Times, ``Morality minus practicality is pious grandstanding, something best left to pop stars and theatre folk." And perhaps to the UN.

Retired major general Jim Molan was chief of operations of the Iraq multinational force in 2004-05.

Load-Date: October 1, 2009



## <u>Israel gets video of captive soldier; Sergeant seems healthy; 19 Palestinians</u> released in deal to get recording

The International Herald Tribune
October 3, 2009 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 722 words

**Byline: ISABEL KERSHNER** 

**Dateline: JERUSALEM** 

## **Body**

#### **ABSTRACT**

Israel obtained on Friday the DVD in which the captured soldier Gilad Shalit appeared in a deal brokered by German and Egyptian negotiators in which Israel released 19 Palestinian <u>women</u> from its jails and is expected to release a 20th prisoner on Sunday.

#### **FULL TEXT**

Appearing thin and wan, but lucid and very much alive, Gilad Shalit, the captured Israeli soldier whose fate has gripped the nation's soul for more than three years, appeared in a video Friday holding a Palestinian newspaper dated Sept. 14.

Israel obtained the DVD on Friday in a deal brokered by German and Egyptian negotiators in which Israel released 19 Palestinian <u>women</u> from its jails and is expected to release a 20th prisoner on Sunday.

It was Israel's first glimpse of Sergeant Shalit since June 2006, when he was seized in a cross-border raid by *Hamas* and other Palestinian militant groups and dragged, injured, into Gaza.

Sergeant Shalit's family decided after seeing the recording to allow it to be made public. It was broadcast on all Israeli television channels Friday afternoon.

In the video, which is 2 minutes and 42 seconds long, Sergeant Shalit, now 23, appeared thin but healthy. Clean-shaven, dressed in khaki military-style clothes and sitting against a plain, light-colored wall, he held up a copy of the *Hamas*-published Palestine newspaper, dated Monday, Sept. 14, 2009.

"As you see I am holding in my hands the Palestine newspaper of Sept. 14, 2009, published in Gaza," Sergeant Shalit said. "I am reading the paper in order to find information about myself, hoping to find some information from which I would learn of my release and imminent return home."

Reading from a piece of paper in Hebrew in a voice that broke at times, he said: "I have been hoping and waiting for the day of my release for a long time. I hope the current government under Benjamin Netanyahu will not waste the chance to finalize a deal, and I will therefore be able to finally have my dream come true and be released."

Israel gets video of captive soldier Sergeant seems healthy; 19 Palestinians released in deal to get recording

With an embarrassed half-smile, Sergeant Shalit said that the "mujahedeen of Iz al-Din al-Qassam," the military wing of <u>Hamas</u>, were treating him "excellently." He then rose from the chair and took a few paces forward to show that he was physically intact.

The video footage had been handed to Israel by a German mediator earlier Friday. The deal was the most tangible sign of progress so far in years of negotiations for the soldier's release.

<u>Hamas</u>, the Islamist group that controls Gaza, hailed the deal as a great political achievement. Of the 19 prisoners released, 18 returned to the West Bank and were received by the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, at his headquarters in Ramallah.

But the largest celebration was reserved for Fatima Younis Zaq, 45, the only one from Gaza. Ms. Zaq, who is affiliated with the extremist group Islamic Jihad, was arrested in May 2007 at the Erez crossing on her way into Israel. She was charged with having undergone military training and planning a suicide bombing, but had not yet been sentenced. She returned to Gaza on Friday to a hero's welcome along with an infant son who was born in jail, her ninth child.

Ismail Haniya, the prime minister of the *Hamas* government in Gaza, and other leaders greeted Ms. Zaq.

"This is a day of victory for the resistance and steadfastness," Mr. Haniya said.

In a startling shift, the Palestinian delegation to the U.N. Human Rights Council has dropped its efforts to forward a report accusing Israel of possible war crimes to the Security Council, under pressure from the United States, Neil MacFarquhar reported from the United Nations, quoting diplomats.

The Americans argued that pushing the report would derail the Middle East peace process they were trying to revive, diplomats said Thursday.

"We don't want to create an obstacle for them," Ibrahim Khraishi, the Palestinian ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, where the Human Rights Council is based, said by telephone. "We want to get a strong resolution to deal with the report in a good manner to get a benefit from it."

The report - produced by a panel of investigators led by an internationally respected jurist, Richard Goldstone - found extensive evidence that both Israel and Palestinian militant groups had taken actions amounting to war crimes during the war in Gaza last winter.

Load-Date: October 7, 2009



## Fatah hopes its revival will restore lost trust

Right Vision News

July 11, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 363 words

Dateline: BETHLEHEM, West Bank

## **Body**

BETHLEHEM, West Bank, Aug. 11 -- The congress of the leading Palestinian party, Fatah, votes on Sunday for a new executive body and assembly, in a test of its ability to renew itself and regain the lost trust of the Palestinian people. The movement led by the late Yasser Arafat for 40 years is seeking to throw off a reputation for corruption and cronyism that led in 2006 to a stunning election loss to its Islamist rival <u>Hamas</u>, which opposes peace with Israel. <u>Hamas</u> seized the Gaza Strip in a civil war a year later, splitting the Palestinian independence movement. On Sunday, delegates passed a motion reaffirming that "the aim of Fatah as a liberation movement is to end the Israeli occupation and achieve independence for the Palestinian people in a state with East Jerusalem as its capital. ""Despite our commitment to the option of a just peace and our efforts to accomplish it we will not drop any options and we believe resistance in all its forms is a legitimate right of occupied peoples in confronting their occupiers," it said. The congress of 2,355 delegates in Bethlehem -- Fatah's first in 20 years -- began last Tuesday, marked by reformists' charges of vote-buying and nepotism by the "old guard." Ninety-six candidates, six of them women, are standing for election to the 21-member central committee and 617 party members including 50 women will vie for the 80 places open in a 128-seat Revolutionary Council, the body's parliament. Voting will last for 10 hours.

Results from the complex ballot papers are expected to take about a day. If stalled peace talks with Israel resume, Fatah's leader, the Western-backed Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, will be Israel's main interlocutor, a position *Hamas* is certain to continue challenging however successful this convention. Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak deplored Fatah's anti-Israel rhetoric but stressed that "it must be understood there is no Middle East solution other than a comprehensive, broad settlement including us and the Palestinians." Published by HT Syndication with permission from Right Vision News. For more information on news feed please contact Surit Das at <a href="https://dication@hindustantimes.com">https://dication@hindustantimes.com</a>

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Load-Date: August 10, 2009



## Female lawyers ordered to wear headscarves

Irish News

July 27, 2009 Monday

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Section: Pg. 21

Length: 359 words

## **Body**

Gaza's top judge yesterday ordered <u>female</u> lawyers to wear Muslim headscarves when they appear in court, the latest sign that the Islamic militant group <u>Hamas</u> is increasingly imposing its strict interpretation of Islamic law on residents of the area.

Supreme Court chief justice Abdul-Raouf Halabi said <u>female</u> lawyers will be required to wear a headscarf and a long, dark-coloured cloak under their billowing black robes from September.

The judge said his order was designed to ensure that <u>women</u> dress in accordance with Islamic law, which requires **women** to cover up in public, wearing loose garments and only showing their hands and faces.

"Showing a woman's hair is forbidden (in Islam)," Mr Halabi said.

"We will not allow people to corrupt morals. This (dress code) will improve work in the courts."

<u>Hamas</u> seized power in Gaza in June 2007 and vowed never to impose its conservative values on others. But it has taken a series of steps in recent months that appear to be aimed at forcing residents to accept its Islamic-oriented social agenda.

Police have pressured store owners to cover scantily clad mannequins, and men relaxing on the beach have been ordered to cover up. One girls' secondary school has made wearing a Muslim headscarf and loose robe a mandatory uniform in the upcoming school year.

The <u>Hamas</u> government formally says it is not imposing Islamic law on the territory's 1.4 million residents. Instead, it says it is simply ensuring that residents behave in line with the territory's own conservative culture.

Most <u>women</u> already wear the headscarf and life in the Mediterranean strip comes to a complete standstill on Fridays as men gather for communal prayers in mosques.

Subhiya Juma, a <u>female</u> lawyer, said the judge's decision would affect only 10 or so lawyers - since the vast majority of the 150 registered <u>female</u> lawyers already cover their hair.

Ms Juma, who does not wear a headscarf, said the point was not the number of <u>women</u> but that freedoms were being eroded.

"This is dangerous - it's a clear violation of the law, it is taking away our personal freedoms - and by whom? The very person who is meant to defend our freedoms," Juma said.

Load-Date: July 28, 2009



## Bereaved mothers: Bring home Schalit 'at any cost'

## The Jerusalem Post November 12, 2009 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 7

Length: 383 words

Byline: RUTH EGLASH

## **Body**

Rona Ramon, wife of deceased Israeli astronaut Ilan Ramon, and Micky Goldwasser, mother of returned kidnapped Israeli soldier Ehud Goldwasser, were among a group of nine bereaved <u>women</u> who sent a letter Wednesday demanding to meet face to face with Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and urge him to bring back Gilad Schalit at any cost and as soon as possible.

Goldwasser explained to The Jerusalem Post that even though her son's remains were returned from Lebanon more than a year ago, the fight for justice for all Israeli parents of soldiers missing in action was not yet over.

"We set out on this battle together," Goldwasser told the Post, referring to the joint efforts by her own family, Schalit's parents and those of Eldad Regev, who was taken by Hizbullah gunmen along with Goldwasser during a July 2006 attack on the Northern border.

"We were three families fighting together for our sons to be returned and until there is a conclusion for all of our families, this battle is not over," she said.

Varda Goldblatt, who prepared the request to Netanyahu and urged the other <u>women</u> to sign it in the name of the Forum of Bereaved **Women** and Mothers, said that the current situation was unacceptable.

"We hope that if Netanyahu meets with us face to face then something will change in this situation," she said.

Schalit, who has been held for some 1,235 days by <u>Hamas</u> in the Gaza Strip, was abducted in a cross-border raid on June 25, 2006. In exchange for his release, <u>Hamas</u> has demanded that hundreds of Palestinian prisoners be freed.

Goldblatt said that releasing Palestinian prisoners should not be an issue because "even when terrorists are held by Israel there is still more terrorists willing to work and the terror does not end."

As well as Goldblatt, Goldwasser and Ramon, American- born Esther Wachsman, whose son Nachshon was kidnapped and tortured by terrorists also joined the group. Together, the bereaved <u>women</u> called on Netanyahu to "find the determination and courage to stop gambling with Gilad's life and sanity and bring him back to his family immediately."

Netanyahu, meanwhile, was set to meet with French President Nicolas Sarkozy in Paris on Wednesday.

Bereaved mothers: Bring home Schalit 'at any cost'

Sarkozy has vowed to make every effort to bring about Schalit's release from <u>Hamas</u> captivity. Schalit has a dual citizenship.

## **Graphic**

2 photos: Rona Ramon. Micky Goldwasser (Credit: Channel 2. Ariel Jerozolimski)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



## Abbas needs to remain credible; Analysis

The Times (London)
October 16, 2009 Friday
Edition 2, National Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 9 Length: 404 words

Byline: Richard Beeston

## **Body**

No one would ever accuse President Abbas of being an inspirational or charismatic leader. But Abu Mazen, as the avuncular figure is better known among his fellow Palestinians, is solid, predictable and unthreatening. More importantly, since the death of his predecessor, Yassir Arafat, he is the only moderate Palestinian figure of any consequence who is an acceptable partner for Israel and the West.

When President Obama declared his intention earlier this year of breathing new life into the stalled Middle East peace process, Mr Abbas figured prominently in his calculations, for he will be a critical part of any solution.

As recently as September there were hopes that a breakthrough in resuming talks was possible. Mr Obama seemed to be pushing the Israelis into making concessions. Israel appeared to be easing its hold over the West Bank.

All that fell apart this month when Mr Abbas surprised his followers by announcing that the United Nations Human Rights Council should delay a debate on the findings of Richard Goldstone's report into the violence earlier this year in Gaza, where more than 1,000 Palestinians were killed in an Israeli offensive against *Hamas* Islamic militants. Palestinians, human rights activists and the Arab world rightly suspected that Mr Abbas was not acting out of the interests of his people, but instead responding to heavy pressure from America, and possibly Britain, to postpone the debate and spare Israel international humiliation.

The timing of his move could not have been worse. It coincided with <u>Hamas</u>'s successful prisoner exchange, when a video showing Gilad Schalit, the captured Israeli soldier, was swapped for 20 Palestinian <u>women</u> inmates from Israeli jails.

The move was a huge victory for <u>Hamas</u> but a disaster for Mr Abbas. He came under attack from his own supporters and made a televised apology. Eventually he was forced to reverse his decision over the Goldstone report.

With their key ally badly damaged, Britain and other Western states are keen to bolster Mr Abbas's precarious position. One obvious solution would be to abstain in today's vote in Geneva. Britain has serious reservations about

#### Abbas needs to remain credible Analysis

the anti-Israel slant of the Goldstone report. But it may calculate that its Palestinian protégé needs this diplomatic victory more than its Israeli ally, Binyamin Netanyahu. The Middle East peace process may be threatened. Without Mr Abbas back at the helm, all bets are off.

Load-Date: October 16, 2009



## Video shows kidnapped Israeli soldier well

Edmonton Journal (Alberta)
October 3, 2009 Saturday
Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A4

Length: 363 words

Byline: Lauren Mcnabb, Canwest News Service

**Dateline: JERUSALEM** 

## **Body**

Recent video of kidnapped soldier Gilad Shalit, shown tired but smiling, aired Friday, giving a relieved Israeli public their first glimpse of him since he was abducted more than three years ago.

The video, two minutes and 40 seconds long, was handed over to Israeli authorities in exchange for the release of 20 *female* Palestinian prisoners.

The swap, negotiated by Egyptian and German mediators, marked the first significant step in a seriously stalled negotiation process that has seen Israel call for Shalit's freedom and <u>Hamas</u> demand the return of at least 1,000 more Palestinian prisoners, some convicted of deadly terrorist attacks.

Dressed in olive fatigues and speaking softly, but coherently, the 23-year-old spoke of his love for his family and a desire to be returned home soon.

"I hope that the present government under the leadership of (Israeli Prime Minister) Benjamin Netanyahu will not at this time waste the opportunity to reach an agreement, and as a result I can at long last realize my dream and be freed," he said.

Shalit was captured and dragged into Gaza during a cross-border raid in June 2006. Since then, the International Red Cross has been barred from seeing him and, with the exception of a few letters to his family and one audio tape, news of his well-being has been scarce.

In Friday's tape, Shalit held an Arabic newspaper, marked with the date Sept. 14. At one point he even walked toward the camera on his own.

In exchange for that assurance that he was alive, and in apparent good health, Israel released 19 <u>female</u> Palestinian prisoners on Friday. Most were deemed to be "low-profile" and near the end of their two-year sentences.

Israel has said Shalit's capture is the key sticking point in its refusal to lift its punishing blockade on the Gaza Strip. Israel essentially sealed its borders to Gaza after the election of *Hamas* in 2007.

In a statement, Netanyahu called the footage "important because it verifies Gilad Shalit's situation and determines that <u>Hamas</u> is absolutely responsible for his health and wellbeing." He was one of the first to see and authenticate the tape before it was flown by helicopter to Shalit's family in northern Israel.

## **Graphic**

Photo: AFP/getty Images; A video released Friday shows captured Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit holding up a Gaza newspaper.;

Load-Date: October 3, 2009



# New development in Schalit case is small but important step, says Peres. French ambassador pledges to work for soldier's release and 'move quickly' on Iran sanctions

The Jerusalem Post
October 1, 2009 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 568 words

Byline: GREER FAY CASHMAN

# **Body**

The newest development in the case of abducted soldier Gilad Schalit is "a small but important step," President Shimon Peres said on Wednesday, after receiving the news that a video on Schalit's state of health would be made available in exchange for 20 Palestinian prisoners.

The president's comment came immediately after he received the credentials of French Ambassador Christophe Bigot, the last of five new ambassadors who presented their credentials to him throughout the morning.

It was a small advancement in the negotiations for Schalit's release, said Peres, adding that he was very proud of the way the Schalit family has maintained its strength in the face of such prolonged and indescribable suffering.

He also expressed appreciation to the Egyptian and German mediators for all their efforts in attempting to secure Schalit's release from *Hamas* captivity.

Early in the morning, Peres who is in frequent contact with the Schalit family, held a working meeting with Hagai Hadas, Israel's special liaison on matters related to Schalit.

Peres later conveyed a personal message via Bigot to French President Nicola Sarkozy, expressing appreciation for the manner in which France has stood by the Schalit family.

Peres also thanked Sarkozy for the "courageous and clear position" that he has taken with regard to the Iranian nuclear threat.

If Iran continues in the manner that it has to date, said Peres, "the world will pay an enormous price in security and loss of life."

Peres was scathing in his remarks about the Goldstone Report, reiterating previously expressed outrage and noting that Israel cannot be considered an occupier of Gaza because Israel left Gaza and handed it over to the Palestinians.

<u>Hamas</u> could have easily put a stop to terrorist activities instead of perpetrating them, Peres contended, noting that both <u>Hamas</u> and Hizbullah were supported by Iran.

New development in Schalit case is small but important step, says Peres. French ambassador pledges to work for soldier's release and 'move quickly' on Iran sanc....

As for the Human Rights Council, Peres suggested that before criticizing Israel, its members examine their own countries for human rights violations.

Noting that Gilad Schalit is both a French and an Israeli citizen, Bigot - who visited the Schalit family very soon after his arrival here - said that he had come to Beit Hanassi with special greetings from Sarkozy and French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner, who have a clear position regarding Iran's development of nuclear arms.

The time frame for negotiations with Iran must be limited, and then, if there is no change in Iran's attitude, severe sanctions against Teheran must be imposed, Bigot said.

"We are determined to move quickly," he said, adding that France is also determined to continue to assist Israel in its attempts to renew negotiations with the Palestinians and equally determined to bring about Schalit's freedom.

"We will do our utmost towards his release," said Bigot. "We are in close contact with the Egyptian and German mediators and with relevant people in Israel. President Sarkozy spoke about this to Prime Minister Netanyahu in New York and he has also spoken about it to President Peres."

"President Sarkozy and the French administration are playing an important role in the Middle East by finding a way in which we can all march together," said Peres, who noted the historic relationship between France and the Jewish people and France and Israel.

France was ahead of other nations in giving rights to its Jews, he said, and it had been supportive of Israel. Ê Ê

# **Graphic**

Photo: <u>HAMAS</u> MEMBERS speak to the press in Gaza City, where the deal that will bring Israel a videotape of Gilad Schalit in exchange for the release of 20 Palestinian <u>women</u> prisoners was announced. (Credit: Hatem Moussa/AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



After the bombing, drug addiction strikes Gaza; Under siege and grappling with joblessness, factional violence and the aftermath of war, Gazans are turning to pills as they seek to escape reality. Donald Macintyre speaks to a mental health group struggling to help addicts

The Independent (London)
October 14, 2009 Wednesday
First Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 24

Length: 1436 words

**Byline:** Donald Macintyre

# **Body**

Abu Ahmed lived through last winter's Gaza war in a daze. Though the district where he lives was invaded by Israeli ground forces and came under heavy fire, including the use of white phosphorus shells, he felt little fear. For by then, the 45-year-old unemployed father of 10 was popping tablets of the painkiller Tramadol to feed an ever more dangerous habit."Of course you care about the children but [with the drugs] you forget about yourself," he explains. "You feel less frightened."

Manufacturers warn the maximum daily dose of the synthetic opioid should be no more 300mg per day; Abu Ahmed was taking as much as 800mg - in the grip of an addiction which has rapidly spread throughout Gaza over the last two years. As the population struggles to cope with Israel closing their home to the outside world, the sometimes violent power struggles between Fatah and <u>Hamas</u>, and then the aftermath of Operation Cast Lead, the Tramadol pills - smuggled in through tunnels from Egypt - have provided a welcome escape from reality.

Mental health professionals say there has been a rise in the drug's usage in Gaza since the war. The <u>Hamas</u> authorities have tried to crack down on it, but the drug's severe withdrawal symptoms means it is a seriously hard habit to break. Hasan Shaban Zeyada, a senior psychologist at the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme (GCMHP) is convinced that many of the psychological problems underlying the addiction are "the consequence of living in this situation: the siege, internal division and the war".

Abu Ahmed used to have a good job as a driver. But like an estimated 100,000 other Gazans he lost it when Israel imposed its blockade after *Hamas* seized control of the strip from Fatah in June 2007. "Before the war the situation was so hard. There was no work, plus I had to take care of 11 people, including my wife. All people could do was sit around in the street and drink tea or coffee."

After the bombing, drug addiction strikes Gaza Under siege and grappling with joblessness, factional violence and the aftermath of war, Gazans are turning to pi....

Depressed and suffering from headaches, he was offered a Tramadol pill by one of his friends. Several of them were using the drug for its supposed power to improve sexual performance, but for Abu Ahmed it was just a way of relieving the strain of life. "When I took it, I felt very relaxed," he says.

But Abu Ahmed soon became hooked. Supplies of Tramadol had surged after <u>Hamas</u> militants blew a breach in the southern wall between Gaza and Egypt in January 2008. "You could get it at pharmacies and there were people selling it on the street," he says. He quickly graduated from taking one pill a day, to three or four and then, though he could ill afford it, as many as eight.

A combination of a doubling in price to around £3.40 for a strip of 10 tablets and a <u>Hamas</u> edict (belated and far from effective) that pharmacies should not sell the drug without a prescription persuaded Abu Ahmed that he had to stop. "I tried to get away from it but I couldn't. I had a headache, pain in every part of my body. I had to go the bathroom every 10 minutes. I was sweating. Then you take one pill and you feel better of course."

It was about six weeks after that that Abu Ahmed- who has a history of drug abuse with hashish - turned, on the advice of a friend, to the GCMHP, the pioneering Palestinian organisation started in 1990 and still directed by the territory's leading psychiatrist and civil society spokesman Dr Eyad Sarraj. With the help of counselling from the group's trained therapists, as well as controlled and decreasing doses of alternative drugs like Avitan, he has stopped taking Tramadol. At the height of his addiction, Abu Ahmed was going without eating for up to three days and his weight dropped to 58 kilos (just over nine stone). Now it is back up to 85.

"They [the GCMHP] made me feel I was in safe hands," explains a grateful Abu Ahmed, adding that the agency arranged for food aid for his family while he was recovering. "They showed respect. And they came to my house to tell my family how they should cope with me when I became nervous and angry."

Yet for all its high professional standards, the organisation cannot help more than a minority of addicts. Although some unofficial estimates put the number of drug addicts as high as many thousands, the GCMHP's Mr Zeyada, who trained in Tel Aviv University, will not, as a scientist, hazard a figure. But he says there is a shortage of mental health provision in Gaza and that "GCMHP cannot take responsibility for the whole community".

Although there has been improvement in mental health awareness in the territory, many residents in socially conservative Gaza baulk at the idea of seeking treatment for psychological problems. "The level of stigma is so high," he explains. Instead, many patients go to their GPs reporting physical problems like headaches, back or abdominal pain, and the doctors, "because of a lack of knowledge about psychological disorder," simply prescribe analgesic drugs - of which Tramadol is a prime example - and "after a while the patients become addicts or abusers".

Operation Cast Lead has been over for nine months, but the return to a state of siege, with unemployment at a record 45 per cent, has left a sense of "helplessness and powerlessness" among residents, compounded by the fact that there is no guarantee the war will not be repeated.

For <u>women</u>, the sense that they exist only to serve their children and husbands makes them especially vulnerable to depression - and use of medication like valium and xanax. For men, the feelings of powerlessness and loss of masculinity are all too often caused by an inability to protect their children in war or provide for them in relative peace. "For a father who cannot fulfil the basic needs of his children it is not easy, especially in a society like Palestinian society," says Mr Zeyada.

Many young people, he adds, are also vulnerable. "They don't have hope, they cannot do anything for the future. They are disappointed, depressed, helpless and powerless. They can't find a job, they can't plan for the future, or [afford to] get married."

Until three weeks ago 21-year-old university student Mohammed, who had first taken the occasional Tramadol pill in 2006 after failing his high school exams, was on a daily dose of 1,000mg per day, increasingly alarming his family

After the bombing, drug addiction strikes Gaza Under siege and grappling with joblessness, factional violence and the aftermath of war, Gazans are turning to pi....

as he sat at his computer all night and slept all day. "You are in another world," he says. "Even when people keep criticising you, you don't feel angry."

In his first month of rehab, Mohammed explains that his addiction reached crisis point when his father, who used to work in Israel and is a passionate believer in university education for his children, was tipped off about his habit. There followed a climactic row last month in which his father threw him out of the family house in northern Gaza, telling him: "If you want to go back to study, and be committed to Islam, then I will help you get out of this problem. If you don't want to be helped, then I will take you to the [*Hamas*] police and that's it."

Mr Zeyada says another factor is the deep split between Fatah and <u>Hamas</u>, which there appears, once again, little hope of healing. Not only does it divide individual families, but for many Gazans it compromises their proud Palestinian national identity with a divisive factional one which makes them especially sensitive to criticism and hostility from political opponents. There are even cases from school playgrounds of conflict breaking out between children favouring (for non-political reasons) a particular colour T-shirt: yellow (Fatah) or green (<u>Hamas</u>).

Abu Ahmed agrees: "Even in one home you have Fatah and *Hamas*. That is a big problem." But now that he feels much better, he looks back on the depression that he believes turned him to Tramadol. "Look," he says. "Even if a person kills someone, he can still sleep at night. If he goes out and steals something, he will still sleep. But if you have children and you can't find work to give them what they need, then you can't sleep."

#### Tramadol

#### 'Full body blanket'

- \* Tramadol is a powerful painkiller with a narcotic effect. A single 200 mg dose can leave users sedated for much of the day so time passes quickly.
- \* One user described it as like being wrapped in a "full body blanket" where problems are not solved but the "volume is turned down a notch".
- \* It has similar effects to opiate painkillers such as pethidine inducing sleepiness, a lack of inhibition and a sense of wellbeing.
- \* Because it is not an opiate, it is not controlled as closely and may be easier to obtain.
- \* Tolerance builds quickly and users need increasing doses to obtain the same effect. Heavy users report forgetting chunks of the day.

Load-Date: October 13, 2009



# High Court upholds gov't ban on family visits to Gazans jailed in Israel

# The Jerusalem Post December 16, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 3

Length: 456 words

Byline: DAN IZENBERG

# **Body**

The High Court of Justice this week upheld the government's policy barring residents of the Gaza Strip from visiting relatives imprisoned in Israel. The government imposed the ban after *Hamas* took control of Gaza in June 2007.

"It is true that the security prisoners are entitled to rights and these should not be withheld beyond what is necessary," said Justice Esther Hayut, who wrote the decision released on Monday. "[However,] we do not believe that the alleged harm to the prisoners justifies cancelling or changing the government's practice, given the fact that it is based on legitimate policy which, at this point in time, restricts entry from Gaza to Israel."

The petitions against the government ban were filed by Moked in the Defense of the Individual, and Adalah, the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights. In its petition, Moked argued against the sweeping ban against all family visits, claiming that by imposing it, Israel was violating the basic rights of Palestinian prisoners and their families.

Moked attorney Yadin Ilem noted that there are currently some 930 Gazans imprisoned in Israel, including <u>women</u> and minors. Until June 6, 2007, Israel allowed spouses, parents, grandparents, sisters and daughters and brothers under the age of 16 or above the age of 45 to visit their imprisoned relatives. The visits were arranged through the auspices of the International Red Cross, and security forces examined each request individually. However, after the <u>Hamas</u> takeover, the security cabinet passed a resolution imposing sweeping restrictions barring all Gazans from entering Israel, except under special circumstances. The government said the decision was based on foreign policy and security considerations.

The court accepted this claim and said it rarely intervened in these matters. It also accepted the state's argument that it was a country's sovereign right to permit or prevent entry of foreigners into its territory.

Hayut wrote that the court had already determined that Israel no longer occupied the Gaza Strip and that it was only obliged to grant the most basic humanitarian needs of the population. Allowing relatives to visit prisoners inside Israel was not one of them, Hayut said.

Asked why Moked believed Israel should allow relatives to visit Palestinian prisoners in Israel while the those holding Gilad Schalit prohibit anyone from visiting their prisoner, Moked lawyer Daniel Shenhar said, "Israel is a state of law and not a terrorist organization. In a state of law, one acts according to the rules and not by the principle of an eye for an eye to obtain revenge on the *Hamas*. Aside from the fact that barring visits constitutes collective punishment, we are also talking about very many prisoners."

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



# THEIR OWN WORST ENEMIES

Daily News (New York)

December 27, 2009 Sunday

SPORTS FINAL EDITION

Copyright 2009 Daily News, L.P.



Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. 36

Length: 452 words

#### **Body**

One year ago today, Israel finally responded to a multiyear barrage of rocket attacks on schools, homes and synagogues, peaking with more than 3,200 in 2008, with a targeted military campaign in Gaza.

In the anti-Israel "world community," that restrained act of self-defense has been repaid with howls that a sovereign nation protecting itself from terrorists committed war crimes. That much, though sickening, was perfectly predictable.

The picture of what's happened to the Palestinian people on the ground - in Gaza on the one hand and in the West Bank on the other - is far more surprising, and powerfully educational.

A year on, unoccupied Gaza, where <u>Hamas</u> rules, is an isolated, angry place - a toxic stew of Islamic radicalism and political repression.

<u>Women</u> cannot walk the streets alone without getting hostile glances or worse. Children, if they go to school at all, are taught to hate Israel. Unemployment is rampant, upward of 40%. Terrorists, drawing from the ranks of the disaffected unemployed, find safe haven. After all, they run the joint.

Though missile launches fell sharply after Israel's intervention, they have since begun to creep up. More than 700 rockets and mortars were fired from Gaza in the first nine months of this year.

All this despite the fact that Israeli humanitarian aid increased ninefold from 2008 to 2009.

Contrast this with the West Bank, where Israel is technically an occupying force but the Palestinian Authority runs the show. The streets are quiet. The economy is growing. The city of Ramallah has film festivals, shopping centers and construction sites. Joblessness is in the teens. Observers say conditions are the best they've seen since 1948.

Perhaps most importantly, terrorists in the West Bank have precious few save havens.

Reported the Israeli newspaper Haaretz last week: "The successes of the Palestinian security forces there have aroused jaw-dropping admiration in the Israel Defense Forces, notably because of the Palestinians' capabilities in fighting *Hamas* and other terrorist groups. Indeed, the Palestinian forces have surprised even the Shin Bet security

#### THEIR OWN WORST ENEMIES

service and Military Intelligence by uncovering dormant <u>Hamas</u> cells . . . whose existence was unknown even to the Israeli defense establishment."

While the likes of the UN Human Rights Council - desperate to perpetuate the false narrative that Israel is to blame for all the region's ills - yearn to throw Israeli leaders in the dock, real Palestinians are determining their own fates.

It is up to them to choose their path: Embrace radicalism, feed terrorism and get poverty and a permanent state of war. Or look inward for solutions, co-exist with a neighbor and plant the seeds of peace and prosperity.

Load-Date: December 27, 2009



# An underworld of tunnels brings life to the cut-off world of Gaza

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

December 19, 2009 Saturday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS; International News; Pg. 15

Length: 1017 words

Byline: Jason Koutsoukis

# **Body**

Need food? Or smokes? Or guns? The smugglers can provide it, writes Jason Koutsoukis in Al Arish.

WE MET our contact in Al Arish, the Mediterranean resort town in the northern Sinai, a 45-minute drive from Egypt's border with Gaza.

Insisting on the sort of secrecy that would not have been out of place in Get Smart, the man calling himself Abu Saad emerged from a mobile-phone shop near the Hotel Sinai Sun and got into the back seat of our vehicle.

Given what it took just to get to Al Arish, talking our way through countless police checkpoints and roadblocks, perhaps his demand for the utmost discretion was not unwarranted.

Directing us through Al Arish's tightly packed streets, barely wide enough for a car, we arrived at a warehouse about the size of a single-fronted house.

Abu Saad revealed a room stacked to the ceiling with contraband of the most lacklustre kind: vegetable oil, dry biscuits and hundreds of cartons of cigarettes.

"All for Gaza," he murmured. "Everything you see in this room, will be sold to people in Gaza."

He took us to several other warehouses that he managed on behalf of a family he said was connected to the Tarabin people, a Bedouin tribe that controlled a slice of territory all the way up to the border.

Of the 360,000 people who live in the Sinai, about 200,000 are believed to be Bedouin, literally "men of the desert", who originated on the Arabian Peninsula.

About 15 Bedouin tribes now share the Sinai along strict, mutually agreed lines of demarcation.

"Most things come from Cairo," Abu Saad said. "We store everything here until we can move them into Gaza."

He estimated that 100 people worked full-time in the family operation. "Many people here have family inside Gaza. There are very strong connections between us, so that's how we find each other to do business."

He insisted that the only things the clan were specifically banned from dealing in were weapons. "This is very, very much controlled by *Hamas*... they have their own people over here."

#### An underworld of tunnels brings life to the cut-off world of Gaza

Flanked by the Mediterranean Sea, the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Aqaba, the Sinai Peninsula is a sliver of desert sandwiched between the African and Asian continents.

Controlled at various stages over the past 100 years by Britain, Egypt, Israel and, since 1982, by Egypt once again, the Sinai is one of history's most fabled crossroads.

According to the Bible, it was across the Sinai that the Israelites trekked in search of the promised land, while it was on the summit of Mount Sinai, near the Red Sea, that Moses received the Ten Commandments.

Yet today the Sinai's desert pathways are the supply routes for one of the world's most notorious smuggling operations that feeds, clothes and arms the Gaza Strip.

Everything that money can buy in Gaza owes its provenance to Egypt and the sandy byways of the Sinai. Petrol, electronic goods, livestock, small cars â€" you name an item and the chances are that buyers and sellers will be able to find a match in a tunnel somewhere beneath the 12-kilometre stretch of border that Egypt shares with Gaza.

Commodities trading is one thing, but for <u>Hamas</u>, the militant Islamic movement that has ruled Gaza since 2007, the Sinai's smuggling routes are its only connection to the world.

In the 12 months since Israel launched Operation Cast Lead â€" a military offensive that involved more than 3000 air raids plus a two-week ground invasion â€" Israeli intelligence suggests that <u>Hamas</u> has been able to re-arm itself.

And not just with bulk explosives that are packed into the heads of the home-made Qassam missiles that <u>Hamas</u> has used to fire at southern Israel, but with military-grade Katyusha and GRAD-style rockets that have the capacity to hit large Israeli cities such as Ashdod, Beersheba and Ashkelon.

Millions of rounds of ammunition, assault rifles, handguns, anti-tank weapons and other arms are also believed to have frequently passed through the tunnel network.

Last month, Israeli officials produced evidence of what it believed was a test-firing by <u>Hamas</u> of a new-style rocket with a range of about 60 kilometres. That would give <u>Hamas</u> the ability to target Tel Aviv.

"We know they are keeping on smuggling in rockets and other weapons, because we can see a lot of what is coming in," says retired Major-General Giora Eiland, who oversaw Israel's military withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 2005.

"That is why we keep hitting specific tunnels today from the air every so often, because we are fairly certain of what we can see going into them," says Mr Eiland, a former director of Israel's National Security Council.

He says the smuggling routes to Gaza are well defined â€" mostly from Iran, via the Red Sea and up the Suez Canal to Egypt's Mediterranean port cities of Port Said and Damietta.

"From there, there are many ways to get across the desert, but in the end everything converges on Rafah," Mr Eiland says.

The only way to prevent smuggling, he says, is to build a wall that encircles Rafah and establishes a buffer between it and the rest of the Sinai.

Last week, Egypt revealed it was starting work on an underground wall made of steel along its border with Gaza to try to prevent the digging of smuggling tunnels.

The steel barrier is reportedly being built with the help of British and United States military engineers.

Spend a little time in the southern Sinai, at one of the multitude of bars and nightclubs that have mushroomed along the Sinai's Red Sea coast over the past decade, such as Pacha in Sharm el-Sheikh, and it doesn't take long to work out what the Sinai's other major exports are.

#### An underworld of tunnels brings life to the cut-off world of Gaza

<u>Women</u> working as prostitutes, most likely from Russia or Eastern Europe, use the Sinai's Red Sea resorts as a first stop on the way to Israel and Middle Eastern countries.

The Sinai is also a major supplier of drugs, such as locally cultivated varieties of marijuana and opiates, to the region.

With the 230-kilometre border that stretches across the Sinai Peninsula from the Mediterranean to the Gulf of Aqaba apparently porous, it seems that it will take more than the prospect of an underground steel wall to prevent goods and services from flowing across it.

# **Graphic**

PHOTO: Shopping, Gaza-style: Tunnels such as this one provide essentials to residents. PICTURE: AP

Load-Date: December 18, 2009



# Israeli soldier footage released

Sunday Herald Sun (Australia)
October 4, 2009 Sunday
1 - FIRST Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 43

Length: 214 words

# **Body**

FOLLOWING a deal in which it freed 19 Palestinian <u>women</u> prisoners, Israel has received footage showing soldier Gilad Shalit looking lucid and healthy after more than three years of Gaza captivity.

The gaunt, clean-shaven 23-year-old read from a piece of paper, at times smiling or repressing a grin, as he sat on a chair in the footage made public hours after the **women** were set free.

"I want to send my regards to my family and tell them that I love them and miss them and yearn for the day of my return," Mr Shalit said, holding a copy of a Gaza newspaper dated September 14. "I hope that the Government headed by Benjamin Netanyahu will not waste now an opportunity to reach a deal," he said, referring to the Israeli Prime Minister.

The exchange was seen as the best breakthrough since <u>Hamas</u> and other militants captured Mr Shalit in 2006, and as a key step towards an eventual swap that would see Israel free hundreds of prisoners for the soldier.

<u>Hamas</u> called the deal -- which marked the first prisoner release the Islamists ruling Gaza have obtained since seizing the soldier -- a "victory for the resistance".

``Although the road (to his release) is still long and arduous, knowing that he is healthy and in one piece is encouraging to us all," Mr Netanyahu's spokesman said.

Load-Date: October 3, 2009



# Grim omens as US envoy pursues Mideast peace

The Daily Star (Lebanon)
October 9, 2009 Friday

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Length: 1057 words

# **Body**

US President Barack Obama's peace envoy sought on Thursday an "early relaunch" of Israeli-Palestinian talks but Israel's foreign minister said Washington's goal of comprehensive peace was an illusion. With wider Muslim-Jewish tension brewing over access to holy sites in Jerusalem, Western-backed Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

**Douglas Hamilton** 

#### Reuters

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM: US President Barack Obama's peace envoy sought on Thursday an "early relaunch" of Israeli-Palestinian talks but Israel's foreign minister said Washington's goal of comprehensive peace was an illusion. With wider Muslim-Jewish tension brewing over access to holy sites in Jerusalem, Western-backed Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas struggling for credibility and Islamist <u>Hamas</u> ascendant in Gaza, omens for US envoy George Mitchell's trip were not good.

"We are determined, persevering, and we recognize the complexities and the difficulties," he told reporters before talks with Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak in Tel Aviv.

"We remain committed and confident that ultimately the goal of comprehensive peace will be achieved."

Resuming talks suspended 10 months ago was essential for a comprehensive regional treaty involving Israel and neighbors that include Syria and Lebanon. Obama believes "there is no alternative" if the region wants peace, Mitchell said.

Desultory peace talks were derailed by the Gaza war. Obama has made their resumption a priority. He invested more political capital last month by arranging a meeting of the Israeli and Palestinian leaders in New York, but with scant results.

Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman announced before meeting Mitchell earlier on Thursday that he would tell the envoy there was no chance of a peace deal for many years.

"There are many conflicts in the world that haven't reached a comprehensive solution and people [have] learned to live with it," Lieberman, a hawk in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's hardline coalition government, told Israel Radio.

#### Grim omens as US envoy pursues Mideast peace

"Whoever says that it's possible to reach in the coming years a comprehensive agreement ... simply doesn't understand the reality," Lieberman said. "He's spreading illusions and in the end [that will only] bring disappointment."

But Barak took a different tack, telling Mitchell that "the time had come to move determinately forward" and that comprehensive peace in the Middle East was not a "zero-sum game" but a "win-win" situation for all the parties.

US officials said Mitchell, who meets Abbas and Netanyahu on Friday, was back with a sense of urgency but no expectation of a breakthrough.

Since his appointment in January, Mitchell has visited Israel and the occupied West Bank nine times.

The missions have been hindered by Netanyahu's refusal to halt settlement construction and by Arab states' reluctance to make peace overtures.

The Palestinians say Mitchell must realize that Lieberman has made it clear why "there will be no re-launch of negotiations any time soon," Abbas spokesman Nabil Abu Rdainah told Reuters from Rome, where Abbas was on an official visit.

"We need to hear a response to this statement, from Mitchell and from the American administration who are making efforts to salvage the peace process while faced with an Israeli government which destroys all those American efforts."

King Abdullah of Jordan, whose country has made peace with Israel and who plays an important role in advancing the peace process with the Palestinians, was quoted on Thursday as saying in an interview "we are sliding back into the darkness."

The sense of pessimism has been deepened by the political weakness of Abbas, who has angered Palestinians by agreeing under US pressure not to push for action on a UN war crimes report critical of Israeli conduct of the Gaza war.

Abbas aides admit this was a mistake and say he will explain everything in a broadcast to the nation. Support for the 74-year-old leader has been badly damaged. Critics say he should resign and in the Gaza Strip he is branded a "traitor."

<u>Hamas</u> asked Egypt to postpone a meeting with Abbas' Fatah movement to sign a reconciliation pact. It was supposed to take place in Cairo on October 24-26, but <u>Hamas</u> said Abbas's decision had "sabotaged the atmosphere."

Unlike Abbas and Fatah, <u>Hamas</u> is enjoying a wave of popularity for securing the release of 20 <u>female</u> prisoners from Israel last week in return for a video showing that the Israeli soldier it has held captive for three years is alive and well.

Like Lieberman, <u>Hamas</u> does not believe in a comprehensive peace leading to a Palestinian state alongside Israel. It proposes a long-term truce but has no intention of surrendering its claim to all of formerly British-ruled Palestine.

Jordan's King Abdullah told the Israeli daily Haaretz he wanted to relay a message to the Israeli people that it should "disavow the illusion that the status quo can be perpetuated."

Fifteen years after his late father concluded a peace treaty with Israel, he said, "our relationship is getting colder." Jordan and Egypt are the only Arab nations to sign peace treaties with Israel.

EU backs report blasting Israel's Gaza war

STOCKHOLM: The European Union backed Thursday a contentious UN report blasting Israel's military offensive in Gaza, praising its chief author and saying the document is "worthy of consideration."

#### Grim omens as US envoy pursues Mideast peace

Israel expressed disappointment at the support from Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt - whose country holds the EU presidency - and said it showed Bildt had either not read the report or misunderstood it.

"It is worthy of consideration. Needless to say, I think Mr. Goldstone is a person of high credibility and high integrity and accordingly his report carries weight," Bildt said.

The report by a fact-finding mission led by former international war-crimes prosecutor Richard Goldstone accused both Israel and Palestinian armed groups of committing war crimes in the Gaza war that erupted on December 27, 2008.

"It is now in the Human Rights Council and that's where we think it should be deliberated. It is an independent report," Bildt added.

Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Yigal Palmor said: "Anyone who had bothered reading the report and not just the headlines in the press would realize this is not an independent or professional investigation but a collection of claims brought forward by *Hamas* to the ... panel." - AFP

Load-Date: October 9, 2009



# Palestinians face bleak future as frustrated leader threatens to quit

The Times (London)

November 11, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 42,43

**Length:** 1047 words **Byline:** James Hider

#### **Body**

A President threatening to quit, his potential successor languishing in an Israeli jail and a peace process heading nowhere: rarely have prospects for the Palestinian people looked so bleak.

Five years after Yassir Arafat died, his defiant portrait stares down from banners in the streets of Ramallah. While he remains a potent symbol of Palestinian resistance, his successors are characterised more by despair than defiance.

Mahmoud Abbas - popularly known as Abu Mazen - is so frustrated by the stalled peace process that he is refusing to stand for re-election. With no obvious successor, his imminent retirement threatens to unravel the entire Palestinian leadership. There is even talk of the movement being hijacked by the militants who regard talking to Israel as a waste of time.

Mr Abbas cannot resign until after January, the scheduled date of elections, because under the Palestinian constitution he would have to be replaced by the Speaker of parliament. Since <u>Hamas</u> won the last parliamentary elections in 2006, that would mean a **Hamas** president, giving the Islamists control of the entire Palestinian territory.

<u>Hamas</u> has said that it will boycott the elections, arguing that Mr Abbas's mandate expired a year ago. He decreed at that time that he would stay on until presidential elections could be held alongside parliamentary polls. Such constitutional gymnastics are likely to continue in the near future, with <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah claiming they are the rightful Government in the probable absence of polls in both Palestinian areas.

A more radical scenario, which some Palestinian officials have raised, envisages Mr Abbas, 74, dissolving the Palestinian Authority, created under the now-defunct Oslo peace accords, and continuing to rule in his capacity as the head of the Palestine Liberation Organisation. Many Palestinian opposition figures have argued that the Authority is a "Vichy government", legitimising continued Israeli occupation.

The Palestinian leadership finds itself in this quandary because the peace process has run into the sands. President Obama's efforts to restart talks are stalled by Israel's refusal to freeze all Jewish settlement growth in the West Bank, and the Palestinians' insistence that they will not negotiate until settlement building stops.

#### Palestinians face bleak future as frustrated leader threatens to quit

"Israel always said Arafat wasn't a partner for peace," said Rabiha Diab, the Palestinian Minister for <u>Women</u>'s Affairs and a long-time member of Arafat's Fatah movement. "We see now the Israelis are not partners for peace, they have implemented nothing and the world stands by them." Many Palestinians believe that the Israelis poisoned Arafat, who lived out his final years practically under house arrest in Ramallah, and have now crippled his successor by not responding to his peace overtures and renunciation of violence. "Israel killed President Arafat, and now it is trying to kill Abu Mazen's project at a time that it knows he is committed to bringing peace," said Mrs Diab.

Mr Abbas's announcement last week that he would not stand for reelection left observers guessing about his real intentions. Tony Blair, the international community's envoy to the Middle East, said yesterday that Mr Abbas's decision to step down was not a political ploy but a reflection of his deep frustration at the absence of any meaningful peace process.

Abdel Nasser al-Najjar, the editor of the Fatah-linked newspaper al-Ayyam, said he thought Mr Abbas was serious about stepping down, though possibly not as soon as January. "There's nobody at this point who can replace the President," he said. Given the deep divide between the <u>Hamas</u>-run Gaza Strip and Fatah-led West Bank, he said Mr Abbas would probably delay the elections until June, by which time he might have wrung some concessions out of Israel, under pressure from the US, or have reconciled with the Gaza Islamists.

Mr al-Najjar said that if elections were held now without Mr Abbas, the Palestinians would probably choose a more militant candidate. "Abu Mazen represents moderation, in spite of all the criticism against him," he said. "The option of negotiations goes out with Abu Mazen, so the people would elect someone else who offers another option," he warned. The most popular contender to succeed him is Marwan Barghouti, a younger Fatah leader who played a key role in the second Palestinian intifada, which started in 2000. However, he is in an Israeli jail after being convicted of heading a group that killed Israeli civilians.

#### Online

Middle East breaking news, pictures, video

timesonline.co.uk/mideast

The next generation

One of the most popular candidates touted as a successor to Mahmoud Abbas - should he step down - would be Marwan Barghouti, a fiery leader of Fatah's younger generation. Barghouti, 50, has immense support in the West Bank as a home-grown, younger alternative to the ageing generation of PLO leaders who fought alongside Yassir Arafat through the years of war in Jordan, Lebanon and then exile in Tunisia. Unlike the older generation, he speaks fluent Hebrew, and was an influential leader in the first Palestinian uprising against Israel in 1987, which led to the Oslo peace accords. He has often been touted as a successor for the leadership, combining his street-fighting abilities with a charismatic popular appeal. He stands in contrast to another potential candidate, Salam Fayyad, a former World Bank economist and technocrat trusted by the West.

Unlike the moderate Mr Abbas, Barghouti has long believed in armed resistance against Israel's occupation of the West Bank, although he said he had tried to avoid civilian casualties. However, in his 2004 trial in Israel - whose legitimacy he refused to accept - he was found guilty of organising an attack in a market that killed three civilians. Barghouti joined Fatah at 15, and learnt Hebrew in an Israeli jail three years later.

Israeli officials in the previous administration, led by the centrist Kadima party, talked privately about releasing Barghouti - seen as one of the few Palestinian leaders with the clout to heal the rift between Fatah's Government in the West Bank and *Hamas*'s rival administration in Gaza. It seems unlikely that the present administration, headed by Binyamin Netanyahu, a right-wing Likud leader, would consider such a move.

James Hider

# **Graphic**

Marwan Barghouti: charismatic appeal

A boy touches a fading mural of Yassir Arafat in Gaza City. The Palestinian leader died five years ago today, but there has been little progress towards political stability since then

TARA TODRAS-WHITEHILL / AP

Load-Date: November 12, 2009



# Furor Sends Palestinians Into Shift on U.N. Report

The New York Times
October 8, 2009 Thursday
Late Edition - Final

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

Length: 1060 words

Byline: By ISABEL KERSHNER and NEIL MacFARQUHAR; Isabel Kershner reported from Jerusalem, and Neil

MacFarquhar from the United Nations.

**Dateline: JERUSALEM** 

#### **Body**

Faced with a torrent of criticism at home and abroad, the Palestinian leadership abruptly reversed course on Wednesday by endorsing a Security Council debate on a United Nations report accusing Israel of possible war crimes in Gaza.

The report, produced by a panel of investigators led by an internationally respected jurist, Richard Goldstone, found extensive evidence that both Israel and Palestinian militant groups took actions amounting to war crimes during last winter's Gaza war.

But after pushing for the United Nations Human Rights Council to endorse the report and forward it to the Security Council, the Palestinians relented to American pressure last week and agreed to drop the issue for six months. Both the United States and Israel had warned that pursuing the accusations would abort attempts to revive the peace process.

Now the Palestinians are grappling with a domestic and regional uproar, with angry street protests at home and condemnation pouring in from Doha to Damascus.

"The level of public protest is unprecedented," said Ghassan Khatib, director of the Palestinian Authority's media center. "I do not remember any situation before when the leadership was so unpopular," he said, speaking by telephone from Ramallah in the West Bank.

Mr. Khatib said there was a feeling among Palestinian leaders that "they have to reconsider" their approach. With the Human Rights Council out of the picture for the time being, he said, they are seeking other avenues to advance the Goldstone report.

Yasir Abed Rabbo, a close adviser of Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president, said Wednesday that the leadership had erred.

"We have the courage to admit there was a mistake," Mr. Abed Rabbo, the secretary general of the Palestine Liberation Organization, told the official Voice of Palestine radio. In an attempt at damage control, he added that the mistake could be "repaired."

Mr. Abed Rabbo was the first senior Palestinian official to speak out publicly against the deferral of the vote on the report. There was no immediate comment from Mr. Abbas, who was in Rome on Wednesday.

At the United Nations, the Palestinian Observer Mission immediately endorsed a move by the Libyan delegation to hold a Security Council discussion on the issue and the Palestinian foreign minister, Riyad al-Maliki, was due in New York late Wednesday to press the matter.

"Accountability is the first order of business for all of us, including the Americans," said Riyad Mansour, the Palestinian ambassador, when asked about the Palestinian leaders' reversal. "That is what is impeding the peace process."

The Security Council agreed Wednesday to move up its monthly debate on the Middle East to Oct. 14 from Oct. 20, and the report will be the focus of that discussion although not officially listed on the agenda. Several Arab ambassadors said they recognized the futility of trying to pass any kind of resolution because the United States would veto it immediately.

The American position is that the report should be handled by the Human Rights Council in Geneva, a consistent opinion among Security Council members.

The Libyan ambassador, Abdurrahman Mohamed Shalgam, said that the judicial aspects of the report could start in Geneva, but that Libya, a current Security Council member, wanted an open debate to give the issue momentum. That could help spur peace, he said, because the decision to delay in Geneva had deepened the already acrid split between the main Palestinian factions, Fatah and <u>Hamas</u>.

"The atmosphere on the ground is not helpful," Ambassador Shalgam said.

Palestinian officials defended their earlier support for a deferral of the vote, saying Israel's allies would have vetoed moves to advance the report, while a delay gave the Palestinian leadership time to raise international support.

But the Abbas administration clearly had not anticipated such a furor.

In Gaza, posters appeared on walls on Wednesday calling Mr. Abbas a traitor and saying he should be consigned to "the trash heap of history." Gaza is controlled by <u>Hamas</u>, the militant Islamic group that is the Palestinian Authority's main rival.

A <u>Hamas</u> official, Salah Bardawil, said in a statement that his group would join Egyptian-mediated reconciliation talks with Mr. Abbas's Fatah movement, to take place in Cairo this month, only if Mr. Abbas apologized to the Palestinian people for the so-called debacle around the United Nations report.

Hundreds of Palestinians demonstrated in Ramallah on Tuesday against the leadership's conduct and called on Mr. Abbas and other officials to resign.

Even Mr. Abbas's own government has been critical. In a statement released by the Palestinian cabinet on Monday, the ministers reaffirmed their position of late September, which called for the Human Rights Council to adopt the Goldstone report, and said it was "unacceptable" for such efforts to be undermined.

Apparently distancing himself from the events at the Human Rights Council, Mr. Abbas ordered the establishment of a committee over the weekend to investigate how the deferral of the vote came about, but that failed to quell the storm.

Mr. Abbas finds himself squeezed on several fronts. The Obama administration is pressing the Israelis and the Palestinians to resume peace negotiations, but has not managed to persuade the Israelis to freeze settlement construction in the West Bank. The Abbas administration had made a building freeze a condition for renewed talks.

#### Furor Sends Palestinians Into Shift on U.N. Report

Last weekend, <u>Hamas</u> took credit for a release of Palestinian prisoners from Israeli prisons. Israel freed 20 <u>female</u> security prisoners in exchange for a videotape of an Israeli soldier who has been held captive since being seized in a raid by <u>Hamas</u> and other groups in June 2006.

In another sign of Palestinian restiveness, there has been simmering violence in the past few days in East Jerusalem. The Palestinian Authority, <u>Hamas</u> and the Islamic Movement of Israel all accuse Israel of provocations at a site holy to both Jews and Muslims, and Israel is accusing the Palestinians of fanning the flames.

All this underlines the challenges facing George J. Mitchell, the Obama administration's special Middle East envoy, who was expected to arrive in the region late Wednesday to continue efforts to restart Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

http://www.nytimes.com

# **Graphic**

PHOTO: Protesters in Gaza threw shoes at a poster of Mahmoud Abbas on Wednesday, part of an outcry against his administration.(PHOTOGRAPH BY HATEM MOUSSA/ASSOCIATED PRESS)

Load-Date: October 8, 2009



# **Anti-Israel? Big surprise**

Kamloops Daily News (British Columbia)
October 16, 2009 Friday
Final Edition

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Section: OPINION; Pg. A6

Length: 244 words

**Byline:** The National Post

#### **Body**

Arab states have little use for the United Nations, except as a cudgel with which to club Israel. They pay little attention to UN rules about the rights of children or <u>women</u>. They openly flout UN guidelines on free speech and fair elections. And they seek membership on human rights committees only to shield their own rampant abuses from scrutiny.

But they know Western chatting classes revere the UN. So they also play games with UN resolutions to embarrass Israel in front of Western media, diplomats and non-governmental organizations.

Now Arab nations are seeking to brand Israel's self-defensive invasion of Gaza earlier this year as a war crime.

They are using as kindling the Goldstone fact-finding report on the Gaza Conflict. The evidence of Israel's wrongdoing was compiled mostly from uncritical interviews with officials of Gaza's <u>Hamas</u> government and militia masquerading as civilians.

Their version of events was accepted without corroboration, while the fact that Israel invaded because of the nearly 7,000 rocket attacks on its citizens from <u>Hamas</u> missile launchers in the three years before Operation Cast Lead did not warrant a mention.

The twin resolutions in New York and Geneva are sponsored by such paragons of human rights as Sudan (complicit in the genocide in Darfur), China (leading torturer and executioner in the world), Cuba, Egypt, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Sadly, though, too many Westerners will hear only that the UN has condemned Israel.

Load-Date: October 16, 2009



# No rest for Gaza's Sinai smugglers

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

December 19, 2009 Saturday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; International News; Pg. 20

Length: 1213 words

Byline: Jason Koutsoukis

#### **Body**

The Sinai's desert pathways are the supply routes for one of the world's most notorious smuggling operations, feeding, clothing and arming the people of the Gaza Strip, writes Jason Koutsoukis in Al Arish, Egypt.

We met our contact in Al Arish, the Mediterranean resort town in the northern Sinai located about a 45-minute drive from the Egypt-Gaza border.

Insisting on the sort of secrecy that would not have been out of place in an episode of Get Smart, the man, who called himself Abu Saad, emerged from a mobile phone shop near the Hotel Sinai Sun and got into the rear seat of our vehicle.

Given what it took just to get to Al Arish, talking our way through countless police checkpoints and roadblocks, perhaps his demand for the utmost discretion didn't seem unwarranted.

Directing us through Al Arish's tightly packed inner-city streets, barely wide enough to fit a single car, we eventually arrived outside a small warehouse about the size of a single-fronted house.

Leading us inside, he revealed a room that was stacked to the ceiling with contraband of the most lacklustre kind: vegetable oil, dry biscuits and several hundred cartons of cigarettes.

"All for Gaza," murmured Abu Saad. "Everything you see in this room, will be sold to people in Gaza."

Abu Saad took us to several other warehouses that he managed on behalf of a family he said was connected to the Tarabin people, a Bedouin tribe that controlled a slice of territory that extended all the way up to the border.

Of the 360,000 people who live in the Sinai, about 200,000 are believed to be Bedouin, literally "men of the desert", who originated on the Arabian peninsula. About 15 Bedouin tribes now share the Sinai along strict, agreed lines of demarcation.

"Most things come from Cairo," said Abu Saad. "We store everything here until we can move them into Gaza." Abu Saad estimated that, altogether about 100 people worked full-time in the family operation.

"Many people here have family inside Gaza, there are very strong connections between us, so that's how we find each other to do business." He insisted that the only things the clan were specifically banned from dealing with were weapons.

#### No rest for Gaza's Sinai smugglers

"This is very, very much controlled by <u>Hamas</u>. Only <u>Hamas</u> knows about this, they have their own people over here."

Flanked by the Mediterranean Sea, the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Aqaba, the Sinai Peninsula is a sliver of desert sandwiched between the African and Asian continents.

Controlled over the last 100 years by Britain, Egypt, Israel, and, since 1982, by Egypt once again, the Sinai is one of history's most fabled crossroads.

According to the Bible, it was across the Sinai that the Israelites trekked in search of the promised land, while it was upon the summit of Mount Sinai near Red Sea that Moses received the Ten Commandments.

Yet today the Sinai's desert pathways are the supply routes for one of the world's most notorious smuggling operations that feeds, clothes and arms the people of the Gaza Strip.

Everything that money can buy in Gaza owes its provenance to Egypt and the sandy byways of the Sinai.

Petrol, electronic goods, livestock, small cars â€" you name the item and the chances are that buyers and sellers will be able to find a match in a tunnel somewhere beneath the 12-kilometre stretch of border that Egypt shares with Gaza.

Commodities trading is one thing, but for <u>Hamas</u>, the militant Islamic movement that has ruled Gaza since 2007, the Sinai's smuggling routes have become its only connection to the world outside.

In the 12 months since Israel launched Operation Cast Lead â€" a military offensive that involved more than 3000 air raids plus a two-week ground invasion â€" Israeli intelligence suggests that <u>Hamas</u> has been able to successfully rearm itself.

Not just with bulk explosives that are packed into the heads of the homemade Qassam missiles that <u>Hamas</u> has fired at southern Israel, but with military grade Katyusha and grad-style rockets that have the range and accuracy to hit large Israeli cities such as Ashdod, Beersheba and Ashkelon that are home to several hundred thousand people.

Millions of rounds of ammunition, assault rifles, hand guns, anti-tank weapons and other arms are also believed to have been smuggled through the tunnel network.

Last month, Israeli officials produced evidence of what it believed was the test-firing by <u>Hamas</u> of a new style of rocket that had a range of about 60 kilometres.

If true, that would give <u>Hamas</u> the ability to target Tel Aviv. "We know they are keeping on smuggling in rockets and other weapons, because we can see a lot of what is coming in," says the retired major general Giora Eiland, who oversaw Israel's military withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 2005.

"That is why we keep hitting specific tunnels today from the air every so often, because we are fairly certain of what we can see going into them," Eiland, a former director of Israel's National Security Council, told the Herald.

According to Eiland, the smuggling routes to Gaza are well defined. Mostly from Iran, via the Red Sea and up the Suez Canal to Egypt's Mediterranean port cities of Port Said and Damietta.

"From there, there are many ways to get across the desert, but in the end everything converges on Rafah," Eiland said.

The only way to prevent smuggling, Eiland believes, is to build a wall that encircles Rafah and establishes a buffer between it and the rest of the Sinai.

"Rafah is densely populated, there are many places to hide, so it is difficult to stop the smuggling once the goods get there. The key is stop things getting into Rafah in the first place and that can be done by building a fence around Rafah."

#### No rest for Gaza's Sinai smugglers

Last week, Egypt revealed that it was commencing work on an underground wall made of steel along its border with Gaza to try to curtail the smuggling by preventing people from digging tunnels.

The steel wall is reportedly being built with the help of British and American military engineers.

Yet spend a little time in the southern Sinai, at one of the multitude of bars and nightclubs that have mushroomed along the Sinai's Red Sea coast over the past decade such as Pacha in Sharm el-Sheikh, and it doesn't take long to work out what the Sinai's other exports are.

<u>Women</u> working as prostitutes, most likely Russian or elsewhere in Eastern Europe, use the Sinai's Red Sea resorts as a first stop on the way to Israel and Middle Eastern countries.

The Sinai is also a major supplier of drugs, such as locally cultivated varieties of marijuana and opiates, to the region.

According to a 2004 report published by the US embassy in Israel, Egypt serves as the country of destination and transit for trafficking victims.

"It has been asserted that Egypt serves as the most common country of transit for trafficking to Israel," the report said.

"Victims are flown to cities such as ... Sharm el-Sheikh and Cairo, from which they are transferred to Israel through the Sinai Desert.

Women are smuggled in groups, together with goods, drugs, weapons and migrant workers."

With the 230-kilometre border that stretches across the Sinai peninsula from the Mediterranean to the Gulf of Aqaba apparently porous all the way along, it seems that it will take more than the prospect of an underground steel wall to prevent goods and services from flowing across it.

# Graphic

PHOTO: Going underground ... goods, drugs, weapons and people are smuggled across the Sinai between Rafah in the Gaza Strip and Egypt. Photo: AFP/Said Khatib. MAP: SUPPLY LINES.

Load-Date: December 18, 2009



# <u>Israel used human shields in Gaza, claims Amnesty International; 'Hideous'</u> injury from flechettes, phosphorus

Windsor Star (Ontario)
July 2, 2009 Thursday
Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. B2

Length: 422 words

Byline: Leigh Baldwin, Agence France-Presse

**Dateline: JERUSALEM** 

# **Body**

Amnesty International has accused Israeli forces of war crimes, saying they used children as human shields and conducted wanton attacks on civilians during their offensive in the Gaza Strip.

The London-based human rights group also accused <u>Hamas</u> of war crimes, but said it found no evidence that the Islamist rulers of Gaza used civilians as human shields during the 22-day offensive Israel launched on Dec. 28.

It also reiterated its call for an international arms embargo against Israel.

"Much of the destruction was wanton and resulted from direct attacks on civilian objects," Amnesty said in a study.

Israeli troops forced Palestinians to stay in one room of their home while turning the rest of the house into a base and sniper position, "effectively using the families, both adults and children, as human shields and putting them at risk," the group said.

It could not support Israeli claims that <u>Hamas</u> used human shields. It said it found no evidence Palestinian fighters directed civilians to shield military objectives from attacks, forced them to stay in buildings used by militants, or prevented them from leaving commandeered buildings.

However, the report did point out that <u>Hamas</u> and other armed groups fired hundreds of rockets into southern Israel. "Such unlawful attacks constitute war crimes and are unacceptable," said Donatella Rovera, who led an Amnesty mission to Gaza and southern Israel.

More than 1,400 Palestinians and 13 Israelis died during the offensive Israel launched in response to rocket fire from Palestinian militants.

"Hundreds of civilians were killed in attacks carried out using high-precision weapons, air-delivered bombs and missiles, and tank shells.

"Others, including <u>women</u> and children, were shot at short range when posing no threat to the lives of the Israeli soldiers," it said.

Israel used human shields in Gaza, claims Amnesty International; 'Hideous' injury from flechettes, phosphorus

It said Israel's use of white phosphorus shells was also a breach of international law.

White phosphorus is not illegal if used as a smokescreen in open areas "but it should not be used in a densely populated area as it was used here," Rovera told AFP, adding that her team saw Palestinians with "hideous burns" from white phosphorus shells.

The rights group was also critical of Israel's use of flechette rounds -- artillery shells which explode to emit hundreds of steel darts.

These are designed for use in open battle but were employed by Israel in built-up areas, said Chris Cobb-Smith, an artillery expert engaged by Amnesty.

The Israeli military did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the report.

Load-Date: July 2, 2009



# Fatah 'old guard' seen determined to keep out younger representatives

The Jerusalem Post August 2, 2009 Sunday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 702 words

Byline: KHALED ABU TOAMEH

# **Body**

Fatah operatives expressed skepticism over the weekend that their faction's general conference, which is scheduled to convene in Bethlehem on Tuesday, would pave the way for the emergence of a young leadership.

The operatives accused veteran "old guard" Fatah leaders of hampering efforts to select new grassroots leaders to the faction's Central Committee, which is considered its most significant institution.

Some of the operatives said they decided to drop their candidacy for the committee's 21 seats after realizing that their chances of beating wealthy veteran Fatah leaders were very slim.

Hatem Abdel Kader, a senior Fatah official who represents the faction's "young guard," said he and many of his colleagues had determined that it would be impossible to run against veteran officials who have unlimited resources and funding.

Instead, he said, most of the younger members were hoping to be elected members of the 120-seat Revolutionary Council, the second most important institution in Fatah.

The council, Abdel Kader noted, will play a significant role in monitoring the work of the newly elected Central Committee, which will almost certainly be dominated by old-timers loyal to Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

"Too many old guard leaders are competing for the 21 seats of the Central Council," Abdel Kader said. "They have the money and resources to defeat their young rivals."

Fatah officials said over 500 members were competing for seats on the Revolutionary Council, while another 150 were running for the Central Committee.

Altogether, some 2,260 delegates have been invited to attend the three-day conference, which is meeting for the first time in two decades.

More than half of the delegates have been appointed by Abbas loyalists, a move that has been sharply criticized by the faction's young guard. On Friday, dozens of Fatah members from the Gaza Strip announced that they would boycott the conference because of the continued "hegemony" of old-guard leaders.

Husam Khader, another representative of the younger generation in Fatah, said he did not expect the upcoming conference to bring major changes.

#### Fatah 'old guard' seen determined to keep out younger representatives

"The older leaders will continue to control Fatah even after the conference," he said. "Many Fatah members are already disappointed and it's possible that they would even boycott the sixth conference."

Apart from voting for the two key decision-making bodies, the Fatah delegates are also expected to discuss the faction's future political and security strategy, as well as demands for implementing widespread reforms in the aftermath of its defeat by *Hamas* in the January 2006 parliamentary election.

Some delegates have also requested that the issue of Yasser Arafat's death be included in the conference agenda, especially after estranged Fatah leader Farouk Kaddoumi accused Abbas of conspiring with Israel to "assassinate" Arafat in 2004.

The conference is also expected to discuss the status of peace talks with Israel. According to a draft "political plan" leaked to some Arab newspapers over the weekend, the Fatah conference will reiterate Fatah's commitment to the "armed struggle" against Israel as one of the options to achieve an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

Fatah, according to the reports, is also expected to reemphasize its opposition to Israel's demand that it be recognized as a Jewish state.

The draft plan calls for the Palestinians to unilaterally declare an independent Palestinian state on all the territories that were captured by Israel in 1967 if the peace talks failed.

Hundreds of Fatah officials from different Arab countries, including Lebanon, Jordan, Syria and Egypt, arrived in Bethlehem over the weekend to attend the long- delayed conference.

A handful of Fatah operatives from the Gaza Strip also arrived in the city, saying they managed to avoid *Hamas* checkpoints disguised as laborers and *women*.

Ghalia Abu Sitta, a poet and veteran member of Fatah, said she fled the Gaza Strip on a donkey cart.

The <u>Hamas</u> government has refused to allow Fatah members to leave the Gaza Strip for the conference until the PA government released hundreds of **Hamas** supporters who are being held in its West Bank prisons without trial.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



# Abbas essential to Middle East hopes

Weekend Australian

October 17, 2009 Saturday

1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 17

Length: 301 words

Byline: Richard Beeston

#### **Body**

#### Comment

NO one would ever accuse Mahmoud Abbas of being an inspirational or charismatic leader. But Abu Mazen, as the avuncular Palestinian Authority President is better known among his fellow Palestinians, is solid, predictable and unthreatening.

More importantly, since the death of his predecessor, Yasser Arafat, he is the only moderate Palestinian figure of any consequence who is an acceptable partner for Israel and the West.

When US President Barack Obama declared his intention earlier this year of breathing new life into the stalled Middle East peace process, Mr Abbas figured prominently in his calculations.

As recently as last month there were hopes that a breakthrough in resuming talks was possible.

All that fell apart this month when Mr Abbas surprised his followers by announcing that the UN Human Rights Council should delay a debate on Richard Goldstone's report into the violence this year in Gaza.

Palestinians, human rights activists and the Arab world rightly suspected that Mr Abbas was not acting out of the interests of his people, but instead responding to heavy pressure from the US, and possibly Britain, to postpone the debate and spare Israel international humiliation. The timing of his move could not have been worse. It coincided with *Hamas*'s successful prisoner exchange, when a video showing Gilad Shalit, the captured Israeli soldier, was swapped for 20 Palestinian *women* inmates from Israeli jails.

The move was a huge victory for <u>Hamas</u> but a disaster for Mr Abbas. He came under attack from his own supporters and made a televised apology. He was forced to reverse his decision over the Goldstone report. With their key ally badly damaged, Western states are keen to bolster Mr Abbas's precarious position. One obvious solution was to abstain in last night's vote in Geneva.

Load-Date: October 16, 2009



# Abbas says peace deal is possible in 6 months if settlements are frozen for that time

Guelph Mercury (Ontario, Canada)

December 16, 2009 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: Pg. 01

Length: 724 words

Dateline: ARTICLE

# **Body**

JERUSALEM - A comprehensive peace deal can be reached between Israel and the Palestinians within six months if Israel completely freezes its settlement construction, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said in an interview published Wednesday.

Abbas told the Israeli daily Haaretz that he proposed the six-month freeze to Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak in a pair of a recent telephone conversations.

"I suggested to him (Barak) three weeks ago that Israel freeze all construction in the settlements for six months, including east Jerusalem," Abbas told the Israeli daily Haaretz. "During this time we can get back to the table and even complete talks on a final status agreement. I have yet to receive an answer."

Barak's office refused to respond to Abbas' comments. But a spokesman for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the Palestinians should "stop making excuses."

Israel has announced a 10-month moratorium on all new housing construction projects in the West Bank. But Palestinians have rejected the move as insincere and insufficient, since some building continues and the limitations do not apply to east Jerusalem - which Israel captured along with the West Bank in the 1967 Mideast war and which Palestinians claim as their future capital.

Peace talks between Israel and Palestinians broke down a year ago and have not resumed since Netanyahu came to power in March. Abbas refuses to renew them until Israel halts all its construction in the West Bank and east Jerusalem, as is laid out in the U.S.-backed "road map" peace plan.

Abbas acknowledged to Haaretz that Israel was correct in noting that the Palestinians hadn't insisted on a settlement freeze before. "True, in 1993 we didn't say so," Abbas said of the year negotiations began. "But then there were no agreements about a freeze. Now, there is the road map."

An interview with an Israeli newspaper is rare for Abbas, and it seems aimed at influencing Israeli public opinion to support a settlement freeze.

Netanyahu spokesman Mark Regev said following Israel's gesture it was time for Abbas to return to talks, rather than dictate more preconditions.

Abbas says peace deal is possible in 6 months if settlements are frozen for that time

"I think the expectation now is that the Palestinian side will answer in kind," he said. "Unfortunately we have just seen the Palestinian leadership place more and more obstacles in restarting the talks ... I call upon the Palestinian side to stop making excuses and return to talks."

Netanyahu's West Bank construction limitations have also put him at odds with Jewish settlers who have vowed to defy the order and have confronted government inspectors since the edict was announced last month. On Tuesday, angry settlers beat and seriously injured a *female* Israeli police officer in the most serious such clash yet.

The impasse over resuming peace talks comes at a time when Abbas' political standing at home is steadily eroding. His term as president ends in January, five years after he was elected, and the standoff with his Islamic militant *Hamas* rivals is intensifying.

<u>Hamas</u> wrested the Gaza Strip from Abbas in 2007, leaving him with only the West Bank. Reconciliation talks mediated by Egypt have reached a deadlock, with <u>Hamas</u> rejecting a proposal to hold new elections in June. <u>Hamas</u> has argued that Cairo's proposal gives Abbas too much control over how the vote is conducted.

Abbas and leaders of the Palestine Liberation Organization were to meet later Wednesday in Ramallah to approve an extension of his term and that of all Palestinian institutions until new elections are held.

Abbas has insisted he will not run again for office once elections are called and reiterated so in the Haaretz interview. "If I can't reach my goals I see no reason to hold on to my chair. If there is progress in talks, that will be welcome. But if elections take place before talks resume, I will not be running."

Abbas also disclosed in the interview some of the progress he made in his talks with former Israel Prime Minister Ehud Olmert a year ago. He said the two leaders agreed on the deployment of international monitors in the West Bank and Gaza following a peace deal and made strides on the touchy topics of Palestinian refugees and the division of Jerusalem.

"We didn't reach an agreement, but let's say Olmert understood the way things stood," he said.

Abbas' comments generally match Olmert's version of the talks.

Load-Date: January 5, 2010



# Israel's war on humanity

The Dominion Post (Wellington, New Zealand)

September 17, 2009 Thursday

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Section: FEATURES; EDITORIAL; Pg. 4

Length: 531 words

#### **Body**

TO READ the United Nations report on the Gaza conflict is to descend into a 21st-century version of Dante's Inferno. A handcuffed Palestinain is shot and left to bleed to death in the street, his wife and children forced by gunwielding Israeli soldiers to abandon him. A four-year-old boy dies of bullet wounds 10 hours after Israeli soldiers prevent ambulance officers from reaching him. Three generations of one family are wiped out by an "operational error". The projectile that killed 22 of them, including 12 children under the age of 10, was intended for a "weapons storage facility" next door.

Some of the casualties detailed in the report are the unavoidable consequence of conducting war in an urban environment. For that <u>Hamas</u>, the militant organisation that controls the Gaza Strip, is responsible. If Palestinain extremists had not spent the previous eight years bombarding southern Israel with rockets, Israeli forces would not have invaded Gaza. But other incidents will distress even Israel's friends.

Israel's diplomatic mission in Geneva has dismissed the report's findings as the outcome of a predetermined exercise. "Its mandate was clearly one-sided and ignored the thousands of <u>Hamas</u> missile attacks on civilians in southern Israel that made the Gaza operation necessary," a statement said.

Israel has reason to be suspicious of the Human Rights Council. In its three-year history, the organisation, dominated by African and Asian countries, has repeatedly condemned Israel while refusing to countenance criticism of Zimbabwe, Sudan or Sri Lanka. But in this case Israel's fears are not supported by the facts. The report notes the pscyhological as well as the physical trauma caused by Palestinian rocket attacks on Israel, and documents *Hamas*' killing of its political opponents just as rigorously as it details Israel's "war crimes".

The UN investigation was led by Richard Goldstone, a respected South African judge, and is written in a detailed, disspassionate manner, which makes its contents all the more chilling.

If Israel were able to disprove reports of excessive civilian casualties it would surely have done so. Its failure even to try left the inquiry with no option but to conclude Israel deliberately set out to "punish, humiliate and terrorise a civilian population".

In one case, its forces systematically bulldozed chicken farms that produced 10 per cent of Gaza's eggs, killing 31,000 birds. In others they destroyed a flour mill, sewage plant, hospitals and schools.

The Israeli Government ignored a request to explain the military advantage of attacking chicken farms. The inquiry's conclusion is logical. As well as targeting known terrorists, Israeli forces deliberately set out to harm the civilian population of an area already suffering from a worrying prevalence of what the report terms "stunting" and thinness among children, and anaemia among pregnant <u>women</u>.

#### Israel 's war on humanity

Israel is entitled to defend itself against rocket attacks. It is not entitled to make war on <u>women</u> and children, either militarily or economically.

Once again the world is left wondering how a people persecuted for 2000 years can be so indifferent to the suffering they are causing.

Load-Date: October 8, 2009



# **News in brief**

The Jerusalem Post July 26, 2009 Sunday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 458 words

Byline: Jerusalem Post staff and AP, Jerusalem Post staff, Ruth Eglash

# **Body**

Two Hamas men killed in Gaza blast

Two <u>Hamas</u> gunmen were killed by an explosion in the Bureij refugee camp in the Central Gaza Strip on Friday night.

Izzadin Kassam, the group's military wing, said in a statement that two of its fighters were killed while on a "holy mission." The statement did not elaborate. <u>Hamas</u> Health Ministry official Dr. Moawiya Hassanain confirmed that two men were killed by the blast and that their bodies were taken to a local hospital.

\* Jerusalem Post staff and AP

Three drown in sea over weekend

Three people drowned off the Mediterranean coast over the weekend.

A 46-year-old man drowned near the Ajami Beach in Jaffa on Friday evening. His wife pulled him out of the water unconscious, but Magen David Adom paramedics pronounced him dead.

On Friday afternoon, Zaka Rescue Service divers found the body of a 22-year-old Ramle man off Rishon Lezion. He had been missing since the previous night. The man had entered the water with a friend after lifeguards left their stations on Thursday, and the two were swept into the sea. The victims's friend managed to get ashore, and alerted rescue services.

Earlier, Tel Aviv District Naval Police pulled the body of a 21-year-old east Jerusalem man out of the water near the Dolphinarium Beach. The officers were called by three of the victim's friends who said they went swimming and lost contact with him.

\* Jerusalem Post staff

Five bikers die in 10 days

A 30-year-old man from the Sharon area was killed on Saturday morning when his motorbike overturned between Moshav Avivim and Kibbutz Malkiya. Traffic police said he was the fifth biker killed on the roads in the past 10 days.

\* Jerusalem Post staff

#### News in brief

#### French tourists get food poisoning

Some 70 French tourists were hospitalized for food poisoning after dining at a Beduin tent eatery in the Mitzpe Ramon area at the weekend. The Health Ministry said it would investigate. \* Jerusalem Post staff

Fired pregnant woman gets NIS 70k

A woman who was fired for admitting to her boss that she was expecting was awarded NIS 70,000 by the Jerusalem Labor Court last week, including NIS 50,000 for emotional pain and suffering - even though she only had the job for four days.

According to the Israel <u>Women</u>'s Network, the woman had just started working as a secretary for the director of the capital's Mamila Mall when she was asked in a phone call if she was pregnant. When she answered yes, the director informed her that she was fired. The mall is run by the Alrov Group.

"This case is an important landmark to remind companies that they cannot fire a woman because she is pregnant," said attorney Shir-El Nackdimon, who represented the woman on behalf of the IWN. "And, in addition, this rule starts from the first day of work."

\* Ruth Eglash

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



#### Cannes should can this

The Calgary Herald (Alberta)

August 6, 2009 Thursday

Final Edition

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Section: THE EDITORIAL PAGE; Pg. A10

Length: 271 words

Byline: Calgary Herald

#### **Body**

Freedom of speech is a wonderful thing, except when it is used to incite hate against a group of individuals. Then, such speech needs to be shut down and its speakers censured. That's why it is hoped that the organizers of the Cannes Film Festival will turn thumbs down to an entry by <u>Hamas</u>. The terrorists-turned-filmmakers want to submit Imad Aqel for screening.

The film's title commemorates the Palestinian terrorist by the same name blamed by Israel for killing 13 soldiers and civilians. In fact, the entire film is a hymn of praise to Aqel's nefarious activities, including the attacks he launched on the Israeli Defense Forces in Gaza and the West Bank. Israeli soldiers eventually killed Aqel, 22, in 1993. Four of the film's actors were also killed when the Israeli military retaliated in Gaza last December for the terrorists' rocket attacks on Israel. The dialogue contains the line: "To kill Israeli soldiers is to worship God," a line which drew cheers and applause from the gender-segregated Muslim audience --<u>women</u> had to sit elsewhere in the theatre apart from the men--when it was screened recently in Gaza.

That line would be perfectly acceptable in a documentary-type film, but that's not what this is. It's a propaganda picture, and its purpose is clear: to further *Hamas*'s self-glorification, romanticize terrorism and incite others to kill Israelis.

If Cannes does not turn away this highly dubious entry, then it should be screened on one condition, that it be followed by a showing of Charlie Chaplin's classic The Great Dictator, to remind viewers of the fate of despots blinded by their own blood lust.

Load-Date: August 6, 2009



## The people's eyes are bright, discerning and not amused

The Australian

August 20, 2009 Thursday

1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 13

Length: 732 words

Byline: Stephen Smith, Paul McGeough, Nathan Rees

#### **Body**

On August 15, Xinhua News Agency delivers The Australian's foreign editor Greg Sheridan a Chinese burn

A LENGTHY article by an editor on Australia's biggest selling national newspaper on Thursday instructing notorious separatist Rebiya Kadeer on how to counter China is an open violation of a journalist's professional ethics. During Rebiya's visit to Australia, Greg Sheridan, an editor of The Australian, also wrote another report ``praising" her ``courage" to confront the Chinese government.

It is hard to understand why a journalist, deviating from the professional ethics of objectivity and fairness, openly played the role of an ``adviser" for a foreign separatist. Last year, after the Tibet riots, the US Cable News Network (CNN) commentator Jack Cafferty referred to the Chinese as ``basically the same bunch of goons and thugs they've been for the last 50 years."

This year, an editor named Sheridan virtually claimed himself to be a "policy think tank" against China for separatists. According to Western journalism, the right to judge the news rests with the readers. As a Chinese saying goes, "the people's eyes are bright and discerning". Media and journalists should learn a lesson from Sheridan's actions or risk becoming a laughing stock around the world.

Stephen Smith in Question Time on Tuesday defends Greg Sheridan:

(JULIE Bishop's) question no doubt arises as a result of the report on the front page of today's Australian newspaper, a primary source for her. The Chinese authorities made it very clear to Australian officials that they were most unhappy with her visit. But we will deal with that matter sensibly, and we will not resort to the flip-flop politicking that the opposition makes of our relationship with China. I vaguely remember the Leader of the Opposition saying to the government some time ago that we should stand up to China. We did on the Rebiya Kadeer issue.

There are people Fairfax reporter Paul McGeough doesn't like much. Radio National's Breakfast program yesterday:

AFGHAN politics is very much about horse trading. The calibre of the deals that (President Hamad) Karzai has done border frankly on the disgusting. He has freed drug traffickers from jail, he has pardoned gang rapists in the most vile circumstances. He has signed off on a law that obliges <u>women</u> to have sex from their husbands or their husbands can withhold food and shelter from them. He has brought back into his circle half a dozen of the worst

#### The people's eyes are bright, discerning and not amused

warlords of the 1990s. They are feared and they are loathed by the bulk of the population. He has promised more government offices than there are provinces to govern. As my friend put it yesterday, he is carrying so many bad mortgages he is a bad bank.

The Pakistan Daily Times July 19, 2004:

THE US media has surprisingly failed to pick up the shocking disclosure by Sydney Morning Herald, Australia's leading newspaper, that the Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi personally executed six suspected insurgents in a Baghdad police station. The story by award-winning Australian journalist Paul McGeough said that the prisoners were handcuffed and blindfolded, lined up against a courtyard wall and shot by the Iraqi PM.

And there are people he likes. Paul McGeough in the New York Times on April 12, 2009:

WHEN I talked with Mr Mashal in 2007, I was interviewing him for my book on an attempted assassination in the streets of Amman, Jordan, in September 1997. Then a midlevel operative in <u>Hamas</u>, Mr Mashal was the intended victim.

Paul McGeough admits in The Age on March 21, 2009, what is involved in rising through the ranks of *Hamas*:

THE Palestinian resistance leader, whose suicide bombers and assassins have taken their own toll on Israeli life over the years, then declares his would-be killer to be a man of straw.

Paul McGeough in the Columbia Review of Journalism, February 11, 2009, finds the word terrorist too harsh for *Hamas*:

RATHER than describe <u>Hamas</u> as a terrorist group, I would say they're a group that uses terror as a weapon and I think there's a significant difference there.

NSW Premier Nathan Rees plays the Nazi card in an address to scientists at the Eureka Awards on Tuesday:

THE threat of climate change is catastrophic. In fact, the current wave of climate change scepticism smacks of 1930s-style appearsement: ``Hide under the blankets and it will go away'. But it won't go away.

cutpaste@theaustralian.com.au

Load-Date: August 19, 2009



## Security and Economic Revival Raise Hopes in the West Bank

The New York Times
July 17, 2009 Friday
Late Edition - Final

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

Length: 1133 words

Byline: By ETHAN BRONNER

Dateline: NABLUS, West Bank

## **Body**

The first movie theater to operate in this Palestinian city in two decades opened its doors in late June. Palestinian policemen standing beneath new traffic lights are checking cars for seat belt violations. One-month-old parking meters are filling with the coins of shoppers. Music stores are blasting love songs into the street, and no nationalist or Islamist scold is forcing them to stop.

"You don't appreciate the value of law and order until you lose it," Rashid al-Sakhel, the owner of a carpet store, said as he stood in his doorway surveying the small wonder of bustling streets on a sunny morning. "For the past eight years, a 10-year-old boy could order a strike and we would all close. Now nobody can threaten us."

For the first time since the second Palestinian uprising broke out in late 2000, leading to terrorist bombings and fierce Israeli countermeasures, a sense of personal security and economic potential is spreading across the West Bank as the Palestinian Authority's security forces enter their second year of consolidating order.

The International Monetary Fund is about to issue its first upbeat report in years for the West Bank, forecasting a 7 percent growth rate for 2009. Car sales in 2008 were double those of 2007. Construction on the first new Palestinian town in decades, for 40,000, will begin early next year north of Ramallah. In Jenin, a seven-story store called Herbawi Home Furnishings has opened, containing the latest espresso machines. Two weeks ago, the Israeli military shut its obtrusive nine-year-old checkpoint at the entrance to this city, part of a series of reductions in security measures.

Whether all this can last and lead to the consolidation of political power for the Fatah-dominated Palestinian Authority based in Ramallah, as the Obama administration hopes, remains unclear. But a recent opinion poll in the West Bank and Gaza by the Jerusalem Media and Communications Center, a Palestinian news agency, found that Fatah was seen as far more trustworthy than <u>Hamas</u> -- 35 percent versus 19 percent -- a significant shift from the organization's poll in January, when <u>Hamas</u> appeared to be at least as trustworthy.

"Two years ago I couldn't have even gone to Nablus," said Tony Blair, the former British prime minister who serves as international envoy to the Palestinians, after a smooth visit this week. "Security is greatly improved, and the economy is doing much better. Now we need to move to the next stage: politics."

#### Security and Economic Revival Raise Hopes in the West Bank

The aim of American and European policy is to stitch Palestinian politics back together by strengthening the Palestinian Authority under the presidency of Mahmoud Abbas, which favors a two-state solution with Israel, while weakening the Islamists of *Hamas*, who rule in Gaza. Fatah says it will hold its first general congress in 20 years in early August to build on its successes, but it remains unclear if the meeting will take place.

The Israeli government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says it shares the goal of helping Mr. Abbas, which is why it is seeking to improve West Bank economic conditions as a platform for moving to a political discussion. The Palestinians worry that the political discussion will never arrive and say the Israelis are doing far too little to ease the occupation. Still, they point with pride to the many changes in the West Bank.

Meanwhile, the Israeli-led economic siege of Gaza continues, letting in only humanitarian goods. That sets the desired contrast between the territories into sharp relief but causes enormous suffering and anger.

Asked to explain why the West Bank's fortunes were shifting, a top Israeli general began his narrative with a chart showing 410 Israelis killed by Palestinians in 2002, and 4 in 2008.

"We destroyed the terrorist groups through three things -- intelligence, the barrier and freedom of action by our men," he said, speaking on condition of anonymity in keeping with military rules. "We sent our troops into every marketplace and every house, staying tightly focused on getting the bad guys."

But he added that the 2006 legislative electoral victory by <u>Hamas</u>, followed by its violent takeover of Gaza in 2007, led Mr. Abbas to fight <u>Hamas</u>. Palestinian troops have been training in Jordan under American sponsorship.

There are now several thousand men trained in that way, and their skills, along with those of the European-trained police force here, have made a huge difference.

An important element in making the Palestinian force effective, American and Israeli officials say, was taking young Palestinian men out of the ancestral grips of their villages and tribal clans and training them abroad, turning them into soldiers loyal to units and commanders.

The Israeli general said that in the past year and a half, Israeli and Palestinian forces had shot at each other only twice, and in each case there was a meeting to restore trust.

Speaking of the seriousness of the Palestinians, he added, "Twice in recent months we have been amazed." The first time was during Israel's military invasion of Gaza when Palestinian police officers kept the West Bank calm during protests. The second was in June when the security forces clashed twice with <u>Hamas</u> men in the city of Qalqilya, fighting to the death.

The Israelis have pulled their forces to the outskirts of four cities, greatly reduced the number of permanent checkpoints and promised to help industry develop. They say the Palestinians now need courts, prisons and trained judges.

Mr. Blair agreed but said there was much more Israel should do, like ending the growth of settlements and taking away dirt mounds and other barriers. In addition, he said, Israel should allow greater Palestinian development in the 60 percent of the West Bank it fully controls.

Palestinian business leaders are incensed at the Israeli limitations. Paltel, which operates the only Palestinian cellphone company, says Israel will not permit it to place its towers on the land it controls. That forces Palestinian customers to pay roaming charges for many calls, and allows Israeli cellphone companies to offer lower rates.

For more than a year, Israel has promised to free a second frequency so that a competitor to Paltel can provide cellphone service, but it has not yet done so. This leaves the Palestinians skeptical.

"I fail to see any indications that Israel wants to help the Palestinian economy," Abdel-Malik al-Jaber, vice chairman of Paltel, said.

#### Security and Economic Revival Raise Hopes in the West Bank

Still, his company has invested millions in the past year in call centers and customer service because of the increased security and disposable income.

As Nader Elawy, manager of Cinema City, the new movie theater here, put it: "We now have law and order. You can really feel the change."

http://www.nytimes.com

#### **Graphic**

PHOTO: Last week, <u>women</u> bought tickets for a movie at a new theater in the West Bank city of Nablus.(PHOTOGRAPH BY NASSER ISHTAYEH/ASSOCIATED PRESS)(A1)

In the Nablus shopping district, a woman with bags and a balloon waited for transportation. The removal of an Israeli checkpoint has made access to the city easier.

This week, Palestinian policewomen, left, patrolled the city center of Nablus, and the Israeli Army removed a roadblock in the northern part of the city.(PHOTOGRAPHS BY RINA CASTELNUOVO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)(A8) MAP: Unlike the West Bank, Gaza is still under economic siege. Map details Nablus, West Bank.(A8)

**Load-Date:** July 17, 2009



#### News in brief

The Jerusalem Post November 25, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 521 words

Byline: Jerusalem Post staff and AP, Abe Selig, Gil Hoffman

## **Body**

IAF hits *Hamas* arms factory, tunnels

IAF jets struck a <u>Hamas</u> weapons factory in northern Gaza early Tuesday, as well as two tunnels in the southern part of the Strip that were used for smuggling arms.

The planes successfully hit their targets, and all the aircraft involved returned successfully to their bases, the IDF Spokesman said.

According to the IDF, the strikes were in response to the firing of rockets into Israel on Sunday. No one was hurt in the attack.

In a statement, the IDF reiterated that it would continue to act decisively against any attempt to disturb the peace of Israel's southern residents.

Separately, <u>Hamas</u> reported that two of its members were killed when a rocket they were handling blew up prematurely. \* Jerusalem Post staff and AP

'Big gap between Arab, Jewish pupils'

The Education Ministry on Tuesday released the results of the Meitzav exams, which are used to measure growth and efficiency in the country's schools and which showed a widening gap between Jewish and Arab pupils.

The exam, which is given to fifth and eighth graders once every two years, tests the pupils' knowledge of math, science, Hebrew or Arabic, and English.

The results showed a decline in Arab students' scores for English and science, while Jewish students showed an improvement in all areas except English, in which they remained similar to their scores from 2007. \* Abe Selig

E. Jerusalemites protest at City Hall

Some 40 people took part in a demonstration opposite Jerusalem's City Hall on Tuesday to protest their "deep discontent with the treatment of Palestinian residents of east Jerusalem."

Using props such as cardboard houses to portray recent evictions of east Jerusalem residents from their homes, the demonstration included a "theatrical protest" enacting such evictions.

#### News in brief

The protest was also held to mark the one-year anniversary of the election of Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat, who protesters said was not honoring his promises with regard to building rights in all parts of the capital.

"When Barkat was elected, he claimed that he was going to be the mayor of all residents of Jerusalem, and he hasn't kept his word," said one of the demonstrators.

"House demolitions have continued, evictions are taking place and building permits are still very difficult to acquire," the demonstrator added. "We feel that Barkat has not sufficiently addressed these issues." \* Abe Selig

Tamir: Appoint woman A-G

Labor rebel MK Yuli Tamir called upon Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu on Tuesday to appoint the first-ever *female* attorney-general.

Tamir noted that the Netanyahu government had taken a step backward in promoting <u>women</u> to key positions and suggested that he use the attorney-general post to fix the problem. She said the parity among the candidates for the job allowed him to consider an additional factor.

"It would be proper to choose Prof. Dafna Barak-Erez as attorney-general, not just because of her exceptional skills but also because she is a woman," Tamir wrote Netanyahu. "You have a unique opportunity to prove that equality is not just an empty slogan for you but an important guiding principle." \* Gil Hoffman

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



## Gaza health officials report first 5 cases of swine flu, UN warns of vaccine shortage

Guelph Mercury (Ontario, Canada)

December 6, 2009 Sunday

Final Edition

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Section: Pg. 01

Length: 311 words

Dateline: ARTICLE

#### **Body**

Gaza health officials on Sunday confirmed the territory's first five cases of swine flu, but the World Health Organization said there is not enough vaccine for health workers.

Gaza health official Dr. Hassan Khalaf said the five patients were diagnosed Sunday.

The relatively late arrival of swine flu to the Gaza Strip is likely attributable to the same measure that has brought shortages and hardships otherwise - a strict blockade imposed by Israel since the Islamic militant <u>Hamas</u> overran the territory in 2007, expelling forces loyal to Western-backed President Mahmoud Abbas.

Shortages include medicines, but Israel insists it does not limit shipment of medical supplies to Gaza. Instead, Palestinians say the rivalry between *Hamas* and Abbas' Palestinian Authority could be to blame.

The Palestinian Authority is responsible for sending medicines to Gaza, but officials there way Abbas' government routinely keeps Gaza in short supply.

One key shortage is swine flu vaccine.

Senior WHO official Mahmoud Daher said Gaza has only 1,000 vaccine doses for around 8,000 health employees, serving 1.5 million Palestinians in Gaza.

West Bank Health Ministry official Dr. Asad Ramlawi denied that the shortage is deliberate. He said 1 million doses would be arriving between mid-December and late January, and they would be divided between the two territories.

Daher said there was no need for panic, and that patients with chronic diseases, the elderly and pregnant **women** should be vigilant about their hygiene.

However, at Shifa Hospital, Gaza City's largest, an Associated Press reporter saw doctors and nurses refusing to go near a young woman believed to have the virus.

The young woman's family had to carry her to the isolation ward on a stretcher.

#### Gaza health officials report first 5 cases of swine flu, UN warns of vaccine shortage

Ramlawi said 1,250 cases of swine flu have been reported in the West Bank. In neighbouring Israel, the number is over 3,000.

Load-Date: January 5, 2010



#### It looks like law, but it's just politics

The Jerusalem Post
October 15, 2009 Thursday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 15

Length: 1634 words

**Byline: WARREN GOLDSTEIN** 

**Highlight:** Any civilized legal system requires that justice be done on two levels: procedural and substantive. The Goldstone Mission is replete with procedural and substantive injustices. The writer, who has a PhD. in Human

Rights Law, is the chief rabbi of South Africa

#### **Body**

Much has been written and said about the inaccuracies, shortcomings and the moral inversion of the United Nations Human Rights Council's Mission presided over by Judge Richard Goldstone and his three fellow members. Most critics have understandably addressed the political and military issues involved. It is important, however, also to deconstruct the Goldstone Mission's Report from a legal point of view.

This is so because the report uses the veneer of respectability that comes with legal methodology, and with the presence of an internationally respected judge, to gain credibility. Law is a very powerful weapon to give respectability to contemptible actions and opinions. The South African Apartheid Government was very legalistic in its approach to racial oppression, and was punctilious about promulgating proper laws, and about maintaining a fully functioning judiciary to give the facade of respectability to its repugnant policies.

The United Nations, through its various organs, but particularly through its Human Rights Commission, uses the superficial veneer of law and legal methodology to give credence and credibility to its anti-Israel agenda. The Goldstone Mission is a case in point. Careful analysis reveals that the legalities utilized are merely a cover for a political strategy of deligitimizing Israel. Judge Goldstone claims that the Mission "is not a judicial enquiry [but is] a fact-finding mission."

This is a distinction without a difference. The Mission's Report makes numerous factual findings, and some legal, just as if it were a judicial body.

The Report could have salvaged some measure of integrity had it stated that its findings, both legal and factual, were only prima facie. It did not do so.

Judges make factual and legal findings which have practical implications. There are very real consequences for Israel resulting from the findings of the Mission. Apart from holding Israel liable in international law to pay war reparations, Judge Goldstone refers the findings to the highest authorities of international law, including the United Nation's General Assembly and the Security Council, and he recommends the commencement of criminal investigations in the national courts of the state signatories to the Geneva Convention of 1949. Of course, the Report also inflicts very great and real harm to Israel's reputation in the court of world opinion. This has serious political, economic and military implications for Israel's future, and for its very survival.

Any civilized legal system requires that justice be done on two levels: procedural and substantive. The Goldstone Mission is replete with procedural and substantive injustices. From a procedural point of view, there are four main areas of injustice.

FIRSTLY, THE Human Rights Council's Resolution S-9/1 establishing the Mission expressly states that it "[s]trongly condemns the ongoing Israeli military operation [in Gaza] which has resulted in massive violations of the human rights of the Palestinian people," and in so doing pre-judges the guilt of Israel. The Resolution refers many times to Israel's guilt in a very lengthy document which is phrased in wide, undisciplined and aggressive language. Furthermore, it calls upon the Mission to investigate Israel's conduct and not that of <u>Hamas</u>. Although Goldstone and the President of the Human Rights Council purported to extend the ambit of the mandate, the legal basis for their doing so without the express authority of the Council is not clear.

The second procedural injustice is that the members of the Mission publicly expressed beforehand their opinions on this conflict. The most explicit in this regard, Professor Christine Chinkin, was one of the signatories to a letter published in the Sunday Times of London which stated that "Israel's actions amount to aggression, not self-defense, not least because its assault on Gaza was unnecessary." The letter is published under the heading "Israel's bombardment of Gaza is not self-defense - it's a war crime."

The other three members, Judge Richard Goldstone, Hina Jilani and Desmond Travers, all signed a letter initiated by Amnesty International stating: "Events in Gaza have shocked us to the core." Thus, all four members of the Mission, including Goldstone himself, expressed public opinions concerning the Gaza conflict before they began their work.

Thirdly, the Goldstone Mission violated another basic principle of justice, audi alteram partem - let the other side be heard. At least due to the procedural injustices already referred to, the State of Israel correctly refused to cooperate with the Mission. Once it had done so the Mission ought, if it were objective and fair, to have accepted Israel's right to remain silent and then ought to have desisted from making findings whether factual or legal. But it did not do so, and as any lawyer knows unanswered allegations often prove unreliable and in almost all conflict situations there are serious disputes of fact, and often of law as well.

The Mission's findings were based on accepting the allegations of only one party to the conflict. The Mission did not try to cross-examine or challenge the witnesses in any real way. There is a lengthy, fascinating article by Jonathan HaLevi of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs in which he analyses in detail the methodology employed by the Mission in respect of witnesses. He demonstrates that there was a lack of adequate cross-examination of the testimony of the witnesses. Unproven allegations of <u>Hamas</u> officials were accepted as established facts. Even the most basic questions were not asked; when, for example, allegations were made of Israel's bombing civilian installations, witnesses were not asked whether there were <u>Hamas</u> fighters or weaponry in the vicinity, or whether any attacks had been launched from the area.

There is a fourth procedural injustice which undermines the integrity and credibility of Judge Goldstone and the three other members of the Mission: There simply was not enough time to do the job properly.

Any lawyer with even limited experience knows that there was just not sufficient time for the Mission to have properly considered and prepared its report. One murder trial often takes many months of evidence and argument to enable a judge to make a decision with integrity. To assess even one day of battle in Gaza with the factual complexities involved would have required a substantial period of intensive examination. According to the Mission's Report, the Mission convened for a total of 12 days.

They say that they considered a huge volume of written and visual material running into thousands of pages; they conducted three field trips; there were only four days of public hearings; and yet in a relatively short space of time the members of the Mission agreed to about 500 pages of detailed material and findings with not one dissenting opinion throughout.

They made no less than 69 findings, mostly of fact, but some of law and within those 69 there were often numerous sub-findings.

All of this was quite simply physically impossible if the job had been done with integrity and care.

The fourth procedural injustice also demonstrates the total sham of this process.

THE SUBSTANTIVE injustices of the Goldstone Mission's Report are too numerous to mention in this article, but one illustrates how far the Mission was prepared to go, and that relates to the very important legal element of intent. Goldstone and his Mission impute the worst of intentions to the actions of the State of Israel, finding that Israel's conduct was motivated by a desire to repress and oppress, and to inflict suffering upon the Palestinian people, and not primarily for the purpose of self-defense. It does this without any evidence and then, without any supporting evidence, asserts that many of Israel's military operations such as that of Lebanon were motivated by the same goal.

The Mission fails to mention a modern leading military expert, Colonel Richard Kemp (the former commander of British forces in Afghanistan), who said, "From my knowledge of the IDF and from the extent to which I have been following the current operation, I do not think there has ever been a time in the history of warfare when an army has made more efforts to reduce civil casualties and deaths of innocent people than the IDF is doing today in Gaza."

By contrast, on the Palestinian side, there is very clear evidence as to <u>Hamas</u>'s intentions - the <u>Hamas</u> Charter openly calls for the destruction of Israel, irrespective of borders. It also calls for the murder of all Jews worldwide. <u>Hamas</u>'s clear intention was to murder as many Israeli civilians as possible and to use its own civilian population as human shields. But not a word of <u>Hamas</u>'s expressly stated intentions appear in the report.

One aspect of the evidence, presented to but not accepted by the Goldstone Mission, was that of <u>Hamas</u> leader Fathi Hammad, who said: "This is why we have formed human shields of the <u>women</u>, the children, the elderly and the mujahideen, in order to challenge the Zionist bombing machine. It is as if we are saying to the Zionist enemy: We desire death while you desire life."

These procedural and substantive injustices demonstrate the complete lack of integrity and fairness of the process. It looks like law, but it is not. It is just politics.

The Goldstone Mission is a disgrace to the most basic notions of justice, equality and the rule of law. And it is dangerous. Injustice will only lead to more death and destruction.

The Talmud says "The world stands on three things: truth, justice and peace." These three values are linked. There can never be peace without justice and truth.

The Goldstone Mission is unjust and wanting in truth. It has, therefore, harmed the prospects for peace in the Middle East.

## Graphic

Photo: JUDGE GOLDSTONE presents his report about the Gaza conflict during a UNHRC session last month. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011



# <u>Israel to free women for video proving Shalit is alive; Father of Israeli</u> corporal held hostage for three years praises German negotiators

The Independent (London)
October 1, 2009 Thursday
First Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 28

Length: 502 words

Byline: Donald Macintyre IN JERUSALEM

### **Body**

Israel is to release 20 <u>female</u> Palestinian prisoners in return for new video footage proving definitively that Gilad Shalit, the army corporal who was abducted more than three years ago by Gaza militants, is alive.

The move, which may be made tomorrow, is the first concrete evidence of real, if slow, progress in the German-mediated negotiations for the release of the 23-year-old corporal and hundreds of Palestinian prisoners, including *Hamas* ones, held in Israeli jails.

An official statement released by the mediators in Jerusalem yesterday said that mediators had told Israel it would receive "updated and unequivocal proof regarding the well-being and status of Gilad Shalit".

In return, Israel said it would release the 20 **women** prisoners as a "confidence building measure". All but one are from the West Bank, while one is from Gaza.

The Shalit family welcomed "the significant achievement by the current negotiating team, under the leadership of Haggai Hadas, and German and Egyptian mediators", but said that it was just a "first step in the right direction to sign a deal for Gilad's release, and [we] will not rest or be silent until [we] see Gilad back home." They added that "both sides must steadily continue to advance the recently started [negotiations] without neglect".

The official statement issued by Israel after its security cabinet meeting was careful to cite the Egyptians' work in seeking to broker an exchange, but the mediation efforts have been given fresh impetus by the involvement of German intelligence officials. German experts also played a role in the exchange of Lebanese and Palestinian prisoners for the bodies of the two Israeli soldiers killed by Hizbollah in the attack which triggered the 2006 Lebanon war.

Noam Shalit, the father of Cpl Shalit who was seized near the Israel-Gaza border crossing Kerem Shalom in June 2006, has gone out of his way to praise the efforts of the German mediators. Their role was also highlighted yesterday by a Palestinian source familiar with the negotiations who said that while Egyptian mediators had acted as "a messenger" between the two sides, the German mediators had been more "creative" in their approach.

Israel to free women for video proving Shalit is alive Father of Israeli corporal held hostage for three years praises German negotiators

While Cpl Shalit was abducted by three groups - including <u>Hamas</u> - in a cross-border raid which killed two other soldiers, <u>Hamas</u> has been leading the indirect negotiations with Israel and is thought to be in control of whether and when he is released.

Abu Mujahed, a spokesman for another of the two groups said yesterday that the one-minute video to be released to the Israelis would show Cpl Shalit to be "alive and moving." According to Israeli television, the video has already been seen by the German mediators.

The previous government of Ehud Olmert said that it would not lift the blockade of Gaza until Cpl Shalit was released. International diplomats are hopeful that his release would lead to an immediate easing of the embargo. Noam Shalit has repeatedly and vainly called for the Red Cross to be allowed access to his son.

Load-Date: October 2, 2009



#### World datelines

Deseret Morning News (Salt Lake City) September 1, 2009 Tuesday

Copyright 2009 The Deseret News Publishing Co.

Length: 595 words

#### **Body**

Indonesia: Terror plot JAKARTA? A suspect wanted in connection with hotel suicide bombings in the Indonesian capital infiltrated the national airline in a plot to carry out a "bigger attack," the police chief said Monday. The suspect, identified only as Syahrir, was recruited by a militant network and had been working as a technician with the airline, Garuda Indonesia, said National Police Chief Gen. Bambang Hendarso Danuri.

Documents seized by police uncovered the plot to strike Indonesia's airline sector, he said, without providing details about when or how the attack was supposed to have taken place. Syahrir resigned from the airline and remains at large, Danuri said. The blasts at the J.W. Marriott and Ritz-Carlton hotels on July 17 killed seven people and wounded more than 50 others. Egypt: Death in Iran CAIRO? An Iranian medical examiner found that the son of a prominent conservative politician's adviser died from beatings and poor prison conditions, a semiofficial news agency reported Monday, in what would be the first official confirmation of a prisoner-abuse death during Iran's post-election turmoil. The report could be a sign that conservatives will seek to prosecute those responsible for prisoner abuse in an attempt to defuse anger over allegations that many opposition supporters detained after the disputed presidential election were tortured. The claims have outraged many conservatives, as well as the proreform opposition that believes hard-line President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad stole the June election through massive vote fraud. Conservative anger has partly been driven by the death of Mohsen Rouhalamini, the son of an adviser to defeated presidential candidate Mohsen Rezaei. Gaza Strip: Schools GAZA CITY? A Hamas spiritual leader on Monday called teaching Palestinian children about the Nazi murder of 6 million Jews a "war crime," rejecting a suggestion that the U.N. might include the Holocaust in Gaza's school curriculum. A senior Israeli official said such statements should make the West think twice about ending its boycott of *Hamas*, in place since the group seized Gaza by force in 2007. Hamas spiritual leader Younis al-Astal lashed out after hearing that the U.N. Relief and Works Agency, the main U.N. body aiding Palestinian refugees, planned to introduce lessons about the Holocaust to Gaza students. A U.N. official said no decision has been made about introducing Holocaust education in Gaza. Many Palestinians are reluctant to acknowledge Jewish suffering, fearing it might diminish their own. Sri Lanka: Imprisoned COLOMBO ? A Sri Lankan reporter singled out by President Barack Obama as an example of persecuted journalists around the globe was sentenced Monday to 20 years in prison on charges of violating the country's strict anti-terror law. J.S. Tissainayagam's articles in the now-defunct Northeastern Monthly magazine in 2006 and 2007 criticized the conduct of the war against the Tamil Tiger rebels and accused authorities of withholding food and other essential items from Tamil-majority areas as a tool of war. Sudan: 46 killed KHARTOUM ? Tribesmen trying to steal cattle attacked a village in southern Sudan, sparking a conflict that killed 46 people, including seven soldiers, the United Nations said Monday. The incident was the latest in a rising wave of tribal violence in the south that has killed more than 2,000 people, including many women and children, and displaced another 250,000, according to the U.N. Dinka Bor tribesmen attacked a village of the rival Lou-Nuer tribe Friday night.

#### World datelines

Load-Date: September 1, 2009



#### Guardian Weekly: International News: Video message from Shalit

Guardian Weekly
October 9, 2009 Friday

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## *The*GuardianWeekly

Section: Pg. 8

Length: 293 words

Byline: Rory McCarthy, Jerusalem

#### **Body**

Gilad Shalit, an Israeli soldier captured near Gaza more than three years ago, appeared unhurt and in good health in a video recording received by the Israeli government last week. Shalit spoke, walked briefly towards the camera and held a newspaper that was less than three weeks old.

Although it was not the first proof that he is alive - there have been audio recordings and letters in the past - it was the first time he has been seen on video. The film, obtained in return for the release by Israel of 20 *female* Palestinian prisoners, suggests that German intelligence officers, who joined mediation efforts this summer, are making progress in the case. However, Israeli officials said there was still considerable negotiation to go before Shalit was freed.

In the tape, which lasts about two and a half minutes, Shalit, 23, sits on a plastic chair against a plain wall indoors. "Hello. This is Gilad, son of Noam and Aviv Shalit, brother of Hadas and Yoel, who live in Mitzpe Hila," he says. He gives his Israeli identity card number and appears to be in good health, despite a sallow complexion and dark rings under his eyes.

He holds a copy of Falasteen, a Pal estinian Arabic newspaper published in Gaza. "I read the newspaper in order to find information about myself, and in hopes of reading about information of my return home and my imminent release," he says, reading from a text. "I hope the current government headed by Binyamin Netanyahu doesn't waste this opportunity to reach an agreement and as a result, allow me to fulfil my dream and be released."

He says he feels well and that the "mujahideen from the al-Qassam Brigades are treating me excellently". Shalit is being held by *Hamas*, and the al-Qassam Brigades are the *Hamas* militant wing.

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# Goods Flood Gaza's Tunnels, Turning Border With Egypt Into a Shopping Mecca

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Byline: By TAGHREED EL-KHODARY

Dateline: RAFAH, Gaza

#### **Body**

Dusty sacks filled with cans of Coca-Cola were being loaded onto trucks by young boys, headed for supermarkets in Gaza City. Thousands of motorcycles were lined up on display in a nearby stadium, ranging in price from \$2,000 to \$10,000.

At Nijma market, refrigerators, flat-screen televisions, microwaves, air-conditioners, generators and ovens filled the tents, all at inflated prices, having been spirited into this town on the border with Egypt through tunnels under the sand. Some Gazans have even purchased cars smuggled in parts into the isolated Palestinian enclave.

The tunnels emerged as an essential lifeline for Gaza two years ago, when Israel imposed a political and economic embargo after <u>Hamas</u> took over the area. Israel did its best to obliterate them during its three-week military offensive in Gaza last winter, saying they were being used for smuggling weapons and explosives.

But the builders set to work immediately after that, and with little hope of the border crossings with Israel opening anytime soon -- and rich profits to be harvested -- there are more tunnels now than ever, and Rafah has turned into a shopping mecca where the tunnel owners are kings.

"If the siege were to be lifted," said Osama, 22, a tunnel owner, "I would end up in intensive care." Osama would not give his family name, fearing he would never be able to travel legally out of Gaza if identified. Locally, he goes by the nickname of Doda, which means worm.

In the past, armed gangs roamed this frontier town with a lawless feel; journalists and humanitarian workers were about the only visitors to venture here. Now, customers flock in from all over Gaza. What started as a few clandestine tunnels dug beneath houses has turned into a booming industry that nobody bothers to hide.

Before the Gaza war the tunnels numbered in the hundreds. Today about 1,500 of them are said to be crammed into an eight-mile stretch along the border, employing in the neighborhood of 30,000 Palestinians from all over the territory. A local merchant has opened a 24-hour grocery store called "Dubai" to cater to them. Only the milk and the yogurt come from Israel. The soft drinks, beans, chocolate, cookies and cooking oil come in consignments from under the ground.

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Across the street Abu Raed Alarja, 58, fixes tools that are used to dig the tunnels. Inside his dark store, he also stocks cement, generators and blue plastic barrels strung together with strong ropes, used to drag goods from the Egyptian side.

For the tunnel owners the profits are high, but precarious. Israel regularly bombards the tunnels in response to rocket fire, and some that are not well constructed collapse. Egypt also occasionally seals them from its side, a tactic it uses to keep *Hamas* in line.

<u>Hamas</u> runs some tunnels of its own, but local residents say the group does not collect taxes from those that are privately owned.

A syndicate has been formed to supervise the tunnel system and to defend the rights of workers killed on the job -- at least 116 to date, according to local human rights groups. Five workers 17 to 20 years old were killed in one of Osama's three tunnels five months ago when it collapsed because of the dryness of the sand. Osama paid the five families \$2,000 each in compensation and has promised to pay an additional \$7,000 each in a few months.

Osama started out as a day laborer, digging tunnels from the age of 16. He graduated to running drugs and TNT through the tunnels into Gaza. Though he is a supporter of Fatah, the secular rival of *Hamas*, he says he supplied both parties. He was young but intimidating enough. He says he used to eat in restaurants in Gaza City and leave without paying. "Now it is different," he said. "We fear *Hamas*."

For the same reason he no longer smuggles drugs or weapons, though the money he made from that illicit trade helped set him up in legitimate business. He says that each of his three tunnels cost about \$300,000 to build, and that four friends helped him finance the enterprise.

By night he brings in live animals, motorcycles, potato chips, Coca-Cola and clothing for <u>women</u> and children. But the most lucrative import is fuel, which he pumps through a pipe fixed on the ceiling of a tunnel more than half a mile long and collects in a large tank on the Palestinian side. Like any smart businessman, Osama does most of his pumping after Israel has blocked fuel supplies from its side or has bombed a few competing tunnels, lifting prices in Gaza.

The tunnel owners, Gaza's nouveau riche, say they make on average more than \$1 million a year from each tunnel.

Sharif Abu Daf, 30, used to work as a contractor in Gaza City until Israel closed the commercial crossings and prevented cement and other construction materials from coming in. Now he is digging to feed his wife and his six children and making 120 shekels, about \$32, a day.

The tunnel owners have brought little change to Rafah, which they consider a conservative backwater. Instead, they prefer to invest their money in property in Gaza City and beyond.

"We make millions, but we are not educated," said Imad, 29, one of Osama's partners. Some local men, he noted, marry more than one wife. "If I want to invest, I'll go to Morocco. I heard it is a beautiful place. They have a normal government."

"What's the point of having so much money when you are not able to travel?" said Hazim, 23, another partner who started out digging tunnels. He said he wanted to go to Egypt, study business administration and then invest in Cairo.

"They have never seen beyond Gaza," said Imad's father-in-law, Abu Mohammed, 57, of the younger generation. "They think like they are in a tunnel," he continued. "They have never seen malls or real supermarkets like I saw in Dubai."

## **Graphic**

PHOTOS: A Palestinian smuggled a sheep through one of the estimated 1,500 tunnels that employ 30,000 Gazans along the border. (PHOTOGRAPH BY SAID KHATIB/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES)

Profits are high, but precarious. Israel regularly bombards the tunnels. This entrance was struck last week. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ASSOCIATED PRESS) MAP: The tunnels emerged as a lifeline for Gaza two years ago.

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#### Prosecuting SA citizens in foreign armies welcomed

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#### **Body**

Deon de Lange's article of September 2 refers.

I must admire advocate John Dugard. Not only has he devoted his life to the law, but he will leave no stone unturned in his pursuance of its implementation and of justice.

In this he is ably assisted by non-governmental organisations supporting the Palestinian cause.

It is illegal for South African citizens to serve in foreign armies, and so Dugard will do his utmost to bring them to trial. There must be South Africans fighting with the <u>Hamas</u> as well. The NGOs will help him to put them on trial too.

Over the past eight years 7 000 rockets are said to have been fired at Israeli civilian settlements, and yet their casualties do not exceed 500.

During the 22 days of onslaught on Gaza, the city is said to have suffered 1 400 casualties. The difference in the casualties is explained by Israel ensuring that its citizens were protected by shelters.

With his known sense of justice, advocate Dugard will also investigate the war crime of the <u>Hamas</u> bombarding Israeli civilian settlements over an eight-year period, and continuing to do so after Israel withdrew all its troops and settlers from Gaza in 2005.

Investigating war crimes is essential and it is to Dugard's credit that he has taken this task upon himself.

Obviously he will want to know why the hours of rocket bombardment coincided with the times when Israeli children were on their way to school and back.

German bombing of residential areas in England during World War II caused the deaths of 51 509 men, women and children.

Winston Churchill promised the British people that he would return every bomb tenfold.

Allied bombing killed 269 618 German civilians and left more than six million homeless.

Perhaps advocate Dugard can express an opinion there-on, for to date Churchill and the RAF have not been indicted retrospectively as war criminals.

Don Krausz

Killarney

Load-Date: September 30, 2009