

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

Job Number: 223444940

Documents (100)

1. Hundreds try to flee to West Bank

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

2. Small step towards peace Cautious welcome for Mecca Declaration

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

3. Israeli amnesty offer divides militants

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

4. Israel Restores Financial Ties to Palestinian Authority

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

5. Peace marchers defy Gaza bullets

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

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

6. Palestinians celebrate as Israel frees 255

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

7. Israel 's Gaza siege winds down: Witnesses say tanks pulling out. At least 55 Palestinians killed in six days; Hamas, Fatah still talking about unity

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

8. On border with Gaza, new crisis is brewing

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

9. Free Alan Johnston

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

Israel promises to free 250 Palestinian prisoners; Arab leaders hope high-profile summit can boost Abbas, restart peace process

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

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

11. Brief

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

12. Between a rock and a hard place; Palestinians trapped in a tunnel between Israel, Gaza Strip

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

13. Jordan 's king likens holy site digging to 'attack': Dome of the Rock won't be harmed by bridge project, Israel

says

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

14. Yet again, politics trumps principle

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

15. Captured Israeli doing well?

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

16. Gaza economy on the brink as 85% of residents live on aid

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

17. Palestinians fleeing Gaza trapped by Israelis at border

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

18. Fatah's backers fear life in Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

19. Israel eases suffering at border crossing Foreign passport holders, Palestinians with health problems

<u>allowed to leave Gaza</u>

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

20. A question of right

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

21. Aid boycott lifted to reward Abbas for new government

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

22. Gaza violence stirs new fear Deaths of 18 in Israeli action bring calls for Palestinians to react.

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

23. Grandmother blows herself up in Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

24. <u>Kidnappers issue tapes of captives; Fate of BBC 's Alan Johnston, Israel 's Corporal Gilad Shalit may hinge</u> on negotiations; Journalist, Soldier

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

25. Girl, 6, describes shooting in Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

26. International Briefs

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

27. Truce fails to curb clashes

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

28. Desperation Rises at Closed Border Crossings Between Gaza Strip and Israel

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

29. Defence Minister warnes about massive ground operation MIDEAST: Not Another Ground Assault

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

30. Temple Mount ignites more Jerusalem ire: Adjacent holy sites raise control issues

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

31. Israeli dig called 'attack' on holy site: Jordan 's king warns of 'dramatic escalation'

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

32. UN stops relief projects in Gaza Closed borders isolate 1.4m

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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

Sep 30, 2007

33. Gaza refugees shelter in border tunnel

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

34. <u>KIDNAPPERS ISSUE TAPES OF CAPTIVES; 'I've been dressed in an explosives belt,' BBC reporter Alan</u> Johnston says on videotape; JOURNALIST, SOLDIER

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

35. ISRAEL FREES 255 PALESTINIANS HOPING TO BOLSTER ABBAS GOVERNMENT

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

36. Mecca peace talks fail to ease anguish: Palestinians angry with political leaders, warring factions



Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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

Sep 30, 2007

37. Israel OKs prisoner releases

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

38. Israel 's secret Gaza servants

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

39. Israeli soldiers fire on Palestinian women serving as human shields to help besieged gunmen escape

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

40. Women confront troops

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

41. Granny suicide bomber

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

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

42. Palestinian leader promotes peace at Cornell U.

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

43. Palestinians Angrily Mourn 18 Civilians Killed by Israel

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

44. <u>Human shields thwart Israeli missile strikes Hundreds of Palestinians guarded houses that were to be</u> targeted in a crackdown against extremists.

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

45. Women free Palestinian gunmen

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

46. Human shield forces Israel to call off missile strikes

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

47. Jordan 's king condemns Israeli dig: Site a flashpoint for bitter disputes between Israel, Palestinians

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

48. Acknowledge Militant Islam's Threat, Then We Can Counter It

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

49. Israeli hospital heals Gaza fighters' wounds Politics no factor in treatment of Palestinians, medical centre

<u>says</u>

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

50. President travels to Gaza to form unity government

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

51. Desperate Palestinians plead for asylum at border

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

52. In Gesture to Abbas, Israel Releases 255 Palestinian Prisoners

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

53. Women broadcasters told to wear hijab or face death

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

54. Israelis open fire on women forming human shield

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

55. Death of a student stirs revolt in Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

56. Two-State Solution: The world must come to the aid of the West Bank

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

57. Islamist group suspected in prostitutes' killings: Militants have bombed businesses before in bid to purge Gaza of western influence

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

58. Following Bombing in Eilat, No Military Operation Seen in Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

59. Granny blasts way into 'martyrdom': Suicide bomber. Two Israeli soldiers injured in attack

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

60. Retaliation vowed as Israeli strike kills 18

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

61. Letters to the Editor

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

62. Israel Approves the Release Of 250 Palestinian Prisoners

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

63. IN BRIEF

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

64. Hunted women of the Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

65. World Digest

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

66. Harper ignoring Jewish history

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

67. Palestinian universities dragged into factional clashes

Client/Matter: -None-



Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

68. Palestinian gunmen push Gaza 'to brink of civil war'

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

69. Reverberations in Egypt Gaza fallout I

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

70. Abbas fights to restore ceasefire as airstrikes pound northern Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

71. If Israel and its Western allies breakHamas, they will face an even deadlier foe

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

72. Palestinian women help free besieged gunmen; Israeli offensive kills 17 including two women

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

73. Oldest suicide bomber injures 2: Palestinian woman, 64, had seen one grandson killed; her house destroyed

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

74. News Digest

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

75. Grandmother kills herself, injures two Israeli soldiers

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

76. Palestinians bury dead Israeli leader offers talks

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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

Sep 30, 2007

77. Hurtling into the darkness

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

78. Dead in the street: women who were called out to shield gunmen

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Sep 30, 2007

79. Refugees try to flee violence in Gaza Strip

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Sep 30, 2007

80. Israeli Official Asks President to Step Aside

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

81. Katsav urged to step aside during Israeli rape inquiry

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

82. Fleeing Gazans wait on Israel

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type Narrowed by

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

83. <u>International: Woman, 64, blows herself up in attack on Israeli troops: Suicide bombing follows killing of</u> grandson: Eight other Palestinians die in Gaza operations

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

84. DOOM & GLOOM

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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

Sep 30, 2007

85. 'Another hot summer for Israel' Iranian leader hints he expects conflict in the coming months

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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

Sep 30, 2007

86. Israel pledges to free 250 jailed Palestinians

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

87. Gaza's universities no longer outside fray

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type Narrowed by

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

88. <u>Seeking common ground; Whether we like it or not, militant groups have millions of supporters in the Middle</u> East -- we can't ignore them in the pursuit of peace

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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Sep 30, 2007

89. Internet cafes in the front line of new Gaza violence

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

90. Islands of learning in a sea of woe Universities, a source of hope, are dragged into Gaza unrest

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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

Sep 30, 2007

91. Rocket fire resumes after Israeli pullout: Homes, mosque destroyed in Gaza town

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

92. 2 women die in standoff in Gaza

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

93. Shortage fears spark long lineups in Gaza; Run on food and fuel after Israel closes Strip and cuts off gas supplies

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

94. Tragedy upon tragedy LEADING ARTICLE GAZA

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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

Sep 30, 2007

95. Mother stands in the crossfire as Gaza violence tears her family apart

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Sep 30, 2007

96. Unborn baby dies during Israeli night raid

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type Narrowed by

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Sep 30, 2007

97. United Palestine a dying dream

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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

Sep 30, 2007

98. Women shield mosque gunmen



Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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

Sep 30, 2007

99. Palestinians freed to boost Abbas

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type Narrowed by

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

Sep 30, 2007

100. Top of the world

Client/Matter: -None-Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Hundreds try to flee to West Bank

The Bismarck Tribune
June 20, 2007 Wednesday

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Section: WIRE; Pg. 2A

Length: 424 words

Byline: SARAH EL DEEB Associated Press Writer

Body

EREZ CROSSING, Gaza Strip - Trapped by Israeli tanks and <u>Hamas</u> gunmen, hundreds of terrified Palestinians holed up in a stench-filled concrete tunnel at a border crossing Tuesday, desperate to flee the Islamic militants now ruling the Gaza Strip.

Israel took in two people hit by <u>Hamas</u> gunfire, 24 hours after they were wounded in an assault on the tunnel, but officials remained steadfast in rejecting pleas to throw open the border. Three people wounded in the Gaza fighting last week also were allowed into Israel.

Israeli officials permitted a food shipment into Gaza for the first time since <u>Hamas</u> seized control in five days of fighting with the Fatah movement of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. That eased concerns about a humanitarian crisis in the impoverished coastal territory.

The crowd at the Erez crossing included dozens of Fatah fighters, who Israeli officials feared could destabilize the West Bank, which is separated from Gaza by about 30 miles of Israeli territory. Officials said most of those seeking to cross were not in danger.

As the standoff stretched on, the scene inside the tunnel grew increasingly desperate.

<u>Women</u>, children and young men sat between two high concrete walls about 10 yards apart, looking tired and grimy. Suitcases and trash were strewn on the ground. Some people sat on mats, others on bare asphalt, including several men with bloody bandages on their legs.

A breeze barely stirred between the walls. The tunnel, which has no toilets, reeked of urine and sweat.

"It's disgusting. People are using the walls as toilets. The <u>women</u> are suffering," said one man, refusing to be identified out of fear for his safety. He said people were on edge and fighting over food.

In one instance, a crowd attacked a food cart, "and only the strong got the food," the man said. Later, Israel sent in five cartons of food, he said. "There was order because they made everybody sit down," he said.

The man said some in the tunnel feared *Hamas* members had infiltrated the crowd to spy on them.

Late Monday, gunmen from a small <u>Hamas</u>-allied group, disguised as civilians, pulled guns and grenades out of their luggage and killed the nephew of a notorious Fatah militia leader who had been slain by a <u>Hamas</u> mob last week, witnesses said. Fifteen people were wounded.

Hundreds try to flee to West Bank

Nearly 24 hours after the attack in the tunnel, Israel allowed in two of the wounded Tuesday, army and medical officials said. Three other Gazans wounded last week also were let in. The army did not identify the wounded, who were taken to Israeli hospitals.

Load-Date: June 20, 2007

End of Document



Small step towards peace; Cautious welcome for Mecca Declaration

The Herald (Glasgow)
February 10, 2007

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 16

Length: 509 words

Body

THE road to peace is rarely travelled in great leaps forward and so we should welcome what is being called the "Mecca Declaration" forwhat it is: a small step in the right direction. Only a week ago an all-out Palestinian civil warwas on the cards. Clashes between <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah gunmen have killed 130 people, including four children, since last May. This conflict is fundamentally different to the Sunni-Shia feud that is tearing Iraq apart. Though <u>Hamas</u> is a Sunni Islamic party, Fatah is a fundamentally secular organisation and allegiances often divide individual families. So this conflict carries the devastating dimension of pitching brother against brother, father against son.

Much stock has been placed on the location of the agreement. "We have pledged our allegiance to God from this sacred place, " said Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, attempting to differentiate it from the series of failed truces that preceded it. The Saudis, too, are keen to put their stamp on the document because, amid criticism of their feudal, intolerant regime that suppresses dissent and the rights of <u>women</u>, they want to be seen as the honest brokers in a region where their power is challenged by the rise of Iran.

The challenge for them will be to sell to the Americans a deal that does not meet its three conditions for lifting sanctions (that *Hamas* should renounce violence, recognise Israel and commit itself to existing peace accords). The reference to "respecting" past accords falls short of the implicit recognition of Israel that Mr Abbas had hoped for. This puts both the US and Israel in a bind. Palestinian infighting enabled Israel to argue that it is not the right time to promote a Palestinian state. Yet Israel has little to gain in the long run from anarchy on its borders. The best hope for both Israel and the Palestinians lies in a two-state solution, and this agreement represents movement in the right direction, albeit modest.

The other significance of the Mecca Declaration is that it implicitly recognises that <u>Hamas</u> is here to stay. The EU offered the declaration a cautious welcome and some member states may now resume diplomatic relations as a cautious first step. For the Palestinian Authority, brought to the brink of financial collapse by sanctions, the key issue is whether GBP750m in frozen aid and withheld tax revenues will now be released. Interim financial help promised by Saudi Arabia may stave off a financial crisis temporarily but eventually a means must be found to put this crisis-ridden people back on its feet. Certainly, <u>Hamas</u> must be nudged gradually towards recognising Israel. In the meantime, the west (Britain and the US especially) must refrain from a simplistic analysis of Palestinian politics as "Fatah good, <u>Hamas</u> bad". The Palestinians rejected Fatah at the ballot box because of its corruption and incompetence and because of the long-term involvement of <u>Hamas</u> in providing much-needed social welfare. Ultimately, it is in everyone's interests that the Mecca Declaration marks a hopeful new beginning.

Load-Date: February 12, 2007

End of Document



Israeli amnesty offer divides militants

Christian Science Monitor July 23, 2007, Monday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 7

Length: 1450 words

Byline: Dan Murphy Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

Dateline: Nablus, West Bank

Body

Sitting with a heavily bandaged right hand at his office in Nablus, Faiz Tirawi says the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade is as committed as ever to pushing Israel out of all the land it seized in 1967 - by force if necessary. And he seethes at the "treachery" of the Islamist group *Hamas*, which he describes as the tool of a "dangerous Iranian agenda for Palestine."

But it wasn't a clash with either of these two old enemies of the Fatah movement, which spawned his brigade, that injured his hand. Instead, the head of Al Aqsa's Nablus unit ruefully explains that it was sprained when he lost his temper and punched an Al Aqsa comrade last week after Israel extended a controversial amnesty offer to wanted Al Aqsa militants.

"I think Israel's policy is to try to destroy Al Aqsa by turning Palestinians on other Palestinians, and some of our leaders aren't being careful enough about this," says Mr. Tirawi. And it's not just him. Al Aqsa's wing in Gaza called the agreement to relinquish weapons "shameful. We carry weapons for one reason; liberating Jerusalem and establishing an independent Palestinian state, which has not been achieved," it reads. "This agreement is going to strengthen other factions who fight the occupation. We urgently appeal to the resistance to avoid falling into this trap."

The goal: Strengthen Abbas, secure Israel

Israeli officials and the Fatah movement of President Mahmoud Abbas, who now only governs the West Bank after losing Gaza to <u>Hamas</u> in a brief civil war last month, says the idea is to strengthen Mr. Abbas while improving security for Israel, something that country demands as a precondition before making meaningful concessions toward peace.

But the signs of deepening mistrust and factional violence in Nablus and other West Bank cities bode ill for the prospects of disarmament by Fatah-linked militias or a turning away from political violence.

If the cracks continue to widen, the process could end up weakening Abbas - who already suffers from the absence of a militant pedigree and the perception of many Palestinians that he's too close to the US and Israel - rather than helping him.

Israel has promised to cancel the arrest warrants for 178 Al Aqsa members if they promise not to participate in attacks against Israel and agree to a three-month period of disarmament and containment, after which they will be absorbed into the uniformed, armed security services loyal to Abbas.

Militants insist on concrete progress

While numerous militants in the West Bank have accepted the amnesty offer, those interviewed by the Monitor caution that if no progress is made on key issues such as a return to the 1967 borders and an end to Israeli incursions into the West Bank, the disarmament will be short-lived. They also are calling for more Al Aqsa militants to be included on the list; in the Nablus area, 121 are included while an estimated 270 are excluded, including Tirawi and his brother Jamal, a senior Al Aqsa and Fatah member who was elected to the Palestinian parliament.

"For now, I've stopped resistance to occupation. The Palestinian Authority has promised that my life will improve as a result," says Mehdi Meruka, an Al Aqsa member who is tired after two years on the run and is cooperating with the amnesty plan. "But you have to remember that this agreement is just ink on paper. If more of my comrades aren't amnestied, if the Israelis don't stop incursions, and if progress towards a state on 1967 borders isn't made, of course we'll rise again."

He says new weapons can easily be obtained and says that to characterize what's going on as an Al Aqsa surrender is wrong. Then during a discussion of his family, he cheerfully shows a video on his phone of his three young sons - all under age 11 - learning to shoot his American-made M-16 and M-4 guns.

Hamas-Fatah divisions

Many Palestinians believe the amnesty is less about directly strengthening Israel's security and more about strengthening Fatah's ability to use its security services to target <u>Hamas</u> in the West Bank to prevent it from strengthening its position there and prevent it, perhaps, from eventually taking power there. A number of the men offered amnesty have been deeply involved in operations against <u>Hamas</u> this year.

But many, such as Da'ass Qanna, the respected Al Aqsa leader in the nearby village of Kufr Khalil, are wary that the amnesty will yield tangible results. Earlier this year men under his command kidnapped dozens of <u>Hamas</u> supporters and local elected officials in a program he said was designed to force <u>Hamas</u> to make concessions to Fatah and form a unity government, which fell apart with <u>Hamas</u>'s Gaza takeover.

"This is a big risk for us because we don't see any concrete commitment to making concessions from Israel," he says. "I don't carry a gun because it's my hobby - if Israel withdraws, we'll have no reason to resist anymore. So we're told that what we're doing is strengthening Abbas. Ok, but there's only so much we can do for him. Without results - most important to me is an end to Israeli incursions - this all falls apart."

The hostility between <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah was on full display during a <u>Hamas</u> demonstration in Nablus last Wednesday that nearly veered into bloodshed.

Fatah-aligned secret police, soldiers, and some Al Aqsa members were out in force to contain the roughly 200 **women** who were peacefully demanding that some 80 **Hamas** supporters, most family members who were arrested by Fatah a few weeks ago, be released.

"Why are most of the protestors <u>women</u>? Well, they've illegally kidnapped most of the <u>Hamas</u> men in Nablus," said a woman who said her husband, Adnan al-Bedawi, a Koran teacher, was taken on July 4. "My husband is just a supporter, not a leader. But they're afraid there will be a revolution here like there was in Gaza."

Some of the <u>women</u> alleged that their family members had been tortured. After Ahmed al-Haj Ali, a <u>Hamas</u> legislator from Nablus who served 10 years in Israeli prisons, and was detained shortly by Fatah earlier this month, started attacking the corruption of Fatah and its policy of arresting <u>Hamas</u> politicians and supporters, he was roughly grabbed and dragged into a nearby police station.

Israeli amnesty offer divides militants

The increasingly agitated <u>women</u> began chanting, "God is great," and tried to press into the compound where he was being held. After an hour, Mr. Ali emerged and called for calm, but then Rammi Nasser, a <u>Hamas</u> supporter recently released from Israeli prison, showed up and was promptly set upon by the linebacker-sized Al Aqsa member Ahmed Abu Selkah and his friends.

Mr. Selkah is one of the Al Aqsa members on Israel's amnesty list, but he is angry that a number of his close friends remain at risk of arrest. He's also among the many Al Aqsa members who see <u>Hamas</u> members as traitors to the Palestinian cause. After Mr. Nasser wrenched himself out of the Al Aqsa men's grasp, Selkah pulled his 9-millimeter pistol from his pants, and chased Nasser around the frightened, milling crowd, many of whom screamed out they were convinced that Nasser was about to be murdered.

The uniformed Fatah security services did not intervene to control Seltah, who earlier had been mingling with them. Instead, other people pushed Selkah's gun down, and Nasser was dragged into the police station. That led to another surge to the gates by the <u>women</u>, with the police pushing and shouting, and eventually firing dozens of rounds into the air to disperse the crowd. More calls for calm were made by <u>Hamas</u> leaders, and a bout of inter-Palestinian killing was avoided.

Militants could be rearmed in three months

Though many Al Aqsa members are participating in the amnesty program and have handed at least some of their weapons in (there is no mechanism in place to verify complete disarmament), the current plan envisions them joining the security services in three months, which means they'll be armed again.

But many Al Aqsa members, such as Tirawi, remain armed. Despite the differences with his comrades, however, Tirawi says that he isn't close to an all-out split. While he says he's frustrated, he's also waiting to see if more militants are offered amnesty and if progress is made on issues he cares about.

"We've lost a lot of people; this is a resting period for us, a consolidation," he says. "The Israelis always use the excuse of our actions as the reason it's not getting rid of settlements or getting its troops away from us. So let's see what comes.

"Do I expect the Israelis to keep their end of the bargain? No, they never do. For now, we'll restrain ourselves to help Fatah's agenda. But if there's a single arrest or assault on us, we'll burn the whole thing down to the ground."

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Load-Date: July 22, 2007

End of Document



Israel Restores Financial Ties to Palestinian Authority

The New York Times
July 2, 2007 Monday
Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 3

Length: 1008 words

Byline: By STEVEN ERLANGER **Dateline:** JERUSALEM, July 1

Body

The Israeli government agreed Sunday to restore full financial ties with the Palestinian Authority, now that President Mahmoud Abbas has decreed an emergency government with no members from <u>Hamas</u>. Israel will resume monthly transfers of taxes to the government as well as return, in installments, about \$600 million withheld from the Palestinians since early 2006.

On Sunday, Israel transferred about \$120 million, the equivalent of a month's payroll for the entire Authority.

The decision ends an Israeli policy of fiscal isolation of the Palestinians that began with the installation of a <u>Hamas</u>-run government in March 2006, after <u>Hamas</u> won a legislative majority that January, beating the rival Fatah faction. The policy, together with a Western ban on aid to the <u>Hamas</u> government, was intended to undermine that government and bring it down, officials conceded at the time.

Now, with <u>Hamas</u> having taken over the Gaza Strip, Mr. Abbas, of Fatah, has fired a <u>Hamas</u>-dominated "unity" government and installed an emergency cabinet led by Salam Fayyad, an independent economist close to Fatah.

Israel and the United States are trying to bolster Mr. Abbas, who favors a peacefully negotiated solution with Israel, and help him create a functional society in the West Bank. Israel views Mr. Abbas as weak and indecisive, but officials see him, in firing the old government, as finally standing up to <u>Hamas</u>.

Mr. Fayyad, educated in Texas and a former economist with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, is prime minister, finance minister and foreign minister. As finance minister, he will be receiving direct transfers from the Israeli treasury -- and from the West. It remains to be seen whether the European Union, which has been paying part of the salaries of up to 80,000 Palestinians through direct transfers to their bank accounts, will now revert to putting its aid -- \$900 million in 2006 -- solely through Mr. Fayyad.

Mr. Fayyad has said he intends, as prime minister of the new government, to pay Palestinian civil servants in Gaza also, even though <u>Hamas</u> holds effective power there. Many Palestinian Authority employees in Gaza work in health and education and many favor Fatah, and it would be politically impossible for Mr. Fayyad to spend all Palestinian income, some of which comes from Gazans, solely in the West Bank. But how he will pay Palestinian security forces in Gaza without financing <u>Hamas</u>, at least indirectly, is unclear.

Israel Restores Financial Ties to Palestinian Authority

Israeli officials said Sunday that they would have no objection if Mr. Fayyad paid Gazans. "Whether he pays Gaza salaries is not our business," said Miri Eisin, a spokeswoman for Prime Minister Ehud Olmert. "This is a Palestinian government that has already outlawed all armed groups outside the official security services, and we want to cooperate with them to give a clear-cut chance for Palestinians to be ruled in a different and effective way."

Some of the money will inevitably go to support <u>Hamas</u> members and groups, but Ms. Eisin said Israel had tried to ensure that it would not be passed to any "nongovernmental groups linked to terrorism." Israel, the United States and the European Union classify <u>Hamas</u> as a terrorist organization and have legal bans on contact with it.

Israel collects taxes and import duties for all goods coming into Israel and the Palestinian territories under a customs agreement. It is then supposed to pass the part belonging to the Palestinians -- roughly \$45 million to \$50 million a month after deductions for Israeli-supplied water and electricity -- to the Palestinian Authority.

But since March 2006, Israel has provided only \$100 million to Mr. Abbas for health and human services, leaving about \$600 million untransferred. That money will now be paid in five or six installments to Mr. Abbas's government, though some \$200 million of it is subject to legal appeals by private Israeli companies, like Dor Alon, which sells gasoline and fuel oil to the Palestinian Authority, to settle unpaid debts.

The Israelis will also, beginning with July, pay the taxes owed monthly, so there will be no further withholding. The Israelis are also holding regular meetings with senior officials of the new government and those close to Mr. Abbas on more extensive security cooperation, partly to ensure that the <u>Hamas</u> rout of Fatah will not be duplicated over time in the West Bank.

But on Sunday, the Israelis were not focused on the Palestinians. They were consumed, instead, with the case of Moshe Katsav, the Israeli president, who resigned after reaching a plea bargain announced Thursday on accusations against him of rape and sexual misconduct. The attorney general, Menachem Mazuz, agreed to accept a deal to spare Mr. Katsav rape charges and any jail time, even though the alleged offenses, if proved in court, would bring a sentence of up to 20 years.

Mr. Mazuz is said by officials to have been concerned by the impact on the state of a rape trial and jail term for Mr. Katsav. He said that some of the events on which the accusations were based took place too long ago, given the statute of limitations, and that rape might be difficult to prove conclusively. But many Israelis are outraged, and some 20,000 people demonstrated in Tel Aviv on Saturday night against the plea bargain.

The Israeli Supreme Court agreed Sunday to hear a petition that seeks to overturn the plea bargain. Mr. Katsav insists that he is innocent, but he will plead guilty under the deal to lesser counts of indecent acts, sexual harassment and obstruction of justice, and pay compensation to two of his four accusers, all <u>women</u> who worked for him.

Shimon Peres has been elected the new president, a largely ceremonial post, and will take over in mid-July.

Also on Sunday, an Israeli military court sentenced a Palestinian belonging to Islamic Jihad, Muhammad Amoudi, to 11 life sentences and 20 more years in jail for his role in a suicide bombing in a Tel Aviv market on April 26, 2006, in which 11 people were killed and dozens wounded.

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photo: A line formed yesterday at a cash machine in Ramallah, in the West Bank, as many Palestinians waited to check their bank balances for government payments after Israel began releasing frozen Palestinian Authority

Israel Restores Financial Ties to Palestinian Authority

money. Israel plans to release about \$600 million in installments. (Photograph by Muhammed Muheisen/Associated Press)

Load-Date: July 2, 2007

End of Document



Peace marchers defy Gaza bullets

The Daily Telegraph (LONDON)

June 14, 2007 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 314 words

Byline: Charles Levinson in Gaza City

Body

AMAL Hellis marched into the crossfire in Gaza City yesterday to plea for peace.

"I am not afraid. I will die to save my family and to save Palestine," said Mrs Hellis, 35, whose younger son Refaat, 17, is a *Hamas* militant, while her elder son Medhat, 19, is a member of the Fatah-controlled security services.

Her sons are on opposing sides of what has become a civil war in the Gaza Strip.

In the fiercest power struggle in the history of the Palestinian people, the radical Islamic faction <u>Hamas</u> is attempting to eradicate forces loyal to the moderate Fatah party.

The success of <u>Hamas</u> in the Gaza Strip raises fears of an Islamist mini-state bordering Israel, led by a regime pledged to destroy the Jewish state.

Last night Fatah-controlled television reported a ceasefire agreement but <u>Hamas</u>, which remains in control of much of Gaza after three days of fighting, denied this.

Earlier, a few hundred Palestinians, including tribal leaders and Islamic Jihad militants, marched to protest at the mounting violence. But as they approached the Al Ghifary tower, near Gaza's beachfront, bullets rained down. The abandoned 18-storey block has been the focal point of fierce battles since <u>Hamas</u> militants threw a Fatah soldier off its roof on Sunday.

The marchers scattered amid the gunfire but refused to bow to the violence. They mobbed a Fatah gunman, forcing him to lower his rifle, then marched into the crossroads separating the factions. Young girls and old <u>women</u> draped in Palestinian flags stood defiant in the crossfire, chanting and trying to make their pleas for calm heard.

Calm descended briefly, but, within minutes, a shot picked off one of the protesters, a man of 20. They charged again into the gunfire, screaming for peace, but several fell as more shots rang out.

Hanna Jouda, a 17-year-old student, said: "The Jews never did to us what our own people are now doing to us."

Load-Date: June 14, 2007



Palestinians celebrate as Israel frees 255

The Daily Telegraph (LONDON)

July 21, 2007 Saturday

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Section: FEATURES; International; Pg. 18

Length: 241 words

Byline: Tim Butcher in Ramallah

Body

ISRAEL released 255 Palestinian prisoners yesterday, prompting a colourful party in the West Bank city of Ramallah - to which *Hamas* was conspicuously not invited.

Almost all of the released men belonged to Fatah, the secular political movement led by Mahmoud Abbas, the president of the Palestinian National Authority. They had been jailed for security offences arising mostly from the second Intifada. The release was a deliberate ploy by Israel to reinforce Mr Abbas just weeks after <u>Hamas</u> seized control of the Gaza Strip.

Among those gathered beside the Israeli-built "separation barrier", which divides the Palestinian and Israeli sectors of the West Bank, were the Roumi family.

They were waiting for 29-year-old Sami, who was jailed in Feb 2002 for membership of an armed wing of Fatah.

The changed political landscape means that Israel is more tolerant of Fatah gunmen. Mr Abbas greeted the new arrivals in a compound where Tony Blair, the new international envoy to the Palestinians, is due to meet the new, *Hamas*-free Palestinian government.

"I thank God that we are honoured by the return of heroes of freedom to their home and the bosom of their homeland," said Mr Abbas.

More than 10,000 Palestinians, including several hundred <u>women</u> and a smattering of under 18-year-olds, remain in Israeli jails.

<u>Hamas</u> leaders have denounced Mr Abbas for making deals with Israel, which controls all access to Gaza and movement throughout the West Bank.

Load-Date: July 21, 2007



<u>Israel's Gaza siege winds down: Witnesses say tanks pulling out. At least 55</u> Palestinians killed in six days; Hamas, Fatah still talking about unity

The Gazette (Montreal)

November 7, 2006 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A24

Length: 360 words

Byline: Agence France-Presse

Dateline: GAZA CITY

Body

Israeli troops, which have been present in Beit Hanoun in the Gaza Strip for six days in their biggest military offensive in four months, began withdrawing from the city, witnesses said today.

"Twenty-four tanks were posted around the hospital. Now I can't see a single one," said Ali Uda, a doctor at a hospital in the centre of the town.

A spokesperson for the Israeli military declined to comment.

According to a third resident, Abdel Halim, about 60 armoured vehicles and tractors had pulled back to the north of the town, close to the border between the Gaza Strip and Israel.

The Palestinian observer to the United Nations, Ryad Mansour, called for the deployment of UN monitors along that border to supervise a ceasefire.

He made the remarks to reporters after meeting yesterday with the president of the Security Council for November, Peru's UN envoy, Jorge Voto-Bernales.

Israel launched the blitz aiming to stop Gaza Strip militants from launching rockets into its territory but the assault has failed to stem the fire, with 35 striking Israel since Wednesday leaving three people slightly wounded.

At least 55 Palestinians and one Israeli soldier have been killed since the start of the offensive. More than 200 Palestinians have been wounded.

At least seven Palestinians died yesterday, including a *female* suicide bomber.

More than 300 Palestinians have been killed since a serviceman was captured in late June. The crackdown has been condemned by the international community.

Saudi Arabia called for an international conference to end Israel's "aggressions" against the Palestinians, SPA state news agency said yesterday.

Israel 's Gaza siege winds down: Witnesses say tanks pulling out. At least 55 Palestinians killed in six days; Hamas, Fatah still talking about unity

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Ismail Haniyeh, head of the <u>Hamas</u>-led government, broke up talks on a unity cabinet yesterday, failing to strike a deal but agreed to continue meeting, officials said.

U.S. President George W. Bush will meet Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert at the White House Monday to discuss bilateral ties and international issues, a spokesperson said Monday.

"There is an agreement on the necessity to form a government of national competence. But we have to agree on a few issues ... to reach a final agreement."

Load-Date: November 7, 2006

End of Document



On border with Gaza, new crisis is brewing

The International Herald Tribune
June 19, 2007 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 7

Length: 658 words

Byline: Ian Fisher and Isabel Kershner - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Taghreed El-Khodary contributed reporting from Gaza.

*

At least one Palestinian was killed Monday at the volatile and closed border between Israel and Gaza, after Palestinian gunmen opened fire on Israeli soldiers near where several hundred people trying to flee Gaza have been camped out for the last few days, officials on both sides of the border said.

Hospital officials identified one dead man, Jihad Madhoun, 35, and at least three injured. A spokeswoman for the Israeli Army said its soldiers had responded to shooting from across the Erez checkpoint but had not confirmed hitting anyone.

The incident highlighted the growing problem at the border crossings between Israel and Gaza, closed since the Islamic group *Hamas* defeated its rival, Fatah, after five days of fighting last week.

In the shooting on Monday, the issue was the several hundred people, most of them Fatah supporters, who have been camped out at Erez, saying they fear for their lives unless they are allowed to escape through Israel to the West Bank, the Palestinian area that Fatah now controls. Their fate remains unresolved: Israel, which closed the checkpoint on Thursday, has said it would not allow the group, which includes some <u>women</u> and children, through.

More broadly, Gaza and its 1.5 million people have been cut off for four days now, and while aid officials say the situation there is not yet dire, a new complication may make it harder for the borders to re-open: Israel will not deal with *Hamas*, which now runs Gaza on its own, even to coordinate moving trucks through checkpoints.

"<u>Hamas</u> is a terrorist organization," said Shlomo Dror, spokesman for the Coordinator of Activities in the Territories, the Israeli government agency that deals with the Palestinian areas. "They can't say on the one hand that they want to destroy Israel, and on the other - we need your help. We won't help <u>Hamas</u>. From our point of view, let them fail."

While Israel has periodically closed the borders to put pressure on Palestinians, independent aid groups say that does not appear to be the case now, as Israel faces a wholly new situation. In the past Israelis were willing to talk to members of the Fatah party in the Palestinian government to coordinate the traffic of food, commerce and humanitarian supplies, but since Thursday, they have been driven out.

On border with Gaza, new crisis is brewing

Now the clock is ticking to crisis after Israel sealed the borders on Thursday, with Gaza almost wholly dependent on the outside world for food, and with 1.1 million receiving some sort of food assistance. Fresh foods like milk and meat are running out and prices on items like flour are rising, humanitarian officials said. Hospitals, already overloaded from those wounded in fierce fighting between <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah militiamen, are reporting shortages of needles, intravenous equipment and anesthesia. Israel has allowed in shipments of medical supplies, including one on Monday.

Human rights advocates say that Israel will have to a new way of letting assistance and supplies in - and that talks, so far inconclusive, have started to figure out what that might be.

"Israel is going to have to rethink its treatment of <u>Hamas</u>," said Sari Bashi, director of Gisha, an Israeli human rights group. "You can't provide for the needs of the civilian population of Gaza without talking to someone in power."

Aid officials say privately that several ideas have been floated, though not agreed on: They include drafting the United Nations or an aid group to coordinate cross-border traffic on the Gaza side, or with any remaining members of the Fatah presidential guard, which had run the border crossings.

As long as the solution does not involve dealing with <u>Hamas</u>, Israeli officials say they are willing to consider anything. "We have no interest in creating hardship - that would play into <u>Hamas</u>'s hands," said Mark Regev, the Foreign Ministry spokesman. "We want to ensure a flow into Gaza of humanitarian support."

Load-Date: June 20, 2007

End of Document



Free Alan Johnston

thespec.com

June 22, 2007 Friday

Final Edition

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Section: OPINION; Pg. A14

Length: 458 words

Byline: The Los Angeles Times

Body

Viewpoint: The Los Angeles Times

If <u>Hamas</u> wants to show that it intends to govern Gaza, and not merely squat on that strip of misery, it should arrange the release of BBC correspondent Alan Johnston.

As of Wednesday, it marked the 100th day of captivity for Johnston, the last foreign correspondent to actually live in Gaza, where he has been based since 2004.

He was abducted in March by a group that calls itself the Army of Islam but is reportedly more of an armed clan of smugglers and guns-for-hire than a political movement. In exchange for Johnston's freedom, the hostage-takers have demanded the release of various Palestinian prisoners, including a cleric with al-Qaeda ties who is being held in Britain. That demand has sparked speculation about whether the reputed head of the Army of Islam, Mumtaz Dagmoush, a leader of the Dagmoush clan who is reportedly estranged from <u>Hamas</u>, is trying to forge an alliance with al-Qaeda or might have been paid by someone else to snatch Johnston.

Be that as it may, <u>Hamas</u> had denounced Johnston's kidnapping even before it routed Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah forces in a bloody, six-day civil war that ended last week, and promised it would free him soon. Immediately upon its victory, <u>Hamas</u> gave Dagmoush 24 hours to release Johnston. The Army of Islam responded by threatening to kill him.

<u>Hamas</u> has promised law and order in Gaza, however, and if, after throwing Fatah rivals off rooftops and other atrocities, it wishes to show the world that it can in fact reimpose civilized norms in Gaza, it should deliver Johnston unharmed.

The Johnston case has broader implications in an age when shooting the messenger has become a standard technique of Islamist terror. It's no coincidence that murders of journalists worldwide are increasing. To suppress information is to hoard power; it kneecaps democratic development.

Consider Iraq, where 32 journalists were killed last year, 13 have died this year and 14 are now held hostage. That compares with 71 journalists killed during 13 years of the Vietnam War. With death threats arriving daily, what kind of fearless reporting on Iraq's civil strife, what kind of hard-hitting investigations of death squads and terrorists or political or clerical corruption can be expected from journalists who wish to remain alive? And consider Afghanistan,

Free Alan Johnston

where two <u>female</u> journalists have been murdered this month in a Taliban campaign of intimidation against <u>women</u> who dare speak out in the media. What kind of civil society can bloom in their silence?

A modern society, whether in Gaza or Iraq, cannot aspire to political accountability if its press is terrorized. The American founding fathers understood this, and so does the Taliban.

Where does **Hamas** stand?

Load-Date: June 22, 2007



<u>Israel promises to free 250 Palestinian prisoners; Arab leaders hope high-</u> profile summit can boost Abbas, restart peace process

The Record (Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario)

June 26, 2007 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Section: FRONT; Pg. A8

Length: 869 words

Byline: Associated Press

Dateline: SHARM EL-SHEIK, EGYPT

Body

Israel's prime minister promised yesterday to free 250 Palestinian prisoners and promised to improve life in the West Bank to try to boost Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas after *Hamas*' takeover in Gaza.

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert made the pledges at a summit with Abbas and the leaders of Egypt and Jordan in the Red Sea resort town of Sharm El-Sheik, Egypt.

The Arab leaders hope the high-profile gathering can lead to a resumption of the long-blocked peace process, rally Palestinian support behind Abbas and isolate *Hamas* after the militant group's stunning and bloody victory in Gaza.

<u>Hamas'</u> new power has raised fears the Mediterranean coastal strip will become a breeding ground for extremism, and a series of messages released by militants ahead of the summit underlined the turmoil swirling around Gaza.

<u>Hamas</u>-linked militants holding an Israeli soldier for the past year released an audiotape of him urging Israel to strike a deal for his release.

A British journalist kidnapped in Gaza appeared in a video wearing an explosives belt that his captors threatened to detonate if security forces try to free him.

And al-Qaida's deputy leader tried to woo <u>Hamas</u> into an alliance and called on Muslims to attack U.S. and Israeli interests in support of the group.

Abbas told the Sharm el-Sheik gathering, "It is time to relaunch the peace process" to tackle the toughest, central issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"Despite the bloody coup in Gaza, we are still determined to work relentlessly to achieve the independence and the freedom of our people," he said. "My hand is extended to work together with the Israelis on the basis of the Arab peace initiative, President (George W.) Bush's vision of two states, international resolutions and the signed agreements."

Israel promises to free 250 Palestinian prisoners; Arab leaders hope high-profile summit can boost Abbas, restart peace process

Olmert did not promise an immediate resumption of peace negotiations, but said the steps he was announcing aimed to prepare the ground for them. "I don't intend to let this opportunity pass," the Israeli said, adding he "told Abbas that we will work with the new government and maintain frequent meetings with it."

The prime minister announced the prisoner release and a series of steps aimed at easing the situation in the West Bank, where Abbas' Fatah faction and the new emergency government he set up hold sway. He promised to "substantially" improve freedom of movement in the West Bank by easing roadblocks and other security measures and reopening trade ties with the territory.

"The residents of the West Bank will feel that choosing the path of no terror or violence, the way of peace and dialogue will bring a better, more comfortable, more peaceful life," Olmert said.

He said the release of 250 Fatah prisoners "who do not have blood on their hands" was meant as "a gesture of goodwill toward the Palestinians." Olmert spokesperson Miri Eisin said the prisoners would be freed within 48 hours of cabinet approval Sunday.

The release would be the largest since February 2005, when Israel freed 500 after a summit in Sharm el-Sheik also aimed at bolstering Abbas, who had just won election as Palestinian president.

Palestinian officials suggested the new release was not as much as they had hoped. "We have more than 10,000 prisoners in Israeli jails. So we want a real and practical release," said Abbas aide Saeb Erekat.

Erekat said that during private meetings at the summit, Olmert had made a pledge to Abbas to "restore the situation in the West Bank to what it was before the intefadeh" -- the outbreak of violence in 2000 that led to Israel sending troops back into parts of the West Bank it had handed over to the Palestinians under earlier peace deals.

On Sunday, Olmert's cabinet approved the release of tax funds Israel had refused to hand over to the Palestinians since <u>Hamas</u> swept Palestinian parliamentary elections in January 2006. Israel is holding \$550 million US in frozen funds, but the cabinet decision did not say how much would be released, or when.

Olmert also promised to allow food and electricity into Gaza, aiming to prevent a worsening humanitarian crisis there that could increase the strip's turmoil.

In a reflection of the worries that taking too hard a line with <u>Hamas</u> could push it deeper into extremism, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak spoke of reopening talks between <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah for the first time since the Gaza takeover. He said a "return to dialogue" was "an urgent necessity that can't wait."

Deposed Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, of <u>Hamas</u>, said he was ready to resume talks with <u>Hamas</u> "immediately." But so far, Abbas has refused contacts with the militant group.

The Sharm el-Sheik summit comes a day ahead of a gathering in Jerusalem of the Quartet of Mideast negotiators: the United States, Russia, the European Union and the United Nations. The hope is that the meeting in Egypt could lead to more in-depth international efforts to prod peace talks that broke down amid violence in 2001.

At the same time, momentum is growing for outgoing British Prime Minister Tony Blair to be named as an international envoy for the Middle East. The Financial Times newspaper reported yesterday the Quartet members had agreed to confirm his appointment at their Jerusalem gathering.

Graphic

Israel promises to free 250 Palestinian prisoners; Arab leaders hope high-profile summit can boost Abbas, restart peace process

Photo: ASSOCIATED PRESS, Palestinian <u>women</u> with pictures of relatives being held in Israeli prisons protest to demand their release yesterday outside the Red Cross office in Gaza City. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas was expected to address the issue with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert at a summit in Sharm el-Sheik, Egypt.; Photo: ASSOCIATED PRESS, Cpl. Gilad Shalit, shown in a file photo, urged, in an audio message posted on a website of the <u>Hamas</u> military wing yesterday, that Israel strike a deal for his release.

Load-Date: June 26, 2007



Brief

The Toronto Star September 2, 2007 Sunday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A14

Length: 379 words

Body

Grenada

Felix gains strength

crossing Caribbean

Hurricane Felix gathered strength yesterday as it pounded Grenada with heavy rains and winds, snapped boats loose from their moorings and toppled utility poles.

The storm was upgraded from a tropical storm to a Category 1 hurricane last night. It was expected to strengthen further as it passed near the Caribbean islands of Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao.

Tropical Storm Henriette, meanwhile, was moving out to sea after dumping rain on Mexico's Pacific coastline. In Acapulco, the storm loosened a hillside in a poor neighbourhood, causing landslides that killed six people.

United States

Canadian suspect's

jail conditions eased

A federal judge has ordered a Canadian terrorism suspect transferred from solitary confinement to more typical pretrial detention.

Mohammed Warsame, a former Toronto resident of Somali descent, was attending college in Minneapolis in 2003 when FBI agents questioned him about time he allegedly spent in two terrorist training camps in Afghanistan three years earlier. He was indicted on charges of conspiring to provide material support to Al Qaeda and of lying to federal agents about travelling to Afghanistan and sending money to an associate there.

Gaza

Teen dies after Hamas

fires on own supporters

<u>Hamas</u> gunmen opened fire on their own supporters yesterday, killing a teenager at a protest on the Gaza-Egypt border, hospital officials said.

Brief

Thousands of flag-waving <u>Hamas</u> supporters gathered at the Rafah border crossing to demand it be reopened. Gaza's only gateway to Egypt has been shut since <u>Hamas</u>'s takeover of the Gaza Strip in June.

<u>Hamas</u> gunmen guarding the border fired in the air as protesters tried to rush the border terminal. A 17-year-old was shot in the head. Seven other people were injured.

Jamaica

7 people gunned down

in pre-election violence

Gunmen in Jamaica killed seven people, including four <u>women</u> and a member of the governing party yesterday, in what police said was political violence ahead of tomorrow's general election.

Recent polls have shown a surge in support for the opposition Jamaica Labour Party. The People's National Party - led by Portia Simpson Miller, the country's first *female* prime minister - is seeking a record fifth consecutive victory.

From the Star's wire services

Load-Date: September 2, 2007



Between a rock and a hard place; Palestinians trapped in a tunnel between Israel, Gaza Strip

Prince George Citizen (British Columbia)

June 20, 2007 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 14

Length: 426 words

Byline: Associated Press

Dateline: EREZ CROSSING, Gaza Strip

Body

EREZ CROSSING, Gaza Strip (AP) -- Trapped by Israeli tanks and <u>Hamas</u> gunmen, hundreds of terrified Palestinians holed up in a stench-filled concrete tunnel at a border crossing Tuesday, desperate to flee the Islamic militants now ruling the Gaza Strip.

Israel took in two people hit by <u>Hamas</u> gunfire, 24 hours after they were wounded in an assault on the tunnel, but officials remained steadfast in rejecting pleas to throw open the border. Three people wounded in the Gaza fighting last week also were allowed into Israel.

Israeli officials permitted a food shipment into Gaza for the first time since <u>Hamas</u> seized control in five days of fighting with the Fatah movement of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. That eased concerns about a humanitarian crisis in the impoverished coastal territory.

The crowd at the Erez crossing included dozens of Fatah fighters, who Israeli officials feared could destabilize the West Bank, which is separated from Gaza by about 50 kilometres of Israeli territory. Officials said most of those seeking to cross were not in danger.

As the standoff stretched on, the scene inside the tunnel grew increasingly desperate.

<u>Women</u>, children and young men sat between two high concrete walls about 10 metres apart, looking tired and grimy. Suitcases and trash were strewn on the ground. Some people sat on mats, others on bare asphalt, including several men with bloody bandages on their legs.

A breeze barely stirred between the walls. The tunnel, which has no toilets, reeked of urine and sweat.

"It's disgusting. People are using the walls as toilets. The <u>women</u> are suffering," said one man, refusing to be identified out of fear for his safety. He said people were on edge and fighting over food.

In one instance, a crowd attacked a food cart, "and only the strong got the food," the man said. Later, Israel sent in five cartons of food, he said. "There was order because they made everybody sit down," he said.

The man said some in the tunnel feared *Hamas* members had infiltrated the crowd to spy on them.

Between a rock and a hard place; Palestinians trapped in a tunnel between Israel, Gaza Strip

Late Monday, gunmen from a small <u>Hamas</u>-allied group, disguised as civilians, pulled guns and grenades out of their luggage and killed the nephew of a notorious Fatah militia leader who had been slain by a <u>Hamas</u> mob last week, witnesses said. Fifteen people were wounded.

Nearly 24 hours after the attack in the tunnel, Israel allowed in two of the wounded Tuesday, army and medical officials said. Three other Gazans wounded last week also were let in. The army did not identify the wounded, who were taken to Israeli hospitals.

Graphic

Photo: Associated Press; Palestinians run and take cover as shots are fired in the air as they wait to cross to the israeli side at the erez crossing, in the northern gaza strip on monday.;

Load-Date: June 20, 2007



Jordan's king likens holy site digging to 'attack': Dome of the Rock won't be harmed by bridge project, Israel says

Ottawa Citizen

February 7, 2007 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A11

Length: 605 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, The Ottawa Citizen; with files from The Associated Press

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

JERUSALEM - Jordan's King Abdullah yesterday accused Israel of "an attack on our holy Muslim sites" by beginning excavation work near Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock.

He warned this was causing "a dramatic escalation" in tensions that could prevent the revival of Middle East peace talks among Israel, the Palestinian Authority and the United States.

Israeli archeologists vigorously denied the Dome of the Rock would be harmed, showing journalists repairs to a wooden foot bridge were 50 metres from the Dome, which is Islam's third holiest site and where Muslims believe Muhammad ascended to heaven. The bridge has been used by Jewish <u>women</u> going to pray at the Western Wall, which is Judaism's holiest site.

The Dome of the Rock, or the Temple Mount, as it is known by Jews, has long been a flashpoint for bitter disputes between Israel and the Palestinians.

It was a visit there in September 2000 by Ariel Sharon that sparked the second intifada, a violent Palestinian uprising that lasted several years.

Eleven Palestinian youths were arrested near the work site yesterday as hundreds of Israeli police cordoned off the area around the Dome of the Rock and refused to allow Muslim males under the age of 45 to enter the Al Aqsa Mosque to pray.

King Abdullah's strong words were considered significant because he is regarded as a moderate Arab leader and because, by treaty with Israel, Jordan's Hashemite monarchy has been designated custodian of Jerusalem's Muslim holy sites.

Palestinian leaders also harshly condemned the project. "What is happening is an aggression," Mohammed Hussein, the top Muslim cleric in Jerusalem, told the Gaza Strip radio station of the <u>Hamas</u> militant movement. "We call on the Palestinian people to unite and unify the efforts to protect Jerusalem."

Jordan 's king likens holy site digging to 'attack': Dome of the Rock won't be harmed by bridge project, Israel says

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's office said construction of the bridge, "located in its entirety outside the Temple Mount, has no impact on the Mount itself and certainly poses no danger to it."

The fresh controversy erupted as it was announced that Mr. Olmert, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice would meet on Feb. 19 to try to restart Middle East peace talks that have foundered for several years.

The Palestinian president, who leads Fatah, condemned the Israeli excavations in Jerusalem when he arrived in Islam's holiest city of Mecca yesterday for crucial peace talks with <u>Hamas</u>'s exiled leader, Khaled Mashaal. The meeting, called by Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah, was aimed at ending a rising tide of violence by Fatah and <u>Hamas</u> factions in Gaza and at forming a national unity government that includes the two warring parties, who have killed more than 70 people in recurring violence since November.

As Mr. Abbas and Mr. Mashaal arrived in Saudi Arabia, their differences were underscored by news reports from Gaza that a *Hamas* loyalist had been killed and three others had been wounded in renewed fighting yesterday. There was also a gunfight at Gaza's border crossing with Egypt as *Hamas*'s delegation left for Saudi Arabia, and several more tit-for-tat kidnappings.

Even as their armed wings continued to hunt each other down in Gaza, <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah both made optimistic claims yesterday that they were close to agreeing on an Egyptian plan that would divide government ministries among them and a few smaller factions, with the crucial security ministry going to an independent.

According to news reports, the deal would keep <u>Hamas</u>'s Ismail Haniyeh as prime minister, but <u>Hamas</u> would have only 10 of 25 cabinet positions, despite winning a shock majority in parliamentary elections 13 months ago.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Sebastian Scheiner, The Associated Press; Workers dig within an archeological site outside the Al Aqsa Mosque compound in Jerusalem's old city yesterday. The Israel Antiquities Authority said the work poses no danger to the holy site, but Palestinians fear Israel will damage it and have warned the work would inflame tensions.

Load-Date: February 7, 2007



Yet again, politics trumps principle

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

July 21, 2007 Saturday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; International News; Pg. 20

Length: 847 words

Byline: Ed O'Loughlin in Nablus

Body

Israel is backing Fatah over <u>Hamas</u> despite the Palestinian group's record on terrorist attacks, writes Ed O'Loughlin in Nablus.

ON AUGUST 31, 2004, two suicide bombers from the Islamic fundamentalist movement <u>Hamas</u> blew up two buses in the Israeli city of Beersheba. Sixteen people were murdered and many wounded. It was the last such <u>Hamas</u> terrorist attack inside Israeli territory.

Three weeks later, an 18-year-old Palestinian woman detonated herself in the Jewish settlement of French Hill in East Jerusalem, killing two Israeli border police and injuring several civilians. The woman had been dispatched by the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade, the armed wing of the Fatah party. Founded by the late Yasser Arafat, Fatah was then the ruling party in the Palestinian Authority, and therefore supposedly bound by the Oslo peace accords.

Since then, Fatah militants have been involved in four more suicide attacks against Israeli civilian targets, killing 20 people and wounding many. The most recent, in April last year, murdered 11 people at a falafel stand in Tel Aviv.

Yet this week it was Fatah, not <u>Hamas</u>, which the Israeli Government singled out for a provisional amnesty, offering to stop hunting 178 Fatah militants if they agree to join forces loyal to the Fatah leader and Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas.

Among those taking the offer is Ala Sanakreh, 27, a leader of the brigade in Nablus's teeming Balata refugee camp. He is wanted by Israel for - among other things - dispatching the French Hill suicide bomber in September 2004.

"The Israelis have looked for me for three years," said Sanakreh this week, reinstalled in his family home off one of Balata's maze of narrow, winding alleys. "They say I planned the suicide attack at French Hill in East Jerusalem. I was involved in the attack. I'm not afraid."

Not for the first time in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the question of who is a terrorist and who is not, or which terrorists should be dealt with and which should be ostracised, appears to have less to do with principle than politics.

Three months before the last Fatah suicide bombing, <u>Hamas</u> had trounced Fatah in parliamentary elections. But the US and Israel are now moving to shore up Fatah's position in the West Bank, after it was routed in Gaza by <u>Hamas</u>.

Yet again, politics trumps principle

Israel's detention without trial of almost all of <u>Hamas</u>'s West Bank MPs has allowed Mr Abbas to appoint his own unelected cabinet without parliamentary sanction.

The US says it will donate about \$US190 million (\$215 million) to Mr Abbas's new regime. But the White House and Israel's Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, have intimated that their support for Fatah will be withdrawn if it resumes contacts with *Hamas* aimed at reconciling the warring Palestinian factions.

It was inconvenient that while the US and Israel were backing Fatah in Gaza, Israeli troops were still hunting down other Fatah supporters in the West Bank.

This week's amnesty for some leading Fatah militants, however distasteful to many Israelis, was a late but necessary step to prevent Mr Abbas's own lawless and demoralised grassroots from turning against him.

In another gesture, the Israeli Government was yesterday due to free about 250 of its 10,000-odd Palestinian security prisoners, most of them Fatah short-timers already due for release.

But few believe these concessions alone will be enough to preserve Fatah, even in the West Bank. In Nablus, Sanakreh said he and his fellow Fatah militants are sceptical that the uneasy quiet can last. Despite the terms of his amnesty he still carries a pistol, and keeps to the streets around his home.

"My judgment is that the Israelis will not forget anyone who was involved in anything like that [the French Hill attack]," he said.

"The Israelis raided three parts of Nablus last night, including here in the Balata camp, and there were exchanges of fire. One guy was wounded and another arrested ... When they come like that it shakes our trust and our confidence in this agreement."

Mr Abbas desperately needs not only a political horizon but also, more immediately, a relaxation in the severe restrictions that the Israeli security establishment has progressively imposed on Palestinian life.

"Israeli [settlement] construction on the West Bank continues at a rapid pace," commented Meron Benvenisti in the Israeli daily Ha'aretz this week. "A regime that is severing and crushing the Palestinian community is taking root; the separation fence is being built; the isolation of the West Bank from the Gaza Strip is taking on the character of a quasi-permanent geopolitical solution; and the chances that Abu Mazen [Mr Abbas] will succeed in establishing a stable government in the West Bank seem distant."

An MP from Nablus, Mona Mansour, one of the few <u>Hamas</u> parliamentarians still at liberty in the West Bank, said she believed that Mr Abbas had little real support left even within Fatah. "I think that Abu Mazen is reaching the end, because everything he is doing right now is coming from the Israeli agenda and the American agenda, it is not for the Palestinian cause," she said.

Graphic

THREE PHOTOS: Wanted ... Ala Sanakreh, an Al-Aqsa Matyrs' Brigade leader, and his brother Mahmoud, 8, in the Balata refugee camp. Photo: Ed O'Loughlin Amnesty...an Al-Aqsa militant signs a form as he hands in weapons as part of a deal with Israel. Photo: AP/Nasser Ishlayeh US too... <u>women</u> rally in Nablus to demand that <u>Hamas</u> members also be among those freed from Israeli jails. Photo: Reuters/Ammar Awad

Load-Date: July 20, 2007



Captured Israeli doing well?

Deseret Morning News (Salt Lake City)

January 10, 2007 Wednesday

Copyright 2007 The Deseret News Publishing Co.

Length: 692 words

Byline: Ibrahim Barzak Associated Press

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip -- After six months of silence, Palestinian militants holding a captured Israeli soldier released the first details of the serviceman's condition Tuesday, saying he is in "good health" and being treated according to "Islamic standards."

However, the militants said they are prepared to keep the soldier, Cpl. Gilad Shalit, until Israel meets their demand for the release of more than 1,000 Palestinian prisoners.

The impasse has held up peace efforts between Israel and the Palestinians.

Abu Mujahid, spokesman for the Palestinian Resistance Committees, made the first official announcement about the soldier's condition. "Gilad Shalit is in good health and is being treated according to Islamic standards of dealing with prisoners of war," he said. "We are ready to keep him for years, as long as our demands are not met."

The militants did not furnish proof to back their statement that the soldier is in good health. Israeli officials were not available for comment.

The soldier was captured in a June 25 raid by <u>Hamas</u>-linked militants, who tunneled under the Gaza-Israel border and attacked an Israeli army post, killing two soldiers and taking Shalit with them. The PRC is one of three groups claiming responsibility.

The raid set off harsh Israeli reprisals and five months of violence, largely ended by a cease-fire at the end of November, although Gaza militants continue firing some rockets at Israel.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has said he is prepared to release some of the more than 9,000 Palestinian prisoners Israel is holding but only after Shalit returns home. Egypt has been trying to mediate a deal, and during a recent trip to Israel, the Egyptian foreign minister said Shalit is still alive.

Abu Mujahid said the militants haven't softened their demand for the release of 1,000 prisoners, as well as all **women**, elderly and minors being held by Israel. "These demands won't change, in a day or two or a month or a year," he said.

He did not elaborate on the "Islamic standards" of treating a prisoner. In a religious ruling issued two years ago after a wave of beheadings of hostages in Iraq, Islamic scholars decreed that prisoners of war must be well treated and must not be killed unless the head of a Muslim state gives the order.

Captured Israeli doing well?

There was a new wave of kidnappings in northern Gaza on Tuesday, rival Palestinian groups said. *Hamas* said three of its men were abducted in the town of Beit Lahiya, and Fatah said two of its members were taken. All were later released. Also, Fatah said one of its leaders in northern Gaza survived an assassination attempt when gunmen opened fire on his car.

Late Monday night, Fatah loyalists kidnapped five <u>Hamas</u> members at gunpoint in the same area. All were released unharmed.

More than 30 people have been killed in factional violence between the ruling Islamic <u>Hamas</u> and moderate President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah in the past month, including a <u>Hamas</u> militant who died Tuesday from wounds sustained in fighting last week, medical officials said.

<u>Hamas</u> has accused Abbas of trying to engineer a coup against the current <u>Hamas</u>-led government by threatening to hold new elections. Abbas announced his plans for early elections after talks over a unity government collapsed.

On Tuesday, <u>Hamas</u> spokesman Fawzi Barhoum called on Abbas to resign, "because he failed to achieve anything."

The Israeli army said Tuesday it has reopened a cargo crossing in the West Bank's Jordan Valley to allow Palestinian farmers to ship their produce more easily. The crossing had been closed for a year because of security concerns, forcing farmers to use a much longer route to export their produce.

At a meeting with Abbas two weeks ago, Olmert promised to ease travel restrictions in the West Bank.

Israel's Interior Ministry said Tuesday the population of Jewish settlements in the West Bank increased 5.8 percent in 2006, to 268,379. About 2.4 million Palestinians live in the West Bank.

Israel is supposed to have frozen construction in settlements according to the internationally backed "road map" peace plan, but Israel insists it must build to accommodate natural growth, despite the plan's ban.

Load-Date: January 10, 2007



Gaza economy on the brink as 85% of residents live on aid

The Independent (London)

July 6, 2007 Friday

First Edition

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Length: 596 words

Byline: Donald Macintyre in Jerusalem

Body

Gaza's industry is in a state of collapse because imports and exports to the Strip have been blocked by Israel since <u>Hamas</u> won internal control of the territory three weeks ago after the civil conflict.

The emergency Palestinian government in Ramallah, in the West Bank, is being urged to do more to avert an economic collapse in the Gaza Strip; 75 per cent of its factories are unable to function because of Israel's closure of the Karni cargo crossing. The emergency administration was set up by President Mahmoud Abbas after the formal dismissal of the *Hamas* Prime Minister, Ismail Haniyeh.

The dire prospects for Gaza's economy since <u>Hamas</u> assumed control of security there is underlined in a report by Gisha, the Israeli human rights agency, which says that 85 per cent of Gaza residents are now dependent on humanitarian aid while production inside the Strip runs down.

The report says that the price of raw materials for household and industrial consumption has already risen by between 15 per cent and 34 per cent and that 30,000 factory workers are likely to lose their jobs. The figure constitutes one-tenth of those in work, supporting 210,000 dependents.

The closures, backed by the international community, which is continuing to boycott <u>Hamas</u>, have affected exports, including those of fruit and vegetables, and imports since 12 June. There are now shortages of flour and sugar for food manufacture. A further shortage of cement is halting construction and the UN Development Programme has announced a freeze on development projects as a result. Some politically unaffiliated businessmen in Gaza say that ministerial opposition in Ramallah to a <u>Hamas</u>-led administration in Gaza is scuppering efforts to reopen the crossings. Israel argues that <u>Hamas</u>'s takeover of internal security, and militants' continuing attacks on the crossings, has also left a vacuum on the Palestinian side which makes it impossible to reopen the crossings.

Two mortar shells fired by Palestinian militants yesterday landed near the Erez crossing, between Israel and Gaza. But the Gisha report argues that the continued delivery of humanitarian aid into Gaza demonstrates that "it is possible to open Gaza's crossings and to permit Gaza residents the passage of goods necessary to live in dignity".

Ahmed Youssef, an aide to Mr Haniyeh, said this week that efforts were under way to find a private-sector solution to the provision of security on the Palestinian side of the crossings, but Israel would need to agree to such a solution.

Gaza economy on the brink as 85% of residents live on aid

Sari Bashi, Gisha's director, said that Israel "is attempting to achieve political objectives by exerting pressure on 1.4 million <u>women</u>, men and children, whose suffering is to bring out the desired change - the overthrow of the <u>Hamas</u>". The report cites as evidence a decision by the Israel Customs Authority to delete from its computers the codes required to allow imports into Gaza. "Cargo intended for the Gaza Strip will not be released until further notification," said Reuven Meltzer, the deputy head of customs.

The collapse of the Gaza economy is also hitting Israeli businesses. The report quotes the chairman of Israel's Association of Industrialists, Shraga Brosh. "The economic boycott on the Gaza Strip ??? will result in a humanitarian disaster, fueling flames and leading to deterioration of the security situation - a situation that will be destructive to the Israeli economy," he said.

Mark Regev, Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman, said: "The alternative is for the Palestinian side to get its act together and revert to previous agreements."

Load-Date: July 6, 2007



Palestinians fleeing Gaza trapped by Israelis at border

The Record (Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario)

June 20, 2007 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: FRONT; Pg. A4

Length: 323 words

Byline: Associated Press

Dateline: EREZ CROSSING, GAZA STRIP

Body

Trapped by Israeli tanks and armed <u>Hamas</u> militants, hundreds of terrified Palestinians holed up in a stench-filled concrete tunnel at a border crossing yesterday, desperate to flee the Islamic militants now ruling the Gaza Strip.

Israel took in two people hit by <u>Hamas</u> gunfire, 24 hours after they were wounded in an assault on the tunnel, but officials remained steadfast in rejecting pleas to throw open the border. Three people wounded in the Gaza fighting last week also were allowed into Israel.

Israeli officials permitted a food shipment into Gaza for the first time since <u>Hamas</u> seized control in five days of fighting with the Fatah movement of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. That eased concerns about a humanitarian crisis in the impoverished coastal territory.

The crowd at the Erez crossing included dozens of Fatah fighters, who Israeli officials feared could destabilize the West Bank, which is separated from Gaza by about 50 kilometres of Israeli territory. Officials said most of those seeking to cross were not in danger.

Witnesses estimated 600 people were huddled in the long concrete passage that leads to the Israeli side of the crossing. About 100 were believed to be fleeing Fatah security men, with the others civilians seeking a better life in the West Bank.

During the standoff, <u>women</u>, children and young men sat between two high concrete walls about 10 metres apart. The tunnel, which has no toilets, reeked of urine and sweat.

Late Monday, armed men from a small <u>Hamas</u>-allied group, disguised as civilians, pulled guns and grenades out of their luggage and killed the nephew of a notorious Fatah militia leader who had been slain by a <u>Hamas</u> mob last week, witnesses said. Fifteen people were wounded.

Nearly 24 hours after the attack in the tunnel, Israel allowed in two of the wounded yesterday, army and medical officials said. Three other Gazans wounded last week also were let in and taken to Israeli hospitals.

Graphic

Photo: ASSOCIATED PRESS, Palestinian men take off their clothes in front of Israeli soldiers to prove they are unarmed before being evacuated yesterday to the Israeli side of the Erez crossing in the northern Gaza Strip.

Load-Date: June 20, 2007



Fatah's backers fear life in Gaza

Sydney Morning Herald (Australia)

June 20, 2007 Wednesday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS AND FEATURES; International News; Pg. 12

Length: 569 words

Byline: Ed O'Loughlin Herald Correspondent in Gaza

Body

THE "sleeve" has long been an unlovely fact of life at the Erez crossing, a kilometre-long cement corridor designed to keep terrorists clear of the Israeli-Gaza border gate.

Known as "the tunnel" among aid workers, United Nations staff and foreign journalists, it was also a concrete manifestation of day to day co-operation between the Israeli Army and the Fatah-controlled Palestinian Authority.

Nobody could approach the Israeli border complex without first being cleared by the Palestinian police at the other end, who co-ordinated movements with their Israeli counterparts.

But that was all last week. Yesterday the only Palestinian Authority security men still visible at Erez were a couple of hundred unarmed Fatah fugitives desperate to flee into Israel. They had camped for four days at the border gate. Behind them, Bedouin looters were dismantling the tunnel, stripping roofing and digging up pipes and wiring.

"If we went back to Gaza, <u>Hamas</u> would execute us," said a 30-year-old man who gave his name as Abu Faras. "We don't have the same ideology as them and they are shooting everybody who has different beliefs."

Abu Faras lay on the floor of the tunnel among a group of injured men, his leg crudely bandaged to staunch bleeding from a gunshot wound.

Along with a dozen others, he was injured on Monday night when gunmen from a breakaway Fatah faction called the Popular Resistance Committees, now allied with <u>Hamas</u>, entered the tunnel and sprayed bullets along it. At least one person was killed.

The faction claimed it was attacking the Israeli soldiers who were posted at the end of the sleeve to stop the fugitive Fatah men from breaking through to Israel. The Fatah men said they were the targets, and that <u>Hamas</u> was responsible.

The day before troops had fired tear gas and concussion grenades to hold back a stampede: yesterday, buses were being assembled on the Israeli side of the border, reportedly waiting for a possible order to ferry the fugitives through Israeli territory to Fatah-controlled areas of the West Bank.

Further away from the gate were clustered the civilians - <u>women</u> with children, the sick and the old - hoping for a chance to leave once the Fatah men were taken care of.

Fatah's backers fear life in Gaza

Israel had already allowed scores of Fatah leaders to flee last week while fighting was still under way. The top commanders, including the Fatah security boss Mohammed Dahlan, left the strip weeks ago.

Mariam Yahi, a 63 year-old cancer patient, was on her way to Tel Aviv for chemotherapy last week when the border was closed. "Two days ago I was OK, but now my situation is getting worse," she said.

"I'm feeling sicker, especially since the Israelis fired tear gas when they [the Fatah fugitives] tried to rush across the border."

The first sign of Gaza's new master, the Islamic fundamentalist <u>Hamas</u> movement, came a kilometre from the border, where a masked but unarmed commander was supervising a checkpoint with one armed subordinate.

"This is as close as we can go," said the commander, who called himself Abu Hassan. "If we went any closer that tank there would shoot at us" - and he pointed to an Israeli tank a few hundred meters inside Gaza territory, its barrel trained on the checkpoint.

He said the fugitives had nothing to fear from <u>Hamas</u> now. "They are no more than kids and jobless men who just want to get out. Everybody knows that <u>Hamas</u> has already freed even the most wanted men it captured."

Graphic

PHOTO: Going back ... the family of a Fatah member waits for permission to return to Gaza, where <u>Hamas</u> is now in control. Many others want to leave. Photo: Getty Images/Abid Katib

Load-Date: July 16, 2007



Israel eases suffering at border crossing; Foreign passport holders, Palestinians with health problems allowed to leave Gaza

The Toronto Star

June 21, 2007 Thursday

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Section: WORLD AND COMMENT; Pg. AA01

Length: 641 words

Byline: Scott Wilson, Washington Post **Dateline:** EREZ CROSSING, Gaza Strip

Body

Israel allowed Palestinians with severe health problems and foreign-passport holders to leave Gaza yesterday in a flight that reflected the humanitarian challenges that have arisen in the days since <u>Hamas</u>'s violent takeover of the strip.

At the same time, Israeli tanks and troops pushed just inside central Gaza near the area where Islamic gunmen ambushed an Israeli border post this month. Israeli military officials said the forces came under fire from Palestinian gunmen.

The fighting yesterday near Khan Younis killed five Palestinians, including two from the armed Islamic movement *Hamas*, which controls the government and security services in Gaza after defeating rival Fatah forces last week. Israeli troops in the West Bank killed two more Palestinian gunmen, making the day one of the deadliest in months between Israel and Islamic groups in the territories. After nightfall, the Palestinians hit back with a barrage of rockets at the southern Israeli town of Sderot. Two Israelis were wounded.

The chaotic scene at the Erez crossing and the stepped-up Israeli military operations, which included Apache helicopter strikes on sites used by Palestinians to launch rocket attacks, highlighted the complexities Israeli and Palestinian officials face in keeping the situation in Gaza from becoming a humanitarian crisis.

A witness told Reuters he saw buses provided by the Israeli army transporting about 100 Palestinians from the Erez crossing southward to the Israeli-Egyptian border. The Israeli military said the passengers would cross into Egypt under a deal struck with Cairo. The Palestinians were among 120 people linked to the Fatah faction who fled possible *Hamas* reprisals.

<u>Hamas</u>'s quick military conquest has split the Palestinian Authority and further divided two territories envisioned as the cornerstones of a Palestinian state. Israel seized the West Bank and Gaza during the 1967 Middle East war. It evacuated Israeli settlements and soldiers from Gaza in the fall of 2005.

After five days of fighting last week that left more than 140 Palestinians in Gaza dead, <u>Hamas</u> is running a parallel government here that is not recognized by Fatah leaders or any foreign countries. The West Bank is governed by a new emergency cabinet appointed by Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, a moderate Fatah leader whose government is backed by the U.S. and recognized by Israel.

Israel eases suffering at border crossing Foreign passport holders, Palestinians with health problems allowed to leave Gaza

Many of the scores of Palestinians caught at the Erez crossing live in the West Bank but were unable to return home because Israel has kept crossings closed.

"We don't have anything to do with politics," said Talal Jabber, 37, an agricultural engineer from the West Bank city of Tulkarm, who travelled to Gaza with Israeli permission as part of a Palestinian government delegation.

The factional fighting that culminated in <u>Hamas</u>'s victory began during Jabber's visit, and he lived in growing squalor inside the tunnel crossing for several days.

Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak ordered the military yesterday to allow Palestinians suffering from serious illness or wounds from the recent factional fighting to enter Israel for treatment. The Israeli military said nine Palestinians passed through the crossing yesterday to seek medical care in Israel. Among them was a 17-year-old boy with leukemia who had been entering Israel regularly for treatment before <u>Hamas</u> took control. Others were injured in recent fighting.

As UN agencies warned of food shortages in Gaza in as little as two weeks unless the crossings open for regular deliveries, Israel sent in truckloads of food. A batch of vaccines was part of the shipment.

Israel also began allowing Palestinians holding foreign passports to leave Gaza. Yesterday, about 200 people with Russian and Ukrainian passports, most of them **women** and children, passed through the crossings after an hourslong wait.

Load-Date: June 21, 2007



A question of right

Windsor Star (Ontario)
July 23, 2007 Monday
Final Edition

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Section: EDITORIAL/OPINION; Pg. A6; Guest Column

Length: 697 words

Byline: Marvin Hier, Abraham Cooper and Leo Adler, Special to The Windsor Star

Body

It is not every day when one of the leaders of a terrorist organization can boast that his op-ed piece was printed simultaneously by the New York Times and the Washington Post. But that's exactly what happened on June 20, 2007, when Ahmed Yousef, a senior leader of *Hamas*, penned an essay defending his group's unilateral, bloody coup in Gaza.

In reaction to a firestorm of protest, The N.Y. Times' public editor, Clark Hoyt, defended his newspaper's position stating, "The point of the op-ed page is advocacy and reminding readers op-ed pages are for debate, and if you get only one side, that's not debate." He quoted Times editors as saying "that the takeover of Gaza was one of the most important stories of the week ... it was our opportunity to hear what *Hamas* had to say."

In 2007, it is difficult fathom the free pass provided to <u>Hamas</u> by the Times and Washington Post. Does their logic mean that had Osama bin Laden, who took responsibility for the murder of almost 3,000 people at the World Trade Center, penned an op-ed piece a week after 9-11 that either paper would have published it?

Let's be clear: The issue has never been about giving ink to <u>Hamas'</u> views. Their statements and actions deserve real-time coverage by the media, just the way the statements and actions of a Hitler and Stalin deserved massive scrutiny and coverage by the newspapers of record in the world's most important democracy.

But back then, from the 1930s to 1950s, the Times failed miserably in its responsibilities to expose, in real-time, the genocidal horrors of the Nazi Holocaust and Stalin's murderous purges and deportations of millions throughout his decades of iron rule in the U.S.S.R. Holocaust scholar Michael Berenbaum put it this way, "as the death toll grows, the headlines shrink."

ON PAGE SIX

The July 2, 1942, headline "700,000 Victims," was posted on Page Six, detailing the murder over a half million Jews, including in mobile gas ovens. Page One was reserved for New York governor Herbert Lehman's donation of his tennis shoes to the war effort. When on Dec. 18, 1942, the NYT finally front-paged a story on Hitler's Final Solution, entitled, "11 Allies Condemn Nazi War on Jews," the Washington Post printed the same story on Page Four, while the Los Angeles Times placed it on Page 10.

As for the Soviet Union, Walter Durant, the New York Times' longtime Moscow bureau chief, won a Pulitzer Prize for stories that buried Ukraine's invisible victims under an avalanche of praise for Stalin's deadly policies.

A question of right

And let us not forget that, like <u>Hamas</u>, Hitler also sought election through the democratic process. But once he took power, he made it clear, just like **Hamas**, that his god was the bullet, not the ballot.

Do we really have to remind the gatekeepers of the media that there is a world of difference between quoting someone in a news story, be it Hitler or bin Laden, and conferring the legitimacy of a byline in the nation's most respected newspapers? If the criteria are simply because it is an important story, then should have we expected bylines from the likes of Auschwitz's Dr. Joseph Mengele, or the Virginia Tech mass murderer's posthumous last will and testament?

Yes, newspapers do have the right and responsibility to inform their readers about dictators and despots. But they don't have the right to bestow credibility upon those dedicated to genocide.

Sadly today, the moral price we all pay when op-ed freebies are provided for terrorists seems lost even on those empowered to correct mistakes.

In his defence of the <u>Hamas</u> piece, Hoyt admitted that a recent op-ed on Veganism "hit much closer to home" than <u>Hamas</u>' record of targeted mass murder and maiming against thousands of unsuspecting, innocent civilians, men, <u>women</u> and children -- on buses, in shopping malls and in restaurants. Neither that record nor their current policy of tossing Arab opponents off of rooftops seems to make a dent in the editorial room.

Can Bin Laden be far behind?

Rabbi Marvin Hier is dean and founder and Rabbi Abraham Cooper is associate dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles; Leo Adler is director of national affairs, Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center, in Toronto.

Load-Date: July 23, 2007



Aid boycott lifted to reward Abbas for new government

The Independent (London)
June 19, 2007 Tuesday
Fourth Edition

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Length: 499 words

Byline: Donald Macintyre in Jerusalem

Body

The US and EU last night lifted their 15-month economic and political boycott of the Palestinian government after President Mahmoud Abbas's expulsion of the militant <u>Hamas</u> movement from the cabinet.

As a group of Palestinians trying to leave Gaza were caught in a gun battle, leaving at least one dead, a top UN official urged the international community not to isolate the <u>Hamas</u>-controlled territory. Karen Koning AbuZayd, head of the UN's refugee agency (Unrwa), warned against reducing aid to the 1.5 million residents of Gaza while it is stepped up for the West Bank.

"Gaza is poorer than the West Bank, and people suffer more," she said. "The suffering must be alleviated by open access for people and goods to move in."

In Washington, the US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, said: "We are not going to countenance that somehow the Palestinians are divisible. We are not going to abandon the Palestinians living in Gaza."

The jailed Fatah leader, Marwan Barghouti, yesterday called for the dismissal of all Palestinian Authority security force commanders and Fatah leaders responsible for the defeat by <u>Hamas</u> last week. This appears to be a reference to Mohamed Dahlan, the Fatah "strongman" in Gaza who was in Cairo for medical treatment during most of the fighting. He was accused by <u>Hamas</u> officials of attempting a "coup" against the <u>Hamas</u> leadership.

In a further development, a leading <u>Hamas</u> official, the former foreign minister Mahmoud al-Zahar, stepped up pressure on the kidnappers of the BBC correspondent Alan Johnston, declaring: "If they are not going to free him smoothly, we are going to use every way in order to set him free ??? safe. I am looking forward to seeing him." Mr Zahar was speaking 24 hours after Mr Johnston's kidnappers had threatened to kill him if negotiations became "difficult". Sources close to the negotiations, however, said that the parties were still talking late in the day.

About 10 Palestinians were wounded at the Erez crossing as militants and Israeli troops exchanged gunfire. Sixty Palestinians, including <u>women</u> and children, had been waiting in the hope they would be allowed to cross into Israel and on to the West Bank. Some were thought to be middle-ranking Fatah officials not on a list allowed through at the weekend. The Israeli military said that the militants had detonated a grenade and shot at the waiting Palestinians, and that its troops then fired on the militants. Witnesses said the militants had arrived to clear the waiting Palestinians for the crossing. The military said it had not identified making a direct hit and had sent rescue

Aid boycott lifted to reward Abbas for new government

services across the border to help the wounded. Ms AbuZayd confirmed that Unrwa had restored normal operations in Gaza after restricting them to emergency food and medical aid during the worst of the fighting last week, which cost some 90 Palestinian lives. "I am painfully aware of the threat to my staff on the ground and I'm keeping the security situation under constant review," she said.

Load-Date: June 19, 2007



Gaza violence stirs new fear; Deaths of 18 in Israeli action bring calls for Palestinians to react.

The Philadelphia Inquirer
November 10, 2006 Friday

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The Philadelphia Inquirer

Found on Philly . com

Section: NATIONAL; Pg. A01

Length: 854 words

Byline: Ned Warwick, Inquirer Staff Writer

Body

This battered and broken Gaza town was filled with the wails of mourning yesterday, interspersed with bursts of automatic weapons aimed at the sky and the fiery blaring of loudspeakers exhorting Palestinians to attack Israel.

Throughout the city, plastic chairs for those coming to pay their condolences were lined in front of houses where people died during the six-day Israeli military operation aimed at rooting out extremists firing Qassam rockets at Israel. More than 50 Palestinians were killed in the street fighting that ended Tuesday morning, most of them gunmen.

But emotions were at their most fevered in front of a cluster of houses where, just before dawn on Wednesday, 18 people, mostly <u>women</u> and children of the same extended family, were killed when artillery shells fired from Israel slashed into the tightly packed neighborhood.

On both sides of the tiny side street, the condolence chairs were placed atop the rubble, scattered sandals of the victims and dried splotches of blood from the attack. Hundreds of <u>women</u> in jilbabs and head scarves at one point chanted, "With souls and blood we sacrifice for you martyrs." An Arab Israeli member of the Knesset, Mohammad Barakeh, arrived to offer condolences but was quickly encircled by screaming and gesturing <u>women</u>. He retreated minutes later, protected by several members of the Palestinian Authority's Presidential Guards.

A short time later, the bodies of the victims, including that of a tiny girl, draped in the flags of the various Palestinian groups, were carried on canvas stretchers down the thronged street, to be buried in a nearby, just-opened cemetery.

The Israelis announced yesterday a technical malfunction caused the shells to hit the neighborhood and apologized. But not before a <u>Hamas</u> leader urged his followers to strike back at Israel, prompting worries that violence in the region was once again about to escalate.

Gaza violence stirs new fear Deaths of 18 in Israeli action bring calls for Palestinians to react.

Whether that happens or not is difficult to predict. <u>Hamas</u>, the Islamic fundamentalist group, is at an awkward crossroad. If it mounts suicide attacks inside Israel after adhering to its unilateral truce for more than a year and a half, it will surely backslide in its efforts to achieve international legitimacy.

A day after Khaled Mashaal, the exiled <u>Hamas</u> leader, ominously called for such attacks, he was on the phone with Mamoud Abbas, the moderate president of the Palestinian Authority, talking about forming a national unity government to replace the present <u>Hamas</u>-dominated and isolated government.

It is hoped this government of experts and technocrats would satisfy the West sufficiently to allow desperately needed donor money and tax revenues to begin flowing again into Gaza and the West Bank. Those funds were frozen after <u>Hamas</u>' election victory last year because of the group's terrorist activities and its refusal to recognize Israel's right to exist. It is hard to conceive of this government having any chance of gaining support in the West if **Hamas** is again launching suicide attacks on Israel.

"The difficulty right now is there is more than one wing to <u>Hamas</u>, and they tend to operate independent of each other," said Gabriel Ben-Dor, chairman of the school of politics at the University of Haifa, making it hard to predict which way the group as a whole will go. On the same day that Mashaal, regarded by many as <u>Hamas</u>' spiritual leader, called for all-out attacks, including on U.S. targets, <u>Hamas</u> spokesman Ghazi Hamad promptly disavowed the statement.

Experts saw little chance that the horrific shelling would lead to a dramatic and sustained leap in violence.

"While I am no prophet, I have a feeling this again is just one of those storms that pass through our area every so often, and it will be forgotten in a few weeks, and then we will wait for the next one," said Shlomo Gazit, a former major general and head of intelligence in the Israeli Defense Force.

"Basically, as Israel and the Palestinians don't go for a real political peace process, they are going to have to face violent military confrontations like this," he said, referring to the sudden spasms of extreme violence.

"Unfortunately, this is part of war," Ben-Dor said. "Civilians get involved, and no one can say one side is more horrible than another. It's just part of a very bloody, very violent, very unfortunate conflict."

In Beit Hanoun, tens of thousands of mourners flocked to the new cemetery, which was hastily opened because no other cemetery in the area had room to bury the 18 victims side-by-side.

The yellow flags of Fatah, the green flags of <u>Hamas</u> and the red flags of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine whipped in the breeze and mourners surged around a father carrying his lifeless 1-year-old girl in his arms.

"I feel lost," said Amal al-Masri, 39, a neighbor of the victims. "Lost between the authorities of Israel and the authorities of the resistance. Israel is the enemy but I demand our parties form a unity government. All they fight for are the chairs [in the cabinet]. They are not thinking of the people. This is no life."

Contact staff writer Ned Warwick at 215-854-2405 or foreign @phillynews.com.

Load-Date: November 10, 2006



Grandmother blows herself up in Gaza

The Times (London)

November 24, 2006, Friday

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Section: OVERSEAS NEWS; Pg. 41

Length: 232 words

Byline: Stephen Farrell in Jerusalem

Body

A grandmother became the oldest Palestinian suicide bomber yesterday when she blew herself up in Gaza and slightly wounded two Israeli soldiers.

Fatma Omar An-Najar was the first suicide bomber to be claimed by *Hamas* for nearly two years.

Its armed wing said that she was aged 57, but her family said that she was 68.

Israel said that its soldiers had spotted her and threw a stun grenade, causing her to set off the explosives early.

<u>Women</u> suicide bombers are rare in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but there have been two this month. Bringing <u>women</u> closer to the front lines appears to mark a change in tactic.

This month <u>Hamas</u> organised a march of <u>women</u> across an Israeli cordon to end a mosque siege in Beit Hanoun.

Eight other Palestinians were killed yesterday on the second day of a large scale Israeli military operation in northern Gaza.

Israel says that the operation is intended to curb rockets fired by <u>Hamas</u> and other militant groups. Palestinian factions say that the rockets are their response to Israeli air strikes and border closures.

The violence came as Khaled Mashal, <u>Hamas</u>'s supreme leader, began talks in Cairo aimed at securing a prisoner exchange with Israel, and the formation of a new Palestinian unity government.

It also coincided with a four-day visit by Louise Arbour, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, to Israel and the occupied West Bank and Gaza.

Load-Date: November 24, 2006



<u>Kidnappers issue tapes of captives; Fate of BBC's Alan Johnston, Israel's</u> Corporal Gilad Shalit may hinge on negotiations; Journalist, Soldier

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

June 26, 2007 Tuesday

All But Toronto Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. A7

Length: 510 words

Byline: Gwen Ackerman in Jerusalem and Saud Abu Ramadan in Gaza, Bloomberg News

Dateline: JERUSALEM; GAZA

Body

Taped messages from British television reporter Alan Johnston and Israeli Corporal Gilad Shalit, both held by captors believed to be in the *Hamas*-controlled Gaza Strip, were released yesterday in the space of 12 hours.

In the videotape of Mr. Johnston, the British Broadcasting Corp. journalist, who was abducted on March 12, wore an explosive-packed vest and warned that his kidnappers, a group calling itself the Army of Islam, will detonate the bomb if anyone tries to rescue him.

In an audiotape purported to be from Cpl. Shalit, the soldier, who was seized a year ago by <u>Hamas</u> gunmen, said his health is deteriorating to the point that he needs hospitalization.

The tapes were released as <u>Hamas</u>, considered a terrorist organization by Canada, the United States and the European Union, sought to cement its control of Gaza, which it seized this month after nine days of clashes that killed 130 people.

Mr. Johnston and Cpl. Shalit each called on his government to urgently negotiate his freedom.

"They must answer the demands so that I can be released from jail," the Israeli said.

"I have spent a year in jail and my health is deteriorating. I need hospitalization. I regret the poor interest shown by the government and the Israeli army in my situation."

The seizure of Cpl. Shalit on June 25, 2006, sparked an Israeli assault on Gaza that lasted until a ceasefire five months later.

Abu Mujahed, a spokesman for the Popular Resistance Committees, a group also involved in the soldier's abduction, told reporters in Gaza before the audiotape was released that the captors' demands include freedom for *female*, young, old and sick Palestinians imprisoned by Israel as well as the release of the leaders of several groups.

He warned that if Israel did not meet the demands, Cpl. Shalit could be held for years.

Kidnappers issue tapes of captives; Fate of BBC 's Alan Johnston, Israel 's Corporal Gilad Shalit may hinge on negotiations; Journalist, Soldier

There was no comment from the Israeli military on the tape. The soldier's father, Noam, told the online news service Y-Net that while he was not certain the voice was his son's, he hoped the tape was a sign <u>Hamas</u> wants to renew negotiations for his release.

Mr. Johnston, 45, was the only Western journalist permanently based in Gaza at the time of his kidnapping.

"I've been dressed in what is an explosive belt, which the kidnappers say will be detonated if there's any attempt to storm this area," he said in the one-minute, 42-second tape that showed him dressed in a long-sleeved red pullover. "I do appeal to the <u>Hamas</u> movement and the British government not, not to resort to the tactics of force in an effort to end this. It seems the answer is to return to negotiations, which I'm told are very close to achieving a deal."

The kidnappers seek in return the release of Abu Qatada, a Palestinian-born Islamic cleric who is suspected of having close links with al-Qaeda and who is held by the British government as a threat to national security.

The <u>Hamas</u> movement is putting pressure on the Army of Islam. "We will not allow the abductors of Alan Johnston to continue holding him, and all options are open," said Sami Abu Zuhri, <u>Hamas</u>'s spokesman in Gaza.

Graphic

Black & White Photo:; Hostage Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit;

Black & White Photo: Abid Katib, Getty Images; Palestinian <u>women</u> at the International Red Cross headquarters in Gaza City yesterday call for the release of Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails. Some Palestinian families want their captive relatives exchanged for Israeli hostage Gilad Shalit.;

Load-Date: June 26, 2007



Girl, 6, describes shooting in Gaza

The Toronto Star

December 13, 2006 Wednesday

Copyright 2006 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: NEWS; Pg. A18

Length: 459 words

Dateline: GAZA CITY

Body

Six-year-old Lydia Abu Eitta was getting a ride to school when masked gunmen stopped her car. She ducked, and a split second later the assailants riddled the car with gunfire, killing her three young cousins.

Osama, 9, Ahmed, 6, and Salam Balousheh, 3, died instantly along with their driver in the Monday morning assassination attempt apparently aimed at the boys' father, Baha Balousheh.

The Fatah intelligence officer, who helped lead a crackdown on <u>Hamas</u> a decade ago and who has escaped two previous **Hamas** assassination attempts, was not in the car.

The little girl who saw it all drew a picture of the bloody scene yesterday, peppering her sketch with pen strokes representing flying bullets, and drawing about 10 simple stick men - the killers - some surrounding her car.

In her drawing, she was under the seat.

"I asked Osama for a tissue" to wipe off the blood running down her face, but "he didn't answer," said Lydia, who always rode to school with her cousins.

The Grade 1 student offered the first eyewitness account of the shooting that prompted a massive outpouring of grief and fury throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip yesterday.

Students stayed home from school, newspapers published angry editorials and dozens of <u>women</u> set up protest mourning tents outside the Gaza home of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, demanding he take action.

The killings raised fears of renewed bloodshed between moderate Abbas's Fatah and <u>Hamas</u>, which have been locked in a power struggle since <u>Hamas</u> won parliamentary elections in March.

"This is something we have never experienced here," said Mayson Muzien, 27, at a protest in Gaza City. "We are asking ourselves: 'Are we close to civil war?'"

As tensions rose, <u>Hamas</u> gunmen opened fire on demonstrators who blamed the militant Islamic group for the slayings. Four were wounded in Khan Younis in southern Gaza Strip.

Last night, hundreds of Fatah supporters marched through Gaza's main street, firing in the air and calling out the names of Fatah members killed in factional fighting.

Girl, 6, describes shooting in Gaza

There were demonstrations, too, in West Bank cities. About 1,000 people marching through Hebron called for the government's resignation.

Survivor Lydia told how three men shot into the air to stop her car.

Then they "started to shoot, shoot from far. The glass broke and then suddenly Ahmed and Osama and Salam died, God have mercy on them."

Peeking through the window, Lydia said she saw about a dozen gunmen with green uniforms and black masks.

<u>Hamas</u> has denied involvement in the shooting and condemned the killings.

Lydia's mother, Reem, 24, said her little girl had trouble sleeping Monday. "When I first got the news, they told me she was dead," Reem said. "As soon as I saw her, you can't believe how I felt."

Associated Press

Load-Date: December 13, 2006



International Briefs

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

December 22, 2006 Friday

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Section: NATIONAL/WORLD; Pg. a10

Length: 476 words

Byline: ASSOCIATED PRESS

Body

Briton charged with murdering prostitutes

IPSWICH, England - Authorities charged a 48-year-old man Thursday with the murder of five prostitutes whose bodies were recovered this month - crimes that terrified this English town and prompted some <u>women</u> to change their routines as a precaution.

Police identified the suspect late Thursday as Stephen Wright, who lives in Ipswich's red-light district and was taken into custody Tuesday.

Gull said that another man, a 37-year-old area resident who had been arrested Monday, was released on bail. Police did not name the man or say whether he remained a suspect, and they gave no details on if or when he would be investigated further.

Rebel monks holed up at chapel after clashes

THESSALONIKI, Greece - Police posted a guard Thursday outside a chapel at an Orthodox monastic sanctuary where rebel monks remained barricaded following clashes that left seven people injured.

Wednesday's violence involved rival groups of monks carrying crowbars and sledgehammers - and is part of a longstanding dispute between legally recognized monks and a rebel monastery that opposes efforts by the Orthodox Church to improve relations with the Vatican.

Gunbattles break out between *Hamas*, Fatah

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip - A fierce gunbattle broke out between <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah militants in Gaza City early Friday, underscoring the fragility of a two-day old truce that had largely ended factional violence there.

The street battle erupted when <u>Hamas</u> militiamen tried to free two kidnapped militants, including a senior member of the Islamic group. It died down after 20 minutes as Muslim clerics and other mediators worked to restore the cease-fire. Nobody was hurt, health officials said.

<u>Hamas</u> said its fighters exchanged fire with Fatah-affiliated militants behind the abductions. The fight quickly spread, drawing in guards outside the residence of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah, and <u>Hamas</u> militiamen guarding the home of Foreign Minister Mahmoud Zahar of <u>Hamas</u> Zahar. Abbas was not in Gaza at the time.

International Briefs

Meanwhile, Palestinians stepped up rocket attacks on Israel, including one that veered off course and hit a Gaza home, injuring a 2-year-old Palestinian boy sleeping in his bedroom, officials aid. Six other rockets landed in Israel, but nobody was hurt.

Holocaust-denier Irving returns to Britain

LONDON - David Irving, the British author who was released on probation after spending 13 months in an Austrian prison for denying the Holocaust, said he felt no remorse for his views Thursday.

Irving spoke upon returning to England a day after Vienna's highest court granted his appeal and converted two-thirds of his three-year sentence into probation.

At London's Heathrow airport, Irving called for a boycott of all Austrian and German historians until laws making Holocaust denial a crime in those countries are overturned.

Load-Date: December 22, 2006



Truce fails to curb clashes

The Toronto Star

December 18, 2006 Monday

Copyright 2006 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: NEWS; Pg. A06

Length: 779 words

Byline: Mitch Potter, Toronto Star

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Control of the Palestinian streets disintegrated further early today despite a hastily cobbled truce to end spiralling violence between the rival *Hamas* and Fatah movements.

Gun battles raged into the morning hours at the home of a senior Fatah figure in the Gaza Strip, capping a weekend that saw militant loyalists from both sides threaten to turn an internal political war into a contest of mortars and bullets on the ground.

One day after a risky and controversial promise to end the impasse with early elections, President Mahmoud Abbas yesterday pleaded for calm, asking Palestinians to reclaim their national spirit and "avoid provocations intended to destroy the democracy and blow up the situation."

Ahmed Baher, acting speaker of the Palestinian Parliament and a leading <u>Hamas</u> figure, echoed the call for restraint, urging "all armed people to leave the streets and stop fighting. We ask people not to use weapons to solve political issues and not to take the political issues to the street."

The two sides later issued a formal ceasefire statement, saying all armed Palestinian factions are to withdraw to their previous positions and allow for a period of renewed calm.

But in threatening early elections Saturday, Abbas appeared to set a countdown to further confrontation.

Most of yesterday's clashes played out in the <u>Hamas</u> stronghold of Gaza, where the day began with a <u>Hamas</u>-led assault on a Force 17 Presidential Guard detachment loyal to Abbas.

The Fatah-backed Force 17 countered later by seizing control of two nearby <u>Hamas</u>-controlled Palestinian government buildings as part of an operation to secure a broad footprint around the presidential headquarters in Gaza.

At least four Palestinians were killed in the clashes, including a 19-year-old <u>female</u> bystander. Among the wounded were a 10-year-old girl and French journalist Didier Francois, 46, who sustained a bullet wound to his leg during a clash in Gaza.

Later, at least three mortar shells were fired toward the presidential complex, one falling short and injuring two Palestinian civilians, in the first attack of its kind since the internal violence first flared earlier this year.

Truce fails to curb clashes

Much of it stems from almost daily street demonstrations as the rival factions flex their military muscle. The clashes intensified after an embittered Abbas spoke on television Saturday, threatening early elections as the only remaining answer to more than six months of fruitless efforts to persuade the rejectionist <u>Hamas</u> movement to relinquish some of its power in a so-called national unity government.

Israeli officials have said little about the degenerating Palestinian situation, with their own government weakened by widespread public anger over the results of what many regard as a failed and futile summertime war with the Lebanese Hezbollah movement.

But many Israeli observers anticipate further disintegration on the Palestinian side, noting that in calling for an early vote, Abbas may be inviting a third crisis - a constitutional showdown - to add to the dire economic and security situations.

"Essentially, what we are seeing is a collapse on the Palestinian side and I am very skeptical of their ability to reestablish their government," said Gidi Grinstein, founder and president of the Reut Institute, a Tel Aviv based thinktank.

"They have a constitution crisis on their hands because a few years ago they changed their laws to compromise the presidency, then held by Yasser Arafat, and empower the premiership, then held by Mahmoud Abbas," said Grinstein.

"So now today you have Abbas as president, holding these compromised powers, and <u>Hamas</u> with the premiership. That means every major aspect of governance on the Palestinian side, including the question of who has the authority to call an election, is subject to dual questions."

Many saw the election threat as a final act of political brinksmanship on the part of Abbas, who is hoping to pressure <u>Hamas</u> back to a final round of negotiations. He is eager to find a power-sharing formula to end U.S.-led sanctions on international financial aid to the <u>Hamas</u>-led Palestinian Authority, which has failed to meet its \$180-million monthly payroll in each of the past nine months.

Palestinian Central Election Commission officials yesterday declined comment on the legality of early elections, which in any event appear unfeasible for at least the next four months.

Abbas has previously said he would not stand for re-election and it remained unclear whether his Fatah movement can count on his renewed candidacy. A weekend opinion poll by the independent Near East Consulting firm of Ramallah indicated the rival factions are virtually tied in public support.

Graphic

HATEM MOUSSA ap Supporters of the Fatah movement brandish weapons and carry a portrait of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas as they march in the Jabaliya refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip yesterday.

Load-Date: December 18, 2006



<u>Desperation Rises at Closed Border Crossings Between Gaza Strip and</u> Israel

The New York Times

June 19, 2007 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 8

Length: 913 words

Byline: By IAN FISHER and ISABEL KERSHNER

Taghreed El-Khodary contributed reporting from Gaza.

Dateline: JERUSALEM, June 18

Body

A Palestinian man was killed Monday at the volatile and closed border between Israel and Gaza after Palestinian gunmen opened fire on Israeli soldiers, officials said. The attack took place near the area where several hundred people trying to flee Gaza had been camped out and Israeli troops fired back.

Hospital officials said that Jihad Madhoun, 35, had died and that five other people had been wounded. A spokeswoman for the Israeli Army said its soldiers responded to shooting from across the Erez checkpoint amid a flurry of gunfire that pinned down bystanders and reporters on the Israeli side. The spokeswoman said the army had not confirmed hitting anyone.

"If there were injuries, it was not necessarily because of our fire," the spokeswoman said.

The incident highlighted the growing problem at the border crossings between Israel and Gaza, closed since the Islamic group *Hamas* defeated its rival, Fatah, in Gaza after five days of fighting last week.

Several hundred people, most of them Fatah supporters, have been camped out at Erez, saying they fear for their lives unless they are allowed to escape through Israel to the West Bank. The dead man was a close relative of Samih Madhoun, a senior Fatah leader executed by *Hamas* militants last week, though it was unclear whether he and the wounded people were among those camped out.

Israel, which closed the checkpoint on Thursday, has said it will not allow a crossing by the group, which includes some **women** and children.

More broadly, Gaza has been cut off for four days now. While aid officials say the situation is not yet dire, Israel will not deal with *Hamas*, even at the low level of coordinating trucks through checkpoints.

"<u>Hamas</u> is a terrorist organization," said Shlomo Dror, a spokesman for the Coordinator of Activities in the Territories, the Israeli government agency that deals with the Palestinian areas. "They can't say on the one hand

that they want to destroy Israel, and on the other 'we need your help.' We won't help <u>Hamas</u>. From our point of view, let them fail."

Some officials said, though, that they were trying to find a way to prevent a humanitarian crisis without dealing with <u>Hamas</u>. "We have no interest in creating hardship -- that would play into <u>Hamas</u>'s hands," said Mark Regev, a spokesman for the Foreign Ministry. "We want to ensure a flow into Gaza of humanitarian support and we are currently looking for solutions. We will have to be creative."

Israel has periodically closed the borders to put pressure on Palestinians, but in the past, the Israelis were willing to talk to members of the Fatah party in the Palestinian government to coordinate the traffic of food, commerce and relief supplies.

Now, independent aid agencies say, the situation is different, though Israel has allowed shipments of medical supplies and there have been some inconclusive talks with aid groups. With Gaza almost wholly dependent on the outside world for food, and with 1.1 million of its 1.5 million people receiving some sort of food assistance, the clock is ticking toward crisis.

Fresh foods like milk and meat are running out, and prices on items like flour are rising, aid officials said Monday. Hospitals are reporting supplies, despite new shipments.

Human rights advocates say Israel will have to find some new way of letting assistance and supplies in. "Israel is going to have to rethink its treatment of <u>Hamas</u>," said Sari Bashi, director of Gisha, an Israeli human rights group. "You can't provide for the needs of the civilian population of Gaza without talking to someone in power."

Aid officials say privately that several ideas have been floated, including asking the United Nations or an aid group to coordinate cross-border traffic on the Gaza side. As long as the solution does not involve dealing with <u>Hamas</u>, Israeli officials say they are willing to consider anything.

The immediate problem, Israeli and aid officials agree, is a breakdown of the Palestinian side of the border: Most of the regular border guards have fled, the offices and terminals looted after <u>Hamas</u> overran Fatah and its militiamen ransacked Fatah-controlled installations.

For the moment, Kevin Kennedy, relief coordinator for the United Nations Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator for Palestinian areas, said the United Nations had stockpiled enough food to last six weeks for people now getting aid. But, he said, that amount assumes that regular supplies from the outside and that those supplies would dwindle more quickly if the borders were not reopened and more people needed their help.

Kirstie Campbell, of the United Nations World Food Program, said the aim was to head off a crisis before it happened: Now, she said, bakers have between five and six days of flour left to make bread, and bread shortages are likely to cause yet more instability in an already uncertain atmosphere.

"It's a main staple of the Palestinian diet, so when there is no bread available at the bakeries, people start to panic," she said.

Israel has been letting a small number of people into Gaza: on Monday they included a Palestinian man released from an Israeli jail; a woman who had been treated in a hospital in Tel Aviv; and Nahim Alian, who arrived at Erez and rested on the customs counter a package wrapped in blue plastic. It contained the body of his son, Mahmoud, just a few months old, who had died in an Israeli hospital. He was going home to bury him.

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photo: Among the few people allowed into the Gaza Strip yesterday was Nahim Alian, with a bundle on the counter holding the body of his 4-month-old son, Mahmoud, who had died of heart disease at an Israeli hospital. (Photograph by Rina Castelnuovo for The New York Times)

Load-Date: June 19, 2007



<u>Defence Minister warnes about massive ground operation; MIDEAST: Not</u> Another Ground Assault

IPS (Latin America)
May 24, 2007 Thursday

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Length: 1240 words

Byline: Peter Hirschberg

Body

The latest warning came Tuesday, when Peretz told European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana, on a visit to the region aimed at dousing the latest surge of violence, that the government was restraining itself from sending troops in on the ground in response to the ongoing rocket fire.

Earlier in the week, Peretz said <u>Hamas</u> should 'not delude itself. We will not be deterred from any decision -- including a ground operation.'

Despite Peretz's breast-beating, for now a major Israeli sweep into Gaza appears unlikely. Olmert, deeply scarred by the debacle of the Lebanon war last summer, seems disinclined to send in massive ground forces. So do most of his ministers, who wonder whether the public has the stomach for what would be a long, complicated operation.

Military officers have also been circumspect about a ground assault, wondering what the endgame would be, especially since Israel does not want to find itself again ensconced in Gaza. That doesn't mean, however, that the latest escalation won't ultimately end in an Israeli incursion into Gaza.

Pressure on the government to adopt an even harsher response to the rocket fire from Gaza intensified Monday evening when a 35-year-old woman was killed by a rocket in the southern town of Sderot -- the first Israeli fatality in the latest round of violence, which has seen some 140 rockets launched into Israel in the last week.

For now, the government is likely to keep up its aerial strikes in Gaza -- a policy it renewed last week in the face of daily rocket salvos into Israel. Over 30 Palestinians, most of them militants, have been killed in the aerial raids so far.

<u>Hamas</u> and Islamic Jihad militants have again become targets as Israeli planes hunt them from the skies. In one lethal strike, four militants belonging to the Islamic Jihad group, which has been responsible for many of the rocket attacks on Israel, were killed Sunday when a missile slammed into their car as they drove near the Jabalya refugee camp in Gaza.

In the deadliest attack so far, eight Palestinians were killed when a missile fired by an Israeli military aircraft smashed into the home of a <u>Hamas</u> lawmaker on Sunday night. Khalil al-Haya was not at home at the time of the blast, but seven of his family members, including his 60-year-old father, were killed in the strike.

<u>Hamas</u> officials said that two of the dead were militants and the rest civilians, but Israeli officials insisted that five of the dead were members of the armed wing of the Islamic group and that three were civilians.

The strike immediately raised questions as to whether Israel was also renewing attacks on the political leaders of <u>Hamas</u>, as it did several years ago when it assassinated the group's most senior leaders. That assessment was strengthened by threats issued the next day by two senior cabinet ministers.

Internal Security Minister Avi Dichter warned that the Damascus-based <u>Hamas</u> leader Khaled Mashaal might be targeted. Dichter, a former head of the Shin Bet internal security service, said that Mashaal, whom Israel tried to assassinate in Jordan in 1997, was 'not immune, not in Damascus and not anywhere else. I'm convinced,' he said in an interview on Army Radio, 'that at the first opportunity, he will be bade farewell.'

Infrastructure Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer followed that up with a more sweeping threat. There was no distinction, he said, 'between those who carry out the (rocket) attacks (into Israel) and those who give the orders. I say we have to put them all in the crosshairs.'

Military officials, however, insisted that al-Haya was not the target of Sunday night's strike, but rather a group of <u>Hamas</u> militants gathered near his home. And despite the threats to renew attacks on <u>Hamas</u> political leaders, government officials let it be known that the renewal of aerial strikes was aimed at the Islamic movement's military wing and not its political leaders.

For now, Israel appears intent on keeping up the pressure on <u>Hamas</u> and Islamic Jihad militants via ongoing aerial strikes, in the hope this will persuade them to cease firing rockets into Israel. Senior ministers have ruled out calls by former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the leader of the hawkish opposition Likud party, to target Palestinian infrastructure in Gaza, like the electricity supply, if the rocket fire continues.

With the trauma of the war in Lebanon last summer still fresh, ministers don't believe there is broad public support for a major ground push into Gaza.

In response to an attack on a border patrol, in which three soldiers were killed and two were captured by Hezbollah guerrillas, Israel launched a major military assault in Lebanon in July last year, but despite its superior fire power it was unable to halt the daily firing of dozens of rockets into the northern part of the country.

After failing to subdue Hezbollah from the air, a hesitant Olmert launched a limited ground offensive that also failed to stem the rocket attacks and which many Israelis believe was poorly managed.

Government ministers and military officials also counsel against a ground operation for fear the army would get entangled again in the densely populated Gaza Strip. Deputy defence minister Ephraim Sneh has warned against re-entering Gaza -- Israel pulled out of the coastal strip in August 2005 -- saying the situation was complicated and that there was no 'magical solution' to the rocket fire.

Army chief Gabi Ashkenazi is known to be against a major ground incursion. The military says that <u>Hamas</u> has built an elaborate maze of underground tunnels in anticipation of an Israeli ground push, and is reticent to get sucked into house-to-house combat in the narrow alleyways of Gaza.

But the death Monday in Sderot and the mounting political pressure on Olmert to take even harsher measures in Gaza as a result of the ongoing rocket attacks could force the Prime Minister's hand. The pictures of hundreds of <u>women</u> and children fleeing the rocket-hit town of Sderot have already forced the government to renew aerial strikes in Gaza.

And Olmert could also find his already shaky ruling coalition further jolted if his more hardline partners demand a harsher response. Avigdor Lieberman, head of the right-wing Yisrael Beiteinu (Israel Our Home) party, has intimated that he would quit the government if the military was not ordered to take more severe measures in Gaza.

'The current coalition has reached the moment of truth, ' he said. 'They must either dismantle *Hamas* or dismantle the government. '

Defence Minister warnes about massive ground operation MIDEAST: Not Another Ground Assault

Some hardline lawmakers want the government to order a major ground operation in Gaza, similar to the one Israel launched in April 2002 when it re-invaded the West Bank following a spate of suicide bombings in its cities.

For now, Olmert will clearly be hoping that the aerial assault on militants in Gaza and the threats to target *Hamas* political leaders will persuade the group to agree to another time-out in the war of attrition between the two sides.

But Olmert -- maybe chastened by his Lebanon experience, when he made bold, unfulfilled pledges about crushing Hezbollah -- has been careful not to offer any instant solutions. 'I don't have simple answers,' he told angry residents in Sderot during a visit to the shell-shocked town on Monday. 'Even when we were in Gaza they continued to shoot at us. © 2007 NoticiasFinancieras - IPS - All rights reserved

Load-Date: May 24, 2007



<u>Temple Mount ignites more Jerusalem ire: Adjacent holy sites raise control</u> issues

Windsor Star (Ontario)
February 7, 2007 Wednesday
Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A6

Length: 579 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, CanWest News Service

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

JERUSALEM - Jordan's King Abdullah accused Israel Tuesday of "an attack on our holy Muslim sites" by beginning excavation work near Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock.

He warned of "a dramatic escalation" in tensions that could prevent the revival of Middle East peace talks between Israel, the Palestinian Authority and the United States.

Israeli archeologists vigorously denied the Dome of the Rock would be harmed, showing journalists repairs to a wooden foot bridge were 50 metres from the Dome.

It is Islam's third-holiest site and where Muslims believe Muhammad ascended to heaven. The bridge has been used by Jewish <u>women</u> going to pray at the nearby Western Wall, which is Judaism's holiest site.

The Dome of the Rock, or the Temple Mount as it is known by Jews, has long been a flashpoint for bitter disputes between Israel and the Palestinians.

A visit there in September 2000 by Ariel Sharon sparked the second Intefadeh, a violent Palestinian uprising that lasted several years.

Eleven Palestinian youths were arrested near the worksite Tuesday as hundreds of Israeli police cordoned off the area around the Dome of the Rock and refused to allow Muslims males under the age of 45 to enter the Al Aqsa Mosque to pray.

King Abdullah's strong words were considered significant because he is regarded as a moderate Arab leader. By treaty with Israel, Jordan's Hashemite monarchy has been designated custodian of Jerusalem's Muslim holy sites.

The fresh controversy over the Dome of the Rock erupted as it was announced Israel Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice would meet on Feb. 19 to try to restart Middle East peace talks that have foundered for several years.

The Palestinian president, who leads Fatah, condemned the Israeli excavations in Jerusalem when he arrived in Islam's holiest city of Mecca on Tuesday for two days of crucial peace talks with *Hamas*' exiled leader, Khaled

Temple Mount ignites more Jerusalem ire: Adjacent holy sites raise control issues

Meshal. The meeting called by Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah was aimed at ending a rising tide of violence by Fatah and <u>Hamas</u> factions in Gaza and at forming a national unity government that includes the two warring parties, who have killed more than 70 people in recurring violence since November.

The differences between Abbas and Meshal were underscored by news agency reports from Gaza that a <u>Hamas</u> loyalist had been killed and three others had been wounded in renewed fighting Tuesday. There was also a gunfight at Gaza's border crossing with Egypt as <u>Hamas</u>' delegation left for Saudi Arabia and several more tit-for-tat kidnappings.

OPTIMISTIC STATEMENTS

Even as their armed wings continued to hunt each other down in Gaza, <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah both made optimistic claims Tuesday that they were close to agreeing on an Egyptian plan that would divide government ministries between them and a few smaller factions, with the crucial security ministry going to an independent.

According to media reports, the deal would keep <u>Hamas</u>' Ismail Haniyeh as prime minister. <u>Hamas</u> would only have 10 of 25 cabinet positions despite holding a majority in parliament.

As the Palestinians made pilgrimages to Mecca's Grand Mosque before formally sitting down to talk, Israel worried about the possible international ramifications if a united Palestinian government finally emerged or if the talks failed, triggering a civil war in Gaza, the collapse of Palestinian Authority and an unprecedented humanitarian crisis on the Jewish state's doorstep.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Adel Hana, Associated Press; making noise: Palestinian <u>women</u> supporting Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, a group linked to the Fatah movement, protest against Israeli construction works near the Al-Aqsa Mosque at Temple Mount, or Dome of the Rock, in Jerusalem.;

Load-Date: February 7, 2007



<u>Israeli dig called 'attack' on holy site: Jordan's king warns of 'dramatic</u> escalation'

The Calgary Herald (Alberta)
February 7, 2007 Wednesday
Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A10

Length: 526 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, CanWest News Service

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Jordan's King Abdullah accused Israel Tuesday of "an attack on our holy Muslim sites" by beginning excavation work near Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock and warned this was causing "a dramatic escalation" in tensions that could prevent the revival of Middle East peace talks between Israel, the Palestinian Authority and the United States.

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King Abdullah's strong words were considered significant because he is regarded as a moderate Arab leader and because by treaty with Israel, Jordan's Hashemite monarchy has been designated custodian of Jerusalem's Muslim holy sites.

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Israeli dig called 'attack' on holy site: Jordan 's king warns of 'dramatic escalation'

The Palestinian president, who leads Fatah, condemned the Israeli excavations in Jerusalem when he arrived in Islam's holiest city of Mecca on Tuesday for two days of crucial peace talks with <u>Hamas'</u> exiled leader, Khaled Meshal.

The meeting called by Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah was aimed at ending a rising tide of violence by Fatah and <u>Hamas</u> factions in Gaza and at forming a national unity government that includes the two warring parties, who have killed more than 70 people in recurring violence since November.

As Abbas and Meshal arrived in Saudi Arabia, their differences were underscored by news agency reports from Gaza that a *Hamas* loyalist had been killed and three others had been wounded in renewed fighting Tuesday.

There was also a gunfight at Gaza's border crossing with Egypt as <u>Hamas</u>' delegation left for Saudi Arabia and several more tit-for-tat kidnappings.

Even as their armed wings continued to hunt each other down in Gaza, <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah both made optimistic claims Tuesday that they were close to agreeing on an Egyptian plan that would divide government ministries between them and a few smaller factions, with the crucial security ministry going to an independent.

According to media reports, the deal would keep <u>Hamas'</u> Ismail Haniyeh as prime minister but <u>Hamas</u> would only have 10 of 25 cabinet positions despite winning a shock majority in parliamentary elections 13 months ago.

Graphic

Colour Photo: Sebastian Scheiner, Associated Press; Workers dig in a walkway to the Al Aqsa mosque compound in east Jerusalem's Old City on Tuesday. The Israel Antiquities Authority said the work poses no danger to the holy site, but Palestinians fear Israel will damage it and have warned the work would inflame tensions.;

Load-Date: February 7, 2007



UN stops relief projects in Gaza Closed borders isolate 1.4m

The Age (Melbourne, Australia)

July 11, 2007 Wednesday

First Edition

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Section: NEWS; International News; Pg. 14

Length: 575 words

Byline: Ed O'loughlin, Jerusalem; With REUTERS

Body

THE United Nations has halted all construction and repair work in Gaza due to an Israeli blockade that has cut off the 1.4 million people in the Palestinian enclave.

A statement from the UN's Relief and Works Agency said it had run out of building materials, including cement.

Among the projects halted was an emergency project to shore up the crumbling banks of a sewage settling pond in northern Gaza, which could drown scores of local villagers if the banks collapse. Five people drowned in sewage earlier this year after a smaller pond in the complex collapsed.

The UN agency was also trying to rehouse hundreds of Gaza families whose homes were damaged or destroyed by Israeli shelling and bulldozers or by recent Palestinian feuding.

The agency was founded to help refugees from the Israeli-Arab war of 1948 but has become the main source of jobs, cash and basic services in Gaza. This is particularly the case since Israeli border closures shut down most private sector business and an international boycott cut off money to the strip's other main employer, the Palestinian Authority.

The Israeli army, which controls all access to the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, has progressively intensified restrictions on people and trade in recent years, citing security concerns including border attacks by militant groups.

In March last year, Israel and the US persuaded most Western countries to join an international boycott of the Palestinian Authority after a surprise election victory for the Islamic fundamentalist <u>Hamas</u> movement. <u>Hamas</u> refuses to recognise Israel's right to exist.

Gaza, which is isolated by land, sea and air, has been harshly affected.

The border closures are part of an Israeli policy to isolate and weaken the <u>Hamas</u>-led Government in the Gaza Strip while allowing enough food, fuel and medical supplies in to avert a humanitarian crisis.

"We are seeing to it that there will be no hunger or disease," said Shlomo Dror, a spokesman for the Israeli Defence Ministry department that deals with the Palestinian areas. "Anything beyond that would strengthen *Hamas*."

UN stops relief projects in Gaza Closed borders isolate 1.4m

Severe restrictions on the movement of goods had already shut down much of Gaza's economy even before <u>Hamas</u> militias defeated forces loyal to the former ruling party Fatah last month. That prompted Israel to shut the borders, apart from the trickle of humanitarian supplies.

According to UN figures, 85 per cent of people in the Gaza Strip now live beneath a poverty line set at \$A2.81 per person per day. Around 6000 people have been stranded on the Egyptian side of the border since Israel closed the Rafah crossing a month ago.

Palestinians in the West Bank, on the other hand, still have some access to trade with Israel, including black market low-wage jobs. The West Bank also remains under the control of the Fatah party, led by the Western and Israeli-backed Palestinian Authority President, Mahmoud Abbas. Israel has resumed payments of millions of dollars in customs revenue to the authority.

Last week the Israeli human rights group Gisha accused Israeli authorities of "attempting to achieve political objectives by exerting pressure on 1.4 million <u>women</u>, men and children, whose suffering is supposed to bring about the change it wants - toppling <u>Hamas</u> control in Gaza.

"In reality, a policy of collective punishment is being imposed upon 1.4 million people, in violation of international humanitarian law and contradictory to Israel's interest." -- With AGENCIES

Load-Date: July 19, 2007



Gaza refugees shelter in border tunnel

The Halifax Daily News (Nova Scotia)

June 20, 2007 Wednesday

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Section: WORLD NEWS; Pg. 16

Length: 495 words

Byline: Sarah el Deeb, The Associated Press

Body

Trapped by Israeli tanks and <u>Hamas</u> gunmen, hundreds of terrified Palestinians holed up in a stench-filled concrete tunnel at a border crossing yesterday, desperate to flee the Islamic militants now ruling the Gaza Strip.

Israel took in two people hit by <u>Hamas</u> gunfire, 24 hours after they were wounded in an assault on the tunnel, but officials remained steadfast in rejecting pleas to throw open the border. Three people wounded in the Gaza fighting last week also were allowed into Israel.

Israeli officials permitted a food shipment into Gaza for the first time since <u>Hamas</u> seized control in five days of fighting with the Fatah movement of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. That eased concerns about a humanitarian crisis in the impoverished coastal territory.

The crowd at the Erez crossing included dozens of Fatah fighters, who Israeli officials feared could destabilize the West Bank, which is separated from Gaza by about 50 kilometres of Israeli territory. Officials said most of those seeking to cross were not in danger.

As the standoff stretched on, the scene inside the tunnel grew increasingly desperate.

<u>Women</u>, children and young men sat between two high concrete walls about 10 metres apart, looking tired and grimy. Suitcases and trash were strewn on the ground. Some people sat on mats, others on bare asphalt, including several men with bloody bandages on their legs.

A breeze barely stirred between the walls. The tunnel, which has no toilets, reeked of urine and sweat.

"It's disgusting. People are using the walls as toilets. The <u>women</u> are suffering," said one man, refusing to be identified out of fear for his safety. He said people were on edge and fighting over food.

In one instance, a crowd attacked a food cart, "and only the strong got the food," the man said. Later, Israel sent in five cartons of food, he said. "There was order because they made everybody sit down," he said.

The man said some in the tunnel feared *Hamas* members had infiltrated the crowd to spy on them.

Late Monday, gunmen from a small <u>Hamas</u>-allied group, disguised as civilians, pulled guns and grenades out of their luggage and killed the nephew of a notorious Fatah militia leader who had been slain by a <u>Hamas</u> mob last week, witnesses said. Fifteen people were wounded.

Gaza refugees shelter in border tunnel

Nearly 24 hours after the attack in the tunnel, Israel allowed in two of the wounded yesterday, army and medical officials said. Three other Gazans wounded last week also were let in. The army did not identify the wounded, who were taken to Israeli hospitals.

An Israeli activist group, Physicians for Human Rights, said Israel's Supreme Court scheduled a hearing today to hear its petition seeking to force Israeli authorities to offer immediate medical treatment to anyone needing it at Erez.

To maintain order at the crossing, Israeli armoured vehicles rolled up to the Palestinian side yesterday, chasing away cars parked next to the tunnel. One tank blocked people from leaving or entering the tunnel.

Graphic

A palestinian youth carries food at a UN distribution point in Rafah, Gaza Strip.;

Load-Date: June 20, 2007



KIDNAPPERS ISSUE TAPES OF CAPTIVES; 'I've been dressed in an explosives belt,' BBC reporter Alan Johnston says on videotape; JOURNALIST, SOLDIER

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

June 26, 2007 Tuesday

National Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. A9

Length: 585 words

Byline: Gwen Ackerman And Saud Abu Ramadan, Bloomberg News

Dateline: JERUSALEM and GAZA

Body

JERUSALEM and GAZA -Taped messages from British television reporter Alan Johnston and Israeli Corporal Gilad Shalit, both held by captors believed to be in the <u>Hamas</u>-controlled Gaza Strip, were released yesterday in the space of 12 hours.

In the videotape of Mr. Johnston, the British Broadcasting Corp. journalist, who was abducted on March 12, wore an explosive-packed vest and warned that his kidnappers, a group calling itself the Army of Islam, will detonate the bomb if anyone tries to rescue him.

In an audiotape purported to be from Cpl. Shalit, the soldier, who was seized a year ago by <u>Hamas</u> gunmen, said his health is deteriorating to the point that he needs hospitalization.

The tapes were released as <u>Hamas</u>, considered a terrorist organization by Canada, the United States and the European Union, sought to cement its control of Gaza, which it seized this month after nine days of clashes that killed 130 people.

Mr. Johnston and Cpl. Shalit each called on his government to urgently negotiate his freedom.

"They must answer the demands so that I can be released from jail," the Israeli said.

"I have spent a year in jail and my health is deteriorating. I need hospitalization. I regret the poor interest shown by the government and the Israeli army in my situation."

The seizure of Cpl. Shalit on June 25, 2006, sparked an Israeli assault on Gaza that lasted until a ceasefire five months later.

Abu Mujahed, a spokesman for the Popular Resistance Committees, a group also involved in the soldier's abduction, told reporters in Gaza before the audiotape was released that the captors' demands include freedom for *female*, young, old and sick Palestinians imprisoned by Israel as well as the release of the leaders of several groups.

KIDNAPPERS ISSUE TAPES OF CAPTIVES; 'I've been dressed in an explosives belt,' BBC reporter Alan Johnston says on videotape; JOURNALIST, SOLDIER

He warned that if Israel did not meet the demands, Cpl. Shalit could be held for years.

There was no comment from the Israeli military on the tape. The soldier's father, Noam, told the online news service Y-Net that while he was not certain the voice was his son's, he hoped the tape was a sign <u>Hamas</u> wants to renew negotiations for his release.

Mr. Johnston, 45, was the only Western journalist permanently based in Gaza at the time of his kidnapping.

"I've been dressed in what is an explosive belt, which the kidnappers say will be detonated if there's any attempt to storm this area," he said in the one-minute, 42-second tape that showed him dressed in a long-sleeved red pullover.

"I do appeal to the <u>Hamas</u> movement and the British government not, not to resort to the tactics of force in an effort to end this. It seems the answer is to return to negotiations, which I'm told are very close to achieving a deal."

The kidnappers seek in return the release of Abu Qatada, a Palestinian-born Islamic cleric who is suspected of having close links with al-Qaeda and who is held by the British government as a threat to national security.

The <u>Hamas</u> movement is putting pressure on the Army of Islam.

"We will not allow the abductors of Alan Johnston to continue holding him, and all options are open," said Sami Abu Zuhri, *Hamas*'s spokesman in Gaza.

The BBC also appealed for his release.

"It is very distressing for Alan's family and colleagues to see him being threatened in this way," the broadcaster said in a statement on its Web site.

"We ask those holding Alan to avoid him being harmed by releasing him immediately."

NATIONALPOST.COM

To hear the audio tape of Israeli hostage Gilad Shalit and see the video of kidnapped reporter Alan Johnston, go to Today on nationalpost.com.

Graphic

Black & White Photo:; Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit.;

Black & White Photo: Abid Katib, Getty Images; Alan Johnston, who was abducted in Gaza on March 12, says on a tape released yesterday that he will be killed if a rescue is attempted.;

Load-Date: June 26, 2007



ISRAEL FREES 255 PALESTINIANS; HOPING TO BOLSTER ABBAS GOVERNMENT

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

July 21, 2007 Saturday

SOONER EDITION

Copyright 2007 P.G. Publishing Co. **Section:** WORLD; Pg. A-3

Length: 700 words

Byline: STEVEN ERLANGER, THE NEW YORK TIMES

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Israel yesterday released 255 Palestinian prisoners in a gesture meant to support Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who said more prisoners would soon be released.

The gesture came out of Mr. Abbas' last meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, who also agreed to amnesty for 178 members of Fatah's Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades if they gave up their weapons and pledged to stop attacking Israel.

Both moves are supposed to help Mr. Abbas and his Fatah faction in their struggle with the Islamic movement <u>Hamas</u>, which conquered Gaza and routed Fatah in June. Since then, Mr. Abbas fired the <u>Hamas</u>-led government and named a new Cabinet led by independent Salam Fayyad. Together they are trying to create, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, a better life for Palestinians with the help of Western aid.

In Gaza, by contrast, <u>Hamas</u> is isolated, and the main crossings for goods and people to both Israel and Egypt have been shut for more than a month.

Mr. Abbas hosted many of the freed prisoners, most of them affiliated with Fatah, at a celebration at his headquarters in Ramallah. Israel holds some 10,000 prisoners. Those released yesterday had at least a year left to their terms, but none was convicted of wounding or killing Israelis.

"This is the beginning," said Mr. Abbas, wearing a checked keffiyeh. "Our work must continue until every prisoner returns to his home." He added: "I thank God that we are honored by the return of heroes of freedom to their home and the bosom of their homeland."

Ziad Abu Ein, the Palestinian deputy minister for prisoner affairs, said those freed had an average of three years left on their sentences. They included Abdel Rahim Malouh, 61, deputy head of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which murdered an Israeli Cabinet minister six years ago.

The release began at dawn, when prisoners in shackles were taken from the Ketziot prison camp in the Negev and put on buses to the West Bank. At the Betuniya checkpoint, they disembarked, some of them kissing the ground, and boarded Palestinian buses to Ramallah.

ISRAEL FREES 255 PALESTINIANS HOPING TO BOLSTER ABBAS GOVERNMENT

One of the prisoners was not released because he apparently had switched his affiliation in prison to <u>Hamas</u>, Israeli officials said. Olmert spokeswoman Miri Eisin said Israel wanted to ensure that "we let out no one from *Hamas*."

Mr. Fayyad, the prime minister, welcomed the release, but said "Israel can allow itself to be more bold," instead of practicing "a policy of small change."

Palestinians want the release of prisoners, Mr. Fayyad told the Israeli newspaper Yediot Aharonot. "But I am a bit cynical in this matter. I look at the meetings that end in festive photographs and announcements of releases. The conflict between us and you is not over prisoners. A prisoner release is better than doing nothing, but it is better to do something significant."

<u>Hamas</u> called the release a crude political ploy. "This step has no real value, because most of the prisoners are from one faction, and most were about to be released," **Hamas** spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri said in Gaza.

In Beit Taamar, a village near Bethlehem, Khaled Hassan Abiyat, 37, was surrounded by friends and family after more than three years in prison. "I thank Abu Mazen for his efforts to release me and my brothers," he said, using a popular name for Mr. Abbas. "I'm very happy; it's an excellent feeling to be free."

The entire village seemed to come out to greet him, and cars were decorated with Palestinian flags and the yellow flags of Fatah. Men carried Mr. Abiyat on their shoulders, and three gunmen with masks and Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades written on their vests shot rifles into the air, joined by another 10 armed men.

On Mr. Abiyat's house was a huge poster with his photo and that of the late Yasser Arafat, with the words "Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades," and he was greeted there by some 80 <u>women</u> singing wedding songs and handing around sweets.

One villager said: "We have a wedding in the village this evening, but tonight we will celebrate two weddings -- the actual one and Khaled's release and homecoming."

Mr. Abiyat's cousin, Muhammad Abiyat, said: "This is an incomplete happiness; something is missing. We want to see the release of all the Palestinian nation."

Graphic

PHOTO: Muhammed Muheisen/Associated Press: Released Palestinian prisoner Samer Awwad, 16, is kissed by his mother upon his arrival at President Mahmoud Abbas' headquarters in the West Bank city of Ramallah yesterday. Israel released 255 Palestinian prisoners, in an attempt to bolster moderate Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in his power struggle with *Hamas*.

Load-Date: July 24, 2007



Mecca peace talks fail to ease anguish: Palestinians angry with political leaders, warring factions

Edmonton Journal (Alberta)
February 6, 2007 Tuesday
Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A9

Length: 487 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, CanWest News Service

Dateline: RAMALLAH, West Bank

Body

RAMALLAH, West Bank - On the eve of peace talks between <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah in Mecca, Palestinians from the relatively calm West Bank expressed anguish Monday over the recent bloodshed in Gaza and exasperation with their leaders for having allowed the violence to continue.

After two months of fighting in which more than 80 Palestinians have died in Gaza and hundreds have been wounded and kidnapped, *Hamas*'s exiled leader, Khaled Meshal, and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, Fatah's leader, were scheduled to be in the Saudi Arabian holy city for the talks.

"I wish they'd all go to hell," said Wahid Abu Assab, who sells pirated CDs and DVDs in Ramallah.

"Only God can help the people of Gaza, not Abu Mazen (Abbas) or Meshal. These people have been killing our country. It is as if they don't want us to have our own nation."

The almost daily television images of masked <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah gunmen running amok, shooting each other and torching and blowing up things in Gaza, made Abu Assab so nervous he recently quadrupled his normal daily intake of cigarettes from 10 to 40.

"Look at this ashtray," he said. "I am upset because I know that everything that we are doing to ourselves helps Israel and the United States."

Diana Buttu, a Canadian-born Palestinian living in Ramallah, and a former legal adviser to Abbas, said every Palestinian understood the recent violence served Israel's interests while badly damaging the reputations of Fatah and *Hamas* leaders.

"This battle is like two bald men fighting for a comb," said Buttu, who has a law degree from Queen's University and a PhD from Stanford University.

"They are not fighting for our national liberation or even for cleaner streets. In fact, it is not exactly clear what they are fighting for at all."

Mecca peace talks fail to ease anguish: Palestinians angry with political leaders, warring factions

The most Ramallah residents seemed to hope for from the Mecca talks was a more durable ceasefire that might serve as a fresh starting point for contentious negotiations that began a year ago to forge a national unity government.

"I don't think they'll sign a real peace that includes a national unity government tomorrow," said Raed Jahama, a Palestinian who was born in Puerto Rico and returned from the U.S. two years ago to help his father sell <u>women</u>'s shoes.

"At best they may agree to stop shooting each other for a while. Still, I guess that would be progress."

The meeting in Mecca, which follows failed talks led by Syria and Egypt, would be about deciding which faction gets what ministries and what to do about the funding and composition of some government security forces, said Buttu.

They would avoid what she called "the big elephant in the room."

The "big elephant" is that both <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah believed they were locked in an existential struggle that only one of them would survive.

"They have to get past this existential question and discuss ways they can learn to live together, but they can't," Buttu said. "These talks will not be a turning point."

Graphic

Colour Photo: The Associated Press; Palestinian <u>women</u> hold banners during a demonstration calling for the end of the Fatah-<u>Hamas</u> factional fighting in the West Bank city of Hebron on Monday.;

Load-Date: February 6, 2007



Israel OKs prisoner releases

Deseret Morning News (Salt Lake City)

July 9, 2007 Monday

Copyright 2007 The Deseret News Publishing Co.

Length: 696 words

Byline: Isabel Kershner New York Times News Service

Body

JERUSALEM -- The Israeli government Sunday gave its approval for the release of 250 Palestinian prisoners to bolster the Palestinian administration of President Mahmoud Abbas, an Israeli government spokesman said.

Israeli and Palestinian officials also said discussions were under way for a meeting between Abbas and Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel, possibly early next week, though the date and location have yet to be determined.

Olmert pledged at a summit meeting in the Egyptian resort of Sharm El Sheik on June 25 to release prisoners belonging to Abbas' Fatah faction. David Baker, the government spokesman, said the gesture was meant to "shore up" the Palestinian leader and his new emergency government, which governs from the West Bank, after the violent takeover of Gaza by Fatah's rival, the Islamic group *Hamas*.

But a political adviser to Abbas, Nimr Hamad, said the release of 250 prisoners was "a very, very limited step," and he said that Israel had rejected a Palestinian request to confer with Israel about which prisoners should be released.

According to Palestinian officials, about 10,500 Palestinians are currently being held in Israeli jails, about half of whom have been charged. Israel's Prisons Authority says that about 10,000 Palestinian prisoners suspected of or charged with security offenses are currently in Israeli jails. About 60 percent belong to Fatah, 30 percent to <u>Hamas</u> and 10 percent to various other factions, a Prisons Authority spokesman said.

Other goodwill gestures offered to Abbas at Sharm El Sheik included a resumption of the transfer of Palestinian tax revenues, which Israel collects on the Palestinians' behalf and which Israel has been withholding since <u>Hamas</u> came to power in democratic elections in early 2006; and a pledge to hold regular meetings between Olmert and Abbas. More than \$100 million in tax money was transferred to the Palestinians last week.

Israeli government officials said the list of prisoners to be released was "still being worked on," but that it had nearly been finalized. The first list presented by the Israeli security services was sent back for revision, according to Israeli news media reports over the weekend, because some of the candidates were very close to ending their prison terms anyway.

In line with a long-standing Israeli policy, Olmert said he would not release prisoners "with blood on their hands," meaning those who had been directly involved in terrorist attacks that killed Israelis.

Hamad, the adviser to Abbas, said he would like sick prisoners and <u>women</u> to be released but that the Israelis were deciding unilaterally.

Israel OKs prisoner releases

The early release of Palestinian security prisoners always arouses opposition in Israel. The cabinet approved the release by a vote of 18 to 6. One member, Avigdor Lieberman of the rightist Yisrael Beiteinu Party, objected to the release in absentia.

Among those who voted against it was Shaul Mofaz, a former defense minister who is now the minister of transportation and a member of Olmert's Kadima Party. Mofaz told Army Radio that he believed that in the end, the Palestinian president would take the money and the prisoners, and then join forces again with <u>Hamas</u> in another unity government.

In the meantime, Palestinian lawyers who were involved in drafting the Palestinian Basic Law, or interim constitution, were disputing the legality of Abbas' emergency government, Reuters reported.

Anis al-Qasem, who oversaw the writing of the Basic Law, and a fellow independent Palestinian constitutional lawyer, Eugene Cotran, told Reuters that Abbas had the power to dismiss Ismail Haniya of <u>Hamas</u>, the prime minister of the previous <u>Hamas</u>-led unity government. But they said the law did not grant Abbas the power to appoint a new government without legislative approval or the right to suspend articles of the Basic Law pertaining to the need for parliamentary approval, as he did last month.

The work of the 132-seat parliament is in any case largely paralyzed, with 45 of its members, mostly from <u>Hamas</u>, currently in detention in Israel. Fatah members of the parliament boycotted a meeting called for July 5, contending that the summer session ended July 4.

Load-Date: July 9, 2007



Israel's secret Gaza servants

The Australian (Australia)
March 15, 2007 Thursday
All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 12

Length: 1594 words **Byline:** Martin Chulov

Body

MATP

Two <u>Hamas</u> executioners tell Martin Chulov how they hunted down and killed Palestinians -- lured by sex and money into becoming Israeli collaborators -- as a warning to other traitors

THE ageing <u>Hamas</u> warrior is nervous as, for the first time in 15 years, he spells out his past as an executioner. His candour, he claims, is sparked by a disturbing trend in Palestinian society that means <u>Hamas</u>'s mortal foes -- collaborators -- pose an even bigger threat than when he called the shots.

Since the darkest days of the al-Aqsa intifada waged by militant Palestinians against Israel, <u>Hamas</u> has been hit harder than any hardline group by traitors. A suicide bombing would almost inevitably lead to an Israeli strike not only on the home of the bomber but also the clandestine cell that dispatched him.

The Israeli reprisals were prompt, usually precise and highly disruptive to the leadership echelons. In Gaza and the West Bank cities of Nablus and Jenin, vengeance traditionally has been just as swift and brutally home-grown.

The <u>Hamas</u> man, who we shall call Ahmad, was one of a small cell of the group's military wing, the Izzedin al-Qassam Brigades, entrusted with tracking down and interrogating Palestinians suspected of collaborating with the enemy.

He says he personally executed seven men, all of whom had colluded and caused the deaths of their compatriots. Most of their paths to treason were driven by two base denominators, sex and money. But others, he claims, were entrapped by the domestic Israeli security service, the Shin Bet, in sting operations that meant they would lose all family honour and possibly risk death if they did not agree to do the enemy's bidding.

He offers the story of a particularly damaging spy.

"He was a merchant selling medical supplies," Ahmad says. "A nurse came to him and bought some merchandise from him. She asked him to drive her home with the supplies and then insisted that he come inside to have a cup of coffee.

"There was food and drink inside the house, and there were other girls there and they seduced him. He ended up having sex with several of them and he was filmed. The Shin Bet sent for him [at that stage Israel maintained an

Israel 's secret Gaza servants

official presence in Gaza]. They said you will work with us or we will show these to everybody. He feared for his reputation and accepted their demands."

Ahmad says the Israelis took the man, then about 20, to settlements where they provided him with training and girls. He then received a call from a member of a network. All was in place. "His main mission was to recruit both males and <u>females</u> in the same way that he had been recruited. He recruited some of his closest family this way. He was trusted in his society and he monitored sheiks and key figures in certain organisations [<u>Hamas</u>].

"The Shin Bet told him to throw stones at a Jeep and he was arrested on a bogus charge so that he could spend time in prison and inform about what the militants were thinking and planning."

While in prison, the man was weeded out by members of the <u>Hamas</u> military wing. He confessed to spying and a file on his deeds was passed on to active military wing members on the outside.

When he was released, he was again confronted, this time by Ahmad and another <u>Hamas</u> man. They interrogated him, then passed sentence. He was shot dead within a week, his body dumped on a Gaza street.

Ahmad says another case he dealt with involved a young Palestinian woman who was trying on lingerie in a Gaza shop. "She was filmed and the Israelis said they would pass the photos around her community," he says. "She also agreed to co-operate. But when she was caught, she was not killed."

Across the restive Gaza strip, which is into week three of relative quiet ahead of the formation of a national unity government, another <u>Hamas</u> executioner, who calls himself Abu Khalil, is waiting to meet us in a refugee camp, just north of Gaza city. He recently was freed from jail after serving a seven-year sentence for helping to hunt down Israeli informants.

"I did not tell them exactly what I did or else I would never be out of there," he says. "I am part of a unit called Maijd, which is the security wing of *Hamas*. Our job was to secretly monitor informants and then take action against them."

Abu Khalil estimates he has executed about 20 informants, most of whom were assigned to infiltrate <u>Hamas</u>. "We prefer to sit off them for a while and try [to] identify their networks. We used to have an underground cell where we would interrogate them day and night. Then we would show his file to a mufti and ask whether there was enough evidence in it for him to be killed.

"If there was, we would throw his body in the street with the garbage."

Even though the Israelis have been out of Gaza for the past 19 months, their influence remains. Many of the networks they put in place before their departure are still providing prescient intelligence and attempting to recruit proxies. Their methods are still the tried and trusted blackmail, sex and money. And their legacy can be seen in Gaza gutters most weeks.

During the past month, according to Abu Khalil, three <u>women</u> have been executed and dumped, accused of spying for Israel and trying to entrap men with sex. No proof has been presented and none will be.

And the reality, with <u>women</u> in particular, can be somewhat blurred. Gaza, like anywhere, has a prostitution industry, albeit small, with many of its practitioners forced into the game by poverty and the death of their husbands. A so-called honour killing is highly unlikely to be prosecuted and, in staunchly Islamic and increasingly conservative Gaza, being a prostitute and being an informant are one and the same. As pivotal to spying and entrapment as prostitutes have been throughout the ages, today's informant can just as easily come from many other walks of life.

Only a few thousand of Gaza's 1.2 million population are candidates for access to Israel these days: truck drivers who ferry goods in and out; labourers who are occasionally allowed in to work in nearby agricultural industries. Drivers are particularly targeted by Israeli spies and several have claimed their Israeli access permits have been revoked after they refused to co-operate.

Israel 's secret Gaza servants

With less opportunity than before to forge new links, Israel appears to be prospering from the established networks. There were many cases of precision targeted killings during the last six months of last year, particularly of senior members of Islamic Jihad who were dispatching rocket-firing teams to the northern strip.

Even more telling was a pre-dawn strike in July last year in central Gaza that targeted the head of the <u>Hamas</u> military wing, the top person on Israel's most-wanted list for the past five years, Mohammed Deif.

Not only was Deif in the Gaza City grey concrete home that midsummer morning, so was the rest of the military wing ruling council. Deif and all inside escaped the 500kg bomb dropped by an Israeli F-16 plane, but he and several others were seriously injured. Deif's wounds included a broken hip and severe lacerations.

Security sources confirm that mobile phone traces helped Israeli officials zero in on the meeting. However, they were able to pinpoint the house only through a spy in place nearby.

It was this strike more than any that raised the alarm for *Hamas*.

Israel's departure from Gaza has not lessened the threat against <u>Hamas</u>. The networks the Israelis put in place have run deep through almost three decades of occupation and the collaborators still seem able to recruit fresh blood.

<u>Hamas</u> claims to have adopted a new policy to deal with rats in the ranks. Both Ahmad and Abu Khalil say executions now will be authorised only in exceptional circumstances. Amid the security shambles of Gaza, some basic tenets of order and justice are beginning to take hold and most informants are being handed over to the police or national security forces.

In the central prison last week, prison governor Abdullah Khattab was responsible for 64 alleged informants. Other prisons across the strip hold an estimated 51 more. Omar attributes the growth in informant numbers to a breakdown in family and societal values in Gaza during the period of Israeli occupation.

"All of the men we have here had drug habits and were born in the '60s," he says. "It is a very typical profile and typical of the group who fell victim to the enticements on offer directly and indirectly during the Israeli period here.

"When the Palestinian Authority took charge [in late 2005] the Israelis may have already had 50,000 collaborators recruited.

"After the Israelis left we had the economic siege with very hard conditions. They started paying a little money for little favours. We are ruled by the tribal system, which is very complicated. And when you have instability in a society the atmosphere will always be ripe to recruit more."

Israel has emphatically said its penetration of Gaza and the West Bank hot spots has given it the edge in fighting terror attacks on its soil. Its penetration of Palestinian society has been pervasive, given the enmity that has steadily increased during the past three decades.

"It's not just the informants who have access to key information," Ahmad says. "It's also people like taxi drivers, who are paid to introduce a couple of messages to anyone who gets in his cab. They are not asked to look for people or key events, just to sow the seeds of doubt or divisiveness.

"These people can do just as much damage as the real collaborators."

Martin Chulov is The Australian's Middle East correspondent.

Load-Date: March 14, 2007



Israeli soldiers fire on Palestinian women serving as human shields to help besieged gunmen escape

The Daily Gleaner (New Brunswick)

November 4, 2006 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A10

Length: 378 words

Byline: By YAKUB RALWAH The Associated Press

Body

Hundreds of Palestinian <u>women</u> in robes and head scarves streamed into a Gaza combat zone Friday to help free gunmen besieged by Israeli troops at a mosque. Two <u>women</u> who came under fire were killed and at least 10 wounded, but some gunmen managed to escape.

The <u>women</u>, many with ties to the Islamic militant group <u>Hamas</u>, left their homes after daybreak in response to appeals on the local <u>Hamas</u> radio station or telephone calls from friends and relatives. By nightfall, they were celebrated as heroes, an unusual role in a deeply conservative society that tends to keep <u>women</u> on the sidelines. Until Friday, battling Israeli troops had been men's business in Gaza.

The mosque standoff came on the third day of Israel's fiercest bid in months to halt Palestinian rocket fire on Israeli border communities. The offensive began Wednesday, when Israeli forces took over the northern Gaza town of Beit Hanoun, close to the border with Israel.

In all, 35 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza since Wednesday, including 17 on Friday. Among those killed Friday were the two <u>women</u> protesters, a 16- year-old boy, two medics and at least 10 militants. Most of the deaths Friday were a result of a series of Israeli air strikes after sundown. In the deadliest hit, five Palestinians were killed in an Israeli strike in the Jebaliya refugee camp.

In the most dramatic episode of the Beit Hanoun incursion, dozens of Palestinian gunmen, many from <u>Hamas</u>, took cover in the town's Al Nasser Mosque on Thursday and were quickly surrounded by Israeli forces. The two sides exchanged fire throughout the night. An army bulldozer knocked down an outer wall of the mosque, causing the ceiling to collapse.

On Friday morning, Al Aqsa Radio, the local <u>Hamas</u> station, broadcast appeals to <u>women</u> to come to the rescue of the trapped gunmen. Hundreds responded, many of them <u>Hamas</u> supporters. The <u>women</u> marched toward the mosque, coming under Israeli fire at times, and approached armoured personnel carriers and bulldozers near the mosque.

Volleys of shots were fired toward them, sending the group rushing toward a nearby wall for cover, according to Associated Press Television News footage.

Two women, both age 40, were shot and killed, and at least 10 others were wounded, hospital officials said.

Israeli soldiers fire on Palestinian women serving as human shields to help besieged gunmen escape

Load-Date: November 6, 2006



Women confront troops

The Philadelphia Inquirer
November 4, 2006 Saturday

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The Philadelphia Inquirer

Found on Philly . com

Section: NATIONAL; Pg. A02

Length: 716 words

Byline: Richard Boudreaux and Rushdi abu Alouf, Los Angeles Times

Body

About 200 veiled Palestinian <u>women</u> broke through an Israeli troop and tank cordon around a mosque to serve as human shields for dozens of <u>Hamas</u> gunmen yesterday.

The <u>Hamas</u> fighters, some dressed in <u>women</u>'s clothing, escaped, but two of the <u>women</u> were killed by Israeli fire, and 17 wounded, on one of the deadliest days of fighting in the coastal territory this year.

The <u>women</u>'s uprising brought a dramatic end to a 15-hour standoff and served as a surprise setback for Israeli forces that had stormed the town of Beit Hanoun on Wednesday to root out stockpiles of crude Qassam rockets and the extremists who launch them into Israel.

An unarmed 17-year-old male and a <u>Hamas</u> fighter also were killed in Beit Hanoun yesterday, bringing the death toll in the three-day-old operation to 13 Palestinian fighters, seven civilians, and one Israeli soldier.

With Israelis occupying most of the town, the fighters had taken refuge Thursday in Nasir Mosque and exchanged fire with the Israelis throughout the day.

After a frantic night of organizing, coordinated by cell phone with the gunmen in the mosque, the <u>women</u> marched yesterday morning from the neighboring town of Beit Lahiya to take up their mission as shields. They brought extra robes and veils to disguise some of the 73 gunmen as <u>women</u> during their flight.

"We risked our lives to save our sons," said Jamela Shanti, 45, a member of the Palestinian parliament and an organizer of the operation.

Most of the gunmen belong to the armed wing of <u>Hamas</u>, the Islamist movement that governs the Palestinian territories. Israeli soldiers trying to force their surrender also hurled stun and smoke grenades at the mosque and knocked down an outer wall with a bulldozer late Thursday, weakening the entire structure, residents of the town said.

At that point, *Hamas* leaders devised the plan that depended on a large number of unarmed *female* volunteers.

Women confront troops

Shanti, one of two Gaza <u>women</u> in <u>Hamas'</u> parliamentary delegation, said it was hashed out during a 2 a.m. meeting of the party leadership. Two hours later, she began recruiting other <u>women</u> to help. As dawn broke yesterday, the <u>Hamas</u> radio station urged <u>women</u> to gather for a midmorning march to Beit Hanoun - a call repeated over mosque loudspeakers in several northern Gaza towns.

The lead group of <u>women</u> approached the besieged mosque on foot, shouting at the Israelis to leave Gaza. Israeli soldiers turned from the mosque and opened fire. One woman, Ibtesam Masoud, 42, died at the scene and another, who was not identified, died in a hospital several hours later, Palestinian medical officials said.

An Israeli army spokesman said soldiers had spotted two gunmen hiding among the <u>women</u> and fired at them. Footage filmed by Reuters and other news organizations showed no men in the crowd at the time.

In the ensuing melee, the crowd retreated, regrouped and advanced again, pushing its way inside the Israeli cordon. The soldiers held their fire, witnesses said, and the <u>women</u> entered the mosque and guided the gunmen out.

Abu Ubaida, a *Hamas* spokesman, said all the fighters escaped unharmed, many by way of a hole connecting the mosque to an adjacent house.

"It was a very complicated operation," Ubaida said, "but our fighters managed to survive and get out of town."

The Israeli spokesman said the fighters escaped in plain sight, protected by a crowd of <u>women</u> too numerous for the soldiers to control.

Shortly afterward, the mosque's roof collapsed.

Television footage of the scene was rebroadcast throughout the day across the Middle East along with commentary in Arab media praising the *women*'s courage.

Sharon Worsens

Ariel Sharon, who has been comatose for months, was in an intensive-care unit near Tel Aviv yesterday after an infection attacked his heart, raising new concerns about his survival.

The Chaim ShebaMedical Center, where the former Israeli prime minister

is a patient said his overall condition had deteriorated but was now stable.

Sharon, 78, who has been in a coma since suffering a major stroke in January, contracted

a new infection that affected his heart.

He has undergone

several extensive brain operations to stop bleeding, in addition to more minor procedures.

After a small stroke in December, he was put on blood thinners,

then he experienced a severe brain hemorrhage Jan. 4.

Associated Press

Load-Date: November 4, 2006



Granny suicide bomber

Weekend Australian

November 25, 2006 Saturday

All-round Country Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 14

Length: 402 words

Byline: Stephen Farrell, Abraham Rabinovich

Body

Additional reporting: The Times

A GRANDMOTHER aged 68 became the oldest Palestinian suicide bomber when she blew herself up in Gaza yesterday, wounding two Israeli soldiers.

Fatma Omar An-Najar was the first suicide bomber to be claimed by <u>Hamas</u> for nearly two years. The group's armed wing said she was aged 57, but her family said she was 68.

Israel said soldiers had spotted the woman and threw a stun grenade at her, causing her to set off the explosives.

<u>Women</u> suicide bombers are rare in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but there have been two this month, signalling an apparent change in tactics. <u>Hamas</u> organised a march of <u>women</u> through an Israeli military cordon this month to end Israel's siege of a mosque in Beit Hanoun.

The Israeli military killed eight other Palestinians yesterday on the second day of a large-scale invasion of northern Gaza.

Israel says the offensive is intended to curb rockets fired by <u>Hamas</u> and other militant groups. The Palestinians say the rockets are their response to Israeli air strikes and border closures.

But despite Israeli army preparations for the biggest offensive yet in the Gaza Strip. both sides signalled readiness for a ceasefire.

<u>Hamas</u> leader Khaled Mashal began talks in Cairo aimed at securing a prisoner exchange with Israel, and the formation of a Palestinian unity government. And a leader of Islamic Jihad, Khader Habib, said his organisation, with <u>Hamas</u>, Fatah and other militant groups, was prepared to stop firing rockets at Israel if Israel halted military attacks.

"For the good of the national Palestinian interest, there is a position supporting a ceasefire by stopping rocket fire in return for an end to the aggression against our people in Gaza and the West Bank," Mr Habib said.

On the Israeli side, former national security council chief Giora Eiland said the Government was seeking a de facto ceasefire that would include a halt in Palestinian rocket attacks in return for an end to Israel's assassinations.

Granny suicide bomber

Many Israeli army officers as well as political figures have demanded a massive invasion of the Gaza Strip by several divisions to uproot the Palestinian militant infrastructure.

The Government says it has been reluctant to undertake such an operation in the densely populated Palestinian area. But in recent days, Israeli units have begun deploying for an offensive that will reportedly not involve the retaking of the entire strip but will be prolonged and intensive.

Load-Date: November 24, 2006



Palestinian leader promotes peace at Cornell U.

University Wire September 21, 2007 Friday

Copyright 2007 Cornell Daily Sun via U-Wire

Length: 761 words

Byline: By Masha Rifkin, Cornell Daily Sun; SOURCE: Cornell U.

Dateline: ITHACA, N.Y.

Body

Thousands of miles away on another side of the world, fighting between Israel and Palestine is an ever-present concern to millions of people.

On this side of the globe in Bailey Hall at Cornell University, Dr. Hanan Ashrawi, a Palestinian leader, brought the focus of this conflict to Cornell students yesterday by discussing possible ways to bring peace to the violence-plagued region.

Ashrawi's lecture, rhetorically titled, "Peace in the Middle East: Who Needs It?" focused on ways to bring an end to conflict. Ashrawi is perhaps a good source for one side of the answer to this question, as her accomplishments include founding the Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy (MIFTAH), as well as a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council and spokesperson of the Palestinian Delegation to the Middle East Peace Process, to name a few.

Ashrawi explained that she did not mean to be "facetious" with her title, but she wanted to address the fact that "people believe it's too complex a situation to handle," referring to geography, religion and culture as some of the complexities.

During the course of her lecture, Ashrawi repeated many times that what is needed in Palestine is an end to the "occupation" by Israel, as well as a two-state solution. According to Ashrawi, the two-state solution would be defined by the pre-1967 borders. These were the borders of Israel and Palestine that were in place before the Six-Day War. Ashrawi also said, "Palestinians have accepted a two-state solution."

In response to a question naming the concern of many Israelis that lifting the occupation will endanger civilian life in Israel, Ashrawi responded, "You know I always get this question ... I don't know, how do we give psychotherapy to the collective Israeli mind?" She continued by saying, "you know, it's pretty racist to say, 'you cannot trust Palestinians ... how do you know?'"

Ashrawi recently co-formed a small centrist party in Palestine but received a disappointing 2.4 percent of the vote. When asked why she received such little support, Ashrawi replied, "In the world of extremism, the people want somebody strong. A party whose sources of power and legitimacy are money; weapons; power."

<u>Hamas</u>, an organization known for endorsing terrorism, was chosen as the leading party. According to the Embassy of Israel, since the beginning of the second Intifada, <u>Hamas</u> has been responsible for the deaths of at least 400

Palestinian leader promotes peace at Cornell U.

Israelis, as well as more than 2,500 wounded in more than 450 terrorist attacks. They continue to fire missiles into Israel unto this day.

Ashrawi claimed, however, that, "<u>Hamas</u> has already modified their political agenda into one for peace ... in fact they have told Islamic Jihad to stop suicide bombing." <u>Hamas</u> recently released a controversial children's television program, in which a Mickey Mouse look-alike spews messages of hatred and violence for Jews, Israel and the United States. When asked to clarify how <u>Hamas</u>' new political agenda involves this cartoon, Ashrawi was quick to correct that "they [<u>Hamas</u>] are not perfect."

Ashrawi also discussed different methods to peace. One method she named is the wall that is currently being built in Israel to separate Palestinian territories from Israel. The wall is controversial, as Israel claims it is to keep terrorists out, and the Palestinian Territories worry that it separates the people from their own land. On this matter, Ashrawi stated, "The wall is not an aid to peace; it has become another cause of violence."

Ashrawi concluded with memories of Yasser Arafat, her friend and colleague, and the former head of the Palestinian Liberation Organization. She stated that "Arafat was committed to religious tolerance and <u>women</u>'s rights" and "he had his humanity." According to Forbes magazine, however, at the time of his death, Arafat was worth \$1.3 billion. The Palestinian territories are historically known for their poverty and financial struggles.

Reactions to the lecture were mixed.

Jordan Fabian '09 said, "I think [Ashrawi] doesn't regard any of the harmful actions of Palestinian organizations (like *Hamas*) against Israel ... when you're saying they're pragmatic, you're not saying that a terrorist organization took control of the government ... that is a serious problem for peace ... it goes against what she's advocating ... I feel like she sent a mixed message and dodged questions."

Alex Kantrowitz '10 countered with, "We can only hope that more moderate voices such as Ashrawi's come out of the region."

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Load-Date: September 21, 2007



Palestinians Angrily Mourn 18 Civilians Killed by Israel

The New York Times

November 10, 2006 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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

Length: 968 words

Byline: By IAN FISHER; Taghreed El-Khodary contributed reporting from Gaza, and Steven Erlanger from

Jerusalem.

Dateline: BEIT HANUN, Gaza, Nov. 9

Body

Palestinians marched in anger and mourning on Thursday for 18 civilians killed by Israeli artillery -- baring for cameras the battered faces of two dead children. Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel offered to ease tensions by meeting the Palestinian president "anytime, anyplace."

"I am very uncomfortable with this event," Mr. Olmert said at a business conference in Tel Aviv. "I'm very distressed."

Saying that he had personally investigated the artillery strike, which spurred <u>Hamas</u> to warn that it might resume suicide bombings against Israeli civilians, Mr. Olmert called the shelling Wednesday a "mistake" caused by technical failure. And he urged Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president, to meet with him immediately.

"He will be surprised when he will sit with me of how far we are prepared to go," he said. "I can offer him a lot."

He did not explain what he meant. But his words seemed to reflect deep embarrassment at the deaths, mostly of <u>women</u> and children. The strike was condemned around the world, but also by many Israelis who are concerned about the number of civilians killed in Israeli operations to curb rocket fire by Palestinian militants into Israel.

Mr. Olmert's statement also seemed to reposition the deaths -- the largest single loss of life among Palestinians in years -- into the realm of politics.

Any discussion between the men would invariably center on the difficult question of prisoners. It is unclear, however, how far Mr. Olmert could move from his past insistence that an Israeli soldier captured by Palestinian militants in June must be released before he would free hundreds of Palestinians from Israeli jails.

Mr. Abbas did not immediately respond to Mr. Olmert's offer. But he has refused other such open-ended offers, saying that he wanted a concrete deal first on the prisoners and a meeting of "substance."

On Thursday evening, the Israeli military issued its first detailed explanation of what went wrong with the shelling, saying an aiming radar had malfunctioned, causing the rounds to hit a cluster of civilians' houses.

Palestinians Angrily Mourn 18 Civilians Killed by Israel

Maj. Avital Leibovich, an army spokeswoman, said that a first volley of 13 shells had been aimed at an orange grove concealing rocket launchers and landed just under a mile away from the houses. A second barrage of 11 rounds, she said, was "aimed 400 meters away from where they hit."

"What we know from aerial photos is that two houses were hit directly," she said. "Our estimate is that 5 or 6 shells of the 11 hit two houses."

She added that, as is standard practice, the system was tested on targets before being used and that it had functioned properly.

Thousands of Palestinians, waving banners and shooting guns, returned to the shrapnel-scarred houses on Thursday with the bodies of the victims, carried on stretchers and wrapped in the yellow flags of the Fatah Party, led for decades by Yasir Arafat and now by Mr. Abbas. <u>Women</u> wailed and screamed for revenge: "Martyrs by the millions!" they chanted. "We are going to Jerusalem!"

Many of the dead were completely covered. But family members exposed the faces of two toddlers, the youngest victims -- sisters named Maisa and Maram Athamnah, -- as they held their bodies over their heads for the crowd and cameras to see.

"How was this baby guilty?" asked Kamal Hamdan, 43, after one of the bodies was paraded past him.

The bodies were carried to a new cemetery and buried in a single row, the two girls in the same concrete tomb as their mother, Manal, 25. The mood was furious, with many people saying they believed that Palestinians should intensify their attacks on Israel, civilians included.

"We must continue our resistance, even if the price is as big as this," said Ataa Zania, a paramedic who helped evacuate the dead and wounded on Wednesday. "Whoever wants to liberate his country has to pay the price."

As such, there was much approval for statements from <u>Hamas</u> leaders that they might resume suicide bombings inside Israel.

Several political analysts and experts on <u>Hamas</u> said they did not expect the group to resume a large-scale campaign of suicide attacks. <u>Hamas</u>, they contend, undertook a major shift in direction from militant group to political leadership when it won the Palestinian elections in January, and it stands to risk that by resuming a suicide campaign.

The group seems to remain deeply engaged in politics. On Thursday, the <u>Hamas</u> prime minister, Ismail Haniya, met again with Mr. Abbas here in Gaza in talks on a government of national unity, in which the <u>Hamas</u> cabinet would step down in favor of professionals and technocrats. The talks, however, are moving slowly, with many complications and little apparent hope of a deal in the next few days.

But several experts said they did not rule out one large attack by <u>Hamas</u> in specific retaliation against the deaths here.

"As in physics, every action has a reaction," said Mustafah Sawwaf, a journalist and political analyst. "Now there is a lot of pressure" from Palestinians not just on *Hamas*, but other factions, to retaliate.

But Abu Obaida, a <u>Hamas</u> military spokesman, took pains to clarify a statement that the group's military wing issued the day before warning of "hard lessons" in store for the United States, as Israel's ally. He strongly denied that <u>Hamas</u> was calling for violence against Americans or their interests.

The "only theater of operations is Palestine, its only target is the Israeli occupation," he said. "We have no intention of targeting any other nation or extending our theater of operation beyond the current one at this time.

"Of course," he added, "this does not clear the United States of its moral obligation to try and be even-handed and objective instead of its bias toward Israel."

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photo: In the Gaza town of Beit Hanun yesterday, a Palestinian man carried the body of Maram Athamnah, who was killed in an Israeli raid. (Photo by Mohammed Salem/Reuters)

Load-Date: November 10, 2006



Human shields thwart Israeli missile strikes; Hundreds of Palestinians guarded houses that were to be targeted in a crackdown against extremists.

The Philadelphia Inquirer November 20, 2006 Monday

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The Philadelphia Inquirer

Found on Philly . com

Section: NATIONAL; Pg. A02

Length: 678 words

Byline: Richard Boudreaux and Rushdi Abu Alouf, Los Angeles Times

Body

Israel said yesterday that it had called off a planned aerial bombardment of a Palestinian extremist's home after about 200 of his supporters rushed to form a human shield around the residence.

The mass mobilization in the Gaza Strip is believed to be the first employed by Palestinians to prevent an Israeli air strike. It is part of a growing use of civilians, including <u>women</u> and children, against an Israeli offensive aimed at halting rocket fire into Israel from Gaza.

Saved by the action late Saturday night was the home of Mohammed Wael Baroud, identified as an operative of the Popular Resistance Committees who has overseen some of the ongoing rocket attacks. Israel considers him a wanted terrorist.

Capt. Noa Meir, a spokeswoman for the Israeli military, said it had targeted the home as part of a "terrorist infrastructure" but canceled the planned air strike because of the large crowd.

She said the military would continue fighting to root out weapons caches and logistical centers of Baroud's organization, as well as those of Islamic Jihad and the armed wing of the <u>Hamas</u> movement, which leads the Palestinian Authority.

All three groups are involved in launching crude Kassam rockets, nearly 1,000 of which have fallen in or near Israeli cities and towns this year. Yesterday, one rocket wounded a taxi driver in Sderot, near the Gaza border. Another killed a 70-year-old woman there Wednesday.

At midday yesterday, an Israeli aircraft attacked a car carrying two <u>Hamas</u> gunmen in Gaza City, killing an 80-yearold man and wounding six other passersby, hospital officials said. The <u>Hamas</u> members, identified by Israel as rocket makers, fled on foot into a nearby mosque after the first missile missed the car.

The Israeli army often attacks the vehicles of Palestinian extremists without warning, aiming to kill, but says it routinely orders occupants out of targeted buildings before striking, in case civilians are among them.

Human shields thwart Israeli missile strikes Hundreds of Palestinians guarded houses that were to be targeted in a crackdown against extremists.

Such a warning came by telephone to Baroud's two-story home in the Jabalya refugee camp in northern Gaza, giving the 15 members of his and his brothers' families a half-hour to get out.

Instead, Baroud holed up inside with relatives and informed his superiors and the local mosque. The Barouds were joined by neighbors and supporters, responding to appeals from the mosque and from Palestinian radio and television.

"Death to Israel! Death to America!" the demonstrators shouted from the roof of the house and the streets outside.

Nizar Rayan, a <u>Hamas</u> leader in northern Gaza, said the demonstration was part of a new method of "popular action to protect the fighters and their homes." He said the tactic would be repeated whenever a Palestinian home was threatened by Israeli bombardment.

Supportive crowds remained at the Baroud home yesterday and formed preemptively around the residences of several other Gaza extremists who had been targeted by Israel.

On Nov. 3, <u>Hamas</u> orchestrated a similar rescue when about 200 unarmed <u>women</u> swarmed past an Israeli military cordon around a mosque in the Gaza town of Beit Hanoun and shielded the escape of 73 Palestinian gunmen who had been trapped inside. Two <u>women</u> were killed by Israeli gunfire that, the Israeli army said, was aimed at armed men in their midst.

Meir, the army spokeswoman, said the mosque incident and the demonstration at Baroud's home "are part of the same cynical use of Palestinian civilians as human shields."

Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, a senior <u>Hamas</u> leader, portrayed Saturday night's demonstration as an act of self-preservation. "Those people intervened... to protect their own houses as well," he told reporters outside the Baroud home.

Nassem Abu Ajena, a 45-year-old local commander in *Hamas*' military wing, climbed to the roof of Baroud's home Saturday night with two of his sons, Khalil, 17, and Samer, 19.

"If I protect my neighbor's house today, he will protect my house tomorrow," Ajena explained.

Palestinian officials say Israeli warplanes have destroyed nine homes in Gaza in stepped-up strikes since Wednesday's fatal rocket attack on Sderot.

Load-Date: November 20, 2006



Women free Palestinian gunmen

The Star Phoenix (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan)

November 4, 2006 Saturday

Final Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. B7

Length: 526 words

Byline: Associated Press

Dateline: BEIT HANOUN, Gaza Strip

Body

BEIT HANOUN, Gaza Strip (AP) -- Hundreds of Palestinian <u>women</u> in robes and head scarves streamed into a Gaza combat zone Friday to help free gunmen besieged by Israeli troops at a mosque. Two <u>women</u> who came under fire were killed and at least 10 wounded, but some gunmen managed to escape.

The <u>women</u>, many with ties to the Islamic militant group <u>Hamas</u>, left their homes after daybreak in response to appeals on the local <u>Hamas</u> radio station or telephone calls from friends and relatives. By nightfall, they were celebrated as heroes, an unusual role in a deeply conservative society that tends to keep <u>women</u> on the sidelines. Until Friday, battling Israeli troops had been men's business in Gaza.

The mosque standoff came on the third day of Israel's fiercest bid in months to halt Palestinian rocket fire on Israeli border communities. The offensive began Wednesday, when Israeli forces took over the northern Gaza town of Beit Hanoun, close to the border with Israel.

In all, 35 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza since Wednesday, including 17 on Friday. Among those killed Friday were the two <u>women</u> protesters, a 16-year-old boy, two medics and at least 10 militants. Most of the deaths Friday were a result of a series of Israeli air strikes after sundown. In the deadliest hit, five Palestinians were killed in an Israeli strike in the Jebaliya refugee camp.

The army said the strikes targeted militants trying to plant explosives or launch rockets.

The Beit Hanoun sweep is different from previous Israeli incursions into Gaza, a senior Israeli military official said. Rather than staying on the outskirts of populated areas, troops are going house to house in Beit Hanoun, sometimes breaking through inner walls to cut down on exposure to gunmen.

In another new tactic for Gaza, troops have rounded up hundreds of men for questioning, releasing most of them but detaining dozens, the army official said. On Friday evening, for example, soldiers ordered men between the ages of 16 and 46 in Beit Hanoun's Al Masri neighbourhood to report to the local agricultural school for questioning.

In the most dramatic episode of the Beit Hanoun incursion, dozens of Palestinian gunmen, many from <u>Hamas</u>, took cover in the town's Al Nasser Mosque on Thursday and were quickly surrounded by Israeli forces. The two sides

Women free Palestinian gunmen

exchanged fire throughout the night. An army bulldozer knocked down an outer wall of the mosque, causing the ceiling to collapse.

On Friday morning, Al Aqsa Radio, the local <u>Hamas</u> station, broadcast appeals to <u>women</u> to come to the rescue of the trapped gunmen. Hundreds responded, many of them <u>Hamas</u> supporters.

The <u>women</u> marched toward the mosque, coming under Israeli fire at times, and approached armoured personnel carriers and bulldozers near the mosque.

Volleys of shots were fired toward them, sending the group rushing toward a nearby wall for cover, according to Associated Press Television News footage.

Two women, both age 40, were shot and killed, and at least 10 others were wounded, hospital officials said.

Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh of <u>Hamas</u> "saluted the <u>women</u> of Palestine . . . who led the protest to break the siege of Beit Hanoun."

Load-Date: November 4, 2006



Human shield forces Israel to call off missile strikes

Prince George Citizen (British Columbia)

November 20, 2006 Monday

Final Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 15

Length: 502 words

Byline: Associated Press

Dateline: BEIT LAHIYA, Gaza Strip

Body

BEIT LAHIYA, Gaza Strip (AP) -- Hundreds of Palestinians serving as human shields guarded the homes of two top militants Sunday, a new tactic that forced Israel to call off missile strikes on the buildings and re-evaluate a mainstay of its aerial campaign in Gaza.

In recent months, the Israeli air force has repeatedly struck the homes of guerrilla leaders after warning residents by phone to clear out. Israeli security officials said they did not know how to respond to the human shield tactic, but pressed ahead with other air strikes Sunday.

In Gaza City, an aircraft fired a missile at a car, killing one man and wounding nine, including two members of *Hamas*. Four of the wounded were children, ages five to 16, who suffered shrapnel injuries, hospital officials said.

The military said the target of the strike was a vehicle carrying senior members of the <u>Hamas</u> rocket launching operation.

The standoff over the homes of the militants began late Saturday when Mohammed Baroud, local leader of the Popular Resistance Committees, was informed by the army that his house would be hit. The three-storey building is home to 17 people from Baroud's family.

Another *Hamas* leader also received a warning.

Instead of fleeing, though, the two decided to stay in their homes. They were quickly joined by crowds of supporters, including dozens of armed men, who gathered on balconies, rooftops and in the streets outside.

"Death to Israel. Death to America," the crowds chanted.

Local mosques and Palestinian TV and radio stations also mobilized supporters.

Baroud, involved in rocket attacks on Israel, said he and other <u>Hamas</u> members planned the response a few days earlier when another house was destroyed in a missile strike.

The army said it called off the nighttime air strikes because of the crowds. It condemned what it said was a cynical exploitation "by the terrorists of uninvolved people as human shields."

Human shield forces Israel to call off missile strikes

Israeli military officials acknowledged they had no solution for the standoff. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the media.

By Sunday afternoon, about two dozen <u>women</u> were milling around on Baroud's roof, shielded from the sun by green tarp. One storey below them, about a dozen men were resting on mattresses.

Baroud's mother, Umm Wael, said shifts had been organized in preparation for a long standoff. "Where should we go?" she said. "We will stay here or die in the house. Let them bring it down on our heads."

Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh of <u>Hamas</u> stopped by to show support. "We are so proud of this national stand. It's the first step toward protecting our homes, the homes of our children," he said.

Also Sunday, <u>Hamas</u> guerrillas in Gaza fired eight rockets at the Israeli town of Sderot, seriously wounding one person. Last week, a Sderot woman was killed in a rocket attack.

Israeli Defence Minister Amir Peretz called Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and demanded he invoke his authority to put an end to the rocket fire, the Defence Ministry said.

Graphic

Photo: Associated Press; A Palestinian gunman shoots in the air next to a crowd gathered around the house of the leader of the Popular Resistance Committees, in Beit Layiha, northern Gaza Strip.

Load-Date: November 20, 2006



Jordan's king condemns Israeli dig: Site a flashpoint for bitter disputes between Israel, Palestinians

Edmonton Journal (Alberta)
February 7, 2007 Wednesday
Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A4

Length: 735 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, CanWest News Service; with files from The Associated Press

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

JERUSALEM - Jordan's King Abdullah accused Israel on Tuesday of "an attack on our holy Muslim sites" by beginning excavation work near Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock and warned this was causing "a dramatic escalation" in tensions that could prevent the revival of Middle East peace talks.

Israeli archeologists vigorously denied the Dome of the Rock would be harmed, showing journalists repairs to a wooden foot bridge were 50 metres from the Dome, which is Islam's third holiest site and where Muslims believe Muhammad ascended to heaven. The bridge has been used by Jewish <u>women</u> going to pray at the Western Wall, which is Judaism's holiest site.

The dig is meant to ensure that no important artifacts are damaged by the walkway's construction, which is expected to be completed in eight months. Such exploratory digs are required by Israeli law in the ancient city.

"The construction of the bridge, located in its entirety outside the Temple Mount, has no impact on the Mount itself and certainly poses no danger to it," Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's office said.

The Dome of the Rock, or the Temple Mount, as it is known by Jews, has long been a flashpoint for bitter disputes between Israel and the Palestinians.

It was a visit there in September 2000 by Ariel Sharon which sparked the second intefadeh, a violent Palestinian uprising that lasted several years.

Eleven Palestinian youths were arrested near the work site Tuesday as hundreds of Israeli police cordoned off the area around the Dome of the Rock and refused to allow Muslims males under the age of 45 to enter the Al Aqsa Mosque to pray. King Abdullah's strong words were considered significant because he is regarded as a moderate Arab leader and because by treaty with Israel, Jordan's Hashemite monarchy has been designated custodian of Jerusalem's Muslim holy sites.

The fresh controversy over the Dome of the Rock erupted as it was announced that Olmert, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice would meet on Feb. 19 to try to restart Middle East peace talks that have foundered for several years.

Jordan 's king condemns Israeli dig: Site a flashpoint for bitter disputes between Israel, Palestinians

The Palestinian president, who leads Fatah, condemned the Israeli excavations in Jerusalem when he arrived in Islam's holiest city of Mecca on Tuesday for two days of crucial peace talks with <u>Hamas'</u> exiled leader, Khaled Meshal. The meeting called by Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah was aimed at ending a rising tide of violence by Fatah and <u>Hamas</u> factions in Gaza and at forming a national unity government that includes the two warring parties, who have killed more than 70 people in recurring violence since November.

As Abbas and Meshal arrived in Saudi Arabia their differences were underscored by news agency reports from Gaza that a <u>Hamas</u> loyalist had been killed and three others had been wounded in renewed fighting Tuesday. There was also a gunfight at Gaza's border crossing with Egypt as <u>Hamas</u>' delegation left for Saudi Arabia and several more tit-for-tat kidnappings.

Even as their armed wings continued to hunt each other down in Gaza, <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah both made optimistic claims Tuesday that they were close to agreeing on an Egyptian plan that would divide government ministries between them and a few smaller factions, with the security ministry going to an independent.

According to media reports, the deal would keep <u>Hamas</u>' Ismail Haniyeh as prime minister, but <u>Hamas</u> would only have 10 of 25 cabinet positions despite winning a majority in parliamentary elections 13 months ago.

As the Palestinians made pilgrimages to Mecca's Grand Mosque before formally sitting down to talk, Israel worried about the possible international ramifications if a united Palestinian government finally emerged or if the talks failed, triggering a civil war in Gaza, the collapse of Palestinian Authority and an unprecedented humanitarian crisis on the Jewish state's doorstep.

Yuval Diskin, who heads the Israeli domestic intelligence service Shin Bet, told Israeli journalists on Monday "chaos in the Palestinian Authority does not serve Israel's interests."

But Israel's shaky coalition government had to be ready to deal with the possibility that if the Palestinians did agree on a national unity government that ended what often looks like a civil war in Gaza, international pressure would grow for Israel to talk to that government, even if *Hamas* refused to recognize Israel's right to exist, Diskin said.

Graphic

Photo: Reuters; The Dome of the Rock towers in the background near the site of excavation work on a foot bridge, bottom right, in Jerusalem's Old City on Tuesday. Despite Palestinian protests, Israel has given assurances that the dig would not harm Islam's third holiest shrine.;

Load-Date: February 7, 2007



Acknowledge Militant Islam's Threat, Then We Can Counter It

Richmond Times Dispatch (Virginia)

September 23, 2007 Sunday

Final Edition

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Section: COMMENTARY; Pg. E-6

Length: 913 words

Byline: Elizabeth Larus

Dateline: FREDERICKSBURG

Body

Recent reports that al-Qaida has regrouped and is planning terrorist attacks against the U.S. remind us that we are in a real war with dangerous enemies who want to kill as many of us as they can. They want us gone, and they want our way of life extinguished. To better understand the threat of Islamic terrorism to democracies, I traveled to

Israel with 45 other American university professors as an academic fellow of the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies (FDD).

FDD provided us with unparalleled access to almost every level of the Israeli security system, from its National Security Council to various units of the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) and National Police. One field trip took us to a maximum-security prison housing convicted terrorists where we spoke with representatives of *Hamas* and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. The message I received from these representatives was not one of hate, but of the desire for peaceful coexistence between Muslims and non-Muslims. Their comments, however pleasing to the ear, did not jibe with the proclaimed agenda of militant Islam and of its terrorist groups such as al-Qaida, Hezbollah, *Hamas*, the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, Abu Sayyaf, and others.

Islamic fundamentalism, from which militant Islam springs, is a political ideology that inspires the recovery of previously held Muslim lands, conversion to Islam, and strict observance of Islamic law as interpreted by the fundamentalists. The agenda is to create a universal community of the faithful (umma) united under Islamic fundamentalism. The quest is global. Some terrorist groups argue that their struggle - jihad - is against Israel's occupation of Palestinian land, and they would end their attacks if Israel would only return all of the occupied territories.

Let us say for the sake of argument that Israel returns those lands. Some Islamic groups might be satisfied and stop their attacks. The *Hamas* representative that I interviewed claimed the desire for Muslims and Jews to coexist. However, *Hamas* and the al-Aqsa Brigade's raison d'etre is to take possession of the entire territory from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea (the current state of Israel) and to drive the Jews into the sea.

As with al-Qaida, <u>Hamas</u> sees a conspiracy between the Zionists (Jews) and the West dedicated to destroying Islam. For example, the <u>Hamas</u> Covenant sees Zionism as a force driving the French Revolution, World War I, the fall of the Ottoman Islamic Caliphate, WWII, and seeking world domination through the League of Nations and later the U.N. Since none of these events took place in Palestinian territories currently occupied by Israel, one must

conclude that <u>Hamas</u>' agenda is not confined to the Palestinian territories, but one that seeks to attack Jews and their Christian supporters (commonly referred to by Islamists as Crusaders) for their values and actions. Osama bin Laden believes that all Americans are Crusaders and Zionists who are in an alliance to destroy Islam.

To better understand their agenda, I consulted Islamic terrorist Web sites. The Internet enables Islamist organizations to reach, influence, and indoctrinate large audiences mostly free of government censorship or media filters, while protecting their anonymity. These Web sites make clear the Islamists' intentions. A blog called "Supporters of Jihad in Iraq" contains the caption, "Kill the Americans everywhere." One site that offers a course on manufacturing explosives claims that their stance is no agreement with non-Muslims. Another calls for the overthrow of the "drinking" and "womanizing" House of Saud and establishment of a fundamentalist Wahabi (Islamist) regime in Saudi Arabia. The photos on Web sites also inform us of a group's agenda. Many Islamist Web sites portray photos of Osama bin Laden; the rose symbolizes <u>female</u> martyrdom; the smiling martyr (shaheed) indicates that the martyred one is enjoying the pleasure of paradise.

There are even Islamist Web sites for children. www.al-fateh.net teaches children jihad "from cradle to grave."

The Islamist agenda raises the question of the possibility of peaceful coexistence between Muslims and non-Muslims in Israel or in Muslim countries. Although the <u>Hamas</u> representative in the Israeli prison told me that peaceful coexistence was possible, he failed to inform me of the Islamist interpretation of coexistence. In Muslim countries, non-Muslims can be exempted from jihad for as long as the Muslim rulers permit - which is usually as long as the non-Muslims pay a poll or head tax (jizya). In addition to its economic function of revenue raising, the tax also impresses on non-Muslims the superiority of Islam.

Islamic law codifies other restrictions on non-Muslins, such as prohibiting the building of churches, proselytizing, and bearing arms. In Malaysia, one of the world's more moderate Muslim countries, Chinese or Indians who want to marry a Malay must convert to Islam before marrying in a Malaysian court.

There is an order to the madness. First, Islamists will eliminate the "Saturday people" (Jews) and then the "Sunday people" (Christians). In the final stage, all Muslims must live under strict fundamentalist Islam. In dealing with Islamic militant terrorism, we need to first acknowledge and understand the threat before we can devise a plan to counter it.

Elizabeth Larus is associate professor of Political Science and International Affairs at the University of Mary Washington.

Graphic

PHOTO

Load-Date: September 28, 2007



<u>Israeli hospital heals Gaza fighters' wounds; Politics no factor in treatment</u> of Palestinians, medical centre says

The Toronto Star February 8, 2007 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A13

Length: 575 words

Byline: Joshua Mitnick, SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Dateline: Ashkelon, Israel

Body

"Isolation," reads the masking tape on the door to Room 20 in the orthopedic ward of Barzilai Medical Centre. Inside, Arabic and Hebrew exclamations mingle as a physical therapist moves the bandaged legs of Palestinian policeman Abdallah Shelieh.

As rival Palestinian factions vied for control of the Gaza Strip in recent weeks, Israel mostly remained on the sidelines. But the hospital in this Israeli city just a few kilometres up the coast from Gaza has been quietly treating wounded Palestinian gunmen, picking up some slack for a medical system caught in the crossfire.

In the last week, Barzilai hospital has accepted as many as five patients a day who survived the battles needing treatment not available in Gaza.

"He would have lost a leg," said Rafat Shelieh, gesturing to his younger bedridden brother, Abdallah, who was waiting for a third operation since arriving at Barzilai last Thursday. "The treatment is a thousand times better here than in Gaza."

Lifting up a hospital frock, Abdallah, a 25-year-old policeman from a Fatah family, pointed to the bullet wounds from a *Hamas* gunmen who attacked his home in the Jabaliya refugee camp on Jan. 27. There was one on the right side of his ribcage, another in the right shoulder, and two in the right leg.

"I was defending my house," said Shelieh, describing a day-long battle that left him wounded and bleeding inside the home for nearly seven hours. "I fired on them for about 15 minutes."

While Israel and the <u>Hamas</u>-led Palestinian Authority won't talk to each other, the political crisis hasn't severed longstanding links between public hospitals on either side of the Gaza border. A spokesperson for Barzilai said the hospital has treated 124 patients from Gaza in the last year, emphasizing politics doesn't factor into the decision of who gets admitted.

"We don't know if it's <u>Hamas</u> or Fatah. We don't know if they are civilian or armed forces. We just know they are injured," said Ron Lobel, the medical director at Barzilai. "It's something normal between hospitals."

Still, Palestinian patients like Shelieh must pass a background check by the Israeli secret service for entry permits, a several-day process that seems to have shut out *Hamas* members.

Israeli hospital heals Gaza fighters' wounds Politics no factor in treatment of Palestinians, medical centre says

Shifa Hospital, Gaza City's largest, has been overwhelmed by the number of wounded as gun battles in and around the medical centre have left walls with bullet scars. *Hamas* security forces have set up positions on the roof and in their own wing, a hospital official said.

"They have their own area, and their own forces. They are firing from the roof," the official said. "We refer members of Fatah to El Quds Hospital" for fear of "friction" with *Hamas* officers.

To compound matters, Gaza hospitals are grappling with a blood shortage and a lack of surgical know-how.

"They took care of him, but not very well," Abdel Hamin Odeh said about his son Adel's treatment in Gaza. Adel, also a police officer from Jabaliya, said he was shot by <u>Hamas</u> gunmen while trying to aid some <u>women</u> caught in the middle of firefight.

When Adel was admitted to Barzilai last week, he was suffering from critical leg injuries from a bullet wound in the hip, but on Tuesday he shuffled gingerly with the help of a walker.

After 20 days hospitalized in Gaza and 12 in Israel, Tawfik Aggi waited for a discharge wheelchair to begin the journey home.

"We hope to stop this fight," he said. "But Gaza is a crazy place."

Joshua Mitnick is a freelance

reporter based in Israel.

Graphic

joshua mitnick for the toronto star Palestinian police officer Adel Odeh recovers from bullet wounds in Barzilai Medical Centre in Ashkelon, Israel. The hospital says it has treated 124 patients from Gaza in the last year.

Load-Date: February 8, 2007



President travels to Gaza to form unity government

Irish News

November 7, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: Pg. 20

Length: 326 words

Body

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas travelled to Gaza yesterday for negotiations with <u>Hamas</u> to put what he hoped will be the finishing touches on a national unity government made up of independent experts.

The movement toward a deal came as fighting in northern Gaza heated up on the sixth day of an Israeli offensive. At least seven Palestinians were killed, including a *female* suicide bomber.

Islamic Jihad released a video of the bomber, identified as Mirvat Masoud, after she blew herself up, wounding an Israeli soldier.

On the video she said: "My dear mother, I ask you to remain strong and forgive me, and God willing we will meet in heaven."

Only of a few of the more than 100 Palestinian suicide bombers in the past six years were women.

Also, an Israeli missile aimed at a group of militants landed near a Palestinian kindergarten, killing a teenage boy, critically wounding a teacher and seriously wounding eight children, doctors said.

The army said an air strike in the same area targeted four militants coming to collect launchers used to fire rockets into Israel.

Mr Abbas, a moderate, has been urging <u>Hamas</u> which controls most government functions to join his Fatah movement in a coalition to end international sanctions.

Mr Abbas began a meeting in Gaza City with the Palestinian prime minister Ismail Haniyeh of *Hamas*, after nightfall on Monday.

The platform of the emerging government however is vague about the key international demand of recognising Israel and may not be enough to end the aid boycott.

Negotiators and officials in <u>Hamas</u>, which has repeatedly rejected the international conditions since winning legislative elections in January, said an agreement on forming a government was imminent.

"We are getting closer and closer toward a deal. Without having a strong opportunity for this deal, Abu Mazen would not have come," Mustafa Barghouti, an independent lawmaker involved in the negotiations said. Mr Abbas is also known as Abu Mazen.

Load-Date: November 7, 2006



Desperate Palestinians plead for asylum at border

Edmonton Journal (Alberta)

June 19, 2007 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A4

Length: 342 words

Byline: Agence France-Presse

Dateline: EREZ BORDER CROSSING

Body

EREZ BORDER CROSSING - "Give us political asylum, in an Arab country, in Europe, anywhere," sobs Amr, one of the Palestinians sleeping rough in the border tunnel with Israel, desperate to flee the Gaza Strip.

Sobbing <u>women</u>, frantic children, rubbish strewn on the ground and choking heat: chaos prevails on the Palestinian side of the crossing, where several hundred people wait, the steel gates leading to Israel firmly shut.

Suddenly bullets rip through the air in warning, piercing the already frayed nerves of those Palestinians, mostly Fatah loyalists, desperate to flee retribution after *Hamas* seized Gaza in a bout of brutal fighting last week.

Camped out for days, <u>women</u> and young children have been stretching out on cardboard or even the concrete floor of the tunnel with their husbands and brothers.

"I fled Gaza with my family to try to get to the West Bank but Israel doesn't want to let us through," says Amr, who worked at the presidential compound in Gaza, now fallen to <u>Hamas</u> fighters.

He refuses to give any more information about his identity, overcome with emotion that the green Islamist flag of <u>Hamas</u> now flutters over the sprawling compound where he once worked in Gaza City.

Palestinian security officers in particular fear being purged after <u>Hamas</u> took power in battles that saw rival fighters thrown from rooftops to their death. The bloodied body of one top Fatah loyalist was dragged through Gaza's streets and riddled with bullets, striking fear into the hearts of many.

At Erez, the people try to shield their heads from the scorching heat, wrapping T-shirts around their heads or huddling in the diminishing shadows of giant concrete slabs. Looters have already made off with the tunnel's roof.

Israeli soldiers in full armour keep watch on the other side of the steel gate, operated automatically from a control room.

"Keep back!" they shout every time a band of Palestinians ventures fruitlessly towards them.

A round of bullets rip through the air. Those in the tunnel flinch and flatten themselves against the concrete barriers.

Load-Date: June 19, 2007



In Gesture to Abbas, Israel Releases 255 Palestinian Prisoners

The New York Times
July 21, 2007 Saturday
Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 3

Length: 726 words

Byline: By STEVEN ERLANGER; Reem Makhoul contributed reporting from Beit Taamar, West Bank.

Dateline: JERUSALEM, July 20

Body

Israel released 255 Palestinian prisoners on Friday in a gesture meant to support the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, who said that more prisoners would soon be released.

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel promised the releases during his last meeting with Mr. Abbas, when he also agreed to grant amnesty to 178 members of the militant faction Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades if they gave up their weapons and pledged to stop attacking Israel.

Both moves are supposed to help Mr. Abbas and his Fatah faction, of which the Al Aksa group is a part, in their struggle with the Islamic movement <u>Hamas</u>, which routed Fatah in Gaza in June. Since then, Mr. Abbas fired the <u>Hamas</u>-led government and named a new cabinet led by an independent, Salam Fayyad.

Together they are trying to create, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, a better life for Palestinians with the help of Western aid, in contrast to the situation in Gaza. There, <u>Hamas</u> is isolated and the main crossings for goods and people both to Israel and Egypt have been shut for more than a month.

Mr. Abbas held a celebration for many of the freed prisoners, most of them affiliated with Fatah, in his headquarters in Ramallah. Israel holds about 10,000 Palestinians. "This is the beginning," he said. "Our work must continue until every prisoner returns to his home. I thank God that we are honored by the return of heroes of freedom to their home and the bosom of their homeland."

Those released Friday had at least a year left to their terms. None had been convicted of wounding or killing Israelis, but they included Abdel Rahim Malouh, 61, deputy chief of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which killed an Israeli cabinet minister six years ago.

Ziad Abu Ein, the Palestinian deputy minister for prisoner affairs, said those freed had an average of three years left on their sentences.

The release began at dawn, when prisoners in shackles were taken from the Ketziot prison camp in the Negev and put on buses to the West Bank. At the Betuniya checkpoint, they got off, some of them kissing the ground, and boarded Palestinian buses to Ramallah.

In Gesture to Abbas, Israel Releases 255 Palestinian Prisoners

One of the prisoners was not released because he apparently had switched his affiliation in prison to <u>Hamas</u>, Israeli officials said. Miri Eisin, spokeswoman for Mr. Olmert, said Israel wanted to ensure that "we let out no one from <u>Hamas</u>."

Mr. Fayyad, the prime minister, welcomed the release but said that "Israel can allow itself to be more bold" instead of practicing "a policy of small change." Palestinians want prisoners freed, he told the Israeli newspaper Yediot Aharonot.

"But I am a bit cynical in this matter," he said. "I look at the meetings that end in festive photographs and announcements of releases. The conflict between us and you is not over prisoners. A prisoner release is better than doing nothing, but it is better to do something significant."

<u>Hamas</u> called the release a crude political ploy. "This step has no real value because most of the prisoners are from one faction, and most were about to be released," said a *Hamas* spokesman in Gaza, Sami Abu Zuhri.

In Beit Taamar, a village near Bethlehem, Khaled Hassan Abiyat, 37, was surrounded by friends and family after more than three years in prison. "I thank Abu Mazen for his efforts to release me and my brothers," he said, using a popular name for Mr. Abbas. "I'm very happy. It's an excellent feeling to be free."

The entire village seemed to have come out to greet him, and cars were decorated with Palestinian flags and the yellow flags of Fatah. Men held Mr. Abiyat on their shoulders, and 3 gunmen with masks and Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades written on their vests shot rifles into the air, joined by another 10 armed men.

On Mr. Abiyat's house, there was a huge poster with his photo and that of Yasir Arafat, the longtime Palestinian leader who died in 2004, and the words "Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades." He was greeted there by about 80 <u>women</u> singing wedding songs and handing out sweets.

One villager said, "We have a wedding in the village this evening, but tonight we will celebrate two weddings -- the actual one and Khaled's release and homecoming."

Mr. Abiyat's cousin Muhammad Abiyat said: "This is an incomplete happiness. Something is missing. We want to see the release of all the Palestinian nation."

http://www.nytimes.com

Load-Date: July 21, 2007



Women broadcasters told to wear hijab or face death

The Times (London)
June 5, 2007, Tuesday

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Section: OVERSEAS NEWS; Pg. 35

Length: 595 words

Byline: Sonia Verma in Ramallah

Body

As one of Gaza's most seasoned television news correspondents, Lana Shaheen has braved everything from Israeli airstrikes to Palestinian sniper fire to get her story.

But in ten years of reporting from one of the world's most dangerous war zones, she has never felt fear like the kind that gripped her when a chilling text message was sent to her mobile phone.

"You are without shame or morals," it read. "We will cut your throat from vein to vein if needed to protect the spirit and moral of this nation."

The threat was an excerpt from a longer letter sent by a radical Palestinian group to more than a dozen <u>women</u> television broadcasters working in Gaza and the West Bank.

If the **women** refused to wear strict Islamic dress, it read, they would be beheaded.

"We are really afraid and our families are afraid," said Ms Shaheen, who typically reports from the field wearing jeans and a T-shirt.

"I have told myself 'you have to be courageous' but every time I leave my house I feel frightened," she said.

The letter was just the latest threat delivered by the Swords of Islamic Righteousness, a shadowy militant group that has also claimed responsibility for bombing dozens of internet cafes, music stores and pharmacies in recent months, punishing them for promoting an "impure" Western lifestyle.

With Fatah and <u>Hamas</u> -the main Palestinian political parties -locked in a bitter power struggle, security in Gaza has all but collapsed, transforming the coastal strip into a breeding ground for fundamentalist groups seeking to impose their own brand of strict Islamic law.

Jihadist groups have recently attacked US and United Nations schools. A radical group called the Army of Islam has claimed responsibility for kidnapping Alan Johnston, the BBC's Gaza correspondent.

Life in Gaza has always been more culturally conservative than in the secular West Bank: there are no bars or nightclubs and most <u>women</u> wear hijabs.

But even though most of the 15 <u>women</u> broadcasters who work on government-run Palestinian television also wear veils by choice, they say that religious law is now being imposed on them by force.

Women broadcasters told to wear hijab or face death

Most said that, despite feeling intimidated, they would continue to work. However, they would take extra precautions, travelling with male relatives for safety. "I do not wear the hijab and I do not intend to do so through any kind of pressure," said Samah Nassar, a presenter at Palestine TV.

The broadcaster, financed by the secular Fatah party of President Abbas, has previously been criticised by its rival, *Hamas*, for being biased.

Some suspect factional rivalry to be behind the recent threats levelled against the <u>women</u> employees -a charge denied strongly by <u>Hamas</u>.

But some Palestinian security officials say that <u>Hamas</u> is secretly funding the Swords of Islamic Righteousness, which is believed to have fewer than 100 members and surfaced only after <u>Hamas</u> won parliamentary elections last year. They accuse <u>Hamas</u> of using the group as a front to impose a hardline version of Islam.

Yesterday the <u>women</u> broadcasters staged demonstrations in front of the Mr Abbas's office, calling for his protection.

But even their employer said that it was powerless to ensure their security. "We are trying to send a message to these gangs to stop their campaign against us, but what else can we do?" asked Basem Abu Sumaya, head of the Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation, which runs Palestine TV.

Ms Shaheen knows that in Gaza's current climate of lawlessness, nobody is safe.

"The whole Gaza Strip is in chaos. We are so scared. Nobody knows when they will be killed," she said.

Load-Date: June 5, 2007



Israelis open fire on women forming human shield

The Guardian (Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island)

November 4, 2006 Saturday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. B12

Length: 249 words

Byline: AP

Body

Israeli forces fired Friday at a group of <u>women</u> as they streamed to a Gaza mosque to serve as human shields for <u>Hamas</u> gunmen holed up there, killing two of the <u>women</u> and wounding 10, Palestinian officials and witnesses said. The more than two dozen gunmen escaped.

The dead were among several hundred who heeded a call by <u>Hamas</u> to ring the mosque in the northern Gaza town of Beit Hanoun where Israeli troops in tanks and armoured personnel carriers had the gunmen surrounded for about 19 hours.

Their presence allowed the 32 gunmen to sneak away, some reportedly wearing robes supplied by the women.

Troops seized Beit Hanoun on Wednesday in their fiercest bid in months to halt Palestinian rocket fire on nearby Israeli communities.

Twenty-three Palestinians have been killed and 155 people have been wounded since the offensive began, the Palestinian Health Ministry said. More than 60 of the wounded were **women**, the ministry added.

The mosque became the focus of the fighting in the town after dozens of gunmen sought refuge from troops there Thursday. Most were thought to belong to the military wing of the governing *Hamas* party.

Armoured vehicles surrounded the building, and the two sides began exchanging fire that lasted throughout the night, the Israeli military and Palestinian security officials said.

Israeli soldiers trying to pressure the gunmen to surrender also threw stun and smoke grenades, and knocked down an outer wall of the mosque with a bulldozer, causing the ceiling to collapse.

Graphic

A Palestinian woman holds a copy of the Quran, Islam's holy book, during a rally supporting the <u>Hamas</u> government in Gaza City, Friday. Two Palestinian <u>women</u> were killed, witnesses said, by Israeli army fire as hundreds of <u>women</u> served as human shields for militants holed up inside a Gaza mosque besieged by Israeli troops. Associated Press photo

Load-Date: November 4, 2006



Death of a student stirs revolt in Gaza

The Sunday Times (London)

December 24, 2006

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Section: OVERSEAS NEWS; News; Pg. 18

Length: 1081 words

Byline: Marie Colvin, Gaza

Body

ON the night before she was killed in crossfire as she walked home from university, Hibba Msebeh, a 21-year-old student, sat up late with her family, passionately condemning the Palestinian factions whose street battles last week sent Gaza drifting towards civil war.

Ifaf Msebeh, her mother, said that Hibba, who had been due to marry next summer, clapped her hands in glee when her grandmother denounced the gunmen on both sides for thinking only of their petty interests while Gaza starved.

"My daughter said, 'Now grandmother is a spokeswoman for the Palestinian people'," Msebeh, 46, recalled last week, sitting in mourning, wrapped against the winter cold in a black hijab and houndstooth black-and-white wool coat. "She was so happy."

Hibba, the only girl among seven brothers, had wanted to study politics at university but was dissuaded. "Study something useful," insisted Mohamed Msebeh, her 51-year-old father. She enrolled to read economics but never lost her interest in politics. Now her father, a dentist, sits inconsolable in a black jacket and trousers, his arms wrapped tightly around his upper chest.

Late-night discussions like that at the kitchen table in the Msebeh home reverberated throughout Gaza last week, as shops and schools shut and people stayed indoors for safety from the street battles that erupted without warning.

The battle between gunmen from Fatah, the secular party of Mahmoud Abbas, the president, and <u>Hamas</u>, the Islamic fundamentalist party of Ismail Haniya, the prime minister, even spilt into the courtyard of Shifa hospital, where gunmen fired from rooftops while doctors and nurses cowered inside, unable to reach the wounded.

Despite the danger, Hibba went to her classes at Azar University as usual last Sunday. When fighting broke out she headed for home. Her favourite brother Sala'am, 17, met her and they hurried along, arm in arm.

Hibba was on her mobile phone to her mother, saying she would be back in a few minutes, when a bullet smashed into her right cheek and out through the back of her head.

"I began screaming for an ambulance but none could come because of all the shooting," Sala'am recalled last week, stroking a cut on his nose sustained when he fainted in hospital at the news that Hibba was dead.

Death of a student stirs revolt in Gaza

Her fiance, Louai Limgani, 28, heard about her death on the television news in Cairo, where he is studying to be a doctor. "He is so angry," Hibba's mother said.

Later the family sat in their courtyard, passing around a large card that Hibba kept by her bed. It was made by her fiance and she would gaze at photographs of the couple inside, with the word "Love" pierced by a Cupid's arrow. "She was my only daughter," her father said. "The loss of Hibba is equal to the loss of all my seven boys."

The family's one remaining hope is that her death may not be in vain. Her senseless shooting has galvanised a population already bitter at the murderous infighting.

Public outrage began to mount when <u>Hamas</u> militants shot dead the three young sons of a Fatah security official as they were driven to school on December 11. They were aged between four and nine.

Last Thursday thousands of <u>women</u> gathered in a park outside parliament and, for the first time in memory at a protest, the only flags were those of Palestine rather than particular factions.

By now Hibba's death had been announced and posters were calling for an end to violence in her memory.

"We want to say to all our leaders, stop killing one another. Stop killing us," said Rida Deeb, a 60-year-old in a pinstripe suit. "That's enough fighting for your positions. Fight for the Palestinian people. Abbas and Haniya should shake hands and form a national unity government."

There are indications that the leaders are taking note. "We know people are angry and don't understand the reason for these battles," said Ghazi Hamad, Haniya's spokesman. "This has pushed us to redouble our efforts to stop the fighting. It is shameful and destroys the image of the Palestinian people."

Members of Abbas's circle made similar comments. Yet three people, including a girl of seven, were wounded in clashes yesterday.

Why are the factions fighting and for what?

Tensions have risen in recent weeks as talks to form a government of national unity have broken down. The coalition was the brainchild of Abbas, an attempt to end the isolation of Gaza and the West Bank and restore foreign funding, cut off after *Hamas*'s victory in parliamentary elections in January.

The rivalry between the two main parties goes back decades. Fatah, founded by the late Yasser Arafat, supports peace talks with Israel, while *Hamas* vows to destroy the Jewish state.

Soon after the murder of the young boys, Haniya tried to circumvent sanctions by crossing into Gaza with £ 18m in cash. He was stopped by the Israelis and, as he waited, Abbas's presidential guards fired on <u>Hamas</u> fighters rushing to Haniya's rescue.

<u>Hamas</u> blamed Abbas and his allies for the attack on the prime minister's motorcade, which killed his bodyguard and injured his son.

Fed up with <u>Hamas</u>'s refusal to compromise on ministerial posts and form a more moderate coalition government acceptable to the West and Israel, Abbas called early elections last weekend in an initiative backed by Tony Blair. It was unclear whether he had any legal basis to do so or whether he would win, but the West saw the move as a chance to get **Hamas** out of power.

Early the next morning came the fighting that killed Hibba and up to 16 others.

Although a truce was agreed, the still of Thursday night was shattered by a street battle near the home of Mahmoud Zahar, the *Hamas* foreign minister, which spread to the presidential compound.

Automatic weapons fire poured into the street and from rooftops, along with the thump of rocket-propelled grenades. A local man who opened his front door to watch was killed.

Death of a student stirs revolt in Gaza

Another sign of the truce's weakness is that both sides are restocking their armouries. Fatah has the advantage that the security forces, established in the Arafat era, mostly consist of members of Fatah or its allies.

<u>Hamas</u>, however, has the more disciplined fighters and its militia, Izzedine al-Qassam, has smuggled an impressive arsenal through tunnels from Egypt and created a local arms manufacturing network.

Ordinary Palestinians are hoping that cooler heads will prevail. "We lost our Hibba, our flower," Ifaf Msebeh said. "It's unbearable. I can only pray they stop this fighting so that no family loses anybody else."

Nasser Ishtayeh/Mahmud Hams

Load-Date: December 24, 2006



Two-State Solution: The world must come to the aid of the West Bank

The Times (London)

June 16, 2007, Saturday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 20

Length: 781 words

Body

For any Palestinian hoping for an end to violence, an economic future and an eventual peace settlement, the triumph in Gaza by *Hamas* militants is a disaster.

It signals the end of cross-border talks for the foreseeable future; prolonged international isolation; and the prospect of repressive rule by a clique of narrow-minded extremists ready to enforce harsh punishment on all those <u>women</u>, secularists or liberals -who do not conform to their intolerant ideology.

But it is not only the 1.4 million people in the foetid and impoverished Gaza Strip who are the victims. Palestinians everywhere have been appalled. The past two days of murderous violence have effectively destroyed hopes of viable Palestinian statehood. They have split the West Bank and Gaza into two rival administrations. They have underlined the Palestinians' own inability to govern themselves. They have entrenched in the heart of the Middle East a movement almost as extreme as those intent on destroying Iraq.

The comprehensive victory of *Hamas* gunmen is a challenge for all in the region.

For the Israelis, it spells the end of any immediate prospect of a two-state solution, raises fears of renewed rocket attacks and could prompt calls for a costly military intervention. For the Europeans and other members of the Quartet - the Americans, Russians and the United Nations -it undermines attempts to revive peace talks and persuade the now defunct Palestinian "unity" Government to recognise Israel. And for neighbouring Arab states, the *Hamas* victory is a devastating blow to their recent diplomatic push for peace, directly endangers their own faltering governments and will prompt widespread unease at the huge boost that it has given to Islamist extremism across the region.

Such is the alarm among all Arab governments that they called an emergency meeting of the Arab League yesterday to discuss possible intervention. It is hard to see what could come of this suggestion. <u>Hamas</u> has already rejected the stationing of any international force in, or on the borders of, Gaza. Few Arab governments would be willing to send in troops to dislodge <u>Hamas</u> gunmen from the administrative offices that they now occupy or risk guerrilla warfare in the narrow alleyways of the Gaza slums. Arab governments will denounce the West's economic boycott for fuelling the economic collapse and despair in Gaza. But they have largely themselves to blame. When the European Union was funding the Fatah-dominated Palestinian Authority (PA), wealthy Arab governments contributed almost no money to it and made no effort to warn Fatah about its misuse of aid -an abuse that sparked anger and the election of a **Hamas** government.

The Arab governments, together with the Quartet, are now desperately seeking ways to contain the damage. All are standing behind Mahmoud Abbas as the legitimate head of the Palestinian Authority. All recognise, however, that his writ now extends only to the West Bank, still dominated by his own Fatah party. Their aim therefore is to bolster

Two-State Solution: The world must come to the aid of the West Bank

his standing in his now truncated PA. The West and Israel are therefore considering a rapid easing of financial sanctions -which, they argue, is now possible as the <u>Hamas</u>-led Government has now been dissolved. The secular Fatah faction and other "moderates" in the West Bank can be helped by the swift release of funds that would immediately lift the lot of public sector workers, boost employment and raise hope among the 2.4 million Palestinian inhabitants -as well as setting an example that might, in time, persuade the desperate people in Gaza to throw off the domination of an extremist faction that has no interest in democracy, tolerance or economic advance.

Some will argue that the violence of the past week is no more that another upsurge of the factionalism and internecine rivalry that have repeatedly dealt blows to Palestinian hopes. This is naive. Something fundamental has changed in Gaza.

Secular politics has been replaced with Islamist extremism, rational argument with zealotry that has no wish to engage but to conquer. This, to many Arabs, is the spillover from Iraq, the triumph of a revolution that began with the Ayatollah Khomeini and has now affected politics across the Middle East. Those Arab governments that have seen the need for reform, that are desperate to ward off popular unrest, are deeply worried by what has happened. They -and the Israelis - must redouble efforts to end the political stalemate, however impossible any initiative seems in Gaza. But in the end it is only the Palestinians who can prevent the collapse of their aspirations. They must take responsibility for what has happened. For they, again, are the victims.

Load-Date: June 16, 2007



Islamist group suspected in prostitutes' killings: Militants have bombed businesses before in bid to purge Gaza of western influence

Ottawa Citizen

March 2, 2007 Friday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A9

Length: 443 words

Byline: Dion Nissenbaum, McClatchy Newspapers

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip - The murders of three <u>women</u> in this Palestinian territory between Israel and Egypt may be an ominous turn in a five-month campaign by militant Islamists to impose their conservative beliefs on Gaza's 1.4 million people.

The first body was found early Tuesday on a deserted Mediterranean beach. The second was dumped hours later in a nearby farming town close to the Israeli border. The third was left in a Gaza City neighbourhood. All three had been killed the same way, police said: with one shot to the head and one to the chest.

Police investigators say the <u>women</u> were prostitutes. While no group has claimed responsibility, police say they are investigating whether the <u>women</u> were killed by the Swords of Islamic Righteousness, a shadowy group that's looking to purge Gaza of what it considers the corrupting influence of western culture.

Until now, the Swords and other renegade groups have limited their campaign largely to bombing closed businesses, including more than two dozen Internet cafes, music shops, DVD stores, cultural centres, recreational clubs, pharmacies and other targets across the Gaza Strip.

"Get back to Allah and away from all those dirty, corrupting things," the group wrote in a warning delivered after it attacked one Gaza City Internet cafe. "Because you will never withstand the fire of hell and the torture at the end of your life."

The murders are increasing fears among Gaza Strip residents that hardline militants are becoming more aggressive.

"We don't know who our enemy is," said Fadi Bakhit, a 25-year-old manager for a Gaza City rap group that sharply curtailed its performances last year after the hardline Islamist group <u>Hamas</u> took control of the Palestinian Authority. "If we knew our enemy, we would fight it."

The exact makeup of the Swords of Islamic Righteousness is not known, but some detectives think the group may have either the tacit or explicit support of members of the <u>Hamas</u>-led Palestinian Authority security forces.

Islamist group suspected in prostitutes' killings: Militants have bombed businesses before in bid to purge Gaza of western influence

One police investigator, who agreed to speak only on the condition that he be identified by a pseudonym, Abu Abed, said that explosives the Swords of Islamic Righteousness had used in some bombings were the same kind used by the *Hamas* militant wing known as Izzedine al-Qassam.

He also said the group included people who served by day as members of the <u>Hamas</u>-dominated Palestinian Authority security service known as the Executive Force, a claim quickly dismissed by Islam Shahwan, a representative of the Executive Force in Gaza.

"They have no connection with *Hamas*," he said. "And if one guy was involved with such an operation, he does not represent the movement itself."

Load-Date: March 2, 2007



Following Bombing in Eilat, No Military Operation Seen in Gaza

The Forward February 2, 2007

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Section: News; Pg. A6

Length: 781 words

Byline:

Additional reporting by Forward stafffirst.

Body

The suicide bombing in Eilat last Monday, January 29, will not lead to a major military operation

in Gaza, security sources say. The suicide bomber came from Gaza via Sinai, but current events in Gaza are so complex that Israel will think twice before putting itself into the mix. Put differently, the internecine

Palestinian conflict is now Gaza's best bulwark against any Israeli operation. When Fatah and <u>Hamas</u> are so good at killing each other, Israeli commanders ask, why should Israel intervene and spur them to close ranks against the common enemy? [Most Israeli and Western policymakers

believe the Hamas- Fatah fighting, which has claimed at least 36 lives in the past month, is largely an ideological

battle over Palestinian national goals. Fatah leaders demand that <u>Hamas</u>, which won power in elections a year ago, formally recognize Israel and swear off terror in order to end international isolation. <u>Hamas</u> leaders refuse; they also charge that Fatah wants to win back with bullets the power that it lost at the ballot box.]

The organization responsible for the Eilat attack, the tiny, Iranian- backed Islamic Jihad, was trying to put the struggle against Israel back at the top of the Palestinian agenda, but with little success. Six Palestinians were killed in Gaza on Monday, double the number of Israelis killed in the suicide bombing that day.

The attack in Eilat, a Red Sea resort town that had been spared the horrors of the second intifada until now, has raised Israeli fears of renewed Palestinian terrorism. Nine months had passed without

any suicide bombings within the Green Line. In all of 2006, there were only two bombings, in which 11 Israelis were killed.

But this is not to say that Palestinian terrorism has disappeared.

There are groups, like Islamic Jihad and the rogue Fatah cells in Nablus, that have never stopped attempting to send suicide bombers. They have been stopped by a combination of good intelligence, improved coordination between the army and Shin Bet, and the separation

fence.

Following Bombing in Eilat, No Military Operation Seen in Gaza

In addition, beginning with the tahadia, the informal cease-fire adopted by <u>Hamas</u> in January 2005, the main Islamist party has held off albeit temporarily, it appears from sending suicide bombers into Israel, removing the most dangerous source of terrorism from the arena.

Monday's attack demonstrated something else: the unbearable ease of crossing the Egyptian border. Drug and arms smugglers and traffickers in <u>women</u> cross it without hindrance. Why not suicide bombers?

Officers of Israel's Southern Command spoke after the Eilat bombing about plans to build a fence and deploy observation

devices along the border. But they know that this latest bombing will result at most in improved protection for Eilat. In Israel, financial investment is directly proportional to the number of fatalities. In response to three fatalities, the state will not spend \$700 million to build a fence on the Egyptian border.

In addition to the porous boundary with Egypt, Israel suffers from a weakening of its intelligence in Gaza. Relatives of the suicide bomber, who was from the Gaza village of Beit Lahia, said he had spoken openly last week of his plan for a suicide bombing. This could not have happened in Nablus, where Israel still maintains military

control. No suicide bomber in the West Bank would have risked blabbing, knowing that the Shin Bet would be on to him immediately.

The terrorists in Gaza, by contrast, feel relatively safe. So do the kidnappers of Corporal Gilad Shalit, who have been evading Israeli intelligence for more than six months, since they snatched him from a border post last June. Without a military presence, Gaza is slipping from the scrutiny of Israeli intelligence.

Monday's bombing also shows how eager Islamic Jihad is to take advantage of the Palestinian political vacuum. Quite a few Palestinians see Islamic Jihad's terrorism as a saner option than the mutual killing between Fatah and *Hamas*.

At present, though, there are no signs that the internecine fighting is abating. Indeed, it has recently overflowed from the Jebalya refugee camp to central neighborhoods in Gaza City. The mediation efforts of Egypt and Saudi Arabia seem pathetic. While leaders of both Fatah and <u>Hamas</u> responded to Egypt's call for a cease-fire and a joint summit in Mecca, the militants continued fighting in the streets.

Any agreement on a Palestinian unity regime now looks remote, and with it, the prospect of a renewed Israeli-Palestinian diplomatic process. Of more immediate concern to Israelis, so does any deal for the return of Shalit.

Load-Date: February 1, 2007



<u>Granny blasts way into 'martyrdom': Suicide bomber. Two Israeli soldiers</u> injured in attack

The Gazette (Montreal)

November 24, 2006 Friday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A16

Length: 559 words

Byline: SARAH EL DEEB, AP **Dateline:** JEBALIYA, Gaza Strip

Body

A 64-year-old Palestinian grandmother blew herself up near Israeli troops sweeping through northern Gaza yesterday, wounding two soldiers, and eight other Palestinians were killed in a day of clashes and rocket fire.

The militant <u>Hamas</u>, which is in charge of the Palestinian government, claimed responsibility for the suicide attack and identified the bomber as Fatma Omar An-Najar. Her relatives said she was 64 - by far the oldest of the more than 100 Palestinian suicide bombers who have targeted Israelis over the past six years.

Israeli forces were moving through the Jebaliya refugee camp in northern Gaza on the second day of an operation to stem rocket fire from the coastal strip into southern Israel. They spotted a woman acting suspiciously, the military said. Soldiers threw a stun grenade, a weapon that makes a loud nose but causes no damage. The woman then set off explosives she was carrying, killing herself and slightly wounding two soldiers.

At the compound where her extended family lives near Jebaliya camp, her oldest daughter, Fatheya, explained the bomber's motives.

"They (Israelis) destroyed her house, they killed her grandson - my son. Another grandson is in a wheelchair with an amputated leg," she said.

<u>Female</u> suicide bombers were a rarity during the first several years of the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but that has gradually changed. The last suicide bombing, on Nov. 6, also was carried out by a woman in northern Gaza.

But the past few weeks have seen an increase in militant activity by <u>women</u> in Gaza who have served as "human shields" defending the homes of militants that Israel has threatened to destroy.

Fatheya said she and her mother had taken part in rally at a Gaza mosque three weeks ago where <u>women</u> defied a cordon of heavily armed Israeli troops to create a diversion for besieged *Hamas* fighters to slip away.

"She and I, we went to the mosque. We were looking for martyrdom," the daughter said.

Granny blasts way into 'martyrdom': Suicide bomber. Two Israeli soldiers injured in attack

Before setting out on her mission, An-Najar filmed the video testament customary for suicide bombers. A copy obtained by the Associated Press showed a petite woman wearing a white head scarf and black dress, toting an assault rifle on her shoulder and standing in front of a *Hamas* wall mural.

Reading from a sheet of paper, she dedicated her attack to the <u>Hamas</u>-led government and to the movement's military commander, Mohammed Deif.

Eight other Palestinians were killed yesterday. In Gaza, three militants from the Palestinian Resistance Committees were killed in an Israeli air strike on their car. Others killed included a 20-year-old member of the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades and two *Hamas* militants killed in a gun battle with Israeli forces.

Despite the stepped-up Israeli military operations, militants kept firing their homemade rockets at southern Israel. Five were fired from Gaza, the army said. No one was hurt.

The escalating violence added urgency to diplomatic efforts to defuse the conflict.

In one hopeful sign, the Damascus-based supreme leader of <u>Hamas</u>, Khaled Mashaal, began talks with Egyptian mediators in Cairo on a vital prisoner swap with Israel and formation of a Palestinian national unity government that could end months of crippling Western aid sanctions.

montrealgazette.com

ONLINE EXTRA: Recent violence in Gaza has sparked controversy over damage to a historic Commonwealth war cemetery.

Graphic

Colour Photo: AFP; GETTY IMAGES; Suicide bomber Fatma Omar An-Najar had seen her house destroyed, a grandson killed and another maimed, her daughter said.

Load-Date: November 24, 2006



Retaliation vowed as Israeli strike kills 18

The Irish Times

November 9, 2006 Thursday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 13

Length: 633 words

Byline: Rory McCarthy in Beit Hanoun

Body

MIDDLE EAST: The leader of the Palestinian militant group <u>Hamas</u> called on his fighters yesterday to "activate resistance" hours after an Israeli artillery strike killed 18 civilians, mostly <u>women</u> and children, from a single family in Gaza.

Khaled Meshaal, who lives in exile in Damascus, promised retaliation after a wave of artillery shells landed before dawn on a residential street in Beit Hanoun. Several homes were hit, all belonging to one family.

The attack sparked international condemnation and came a day after the Israeli military ended a six-day operation in Beit Hanoun that claimed more than 50 lives. More than 350 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza by the Israeli military in the past five months.

"Our condemnation will not be in words but in deeds," Mr Meshaal said. "All Palestinian groups are urged to activate resistance."

<u>Hamas</u> agreed a truce that began 18 months ago, but it expired at the end of last year. <u>Hamas</u> militants have since fired rockets into Israel, but the call to arms risks a return to suicide bombings.

Israel's military halted all artillery strikes into Gaza yesterday and said it had appointed a general to investigate the shelling. The military admitted that it had fired "preventative artillery" into Gaza yesterday aimed at "launch sites" from which rockets had been fired the day before.

The military suggested there had been a targeting mistake.

"Initial information shows the artillery fire was directed at a location distant from the one reportedly hit," it said in a statement.

Israel's foreign minister, Tzipi Livni, said: "Unfortunately, in the course of battle, regrettable incidents such as that which occurred this morning do happen."

Margaret Beckett, the British foreign secretary, said she was "gravely disturbed" by the deaths. "Israel must respect its obligation to avoid harming civilians. It is hard to see what this action was meant to achieve and how it can be justified," she said.

Alvaro de Soto, the UN's Middle East special co-ordinator, said he was "deeply shocked and appalled" by the shelling. The International Committee of the Red Cross said it was also "appalled".

Retaliation vowed as Israeli strike kills 18

Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president, called the attack a "despicable crime". He said: "We tell the Israelis, you are not seeking peace at all . . . you must therefore bear all the consequences."

Israeli military operations continued in Gaza last night. An airstrike in Gaza City killed two militants.

The Islamic Jihad militant group, which never accepted the ceasefire brokered by Mr Abbas and Egypt, has vowed to carry out suicide bombings in response to the Beit Hanoun strike.

Israeli police said they had gone on high alert.

<u>Hamas</u>'s armed wing, decrying Washington's "political and financial support" for Israel, appeared to call on Muslims to attack US targets, urging them "to teach the American enemy harsh lessons".

An Israeli military statement said the army had "fired preventative artillery at launch sites from which Qassam rockets were launched (on Monday) into Ashkelon", in southern Israel.

Israeli media said an artillery battery had missed its target, about 1km from Beit Hanoun. An army spokeswoman could not confirm this.

In a rare show of unity, Mr Abbas and prime minister Ismail Haniyeh of <u>Hamas</u> donated blood together and visited a hospital, in northern Gaza, treating some of Beit Hanoun's 54 wounded.

Mr Haniyeh said he had suspended, for a few days, talks with Abbas on the creation of a technocrat unity government, an administration that Palestinians hope could prompt the West to ease sanctions imposed after <u>Hamas</u> came to power in March.

Funerals expected to draw thousands of mourners will be held today in Beit Hanoun, the focus in the past week of Israel's biggest offensive in Gaza in a year.

- (Guardian service; additional reporting Reuters)

Load-Date: November 9, 2006



Letters to the Editor

Christian Science Monitor June 28, 2007, Thursday

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Section: EDITORIAL; Pg. 8

Length: 891 words

Body

The United States can't afford to ignore **Hamas**

Regarding the June 26 book review, "A look 'Inside <u>Hamas</u>' ": I live in an Arab neighborhood. Two shopkeeper friends are Sunni Palestinians (also American citizens) who strongly prefer <u>Hamas</u> to Fatah. They believe Fatah keeps more of the funding it receives for itself. Both claim that <u>Hamas</u> provides more charitable, educational, and medical services than Fatah.

Palestinians have lived under deplorable circumstances and hopelessness for far too long. A just peace between the Arabs and Israelis needs to be the goal of both sides. I think this will be even more difficult with the Palestinian territories divided between *Hamas* and Fatah. The territories need to speak with one voice.

It would be naive to think <u>Hamas</u> doesn't have support among Sunnis as well as the Shiites. I do agree with Zaki Chehab, the author of the book, "Inside <u>Hamas</u>: The Untold Story of the Militant Islamic Movement." He suggests that the US cannot afford to ignore <u>Hamas</u>. Nor do I believe that it can ignore Fatah or the clerics. These are the groups that have the ears, if not the hearts, of the people.

Elizabeth Tang

Anaheim, Calif.

The pitfalls of higher gas taxes

Regarding Randy Salzman's June 26 Opinion piece, "Get Americans to drive less: Raise gas taxes": Every time I learn of someone going on about how the United States ought to imitate Europe and try to tax Americans out of their cars and into mass transit, it makes me laugh.

Unlike Europe, America is a large country with vast distances to cross, and most of the stuff that you and I buy is delivered by truck. Raising gas taxes means that everything we get from food to electronics is going to get massively more expensive.

The foolish decision the US has made to use more ethanol may mean an even higher tax on fuel. Ethanol cannot be shipped via pipeline due to its water-absorbing characteristics that destroy pipelines, so it must travel by truck.

Most people commute miles from far-flung suburbs, where they moved to escape the violence of gang-infested cities and poor city schools. Moving is a goal that becomes ever higher on my list as my neighborhood makeup

Letters to the Editor

changes to a more unruly and discourteous populace. Moreover, few people live close to co-workers or are connected enough to their neighbors to even know if they work in proximity.

Wayne Palmer

West Allis, Wis.

Randy Salzman's June 26 Opinion piece arguing for higher gas taxes to decrease driving misses an important point: We in the United States have developed our cities and outlying areas around driving. Those of us who do not live in well-planned cities often have no other option but to drive. We have planned ourselves into a difficult bind with unwalkable, and sometimes unsafe, towns, rural localities, suburban sprawl, and urban areas.

If gas prices go up to \$5 a gallon, who will suffer? The rural poor with no easy access to grocery stores, everyone who lives in a town where main arteries have 50 m.p.h. speed limits and no grocery stores within walking distance, and those people in urban areas where the streets are unsafe after dark.

I agree that if we all lived in quaint university towns with their bike paths and good design elements, we'd be better off raising gas prices. But citizens have to demand better design from their city councils, local planning agencies, and developers. The city of the future may require walking, but there have to be places to walk.

Jude Egan

San Luis Obispo, Calif.

Diversity of the black community

I appreciated Jim Sollisch's May 30 Opinion piece, "At graduation, reflections on race." It felt as if Mr. Sollisch articulated what I internally complain about daily as I interact with nonminorities. I am an African-American who is educated, married, has a family, and is pursuing educational goals in law school. I like Jane Austen and all types of music, especially rock. These are things that I sometimes find nonminorities marveling about.

I tell my husband all the time that racism today is not about being relegated to the back of the bus; it is a fallacious idea in the back of many people's minds that "black" means a person is either poor, uneducated, dishonest, or possesses any number of other unfavorable traits. It has been extremely frustrating to me that many nonminorities do not realize that people are just people, despite race, ethnicity, culture, or religion. Most people are law-abiding citizens who want to be happy and provide for their families.

Negative attributes are found across racial lines, and there is no one way to be <u>female</u> or black or Jewish or anything else. If I could say one thing to all nonminorities, it would be this quote from Sollisch's Opinion piece, "...that black culture is far from monolithic. Blacks are as diverse as whites."

Anesha Worthy

Largo, Fla.

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Letters to the Editor

Load-Date: June 27, 2007



Israel Approves the Release Of 250 Palestinian Prisoners

The New York Times
July 9, 2007 Monday
Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 5

Length: 703 words

Byline: By ISABEL KERSHNER **Dateline:** JERUSALEM, July 8

Body

The Israeli government on Sunday gave its approval for the release of 250 Palestinian prisoners to bolster the administration of Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president, an Israeli government spokesman said.

Israeli and Palestinian officials also said that discussions were under way for a meeting between Mr. Abbas and Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel, possibly early next week, though the date and location have yet to be determined.

Mr. Olmert pledged at a summit meeting in the Egyptian resort of Sharm el Sheik on June 25 to release prisoners belonging to Mr. Abbas's Fatah faction. David Baker, the government spokesman, said the gesture was meant to "shore up" the Palestinian leader and his new emergency government, which governs from the West Bank, after the violent takeover of Gaza by Fatah's rival, the Islamic group *Hamas*.

But a political adviser to Mr. Abbas, Nimr Hamad, said that the release of 250 prisoners was "a very, very limited step," and he said that Israel had rejected a Palestinian request to confer with Israel about which prisoners should be released.

According to Palestinian officials, about 10,500 Palestinians are currently being held in Israeli jails, about half of whom have been charged. Israel's Prisons Authority says that about 10,000 Palestinian prisoners suspected of or charged with security offenses are currently in Israeli jails. About 60 percent belong to Fatah, 30 percent to <u>Hamas</u> and 10 percent to other factions, a Prisons Authority spokesman said.

Other good-will gestures offered to Mr. Abbas at Sharm el Sheik included a resumption of the transfer of Palestinian tax revenues, which Israel collects on the Palestinians' behalf and which Israel has been withholding since *Hamas* came to power in early 2006; and a pledge to hold regular meetings between Mr. Olmert and Mr. Abbas.

Jordan's and Israel's Foreign Ministries said Sunday that the Jordanian and Egyptian foreign ministers would travel to Jerusalem on Thursday to represent the Arab League in talks about the Arab peace plan, The Associated Press reported. The plan would trade full Arab recognition of Israel for an Israeli withdrawal from all lands captured in the 1967 Middle East war and the creation of a Palestinian state.

Israel Approves the Release Of 250 Palestinian Prisoners

With regard to the release of Palestinian prisoners, Israeli government officials said that the list of those to be released was "still being worked on," but that it had nearly been finalized.

The first list presented by the Israeli security services was sent back for revision, according to Israeli news media reports over the weekend, because some of the candidates were very close to ending their prison terms anyway.

In line with a longstanding Israeli policy, Mr. Olmert said he would not release prisoners "with blood on their hands," meaning those who had been directly involved in terrorist attacks that killed Israelis. Mr. Hamad, the adviser to Mr. Abbas, said that he would like sick prisoners and <u>women</u> to be released, but that the Israelis were deciding unilaterally.

The early release of Palestinian prisoners always arouses opposition in Israel. The cabinet approved the release by a vote of 18 to 6. One member, Avigdor Lieberman of the rightist Yisrael Beiteinu Party, objected to the release in absentia.

In the meantime, Palestinian lawyers who were involved in drafting the Palestinian Basic Law, or interim constitution, were disputing the legality of Mr. Abbas's emergency government, Reuters reported.

Anis al-Qasem, who oversaw the writing of the Basic Law, and a fellow independent Palestinian constitutional lawyer, Eugene Cotran, told Reuters that Mr. Abbas had the power to dismiss Ismail Haniya of <u>Hamas</u>, the prime minister of the previous <u>Hamas</u>-led unity government.

But they said the law did not grant Mr. Abbas the power to appoint a new government without legislative approval or the right to suspend articles of the Basic Law pertaining to the need for parliamentary approval, as he did last month.

The work of the 132-seat parliament is in any case largely paralyzed, with 45 members, mostly from <u>Hamas</u>, currently in detention in Israel, and Fatah members contend their summer session has ended.

http://www.nytimes.com

Load-Date: July 9, 2007



IN BRIEF

The Australian (Australia)
April 25, 2007 Wednesday
All-round Metro Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 8

Length: 249 words

Body

MATP
----- Hamas truce ends ----
GAZA CITY: The armed wing of Hamas said yesterday a five-month truce with the Israeli army "no longer exists" after it fired dozens of rockets into the Jewish state. It was the first time that Hamas, the senior partner in the Palestinian Government, claimed responsibility for launching rockets into Israel since a November 26 ceasefire.
----- Italy rejects veil ----
ROME: Women in Italy should not wear veils that cover their face, according to new government guidelines for immigrants that were drawn up in consultation with representatives of the main faiths, including Muslims.
------ Banker's legal aid ----
WASHINGTON: World Bank president Paul Wolfowitz has hired prominent US lawyer Robert Bennett as he fights

to keep his job following the controversy over the promotion of his girlfriend.

---- Hillary laid low -----

WELLINGTON: Edmund Hillary, the first man to scale Mount Everest, is in a New Zealand hospital after a fall. The 87-year-old's condition is not life-threatening.

---- Basinger acts ----

LOS ANGELES: Actor Kim Basinger has hired a bodyguard for her 11-year-old daughter, Ireland, after a voice-mail tirade by Ireland's father, actor Alec Baldwin, was made public last week.

---- Horror floor show -----

LONDON: A man chopped off his penis with a knife in front of horrified diners at busy London restaurant Zizzi on Monday. A police spokeswoman said the man, aged between 30 and 40, had been taken to hospital to have the penis sewed back on.

IN BRIEF

Load-Date: April 25, 2007



Hunted women of the Gaza

Weekend Australian

March 24, 2007 Saturday

All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Inquirer; Pg. 26

Length: 1545 words **Byline:** Martin Chulov

Body

MATP

The Palestinian territories are torn by feuding forms of Islam, writes Middle East correspondent Martin Chulov

ON a windswept winter day last week, just before afternoon prayers, three gunshots rang out across the damp sand dunes of northern Gaza. Mohammed Yousef was just about to climb the minaret of the beach mosque to summon the faithful when he heard the distinctive crack of a Kalashnikov, a sharp, violent, intrusion that has become a soundtrack for the turbulent Gaza Strip, especially this month.

He hurried outside, looking first down a rubbish-strewn strip of beach that leads to the Mediterranean, then left towards a low-set concrete fence. Just inside a narrow entrance lay the crumpled body of a small woman, wearing a green Islamic gown and a full black veil. Her blood seeped into the puddles of sandy water around her head. Mohammed didn't bother with an ambulance. He need not have bothered with the police.

The dead woman was Dalal al-Behtete, a young woman from a struggling family in central Gaza. Seven other <u>women</u> have met the same violent and lonely fate across Gaza during a 10-day stretch this month. According to their assassins, their deaths gave them honour that their conduct in life had not. All the <u>women</u> had been accused of immoral behaviour. Some had been labelled prostitutes; others were branded for fraternising with men outside their immediate families.

So-called honour killings have been carried out here in the past, but even in this ramshackle, anarchistic and fractured society, *women* have never before been hunted down so blatantly.

Gaza, more so than anywhere else in the Palestinian territories, has been a feudal battleground of countless agendas, historical enmity, ideology and greed. Historically, clans and tribes have ruled the roost here, with factionalised militant ideologies running a close second. But the balance appears to have shifted during the past six months. Strict observance of Sunni Islam seems to have encouraged a fundamentalist trend that is making a play for influence, through the rigid enforcement of radical Islamic law espoused by the global jihad network that follows the bin Laden world view.

Sharia law appears to have drifted into Gaza, alarming Muslim and militant groups alike and sharply rattling the neighbour across the security barrier, Israel.

Hunted women of the Gaza

Change had begun in Gaza long before its <u>women</u> began to fall. Late last year, several internet cafes and music stores were bombed. In February, six pharmacies in the southern town of Rafah were also attacked because they persisted in selling Viagra to youths. In the past year, the name of a new group, first heard of after the capture of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit last June, persistently has been linked to the unrest.

It calls itself the Army of Islam and consists of self-styled morality warriors who claim links to al-Qa'ida. <u>Hamas</u>, the most powerful of the militant groups and a joint partner in the new unity government, steadfastly denies that al-Qa'ida has established an organised presence in Gaza. If it is true that al-Qa'ida has done so, it cripples <u>Hamas</u>'s claims to be fighting for a Palestinian state alone and not being standard bearers of the global jihads.

Saha Rijab had never heard of the Army of Islam until she was dragged by her hair and tossed into a car by masked men with assault rifles hours before Dalal was murdered. From her hospital bed in central Gaza, she agrees to tell Inquirer of the ordeal that has left her legs riddled with bullets and nearly led her to become the eighth victim of Gazan <u>women</u>'s most terrifying month.

"I was taking clothes to my <u>female</u> neighbour and I had to pass my cousin's house to get there," she says, wearing a yellow-knitted cardigan and a brown hijab. "My cousin was inside and saw me passing and he opened the door and came outside. I didn't look at him and he slammed the door against the wall."

Saha's cousin, Wael Rijab, is the head of the <u>Hamas</u> executive force in the northern Gaza Strip, the vanguard of the militant group's strike power and a key player in the blood-soaked factional in-fighting of the past three months. He has accused his cousin of immorality for the past five years, seemingly because of her preference for jeans, tops and sometimes flowing hair instead of the Islamic jilbab. Just as damaging was his accusation of treachery; she was an avowed supporter of the Fatah movement that <u>Hamas</u> deposed in elections 14 months ago. Both groups have since been entangled in a struggle for power in Palestinian society.

"I kept walking and gave my neighbour the jilbab, then came back home," Saha says, with her shocked 12-year-old son sitting beside her. "After that I took a taxi to the shop to buy fruit and some militants from the [*Hamas*] executive force were sitting in a Mitsubishi with darkened glass. Their windows were half open and they were looking at me.

"I was scared but I decided to just keep walking to my street. What else could I do?

"I was 20m away from my home, then their car moved and another one arrived; the cars started moving closer to me. They opened the door. They were masked and they were running after me, the driver and two others. I was a few metres away from a clothes shop, but they reached me and put their hands on me. They dragged me by the hair and clothes and pushed me inside the car. They blindfolded me and they tied my hands.

"When I took the blindfold off I was in a street full of taxis. They said: 'Where are you going?' And I said: 'I am going to my street, I swear to God.' They said: 'You know God and you dress like this?' I said: 'I know God better than you.' They said: 'Are you Fatah or *Hamas*?' I said: 'I am Fatah', and they replied: 'We spit on Fatah.'"

Then they announced their allegiance as followers of the Army of Islam and told Saha she should dress liberally only for her husband.

She retorted: "This is politics and you are trying to avenge something. I have nothing to do with it. If this is just about the way I dress I will start wearing the jilbab.

"They said: 'We will beat you and force you to say, 'I had sex with my son.' Then they covered my eyes again. I could hear the sound of the sea and their mobiles were ringing all the time. We went to a market and they said: 'So, you promise you have not been in contact with any other men?"

Terrified and haunted by the recent deaths of other <u>women</u>, Saha drew little comfort from the next words she heard: "OK, don't worry. We will take you home."

Hunted women of the Gaza

She was right to be wary. Minutes later, she tells Inquirer, the car stopped and she was thrown outside into the dirt. She wriggled furiously to free herself as the first bullet thudded into the bone just below her knee. Two more pierced her lower legs before the gunmen sped off.

At the Jabaliya police station, which notionally investigates crime in the north of the Gaza Strip, five officers usher us inside the dingy office of the lead junior officer. Two officers sit behind a desk, and others sit on old foam mattresses on single beds along the wall. There is no computer, let alone a typewriter, no files or cabinets, not even a notepad. The officers received about 30 per cent of their annual salary last year and have no operational budget of which to speak. But it isn't their dearth of resources that has left them hamstrung; it is the impossible task of taking on the perpetrators.

"What could we do even if we wanted to?" asks an officer, who refuses to be named. "We are ruled by the tribes and we will not fight the [*Hamas*] executive force."

In the case of Dalal, after escorting her body to the morgue and advising her distraught father of her death, the police will play no further role. Justice, if it is delivered, will be played out Gaza-style, in a cycle of vengeance.

But with the rising power of the so-called Army of Islam, even that seems unlikely. Dalal and three other <u>women</u> murdered during the 10-day stretch -- Ibtisam Mohammed Abu Genas, Samira Tohami Debeki and Amany Khamis al-Hussary -- were victims of killers who claimed the ideological backing of the fledgling group, even if the murders stemmed from bids for family honour.

The deaths pose a significant issue for the new unity government on many fronts, especially <u>Hamas</u>. No one in the uneasy Fatah-<u>Hamas</u> alliance wants to be seen to be linked to extremism, especially of the Salafi-Islamic kind.

Israel has long feared that Gaza will be turned into a platform for al-Qa'ida and the consortium of international jihadis that have emerged in its likeness. Creeping sharia law at the border is a worst-case scenario for the Jewish state; it fears it will lead to imported and intensified jihadism.

For <u>Hamas</u>, the links appear to be just as troubling. Saha says she recognised her tormentors as being members of the <u>Hamas</u> executive force.

Soon after Inquirer's visit to Dalal's grieving family, our translator receives a phone call from a cousin confessing to the murder. In a menacing tone, the man says he too is an executive force member and warns us not to publish the dead woman's story.

"These are the worst days ever here," Saha says, knowing well the risks she faces for speaking out.

"Hamas believes that women cannot be the ones who lead. So long as Hamas is in Gaza, the situation will keep developing."

Load-Date: March 23, 2007



World Digest

The Toronto Star

August 19, 2007 Sunday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A07

Length: 561 words

Body

Afghanistan

German aid worker abducted at Kabul eatery

Four armed assailants kidnapped a German aid worker having lunch with her husband at a restaurant in Kabul yesterday.

The abduction of the 31-year-old German woman, who works for a small Christian aid organization, Ora International, along with her husband, prompted police in Kabul to shoot at the speeding getaway car, killing a nearby taxi driver. The woman's husband, also German, unsuccessfully tried to fight off the abductors. Neither the woman nor her husband were named.

Meanwhile, a suicide car bomb attack killed 15 people and wounded 26, including several <u>women</u> and children, in Kandahar.

China

Rescuers pump water

in bid to get to miners

Rescuers raced yesterday to pump water out of two coal mines flooded by the rain-swollen Wen River, where 181 miners were missing and feared dead.

Water levels were rising, work areas were submerged and the miners "had only slim chances of survival," the official Xinhua News Agency reported, citing Wang Ziqi, director of Shandong province's coal mine safety agency. Crews are trying to rescue 172 people in one mine and nine in the other. It is uncertain if the flooding in the latter mine was caused by the same dike break that caused water to deluge the former.

West Bank

Abbas cleans house

of *Hamas* civil servants

World Digest

In a belated move to erase the last vestiges of his short-lived partnership with the Islamic militant group <u>Hamas</u>, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah, fired dozens of <u>Hamas</u>-affiliated senior civil servants, his office said yesterday.

Those affected were hired last spring under a power-sharing agreement between the rival factions. In <u>Hamas</u>-controlled Gaza, Ahmed Bahar, the acting speaker of the Palestinian parliament from <u>Hamas</u>, called the firings "absolutely illegal."

United States

Reagan media guru Deaver dies of cancer

Michael Deaver, a media strategist who shaped iconic images of president Ronald Reagan only to be convicted of perjury over his later lobbying business, died yesterday.

Deaver, 69, had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. He died at his home in Bethesda, Md., surrounded by family members, said a statement by Edelman, the public relations firm he served as a vice chairman.

Korea

Leaders delay summit due to flooding in North

The two Koreas agreed yesterday to postpone until Oct. 2-4 the summit they had planned to hold this month because of the flooding that has killed hundreds of people and made more than 300,000 homeless in the North.

The meeting, originally set for Aug. 28-30 between South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun and North Korean leader Kim Jong-il, will be only the second between heads of Asia's fourth-biggest economy and its impoverished, communist neighbour.

Iraq

Interpol issues notice

for Saddam's daughter

Interpol yesterday issued a wanted notice for Saddam Hussein's eldest daughter, who is sought by the Iraqi government on suspicion of terrorism.

Interpol's "Red Notice" is not an international arrest warrant but a request for foreign police forces to co-operate in tracking down Raghad Hussein, 38, and in extraditing her to face justice in Iraq. Hussein has lived in Jordan since July 2003 and since last year has been on a list of 41 people associated with her father's regime that the new Iraqi government is seeking to prosecute for allegedly inciting violence.

From the Star's wire services

Load-Date: August 19, 2007



Harper ignoring Jewish history

The Toronto Star January 26, 2007 Friday

Copyright 2007 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: LETTER; Pg. A15

Length: 214 words

Body

Canada's policy on Hamas correct

Letter, Jan. 25.

Ofir Gendelman criticizes Jim Travers's comparison of Israel's gangs (i.e. the Haganah, the Stern Gang, Irgun and Mapai) to *Hamas* by saying these Jewish gangs were scrupulous in avoiding killing civilians.

Here is a brief listing of some of the results of these Jewish actions: There was the blowing up of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, which killed 91 and injured 45 British and Arabs; the assassination of Lord Moyne in Cairo in 1944; the 1947 letter bombs to British cabinet ministers; the blowing up of the Semiramis Hotel in Jerusalem, which killed the Viscount de Tapia and 19 other civilians. All of these were admitted by the Haganah and are a matter of public record.

The grossest outrage was Deir Yassin and the killing of 254 <u>women</u>, children and old men in April 1948. Then we have the assassination of Count Bernadotte and his aide by the Stern gang because of the rumour that Bernadotte was going to recommend that Jerusalem be made an international city.

It seems this history is being ignored by the Harper government, which is applying a different standard toward Hamas than toward Israel because of political and economic support of the Jewish lobby in Canada.

Bohdan Zaputovich and Maria Hrycaiko Zaputovich, Toronto

Load-Date: January 26, 2007



Palestinian universities dragged into factional clashes

Yukon News (Yukon)
March 2, 2007 Friday
Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 25

Length: 1109 words

Byline: Greg Myre, New York Times Service

Dateline: GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

Body

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip - The computer centre in the Islamic University's library is ankle-deep in ashes, and the few computers remaining after a recent grenade attack and fire are misshapen and melted, as if painted by Salvador Dali.

Just next door, at Al Azhar University, a rocket mangled the protective metal bars as it crashed through the windows of the president's office this month, destroying his desk and pocking his walls with shrapnel.

Many Palestinians never imagined that the violence in their streets would spread to these institutions, sources of great pride to all Palestinians.

But as infighting spun out of control at the beginning of this month, it consumed the major universities that represent one of the few hopes of a better life here in the impoverished Gaza Strip.

Islamic University is closely identified with one of the main Palestinian factions -- <u>Hamas</u> -- while Al Azhar is a stronghold for its main rival, Fatah.

For three days this month, from February 1 to February 3, the adjacent campuses became a battleground for gunmen from the two factions while the universities were on winter break and largely deserted.

"I never thought this could happen," said Ahmed Bahar, a <u>Hamas</u> leader and the deputy speaker of the Palestinian parliament, who toured Islamic University on Sunday. "When we saw the university burning, it was like our hearts were burning, because this institution is very dear to us."

Hamas and Fatah now say they will share power in a unity government, and the factional fighting has stopped.

At the universities, the students have returned from their breaks, and workmen are repairing the damage. But the tensions linger.

"I have two sisters and many friends at the Islamic University," said Rasha Nejem, 22, a pharmacy student at Al Azhar. "But when I visited to see the damage, one girl told me: 'Get out of my university. You have no business here."

Palestinian universities dragged into factional clashes

When the fighting was at its worst, members of the Presidential Guard, who are linked to Fatah and are responsible for protecting the president of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, stormed onto the Islamic University campus on February 1 and remained there the next day.

They said *Hamas* fighters were shooting from the buildings and storing weapons at the university.

"The Islamic University was used as a base for <u>Hamas</u> gunmen," said Maher Makdad, a Fatah spokesman. "We didn't attack the university because it was a university, but because gunmen were firing from there."

The Presidential Guard left a trail of destruction that included significant damage to seven buildings, totaling \$10US million, according to Islamic University officials.

The security forces said they confiscated <u>Hamas</u> weapons but backed away from some of the accusations made at the time, including an assertion that eight Iranian weapons experts were arrested at the university.

"They made all kinds of charges," said Kamalain Shaath, the president of the Islamic University.

"They said we were holding an Israeli soldier, that there were Iranians and that we were keeping dead bodies here. They were all fabrications."

"Until now, I have received no convincing explanation as to why the university was attacked," Shaath added.

He said he had received a call of support from Jawad Wadi, the president of Al Azhar. However, Shaath said he had no communication from Abbas, his office or the Presidential Guard.

Some of the most valuable parts of the campus were singled out for attacks. Two rocket-propelled grenades were fired into the top floor of the library, setting a blaze that gutted the computer centre.

The intensity of the fire warped the blades on the ceiling fans, which now droop like wilted flower petals.

The library's bookstore was burned, and one of the few surviving volumes is a badly singed Quran. But the 130,000 books in the library itself were not harmed.

Science labs with expensive equipment were also burned, as was a conference centre.

Throughout the university, graffiti spray-painted on office doors reads, "the Presidential Guards were here" and "Greetings from Abbas and Dahlan," a reference to the president of the Palestinian Authority and Muhammad Dahlan, a former Gaza security chief and a prominent Fatah leader.

The smell of smoke still hangs in the air more than two weeks after the attack.

On February 3, the day after the attack on the Islamic University ended, Wadi, Al Azhar's president, received an anonymous phone call urging him to go to his office because gunmen were using his campus to fire on the Islamic University.

"They told me it was urgent, and I should come right away," he said.

He checked with security guards at his university, who assured him it was not true, so he decided not to go because there was still fighting in the surrounding neighbourhood.

About an hour after the phone call, a rocket fired from the direction of the Islamic University smashed through the window behind his desk.

Several more rockets slammed into other parts of the administration building. University officials collected the tail fins of four rockets, which bore the *Hamas* insignia.

Palestinian universities dragged into factional clashes

"I was lucky," said Wadi, who is now working out of an undamaged office across the hall. "After the phone call, I asked for cars to be moved out of the area, and when the attackers saw the movement, they probably thought I was in my office."

There is no evidence that students from either institution were involved in the violence, but the attacks showed that no place was immune.

"We want to keep education separate from politics," said Gehad Hamad, a spokesman for Al Azhar.

"We view the universities as a holy place, almost like a mosque. But this is a small community, and what happens on the street affects us here."

The two universities are separated by a wall on Thalathini Street, a main thoroughfare in Gaza City.

The Islamic University, founded in 1978, has nearly 20,000 students, a majority of them **women**, and caters to those who seek a religion-based education.

All the <u>women</u> wear black abayas, or long robes, as well as head scarves, and some wear full veils.

Many *Hamas* leaders in Gaza have some link to the university, among them Prime Minister Ismail Haniya.

At Al Azhar, established in 1990, there are more than 12,000 students, and most offices feature a large photo of Yasser Arafat, the longtime Palestinian leader and Fatah chief who died in 2004.

As competition between <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah has increased, students from the two universities have waged occasional stone-throwing clashes, as happened last spring.

"Let us hope that what happened here was an exception," said Shaath, the Islamic University president. "Now it is time to rebuild everything that was destroyed."

Graphic

Black & White

Photo: Taghreed El-Khodary, The New York Times / EDUCATED CLASS...: A majority of the students at the Islamic University in Gaza City are <u>women</u>.;

Load-Date: March 3, 2007



Palestinian gunmen push Gaza 'to brink of civil war'

The Evening Standard (London)
January 29, 2007 Monday

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Section: LL 04; Pg. 8 Length: 472 words

Body

World at a glance . <u>HAMAS</u> and Fatah gunmen battled each other across the Gaza Strip today, attacking security compounds, knocking out an electrical transformer and kidnapping several local commanders in some of the most extensive factional fighting in recent weeks. Two people were killed and large parts of Gaza City were plunged into darkness. Saudi Arabia and Egypt offered to mediate, as Information Minister Youssef Rizka of <u>Hamas</u> warned the two sides are close to civil war.

Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah said the infighting, which has claimed more than 60 lives since December, was shameful, and offered to host talks in the holy city of Mecca. The fighting erupted in Gaza after the collapse of coalition talks between <u>Hamas</u>, which controls parliament and the government, and moderate President Mahmoud Abbas, who heads Fatah. Abbas has threatened to call early elections, a step <u>Hamas</u> has denounced as a coup attempt. <u>Hamas</u> is getting funds from Iran and other Islamic supporters worldwide, while the US has asked Congress to approve \$85 million in aid for Abbas's troops.

Both sides began preparing for the possibility of a big battle after Israel left the Gaza Strip in 2005.

Angelina's mum dies at 56. ACTRESS Angelina Jolie was grieving today for her mother after she lost her six-year battle with cancer. Jolie and boyfriend Brad Pitt, 43, were by her side in California, along with Jolie's older brother James Haven, when the 56-year-old French actress Marcheline Bertrand died. Bertrand raised Jolie, 31, and Haven alone after divorcing their father, Oscar-winning actor Jon Voight, in 1976. She won small roles in the 1982 movie Lookin' To Get Out and 1983's The Man Who Loved <u>Women</u>. A private funeral is planned. Jolie described her mother as "a remarkable woman".

Kiri blames no-show on knicker fear I won't go home, says US defector. A U.S. Army deserter who defected to North Korea in 1962 said "a billion dollars" could not entice him to leave the isolated communist country that is locked in a nuclear stand-off with America. Joe Dresnok, the last U.S.

Palestinian gunmen push Gaza 'to brink of civil war'

defector living in North Korea, broke a 44-year silence in an interview on CBS on Sunday. The 65-year-old, who is in poor health, has appeared in anti-US propaganda films and his story has been made into a documentary called Crossing The Line. He said: "I don't have intentions of leaving."

. INTERNATIONAL opera singer Dame Kiri Te Kanawa is being sued after cancelling a concert with Australian rocker John Farnham over fears about his fans' antics. Action against the soprano began today in a Sydney court after she pulled out of a series of concerts with Farnham in 2005 on learning that fans threw underwear at him on stage. Barrister Richard Evans told the court that Dame Kiri breached her contract because her concerns were "never properly communicated".

Load-Date: January 29, 2007



Reverberations in Egypt; Gaza fallout I

The International Herald Tribune
June 19, 2007 Tuesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 8

Length: 650 words

Byline: Uri Dromi - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

The emergence of "Hamastan" in Gaza sent leaders in the Middle East and elsewhere scrambling for an answer: Whose fault is it? Is it reversible? Will the same thing happen in the West Bank? What should and could be done now? In this soul-searching process there is plenty of blame to share.

The Palestinians once again demonstrated their tendency to harm their own interests. I'm not being patronizing here by taking the usual Western "Orientalist" approach, presuming to know better than the Palestinians what is best for them. I'm only quoting my Palestinian friends in the West Bank, who call the recent events in Gaza "our second naqba" (catastrophe), the first one being the loss of Palestine in 1948.

Israel could have done more in the past to strengthen the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, mainly by handing Gaza to him instead of allowing *Hamas* to claim it had kicked the Israelis out.

And the Bush administration should now ponder whether its doctrine of "democratizing" the Middle East really works. It seems that when Arabs are allowed to vote freely, they tend to elect the "wrong" people. Already in Algeria, in 1992, the Islamic Salvation Front was set to win the elections when the army stepped in to cancel them.

Needless to say, democracy means more than just letting people elect their leaders freely - it's about civic society, the rule of law, the equality of **women** and more.

While President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel will obviously be discussing these issues when they meet this week in Washington, a critical country is missing: Egypt.

Cairo washed its hands of Gaza back in 1978 when, during talks that led to the Camp David accords, President Anwar Sadat of Egypt sort of told Prime Minister Menachem Begin of Israel, "You take Gaza."

Since then, Egypt has treated Gaza as basically an Israeli problem, frequently turning a blind eye to the heavy arms smuggling in this troublesome area.

However, with the victory of *Hamas* in the Palestinian elections in 2005, Egypt became nervous.

After all, <u>Hamas</u> is a Palestinian manifestation of the Muslim Brotherhood, the radical Islamic movement established in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna to turn Egypt into a state based strictly on the sharia, the religious law of the Koran.

Reverberations in Egypt Gaza fallout I

One of al-Bana's successors, Sayyid Qutb, took it a step further by declaring that true Muslims must rise against their rulers, because they were infidels. President Anwar Sadat was assassinated in 1981 precisely on this jihadist thrust.

While Egyptian regimes since the days of Gamal Abdel Nasser have succeeded in controlling the Muslim Brotherhood, either by arresting and executing its leaders or by blocking its way to the ballot, the movement is still alive and dangerous. Experts believe that if free elections were held in Egypt today, the Muslim Brotherhood would win by a landslide.

And looking over the Sinai Peninsula into Gaza, Egyptians today are getting the message that the idea of radical Islam carrying the day is no longer an inconceivable outcome. If not checked in time, the <u>Hamas</u> takeover of Gaza might send shock waves deep into Egypt.

The immediate step Egypt should take is to work with Israel, other countries and international organizations, so that a humanitarian crisis does not occur in Gaza.

The second priority is to stop the arms smuggling. If instead of the current Kassam rockets, which are bad enough, <u>Hamas</u> starts launching Katyushas, Israel will retaliate in a severe manner, potentially escalating an already fragile situation.

Further down the line, Egypt will have to reassess its position vis-^Y-vis Gaza. We Israelis have no great expectations from a <u>Hamas</u>-dominated Gaza: It will be a long and painful arm-twisting, with occasional periods of calm. For the Egyptian regime, it's a challenge to its very existence.

Uri Dromi was the spokesman of the Israeli government from 1992 to 1996.

Load-Date: June 20, 2007



Abbas fights to restore ceasefire as airstrikes pound northern Gaza

The Independent (London)
May 23, 2007 Wednesday
Fourth Edition

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Length: 637 words

Byline: Donald Macintyre in Sderot, Israel

Body

The Israel Air Force launched a fresh round of air strikes on militant targets in Gaza yesterday as the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, struggled to raise dwindling hopes of restoring the shattered ceasefire between <u>Hamas</u> and Israel.

Israeli aircraft launched two attacks in northern Gaza and two in central Gaza the day after Shirel Friedman, a woman in the border town of Sderot, became the ninth Israeli to be killed in a Qassam rocket attack since 2000. The Army said early today it had launched two fresh attacks in northern and southern Gaza.

Mr Abbas was hoping to open talks with <u>Hamas</u> leaders on the mounting conflict with Israel and the fragile ceasefire between <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah after more than a week of internal fighting that cost at least 47 Palestinian lives. Palestinian medics say at least 34 Palestinians have been killed in the air strikes since Wednesday last week, the majority of which, but by no means all, were militants. Palestinian sources said at least seven people were wounded in yesterday's four airstrikes, in Israel's response to about 150 rocket attacks in the past week.

Ahmed Youssef, a <u>Hamas</u> aide to the Palestinian Prime Minister, Ismail Haniyeh, suggested that a "comprehensive ceasefire" was possible if Israel was willing to operate it in the West Bank as well as Gaza. Amir Peretz, the Defence Minister and a native of Sderot, said: "<u>Hamas</u>??? is leading the violence. We don't intend on stopping. We will stop at the point that the rockets stop."

Ephraim Sneh, the Deputy Defence Minister, said "no one" in <u>Hamas</u>, including Mr Haniyeh, was immune from strikes.

The death on Monday night of Ms Friedman, 32, has added to a sense of fear and frustration among Sderot's 25,000 residents. Police said yesterday that about half had left the town to escape the rockets, either on their own initiative or under a government-sponsored temporary evacuation plan. Most schools have been closed for the past 10 days.

Some of those who remained staged an angry demonstration outside the town hall after Ms Friedman died on the way to hospital from shrapnel wounds in her legs. She had been walking near a parked BMW which was hit by a Qassam at about 8pm.

Abbas fights to restore ceasefire as airstrikes pound northern Gaza

Ms Friedman was in some ways typical of Sderot, an immigrant "development town" which was started in the 1950s with Jews mainly from Morocco and Romania. Continued exposure to Qassams, as the nearest large Israeli community to Gaza, has compounded the economic hardship and high unemployment rates - about 30 per cent.

According to a friend, Edna Sela, Ms Friedman, whose family came from Romania, had worked on the controversial Wisconsin plan designed to force people off benefits and into low-paid jobs. Ms Sela, 55, who is still on the project, said: "She was sent from job to job but she left because she couldn't take the physical work. She had no money." She said that Ms Friedman's mother, who is also on the plan, gave her money when she could.

Ms Sela added: "She was a very nice person, a beautiful person. She loved being outside. She was a bit naive. I met her just by the market with her mother yesterday and I told her, 'You should go home because they will start shooting Qassams at night'. But she said, 'God will not kill me'."

Among several residents seeking an even tougher response was Yaffa Malcha, 44, a hairdresser, who said: "They should destroy every house where a Qassam has been fired from. They are shooting at civilians and I don't care if there are **women** and children there."

A shopkeeper, Amnon Zakai, 46, said: "If this was Ashkelon, never mind Tel Aviv, they would be doing something." Arto Argonov, 37, who works in a factory, said: "Everybody is afraid." Echoing one reported plan by the Israel Defence Forces, he added: "The army should create a buffer zone in the [Gaza] area that they are shooting from."

Load-Date: May 23, 2007



If Israel and its Western allies breakHamas, they will face an even deadlier foe

The Independent (London)

December 18, 2006 Monday

First Edition

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Section: EDITORIAL & OPINION; Pg. 28

Length: 1129 words **Byline:** JOHANN HARI

Body

I am sitting in a poky bedroom somewhere in Gaza City - I'm not allowed to know where - and opposite me is a huge beaming picture of Osama bin Laden, with the smoke from a burning World Trade Centre forming a black halo around his head. He is surrounded by a gaggle of jihadi angels: some Chechen fighters, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, and our own Tube bomber, the Yorkshireman Mohammed Sidique Khan. "Would you like to see our weapons?" a masked jihadi says cheerfully, before thrusting a grenade into my hand.

I have come to see what Israel will confront in a generation if - as now looks certain after this weekend - they never, ever deal with the democratically elected *Hamas* government, but instead resolve to break it.

Coining one of the dullest clichés about the Middle East, Abba Eban, one of Israel's longest-serving foreign ministers, famously claimed that "the Palestinians never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity". Precisely the opposite is the case. As the Fatah President, Abu Mazen, tried desperately this Saturday to dislodge *Hamas* by calling for early elections, we need to remember a stark truth. Every time the Israeli government rejects a Palestinian leader because he is too hard-line, they do not get a cuddly Gandhian moderate in his place. They get somebody more hard-line still.

Yasser Arafat endorsed a two-state solution, but couldn't accept a forever-and-always string of Bantustans bisected by Israeli settler-only roads as his half of the deal - so they rocketed and shelled the old man's compound until he died. Many Israelis now look back on Arafat with near-nostalgia. Today the <u>Hamas</u> Prime Minister, Ismail Haniyeh, says he can never accept Israel's existence. But he is offering a 40-year-long hudna (ceasefire) - provided Israel withdraws to the internationally recognised 1967 borders, as they should anyway under international law.

Haniyeh is offering to kick all the tough issues down the road until 2046, and build two peacefully co-existing states, with no mutual violence. His track record of keeping his word on ceasefires is strong: in the current short hudna, <u>Hamas</u> has held its fire even as Fatah fires a few Qassam missiles.

But the governments of America, Europe and Israel are snubbing this deal too. They say Haniyeh has to recognise Israel totally, and today. Until he does, his people will be "put on a diet", in the words of one Israeli government

adviser. I have seen what this means: hospitals shut and shuttered across the West Bank, with <u>women</u> left to give birth at home like pre-modern peasants. The yellowish hue of malnutrition on children's faces. The empty and echoing schools. Tony Blair has been at the forefront of this programme to force <u>Hamas</u> to concede, and is in the Middle East to promote it further. For him, the onus is on the Palestinians living under military occupation to justify why they should be freed - rather than on the people who have been oppressing them on their own land for 39 years to explain why it should continue.

The result of breaking the democratic will of the Palestinian people will not be greater softness on their part. No. It will create more men like Abu Ahmad (a nom de guerre), who I sat with last week in the shadow of Bin Laden in a corner of Gaza.

"I want to kill and kill again. I want to be a killing machine until, inshallah [God willing], I become a martyr," he said, staring at me intensely. He is 27 - my age - and murderous. He has just described how he slashed the throats of four *female* Israeli soldiers in an illegal settlement in 2002, and he chuckled as he described how they cried for their mothers. "All the Jews have to be killed," he says. The children? The *women*? "I prefer to kill soldiers, but they must all be killed in time. Soldiers first." The Holocaust did not happen, he says, "but it should have".

These crazed young men - the "troops" of Islamic Jihad - are the children of the first Intifada. They saw their parents peacefully protest, and the Israeli troops be ordered to "break their bones" as punishment. Abu Hamza, a sober, severe 26-year-old, explained he first joined Islamic Jihad when he was 10 - a year after he took his first Israeli bullet in the skull. He had been throwing stones and setting fire to old tyres in the street when it happened, and he became a local celebrity as the first child victim of the violence. "I was so proud," he said. He invited me to feel the scar on the back of his head. "Yes," he said with a smile, "we have been growing in popularity over the past few years. Very much."

All over Gaza and the West Bank, the assault on <u>Hamas</u> is creating groups like this to their right, deranged little pockets that will swell if <u>Hamas</u> is totally humiliated. At the moment, they are small, speaking - as <u>Hamas</u> did a generation ago - for only a small fraction of Palestinians. But for how long? Last week I tried to trace the footsteps of a new streak of Islamist fanaticism that has jutted suddenly into Gaza over the past month. A group calling itself Swords of Islam has started blowing up internet cafés - a symbol of extra-Koranic knowledge and cosmopolitan connection to the world. They have issued Talibanist threats warning that <u>women</u> who do not wear the hijab will be "burned", and that the internet is a "Zionist plot" to keep people away from "their religious duties".

In a bombed-out café named Montada Donajoun in the Jaballiya refugee camp, I spoke to the terrified owner. Basa Abu-Jased, 29, said, "Of course <u>women</u> are frightened now. [Even as a man] I am really frightened! I used to sit on the street and talk to <u>women</u>. Now I won't do it. You don't know what's going to happen." Almost everybody on the street was too frightened to speculate about who these people were; one woman suggested they were "maniacs who had returned from fighting in Iraq", but then hurried away.

It took a very long time to rouse the Palestinians to violence and produce these pathologies. Between 1967 and 1982 - as 200,000 Palestinians were expelled and more than one-third of their remaining land was stolen by fanatical settlers - just 282 Israelis were killed by Palestinians. But Israeli policies have virtually guaranteed a tip towards great violence and forms of madness. Every time the Palestinians have peacefully protested or negotiated, they have been choked further.

There is still - still - a majority in Palestine for peaceful coexistence with Israel, with 67 per cent supporting the *Hamas* proposal for a 40-year hudna. But if their democratic will is treated with contempt by humiliating *Hamas*, this historical window will close. Every year the occupation goes on, more deranged people like Abu Ahmad are smelted. "I love Osama bin Laden," he said to me as we parted, slapping me on the back. "I love killing."

Load-Date: December 18, 2006



<u>Palestinian women help free besieged gunmen; Israeli offensive kills 17</u> including two women

The Times & Transcript (New Brunswick)

November 4, 2006 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. B4

Length: 500 words

Body

Hundreds of Palestinian <u>women</u> in robes and head scarves streamed into a Gaza combat zone yesterday to help free gunmen besieged by Israeli troops at a mosque. Two <u>women</u> who came under fire were killed and at least 10 wounded, but some gunmen managed to escape.

The <u>women</u>, many with ties to the Islamic militant group <u>Hamas</u>, left their homes after daybreak in response to appeals on the local <u>Hamas</u> radio station or telephone calls from friends and relatives. By nightfall, they were celebrated as heroes, an unusual role in a deeply conservative society that tends to keep <u>women</u> on the sidelines. Until Friday, battling Israeli troops had been men's business in Gaza.

The mosque standoff came on the third day of Israel's fiercest bid in months to halt Palestinian rocket fire on Israeli border communities. The offensive began Wednesday, when Israeli forces took over the northern Gaza town of Beit Hanoun, close to the border with Israel.

In all, 35 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza since Wednesday, including 17 yesterday.

Among those killed yesterday were the two <u>women</u> protesters, a 16-year-old boy, two medics and at least 10 militants. Most of the deaths yesterday were a result of a series of Israeli air strikes after sundown. In the deadliest hit, five Palestinians were killed in an Israeli strike in the Jebaliya refugee camp.

The army said the strikes targeted militants trying to plant explosives or launch rockets.

The Beit Hanoun sweep is different from previous Israeli incursions into Gaza, a senior Israeli military official said. Rather than staying on the outskirts of populated areas, troops are going house to house in Beit Hanoun, sometimes breaking through inner walls to cut down on exposure to gunmen.

In another new tactic for Gaza, troops have rounded up hundreds of men for questioning, releasing most of them but detaining dozens, the army official said. On Friday evening, for example, soldiers ordered men between the ages of 16 and 46 in Beit Hanoun's Al Masri neighbourhood to report to the local agricultural school for questioning.

In the most dramatic episode of the Beit Hanoun incursion, dozens of Palestinian gunmen, many from <u>Hamas</u>, took cover in the town's Al Nasser Mosque on Thursday and were quickly surrounded by Israeli forces. The two sides exchanged fire throughout the night. An army bulldozer knocked down an outer wall of the mosque, causing the ceiling to collapse.

Palestinian women help free besieged gunmen; Israeli offensive kills 17 including two women

Yesterday morning, Al Aqsa Radio, the local <u>Hamas</u> station, broadcast appeals to <u>women</u> to come to the rescue of the trapped gunmen. Hundreds responded, many of them <u>Hamas</u> supporters. The <u>women</u> marched toward the mosque, coming under Israeli fire at times, and approached armoured personnel carriers and bulldozers near the mosque.

Volleys of shots were fired toward them, sending the group rushing toward a nearby wall for cover, according to Associated Press Television News footage.

Two women, both age 40, were shot and killed, and at least 10 others were wounded, hospital officials said.

Load-Date: January 8, 2007



Oldest suicide bomber injures 2: Palestinian woman, 64, had seen one grandson killed; her house destroyed

The Vancouver Sun (British Columbia)

November 24, 2006 Friday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A11

Length: 398 words

Byline: Sarah el Deeb, Associated Press

Dateline: JEBALIYA, Gaza Strip

Body

JEBALIYA, Gaza Strip -- A 64-year-old Palestinian woman blew herself up near Israeli troops sweeping through northern Gaza on Thursday, wounding two soldiers, and eight other Palestinians were killed in a day of clashes and rocket fire.

The <u>Hamas</u>, which is in charge of the Palestinian government, claimed responsibility for the suicide attack and identified the bomber as Fatma Omar An-Najar. Her relatives said she was 64 -- by far the oldest of the more than 100 Palestinian suicide bombers who have targeted Israelis over the past six years.

Israeli forces were moving through the Jebaliya refugee camp in northern Gaza on the second day of an operation to stem rocket fire from the coastal strip into southern Israel. They spotted a woman acting suspiciously, the military said. Soldiers threw a stun grenade, a weapon that makes a loud nose but causes no damage. The woman then set off explosives she was carrying, killing herself and slightly wounding two soldiers.

At the compound where her extended family lives near Jebaliya camp, her oldest daughter Fatheya explained the bomber's motives.

"They [Israelis] destroyed her house, they killed her grandson -- my son. Another grandson is in a wheelchair with an amputated leg," she said.

<u>Female</u> suicide bombers were a rarity during the first several years of the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but that has gradually changed. The last suicide bombing, on Nov. 6, was also carried out by a woman in northern Gaza.

But the past few weeks have seen an increase in militant activity by <u>women</u> in Gaza who have served as "human shields" defending the homes of militants that Israel has threatened to destroy.

Fatheya said she and her mother had taken part in rally at a Gaza mosque three weeks ago where <u>women</u> defied a cordon of heavily armed Israeli troops to create a diversion for besieged <u>Hamas</u> fighters to slip away.

"She and I, we went to the mosque. We were looking for martyrdom," the daughter said.

Oldest suicide bomber injures 2: Palestinian woman, 64, had seen one grandson killed; her house destroyed

Before setting out on her mission, An-Najar filmed the video testament customary for suicide bombers. A copy obtained by The Associated Press showed a petite woman wearing a white headscarf and black dress, toting an assault rifle on her shoulder and standing in front of a *Hamas* wall mural.

Reading from a sheet of paper, she dedicated her attack to the <u>Hamas</u>-led government and to the movement's military commander, Mohammed Deif.

Graphic

Photo: Khalil Hamra, Associated Press; Relatives grieve at the family house in Jebaliya Thursday. The military reported soldiers spotted the bomber and threw a stun grenade at her, causing her to set off the explosives she was carrying.;

Photo: Palestinian Fatma Omar An-Najar is seen in photo released by <u>Hamas</u> Thursday holding a rifle before carrying out a suicide bombing next to Israeli soldiers in the northern Gaza Strip.

Load-Date: November 24, 2006



News Digest

The Daily Gleaner (New Brunswick)

November 7, 2006 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A7

Length: 499 words

Body

Wedding gowns stolen from charity group

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (AP) - A trailer containing thousands of wedding gowns worth an estimated US\$3 million was stolen from a charity that grants the dying wishes of **women** with breast cancer.

The 12-metre trailer and a pickup truck owned by Making Memories were taken Sunday, authorities said.

"They've stolen the last wish and dream and hope of someone who is terminally ill," said Fran Hansen, co-founder of the group, which resells donated wedding gowns to raise money.

Palestinian leaders reach unity agreement

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP) - Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas travelled to Gaza on Monday for negotiations with <u>Hamas</u> to put what he hoped will be the finishing touches on a national unity government made up of independent experts.

Abbas, a moderate, has been urging <u>Hamas</u>, which controls most government functions, to join his Fatah movement in a coalition to end international sanctions. Abbas began a meeting in Gaza City with the Palestinian prime minister, Ismail Haniyeh of <u>Hamas</u>, after nightfall Monday.

A <u>Hamas</u> website and Palestinian officials said the new prime minister would be current Health Minister Bassem Naim, a <u>Hamas</u> activist. However, it was seen unlikely that Fatah would agree, because Naim has a rich anti-Fatah record.

The platform of the emerging government, however, is vague about the key international demand of recognizing Israel and may not be enough to end the painful aid boycott.

Man in bomb plot faces life sentence

LONDON (AP) - An al-Qaida operative captured in Britain planned to bomb the New York Stock Exchange and plotted a series of murderous attacks on London, including a scheme to blow up a London subway train as it passed below the River Thames, prosecutors said Monday.

Dhiren Barot, 34, pleaded guilty last month to conspiring to commit mass murder in terrorist plots on both sides of the Atlantic. He faces a life sentence in Britain but he also is wanted in the United States and Yemen on separate terror-related charges.

News Digest

The Muslim convert and a gang of seven alleged accomplices spent more than four years making detailed plans to attack a host of financial industry targets in the United States, while also plotting to detonate limousines packed with explosives in the underground garages of famous London hotels and train stations.

Prosecutor Edmund Lawson said the group had proposals to use a radioactive "dirty bomb" and to ignite a gasoline tanker, ramming it into a high-profile British target.

War brides gather for reunion

MONTREAL (CP) - Joan Reichardt won her Canadian beau as a prize at a dance.

It was 1944, the war was raging in Europe. The Germans were bombing London, there were blackouts, and sugar was scarce but sweeties, it seems, were abundant.

"He was very, very tall and they had this spot dance and they said 'watch the tall Canadian,' " Reichardt said Monday in Montreal, where she was among hundreds of war brides gathering for a reunion train trip for the Year of the War Bride.

Load-Date: November 7, 2006



Grandmother kills herself, injures two Israeli soldiers

The Daily Gleaner (New Brunswick)
November 24, 2006 Friday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A10

Length: 481 words

Byline: The Associated Press

Body

A 64-year-old Palestinian grandmother blew herself up near Israeli troops sweeping through northern Gaza on Thursday, wounding two soldiers, and eight other Palestinians were killed in a day of clashes and rocket fire.

The militant <u>Hamas</u>, which is in charge of the Palestinian government, claimed responsibility for the suicide attack and identified the bomber as Fatma Omar An-Najar.

Her relatives said she was 64 - by far the oldest of the more than 100 Palestinian suicide bombers who have targeted Israelis over the past six years.

Israeli forces were moving through the Jebaliya refugee camp in northern Gaza on the second day of an operation to stem rocket fire from the coastal strip into southern Israel. They spotted a woman acting suspiciously, the military said.

Soldiers threw a stun grenade, a weapon that makes a loud nose but causes no damage. The woman then set off explosives she was carrying, killing herself and slightly wounding two soldiers.

At the compound where her extended family lives near Jebaliya camp, her oldest daughter Fatheya explained the bomber's motives.

"They (Israelis) destroyed her house, they killed her grandson - my son. Another grandson is in a wheelchair with an amputated leg," she said.

<u>Female</u> suicide bombers were a rarity during the first several years of the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but that has gradually changed. The last suicide bombing, on Nov. 6, was also carried out by a woman in northern Gaza.

But the past few weeks have seen an increase in militant activity by <u>women</u> in Gaza who have served as "human shields" defending the homes of militants that Israel has threatened to destroy.

Fatheya said she and her mother had taken part in rally at a Gaza mosque three weeks ago where <u>women</u> defied a cordon of heavily armed Israeli troops to create a diversion for besieged <u>Hamas</u> fighters to slip away.

"She and I, we went to the mosque. We were looking for martyrdom," the daughter said.

Grandmother kills herself, injures two Israeli soldiers

Before setting out on her mission, An-Najar filmed the video testament customary for suicide bombers. A copy obtained by The Associated Press showed a petite woman wearing a white headscarf and black dress, toting an assault rifle on her shoulder and standing in front of a *Hamas* wall mural.

Reading from a sheet of paper, she dedicated her attack to the <u>Hamas</u>-led government and to the movement's military commander, Mohammed Deif.

Eight other Palestinians were killed Thursday. In Gaza, three militants from the Palestinian Resistance Committees were killed in an Israeli air strike on their car. The Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades said one of its men, a 20-year-old, was killed in a clash.

Two <u>Hamas</u> militants were killed in a gun battle with Israeli forces, and another was shot dead as he was about to fire a rocket at Israel, the military said. Another man died of wounds in a Gaza hospital. It was not known whether he was a militant or a civilian.

Load-Date: January 8, 2007



Palestinians bury dead; Israeli leader offers talks

The International Herald Tribune November 10, 2006 Friday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1 Length: 1142 words

Byline: Ian Fisher

Dateline: BEIT HANOUN, Gaza Strip

Body

Taghreed El-Khodary contributed reporting from Gaza.

*

Palestinians marched in anger Thursday, mourning 18 civilians killed by Israeli artillery and baring for cameras the battered faces of two dead children as the Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert, offered to ease tensions by meeting the Palestinian president "any time, any place."

"I am very uncomfortable with this event," Olmert said at a business conference in Tel Aviv. "I'm very distressed."

Saying that he personally investigated the incident, which has spurred <u>Hamas</u> to warn that it might resume suicide bombings against Israeli civilians, Olmert called the shelling a "mistake" caused by "technical failure." And he urged Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president, to meet with him immediately.

"He will be surprised when he will sit with me of how far we are prepared to go," he said. "I can offer him a lot."

He did not explain what he meant. But his words seemed to reflect deep embarrassment at the deaths, condemned around the world but also by many Israelis long concerned about the numbers of civilians killed in Israeli operations to curb rocket fire by Palestinian militants into Israel.

His statement also seemed to reposition the deaths the largest single loss of life among Palestinians in years into the realm of politics.

Any discussion between the two men would invariably center on the difficult question of prisoners. It is unclear, however, how far Olmert could move from his past insistence that an Israeli soldier captured by Palestinian militants in June must be released before he would free hundreds of Palestinians from Israeli jails.

Abbas did not immediately respond to Olmert's offer, amid three days of mourning here after the deaths on Wednesday, among them 9 **females** and 5 children 16 years or younger. But he has refused other such openended offers, saying that he wanted a concrete deal first on the prisoners and a meeting of "substance."

Amid the mourning on Thursday, the cycle of violence continued. By evening, seven of the homemade Qassam rockets were fired from Gaza, wounding three Israelis hit by shrapnel in the city of Sderot, the Israeli military reported.

Palestinians bury dead Israeli leader offers talks

The issue of the Qassam rockets, crude and inaccurate and aimed at Israeli cities, has emerged as a central dynamic of the conflict here since Israel evacuated its settlers and military outposts from Gaza Strip last year.

Many Palestinians argue that the rockets are a legitimate form of resistance to combat what they call an Israeli "siege" of Gaza, virtually locked out from the outside world, and for their larger claims against Israel.

The rockets have been condemned by human rights groups and by Israelis as indiscriminate terrorism, but the human-rights groups have also criticized Israeli tactics as disproportionate.

Asserting the right to self-defense, including efforts to deter future attacks, Israel has responded forcefully with artillery barrages in densely populated areas against rocket launchers that often also kill civilians, and have carried out armor and infantry operations inside Gaza, most recently this week in Beit Hanoun.

On Wednesday morning, just a day after Israeli troops withdrew from a major operation to stop the rocket fire in Beit Hanoun, the Israeli military said it fired off 12 rounds near an orange grove used by rocket launchers.

But for reasons the military has not yet explained in detail, the rounds slammed into a cluster of houses here, home to the extended Athamnah family.

Early reports in the Israeli media have focused on a faulty radar or aiming device in a barrel of one cannon, which use radar and computers to supposedly ensure accuracy.

The death toll seemed especially high, witnesses said, because residents fled their bedrooms for a narrow alley after the first shells hit and were crowded in the open when the others landed.

Thousands of Palestinians, waving banners and shooting guns into the air, returned to the shrapnel-scarred houses on Thursday with the bodies, carried on stretchers and wrapped in the yellow flags of the Fatah party, which was led for decades by Yasser Arafat and now by Abbas. <u>Women</u> wailed and screamed for revenge: "Martyrs by the millions!" they chanted. "We are going to Jerusalem!"

Many of the dead were completely covered. But family members exposed the faces of two youngest victims - sisters named Maisa Athamnah, 6 months old, and Maram, 3 as they held their bodies over their heads for the crowd and cameras to see.

"How was this baby guilty?" asked Kamal Hamdan, 43, after one of the bodies was paraded past him.

The bodies were carried to a new cemetery and buried in a single row, the two girls in the same concrete tomb as their mother, Manal, 25. The mood was furious, with many people saying that they believed Palestinians should intensify their attacks on Israel, civilians included.

"We must continue our resistance, even if the price is as big as this," said Ataa Zania, a paramedic who helped evacuate the dead and wounded on Wednesday. "Whoever wants to liberate his country has to pay the price."

There was much approval for statements from <u>Hamas</u> leaders following the attack that they might resume suicide bombings inside Israel.

In early 2005, <u>Hamas</u> declared a partial cease-fire in its fight with Israel and has not carried out suicide attacks, though it helped in the kidnapping of the Israeli soldier, Gilad Shalit, this summer; has fired off Qassam rockets; and has engaged in battles against Israeli soldiers in Gaza.

On Thursday, *Hamas* members did little to clarify their vague threats.

"The situation on the ground in the theater dictates what tactics will be used against the Israeli occupation," Abu Obaida, a spokesman for the military wing of *Hamas*, told a handful of reporters in an interview.

He conceded the broad international condemnation of suicide attacks, but contended that outside condemnation was always more harsh against Palestinians than Israel.

Palestinians bury dead Israeli leader offers talks

"So we can't stop at the world's condemnation and forget our main task, which is resisting occupation and making this occupation as costly as possible to the occupier," he said.

Several political analysts and experts on <u>Hamas</u> said they did not expect the group to resume a large-scale campaign of suicide attacks. <u>Hamas</u>, they contend, undertook a major shift in direction from militant group to political leadership when it won the Palestinian elections in January and stands to risk that by resuming a suicide campaign.

And the group seems to remain deeply engaged in politics: On Thursday, Prime Minister Ismail Haniyah of <u>Hamas</u> met again with Abbas in Gaza in talks on a government of national unity, in which the <u>Hamas</u> cabinet would step down in favor of professionals and technocrats. The talks, however, are moving slowly, with many complications and little apparent hope of a deal in the next few days.

Load-Date: November 10, 2006



Hurtling into the darkness

Weekend Australian

June 16, 2007 Saturday

All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Inquirer; Pg. 23

Length: 1463 words

Byline: GREG SHERIDAN FOREIGN EDITOR

Body

MATP

What we have seen in Gaza is radical Islamist extremism eating radical secular extremism

THE Palestinian civil war, in which the Islamist outfit <u>Hamas</u> has now taken control from Fatah of all of the Gaza Strip, is first a tragedy for the Palestinian people throughout the occupied territories. The fighting has been as cruel as anything seen in the Middle East.

<u>Women</u> and children have been gunned down trying to get to hospital. Opponents have been bound and gagged and thrown from the tops of buildings.

In one widely reported incident, Jamal Abu al-Jadian, a senior Fatah leader, dressed as a woman to escape his home. But when he went, wounded by gunfire nonetheless, to a nearby hospital, a group of <u>Hamas</u> gunmen discovered him and shot him through the head more than 40 times.

Since the election victory of <u>Hamas</u> last year in the occupied territories -- Gaza and the West Bank -- something in the order of 700 Palestinians have been killed by other Palestinians in factional fighting.

But tragedy aside, the <u>Hamas</u> victory in Gaza represents a new strategic reality in the Middle East. It is a profound strategic change and it is emblematic of a broader dynamic throughout the region.

What we have seen in Gaza is radical Islamist extremism eating radical secular extremism. Moderation and democracy have not been on the playing field for a long time.

No one should be in any doubt about what <u>Hamas</u> is or what it represents. It is a terrorist organisation backed by Iran and Syria, dedicated to the destruction of Israel and wider opposition to the West. Its manifesto is a hate-filled document. Its propaganda is frequently anti-Semitic. Its Islamist agenda is unambiguous. It is a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, the fountainhead extremist Islamist organisation in the Middle East. It has closed down bars and restaurants and the like throughout Gaza because they do not conform to **Hamas**'s Islamist identity.

The <u>Hamas</u> victory follows a pattern we can see in many parts of the Middle East, and in some other parts of the Islamic world. Overtly, Islamist extremism is the only ideology left standing.

Hurtling into the darkness

The Palestine Liberation Organisation, of which Fatah is part, was for long a terrorist organisation that conceded only at the end of the 1980s, in a tenuous way, that Israel had any right to exist.

It pioneered much of modern international terrorism. But it was a broadly secular movement. In the '70s the PLO was widely supported by Western Marxists and it had a secular nationalist agenda, although it never had a democratic agenda that it believed in.

Arab secular nationalism is now dying all over the Arab world and it is being replaced by millenarian Islamism.

Every recipe, every received opinion about the Middle East is contradicted by the <u>Hamas</u> victory, and indeed by the trend of events in recent years.

It is as near to a universal truism of the international diplomatic community as there can be that the problems of the Middle East are all ultimately caused by, or at least mostly caused by, Israeli occupation of Arab lands.

Yet look now at the history of Israeli withdrawals in recent years and see where they have led.

Several years ago Israel withdrew from southern Lebanon. The most morally compromising aspect of this withdrawal was that it left many of Israel's Lebanese allies, especially those associated with the South Lebanon Army, open to terrible retribution.

But the longer term strategic consequence was the emergence of Hezbollah as a powerful military and political force, which now threatens the Lebanese Government.

Broader trends in Lebanon are equally disturbing. An al-Qa'ida backed militant group has challenged the Lebanese army in fierce military clashes in Palestinian refugee camps in northern Lebanon, opening a new front for al-Qa'ida in the Middle East.

Apparently Syrian-backed assassins are murdering Lebanese politicians who are opposed to Syrian influence one by one. The pro-Syrian Lebanese President, Emile Lahoud, is increasingly relying on Hezbollah, which stands a good chance of dominating and perhaps formally leading a Lebanese government in due course.

Similarly, the Israelis withdrew from all of Gaza in 2005. Gaza was to be the showpiece of Palestinian self-rule and democracy. Now the occupied territories have been shattered and divided into two. Gaza is now effectively Hamastan.

The West Bank is run by Fatah under the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas.

But this bland statement in truth overestimates Fatah's strength. Fatah's domination of the West Bank is only really sustainable because the West Bank remains under Israeli military occupation.

Fatah has been competing with <u>Hamas</u> over claiming an Islamist identity. Fatah will presumably cling to power in the West Bank by whatever means are necessary, including tactical accommodations with Israel, but the sap of extremism rises in the West Bank

as well.

While the genuine grassroots support for the extremist Islamist ideology is perhaps the single most disturbing feature of the situation today, the role of outside powers is a close number two. Iran and Syria are delighted at the turn events have taken.

Western realists believe a grand bargain awaits the US with Iran. But Iran can look out at the broader Middle East delighted at what it sees. The US is bogged down and bleeding in Iraq. President George W. Bush, who once terrified the mullahs in Tehran, now looks enfeebled and embattled on all sides. Iran's nuclear program is proceeding effectively unchallenged with a huge increase in centrifuge numbers, a clear precursor to nuclear weapons.

Hurtling into the darkness

Iran's proxies everywhere are flowering. Iran has sponsored Shia as well as Sunni terrorism in Iraq. It has manufactured the explosively formed projectiles used increasingly in improvised explosive devices, which are causing dreadful casualties among US troops and Iraqi civilians.

All the realists, from Washington to Brussels, from New York to the Australian National University, can suggest is that the US hold talks with Iran. Tehran is delighted with this prospect. It can play around with talks forever while it pursues its deeper strategic aims at home and abroad. Its role in the Gaza Strip should not be discounted.

The efforts of Syria and Iran in Iraq, Lebanon and the occupied territories demonstrate the way terrorism has become a strategic weapon and shows the folly of local analysts who believe that terrorism cannot be a threat to the international system.

After 60 years, Israel's neighbours, and especially its antagonists, have worked out that you cannot beat Israel with armies and air forces. No Arab power, nor Iran, will oppose Israel militarily. That way lies defeat, along the lines of 1948, 1967, 1973.

The enemies of the US have worked out the same truth. No nation, except Saddam Hussein's Iraq and the Taliban's Afghanistan, is suicidal enough to take on the Americans force on force.

Any army that marches against the US will be defeated in weeks, any air force in days, any navy in hours. But there are other ways to hurt the US, and to hurt it strategically.

China discovered this in years gone by and proliferated nuclear weapons technology to Pakistan to hurt India, and to the Middle East to hurt the US.

That is an example of one state going over the forces of the US to hurt it militarily and strategically. Now terrorism offers a new strategic weapon, a way to go below the forces of the US.

Iran and Syria and others can reach out through the sponsorship of terrorism to hurt the US and Israel and other allies and interests of the US throughout the Middle East and indeed throughout the world.

And where they can do this on the back of terrorist movements such as <u>Hamas</u> or Hezbollah, which have some genuine grassroots support, their connection can be more easily denied, greater distance between the state sponsor and the terrorist acts can be established.

But in any event at this stage in the US electoral cycle, and with Bush weakened, the state sponsors of terror calculate that the chance of any meaningful US retaliation is small.

And the extreme increase in lethality of weapons readily available to terrorists, from IEDs to anti-tank missiles, means any military confrontation with terrorists is militarily costly as well as politically fraught.

<u>Hamas</u> will now likely consolidate its rule in Gaza, murdering its opponents, perhaps seeking a period of relative peace, but all the time intensifying the arms trade across the Egyptian border.

Then there will be longer range rockets to fire at bigger concentrations of Israeli population across the border, forcing the Israelis once more into retaliation which, no matter what the justification, will once more cost them international support and help to further radicalise the Muslim population.

These are dark days in the Middle East.

Load-Date: June 15, 2007



Dead in the street: women who were called out to shield gunmen

The Times (London)

November 4, 2006, Saturday

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Section: OVERSEAS NEWS; Pg. 43

Length: 779 words

Byline: Stephen Farrell

Body

Radio pleas for a rescue brought them into killing zone, reports Stephen Farrell from Beit Hanoun

By THE thousands, the <u>women</u> descended on Beit Hanoun, answering <u>Hamas</u>'s overnight radio pleas to rescue besieged Palestinian gunmen from the mosque.

Veiled and carrying mobile phones and handbags, they charged past Israeli tanks and armoured bulldozers through the streets of a border town in the midst of the most intensive Israeli military operation in northern Gaza in recent months.

The fighters, who had been holed up in the mosque for at least 36 hours, were to have been smuggled out in **women**'s clothes -some of the marchers were double sets under their voluminous black cloaks and veils.

When shooting broke out, two <u>women</u> were killed and dozens more injured by Israeli troops. The Israeli army insists that it hit eight gunmen hiding in the crowd and criticised the militants for using the <u>women</u> as cover for their battle.

But many of the marchers accused Israeli tanks and snipers of shooting into unarmed crowds of <u>women</u>, and claimed that several were wounded before they got anywhere near the Nasr mosque in Beit Hanoun. The stand-off renewed criticism of guerrillas operating from within civilian areas during the war in Lebanon this summer and the scale and effectiveness of the Israeli response.

As she emerged with other veiled <u>women</u> from the town centre with machinegun fire still rattling behind her, Umm Bara, 25, said that she was among thousands who answered the overnight call on the <u>Hamas</u> al-Aqsa radio to free their beseiged "brothers and cousins".

"We reached the mosque. There was a tank between us and the mosque. A group ahead of us managed to get the besieged out," she said.

Then, she added, a tank opened fire on her group. "They shot six <u>women</u> in front of me. One of them was pregnant. Two <u>women</u> were killed."

Other groups of <u>women</u> descended on the town from other directions as part of a concerted plan -confirmed by **Hamas** later -to create a diversion.

Dead in the street: women who were called out to shield gunmen

A spokeswoman for the Israel Defence Forces condemned militants for using "with no shame" -human shields, "knowing the IDF would not shoot at **women** and children".

The spokeswoman said that the gunmen ignored repeated calls to surrender from Israeli forces surrounding the mosque, who used means "specifically designed" to minimise damage to the building.

But as the tanks and bulldozers moved in and the building collapsed during the attack, the stand-off degenerated into a "heavy exchange of fire".

Lying in hospital with a dressing to a shrapnel wound on her forehead, Elham Hamad, 45, said that Israeli tanks opened fire on her group even though they did not get within 300m of the mosque.

"We had white flags and all of us were <u>women</u>. They didn't tell us to stop or leave, they didn't even stick their heads out of the tank. They started shooting at us with the tank's machinegun."

In a nearby bed Nehla Abu al-Jobain, 35, conceded that some <u>women</u> wore two sets of clothes beneath their gowns to give one to the fighters.

<u>Hamas</u> denied planning to evacuate men in <u>women</u>'s clothes. "The Israeli army is operating in a densely populated area...they are destroying civilian infrastructure and have been using Palestinians as human shields for years, which is well documented by Israeli and international human rights groups," a masked spokesman in Gaza City retorted.

Beit Hanoun was all but sealed off from the outside world during the siege and earlier military operation, called to curb rocket attacks on Israel. Israel rounded up men aged 16-45 but scores of militants eluded the net and fled to the mosque.

In the early hours of the siege, The Times saw tanks moving through otherwise deserted streets as scores of youths mingled with armed men behind the cover of smoke from a burning tyre. Throughout the operation <u>Hamas</u> continued to fire rockets from the Beit Hanoun area and further inside the Gaza Strip.

<u>Hamas</u> said that 73 people in total had been inside the mosque -69 armed men and four civilians -and repeatedly appealed for <u>women</u> to march on the building. By noon yesterday freshly printed leaflets bearing the logo of the military wing of <u>Hamas</u> were already being handed out by eager schoolchildren outside emergency wards, proclaiming: "The **women** of north Gaza arose to help Beit Hanoun."

The final tally of dead and injured was still confusing last night. Medical officials claimed that two <u>women</u> were killed and about 70 people injured.

Amid the chaos records were unreliable. The Times arrived at the mourning tent of one woman pronounced dead, only for the bemused "martyr" to turn up at her own funeral, saying: "I'm fine".

Another woman was lying, dead in the mortuary, her face blown away.

Load-Date: November 4, 2006



Refugees try to flee violence in Gaza Strip

The Daily Gleaner (New Brunswick)

June 20, 2007 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A8

Length: 281 words

Body

Trapped by Israeli tanks and <u>Hamas</u> gunmen, hundreds of terrified Palestinians holed up in a stench-filled concrete tunnel at a border crossing Tuesday, desperate to flee the Islamic militants now ruling the Gaza Strip.

Israel took in two people hit by <u>Hamas</u> gunfire, 24 hours after they were wounded in an assault on the tunnel, but officials remained steadfast in rejecting pleas to throw open the border. Three people wounded in the Gaza fighting last week also were allowed into Israel.

Israeli officials permitted a food shipment into Gaza for the first time since <u>Hamas</u> seized control in five days of fighting with the Fatah movement of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. That eased concerns about a humanitarian crisis in the impoverished coastal territory.

The crowd at the Erez crossing included dozens of Fatah fighters, who Israeli officials feared could destabilize the West Bank, which is separated from Gaza by about 50 kilometres of Israeli territory. Officials said most of those seeking to cross were not in danger.

As the standoff stretched on, the scene inside the tunnel grew increasingly desperate.

<u>Women</u>, children and young men sat between two high concrete walls about 10 metres apart, looking tired and grimy. Suitcases and trash were strewn on the ground. Some people sat on mats, others on bare asphalt, including several men with bloody bandages on their legs.

A breeze barely stirred between the walls. The tunnel, which has no toilets, reeked of urine and sweat.

"It's disgusting. People are using the walls as toilets. The <u>women</u> are suffering," said one man, refusing to be identified out of fear for his safety. He said people were on edge and fighting over food.

Load-Date: June 20, 2007



Israeli Official Asks President to Step Aside

The New York Times
October 30, 2006 Monday
Late Edition - Final

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Section: Section A; Column 1; Foreign Desk; Pg. 11

Length: 630 words

Byline: By GREG MYRE; Michael Slackman contributed reporting from Cairo.

Dateline: JERUSALEM, Oct. 29

Body

Israel's attorney general said Sunday that President Moshe Katsav should temporarily step aside while prosecutors decide whether to charge him with sex crimes.

Mr. Katsav has come under intense pressure to resign, or at least to suspend his official duties temporarily, and the remarks by the attorney general, Menachem Mazuz, made the president's position appear even more tenuous. Two weeks ago, the police recommended that prosecutors file charges, including rape and sexual assault, after accusations were made by several **women** who have served on his staff.

Mr. Mazuz will make the final decision about whether to charge Mr. Katsav. That announcement could still be weeks away.

"The more serious the allegations and the farther along in the process, the obligation increases for the president to take the step of temporarily suspending his term," Mr. Mazuz said in a letter to the High Court of Justice.

Mr. Katsav, whose position is largely ceremonial, has denied any wrongdoing. "Sooner or later it will be proven that the allegations against him are false," the president's office said in a statement on Sunday evening.

An Israeli president cannot stand trial while in office. However, the Parliament can impeach him, and once out of office, a former president can be prosecuted. Mr. Katsav's seven-year term expires next year.

In a separate development, neighboring Egypt has renewed its efforts to ease Israeli-Palestinian tensions and to try to broker a deal that would free an Israeli soldier captured by Gaza militants in return for a large number of Palestinian prisoners.

Egypt said Sunday that it had invited the exiled political leader of <u>Hamas</u>, Khaled Meshal, who is based in Syria, to come to Cairo for discussions on a prisoner exchange.

Such talks would also address the stalled efforts by <u>Hamas</u>, a militant Islamic group that controls the Palestinian government, and Fatah, a secular movement, to end their feuding and to form a national unity government.

Senior <u>Hamas</u> leaders plan to travel to Cairo for the talks in the next few days, but Mr. Meshal will not be among them, Reuters reported Sunday night from Damascus, Syria.

Israeli Official Asks President to Step Aside

Egyptian officials have privately expressed sharp criticism of Mr. Meshal and <u>Hamas</u>, which has strong links to the Muslim Brotherhood, a group that is officially banned in Egypt. The Egyptians have also expressed frustration at the inability of the Palestinian government to calm the turmoil in the Gaza Strip.

Palestinian militants, including members of <u>Hamas</u>, seized the Israeli soldier on June 25, and the Palestinians are seeking to swap him for a large number of Palestinian prisoners. Israeli troops, who left Gaza last year, re-entered the coastal territory after the soldier was captured.

In a related development, the Israeli newspaper Maariv reported Friday that Israel might bomb a narrow strip along Gaza's southern border in an attempt to destroy weapons-smuggling tunnels linked to Egypt.

Israel's military has not commented on the report, but it appeared to raise concerns in Egypt about further instability in Gaza.

Palestinian security officials said a <u>Hamas</u> militant, Baker al-Assar, 20, was killed Sunday when a tunnel he was digging from southern Gaza into Egypt collapsed.

Egyptian officials said they had redeployed security forces around the border with Gaza specifically to help stop the smuggling. They denied reports, though, that they had moved 5,000 troops to the border, which would be a violation of an agreement with Israel that allows 750 Egyptian border guards.

"Egypt is anxious to have calm on its border with Gaza and there are communications to guarantee this between the Egyptian and Palestinian sides," an Egyptian presidential spokesman, Soliman Awad, said in an interview.

http://www.nytimes.com

Graphic

Photo: The office of the Israeli president, Moshe Katsav, said yesterday that "sooner or later" the allegations against him would be disproved. (Photo by Uriel Sinai/Getty Images)

Load-Date: October 30, 2006



Katsav urged to step aside during Israeli rape inquiry

The International Herald Tribune
October 30, 2006 Monday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 598 words **Byline:** Greg Myre

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Michael Slackman contributed reporting from Cairo.

*

Israel's attorney general said Sunday that President Moshe Katsav should temporarily suspend himself while prosecutors decide whether to charge Katsav with sex crimes.

Katsav has come under intense pressure to resign, or at least step aside temporarily, and the remarks Sunday by the attorney general, Menachem Mazuz, made the president's position appear even more tenuous. Two weeks ago, the police recommended that prosecutors file multiple charges, including rape and sexual assault, against the president for acts he allegedly committed against several *female* members of his staff.

Mazuz is to make the final decision on whether to charge Katsav, but that announcement could be weeks away.

"Given the special position of the head of state, who symbolizes the sovereignty of the state, it is necessary that the president suspend himself during this affair," Mazuz wrote in a letter to the High Court of Justice.

Katsav, whose position is largely ceremonial, has denied any wrongdoing, and his office did not comment Sunday on the latest developments. Katsav's attorney has said the president will resign if indicted.

Israel's president cannot stand trial while in office. However, Parliament can impeach him, and once out of office, a former president can be prosecuted. Katsav's seven-year term expires next year.

In a separate development, Egypt has renewed its efforts to ease Israeli-Palestinian tensions and broker a deal that would free an Israeli soldier in return for a large number of Palestinian prisoners. Egypt said Sunday it has invited the exiled political leader of <u>Hamas</u>, Khaled Meshal, who is based in Syria, to Cairo for discussions on a prisoner exchange. Such talks would also address the stalled efforts by <u>Hamas</u>, a radical Islamic group, and Fatah, a secular movement, to end their feuding and form a Palestinian national unity government.

There was no immediate confirmation that Meshal would take up the invitation, and several previous Egyptian mediation attempts have been unsuccessful.

Katsav urged to step aside during Israeli rape inquiry

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Egyptian officials said they have redeployed security forces around the border with Gaza specifically to help stop smuggling. They denied, however, reports that they moved 5,000 troops to the border, which would be a violation of an agreement with Israel that allows 750 Egyptian border guards.

"Egypt is keen to have calm on its border with Gaza, and there are communications to guarantee this between the Egyptian and Palestinian sides," an Egyptian presidential spokesman, Soliman Awad, said in an interview.

Load-Date: November 1, 2006



Fleeing Gazans wait on Israel

Geelong Advertiser (Australia)

June 21, 2007 Thursday

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 17

Length: 269 words

Byline: MIDDLE EAST Gaza Strip, Wednesday

Body

ISRAEL'S new defence minister today ordered the army to allow into Israel any of the hundreds of Gazans holed up at a fetid crossing who might desperately need medical treatment.

A teenager with leukemia was on his way through soon after the order was issued, the military said.

Meanwhile, Israel's Supreme Court was hearing a petition today by a human rights group, demanding that Israeli authorities offer immediate medical treatment to 26 critically ill Palestinians in Gaza.

About 200 Gazans, petrified by the chaos in the <u>Hamas</u>-controlled coastal strip, have been camped out for six days in a tunnel on the Palestinian side of the Erez crossing with Israel, pleading with Israeli authorities to grant them safe passage to the West Bank.

<u>Hamas</u> seized control of Gaza last week after vanquishing security forces allied with the rival Fatah faction, leaving many scared further violence will ensue.

Some in the tunnel fear their lives are in danger because of their Fatah loyalties; others seek a better life than volatile Gaza can offer.

Among their number are people wounded in gunbattles between the rival factions.

With no sanitary facilities at the tunnel, the stench of urine and sweat has permeated the air. Food and water were in short supply as **women**, children and young men sat waiting.

The situation was expected to be one of the first issues Defence Minister Ehud Barak would tackle after he took over the job yesterday.

Israel yesterday allowed in two Palestinians wounded in a shootout the previous day. Three other people hospitalised in the course of <u>Hamas</u>-Fatah infighting last week also were allowed to pass.

Load-Date: June 21, 2007



International: Woman, 64, blows herself up in attack on Israeli troops: Suicide bombing follows killing of grandson: Eight other Palestinians die in Gaza operations

The Guardian - Final Edition

November 24, 2006 Friday

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Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 26

Length: 545 words

Byline: Rory McCarthy, Jerusalem

Body

A 64-year-old Palestinian woman blew herself up as a suicide bomber in Gaza yesterday in an attack on Israeli troops.

Two soldiers were slightly injured when the woman, apparently a supporter of the *Hamas* militant group, detonated explosives strapped to her body, becoming the conflict's oldest suicide bomber.

Eight other Palestinians were killed yesterday as the Israeli military staged operations across the northern Gaza Strip aimed at stopping rocket fire into Israel.

Troops were going through Jabaliya refugee camp when they saw a woman acting suspiciously, the Israeli military said. A soldier threw a stun grenade at her and she detonated the explosives.

<u>Hamas</u>, which claimed responsibility for the attack, named the woman as Fatma Omar An-Najar and said that she lived near the refugee camp. Her oldest daughter, Fatheya, said she decided to become a bomber because her grandson had been killed. "They (the Israelis) destroyed her house, they killed her grandson - my son," she told the Associated Press. "An other grandson is in a wheelchair with an amputated leg," she said. "She and I, we went to the mosque. We were looking for martyrdom." Other relatives said the woman had nine sons.

There has been an increase in the role of <u>women</u> among militant groups. Earlier this month a woman suicide bomber struck in Gaza during an Israeli military operation. In a third incident hundreds of <u>women</u> supporters of <u>Hamas</u> wearing headscarves and long cloaks marched into the town of Beit Hanoun during an Israeli incursion in an attempt to free dozens of armed militants holed up in a mosque. Two of the <u>women</u> were killed.

Yesterday a <u>Hamas</u> spokesman, Abu Obeideh, said the attack was part of the group's tactics. "We told the Zionist enemy we will meet it with many surprises . . . and this is one of the surprises," he said.

Israel's security cabinet met on Wednesday to consider a strategy for Gaza and decided to begin targeting "*Hamas* institutions" but stopped short of ordering the full-out assault in Gaza that some in the government have pushed for.

Palestinian militant groups offered Israel a partial truce last night, saying they would stop rockets attacks in exchange for a cessation of attacks on the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

International: Woman, 64, blows herself up in attack on Israeli troops: Suicide bombing follows killing of grandson: Eight other Palestinians die in Gaza operat....

Two Israeli civilians were killed in the past 10 days in the town of Sderot, just over the border from Gaza. Three Israeli soldiers have also been killed since late June when the capture of an Israeli soldier triggered the latest wave of violence.

However, the toll on the Palestinian side has been much higher. Between late June and November 15 a total of 375 Palestinians were killed in Gaza, according to the latest figures from the reputable Israeli human rights organisation B'Tselem. Among the dead were 199 people who the group determined were not taking part in the fighting when they died. Of that number 74 were under the age of 18.

Separately in Jerusalem, Louise Arbour, the UN high commissioner for human rights, said yesterday that there needed to be a system of accountability to investigate cases where lethal force had been used in the conflict.

"Evidence shows that an effective system of accountability, including personal criminal accountability, will lead to a change in the approach in the use of force," she said.

Load-Date: November 24, 2006



DOOM & GLOOM

MX (Australia)

March 20, 2007 Tuesday

Melbourne Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 10

Length: 287 words

Body

IRAQ DEATH TOLL MOUNTS

A SERIES of bombings and shootings has killed 25 people in Iraq and police have found another 30 corpses in Baghdad.

In the biggest attack, in Kirkuk, a car bomb near two mosques killed 10 people and wounded eight, police Colonel Taha Salaheddin said. Another five people were killed in separate attacks in and around the city.

The bomb exploded in central Kirkuk's Sector 90 district, which houses the two mosques, one Shi'ite and one Sunni, as well as the emergency police command.

BOY KILLED IN SUICIDE BOMBING

A US embassy convoy was hit by a Taliban suicide car bomber in Kabul, killing an Afghan teenager by the road and wounding officials in the motorcade, police said.

A 14-year-old boy was killed in the attack, which took place on a main road leading east out of the Afghan capital.

HAMAS ADMITS TO ATTACKS

THE ARMED wing of <u>Hamas</u> said it carried out its first attacks today against Israel since a shaky November truce in the Gaza Strip, shooting a utility worker near the border and firing two mortar bombs at soldiers.

<u>Hamas</u>'s Qassam Brigades said the shooting attack, which seriously injured the Israeli worker, was in response to Israeli military operations in the occupied West Bank, which is not covered by the truce. No soldiers were injured.

The group said attacks against Israel would continue.

SEVERE WEATHER CLAIMS 17 LIVES

AT LEAST 17 people have been killed in Afghanistan in an avalanche and floods triggered by heavy rain, and several villages were inundated, officials said today.

Twelve people, including <u>women</u> and children, were killed in the avalanche in the central province of Ghor yesterday.

DOOM & GLOOM

Five people died in flash floods in the western province of Badghis, another official said.

Load-Date: March 20, 2007



'Another hot summer for Israel'; Iranian leader hints he expects conflict in the coming months

The Straits Times (Singapore)
July 21, 2007 Saturday

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Length: 629 words

Byline: Abraham Rabinovich, For The Straits Times

Body

JERUSALEM - IRANIAN President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has hinted during a brief visit to Damascus that he expects a war involving Israel in the coming months.

Asked at a joint press conference with Syrian President Bashar Assad on Thursday whether he expected another 'hot summer' reminiscent of last year's war between the Israelis and Hizbollah, the Iranian leader said: 'We expect this summer's temperatures to rise with victories by the peoples of the region.'

Mr Ahmadinejad's one-day visit to Syria came only two days after Mr Assad told Parliament he was seeking negotiations with Israel that would lead to peace with the Jewish state if Israel returned the Golan Heights which it seized after the Six-Day War in 1967.

Mr Ahmadinejad, whose demand for Israel's elimination has been unrelenting, presumably attempted to dissuade Mr Assad from that notion.

The secular government in Syria, whose population is mostly Sunni, has maintained close relations with the Islamic regime in Iran, a Shi'ite country, in the face of attempts by Washington to isolate both countries as supporters of terrorism.

The substance of the Assad-Ahmadinejad talks could not be discerned from the innocuous communique issued by the two leaders after their meeting.

They were comfortable, it said, 'with the fine way ties between Syria and Iran are going, and are careful to continue cooperation in all fields'.

Israeli website DebkAfile, which purports to have good intelligence sources, reported yesterday that the two leaders in fact had an acrimonious discussion in which Mr Ahmadinejad pushed Mr Assad towards engaging Israel in war this summer, but the Syrian leader demurred.

Iran has underwritten Syria's purchase of Russian missiles and also provides it with commodities at subsidised prices.

The Iranian President also met the Hizbollah leader, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, who made a secret visit to Damascus for the occasion.

'Another hot summer for Israel ' Iranian leader hints he expects conflict in the coming months

Sheikh Nasrallah reportedly spends most of his time in hiding in Beirut because of Israeli threats to assassinate

Hizbollah, which is backed by Syria and Iran, is designated a terrorist organisation by the United States. It fought a five-week war with Israel last year that resulted in the deaths of 1,100 Lebanese and 163 Israelis.

Before returning to Teheran, Mr Ahmadinejad also met <u>Hamas</u> leader Khaled Meshaal and leaders of other Palestinian militant groups. His visit, observers believe, may have been an effort to coordinate efforts for some kind of joint action against Israel.

The Palestinian coalition government led by <u>Hamas</u> was dissolved last month after the hardline Islamist group's violent takeover of the Gaza Strip.

Yesterday, Israel released 256 Palestinian prisoners as a goodwill gesture aimed at strengthening the status of moderate Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and his emergency government.

The move came less than a month after Israel transferred to the Palestinian Authority more than US\$100 million (S\$150 million) in frozen tax receipts in the wake of the collapse of the <u>Hamas</u>-led unity government, which had been boycotted by Western countries and Israel.

Almost all the freed prisoners, who included six <u>women</u> and 11 minors, were members of Mr Abbas' secular Fatah movement. They were taken to the Bitunya crossing near Ramallah on the West Bank and handed over to Palestinian officials.

All the prisoners were required to sign a pledge not to take up arms against Israel after their release, not to engage in incitement against Israel and not to work to undermine peace efforts.

The release of the Fatah prisoners was intended, at least in part, to offset the anticipated release of hundreds of <u>Hamas</u> prisoners in return for the freedom of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, who has been held by <u>Hamas</u> for more than a year.

abra@netvision.net.il

Load-Date: July 20, 2007



Israel pledges to free 250 jailed Palestinians

The International Herald Tribune
July 9, 2007 Monday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 4

Length: 649 words

Byline: Isabel Kershner - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Israel announced Sunday that it would release 250 Palestinian prisoners, a move intended to bolster the administration of President Mahmoud Abbas, a government spokesman said.

Israeli and Palestinian officials also said that discussions were under way for a meeting between Abbas and Ehud Olmert, the Israeli prime minister, possibly early next week, although the date and location had not been finalized.

Olmert had pledged to release prisoners belonging to Abbas's Fatah faction at a summit meeting in the Egyptian resort of Sharm el Sheik on June 25. David Baker, a government spokesman, said the gesture was meant to "shore up" the Palestinian leader and his new emergency government, which rules from the West Bank, after the takeover of Gaza by Fatah's rival, *Hamas*.

But a political adviser to Abbas, Nimr Hamad, said that the release of 250 prisoners was "a very, very limited step" and that Israel had rejected a Palestinian request to coordinate on which prisoners should be released.

Palestinian officials said about 10,500 Palestinians were being held in Israeli prisons, about half of whom have been charged. According to the Israeli prisons authority, there are about 10,000 Palestinian prisoners suspected of, or charged with, security offenses in the prisons. About 60 percent of them belong to Fatah, 30 percent to <u>Hamas</u> and 10 percent to other factions, a prisons authority spokesman said.

Israel released 500 Palestinian prisoners in February 2005, soon after Abbas was elected.

Other "goodwill gestures" offered to Abbas at Sharm el Sheik included a resumption of the transfer of Palestinian tax revenues that Israel collects on the Palestinians' behalf, and that Israel has been withholding since <u>Hamas</u> came to power in early 2006; and a pledge to hold regular meetings between Olmert and Abbas. More than \$100 million in tax money was transferred to the Palestinians last week.

Israeli government officials said that the list of prisoners to be released was "still being worked on," but was nearly finalized. The first list presented by the Israeli security services was sent back for revision, according to Israeli media reports, because some of the candidates were very close to ending their prison terms anyway.

In line with a longstanding Israeli policy, Olmert said he would not release prisoners "with blood on their hands," a reference to those who have been directly involved in terrorist attacks that killed Israelis.

Israel pledges to free 250 jailed Palestinians

Hamad said that he would like to see sick prisoners and <u>women</u> among those released, but that the Israelis were deciding unilaterally.

The early release of Palestinian security prisoners always arouses opposition in Israel. The cabinet approved the release by a majority of 18, with six voting against, Baker said. A seventh, Avigdor Lieberman of the rightist Yisrael Beitenu party, objected to the release in absentia.

Among those who voted against was Shaul Mofaz, a former defense minister who is now minister of transportation and a member of Olmert's Kadima party. Mofaz said on Army Radio that he believed that in the end the Palestinian president would take the money and the prisoners and then join forces again with <u>Hamas</u> in a new unity government.

In the meantime, Palestinian lawyers who were involved in drafting the Palestinian Basic Law, or interim constitution, are disputing the legality of Abbas's emergency government, Reuters reported.

Anis al-Qasem, who oversaw the writing of the Basic Law, and a fellow independent Palestinian constitutional lawyer, Eugene Cotran, told Reuters that Abbas had the power to dismiss Ismail Haniya, the sacked prime minister of the previous *Hamas*-led unity government.

But they said the law did not grant Abbas the power to appoint a new government without legislative approval nor the right to suspend articles of the Basic Law pertaining to the need for parliamentary approval, as he did last month.

Load-Date: July 11, 2007



Gaza's universities no longer outside fray

The International Herald Tribune February 24, 2007 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 1158 words

Byline: Greg Myre - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: GAZA

Body

The computer center in the Islamic University's library is ankle-deep in ashes, and the few computers that survived a recent grenade attack and fire are misshapen and melted.

Just next door, at Al Azhar University, a rocket mangled the protective metal bars as it crashed through the windows of the president's office this month, trashing his desk and pocking his walls with shrapnel.

Many Palestinians never imagined that the violence on their streets would have spread to these institutions, sources of great pride to all Palestinians. But as infighting spun out of control at the beginning of this month, it consumed the major universities that represent one of the few hopes of a better life in tiny, impoverished Gaza.

Islamic University is closely identified with <u>Hamas</u>, one of the main Palestinian factions, while Al Azhar is a stronghold for its main rival, Fatah. For three days this month, from Feb. 1 to Feb. 3, the campuses became a battleground for gunmen from the two factions while the universities were on winter break and largely deserted.

"I never thought this could happen," said Sheikh Ahmed Bahar, a <u>Hamas</u> leader and the deputy speaker of the Palestinian Parliament, who toured the Islamic University on Sunday. "When we saw the university burning, it was like our hearts were burning because this institution is very dear to us."

<u>Hamas</u> and Fatah now say they will share power in a unity government, and the factional fighting has stopped. At the universities, the students have returned from their semester breaks, and workers are repairing the damage. But the tensions linger.

"I have two sisters and many friends at the Islamic University," said Rasha Nejem, 22, a pharmacy student at Al Azhar. "But when I visited to see the damage, one girl told me, 'Get out of my university. You have no business here."

When the fighting was at its worst, members of the Presidential Guard, who are linked to Fatah and are responsible for protecting the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, stormed onto the Islamic University campus on the night of Feb. 1 and remained the following day. They said that <u>Hamas</u> fighters were shooting from the buildings and storing weapons at the university.

"The Islamic University was used as a base for <u>Hamas</u> gunmen," said Maher Makdad, a Fatah spokesman. "We didn't attack the university because it was a university, but because gunmen were firing from there."

Gaza's universities no longer outside fray

The Presidential Guards left a trail of destruction that included significant damage to seven buildings, totaling \$10 million, according to Islamic University officials. The security forces said they confiscated <u>Hamas</u> weapons, but backed away from some of the accusations made at the time, including an assertion that eight Iranian weapons experts had been arrested at the university.

"They made all kinds of charges," said Kamalain Shaath, the president of the Islamic University. "They said we were holding an Israeli soldier, that there were Iranians and that we were keeping dead bodies here. They were all fabrications."

"Until now, I have received no convincing explanation as to why the university was attacked," Shaath continued. He said he had received a call of support from Jawad Wadi, the president of Al Azhar. However, Shaath said he had had no communication with Abbas, his office or the Presidential Guard.

Some of the most valuable parts of the campus were targets. Two rocket-propelled grenades were fired into the top floor of the library, starting a blaze that gutted the computer center. The intensity of the fire deformed the blades on the ceiling fans, which now droop down like wilted flower petals.

The library's bookstore was burned, and one of the few surviving volumes is a badly singed Koran. However, the 130,000 books in the library itself were not harmed.

Science labs with expensive equipment were also torched, as was a large conference center. Throughout the university, graffiti spray-painted on office doors read, "The Presidential Guards were here" and "Greetings from Abbas and Dahlan," the latter being a reference to the president and Muhammad Dahlan, a former Gaza security chief and a prominent Fatah leader. More than two weeks after the attack, the smell of smoke still hangs in the air.

On Feb. 3, the day after the attack on the Islamic University ended, Wadi, the Al Azhar president, received an anonymous phone call urging him to go to his office because gunmen were using his campus to fire on the Islamic University.

"They told me it was urgent, and I should come right away," Wadi said.

Wadi checked with security guards at his university, who assured him it was not true, so he decided not to go because there was still fighting in the surrounding neighborhood.

About an hour after the phone call, a rocket fired from the direction of the Islamic University smashed through the window behind his desk. Several more rockets slammed into other parts of the administration building. University officials collected the tail fins of four rockets, which bear the *Hamas* insignia.

"I was lucky," said Wadi, who is now working out of an undamaged office across the hall. "After the phone call, I asked for cars to be moved out of the area, and when the attackers saw the movement, they probably thought I was in my office."

There is no evidence that students from either institution were involved in the violence, but the events showed that no place was immune.

"We want to keep education separate from politics," said Gehad Hamad, a spokesman for Al Azhar. "We view the universities as a holy place, almost like a mosque. But this is a small community, and what happens on the street affects us here."

The two schools are set along Thalathini Street, a main thoroughfare in Gaza City, and are separated by a wall.

The Islamic University of Gaza, founded in 1978, has nearly 20,000 students and caters to those who seek a religiously based education. All the <u>women</u> wear black abayas, or long flowing robes, as well as head scarves, and some wear full veils. In conservative Gaza, <u>women</u> are noticeably absent from the street and relatively few work outside the home, but at the Islamic University they make up a solid majority of the student body.

Gaza's universities no longer outside fray

Many top <u>Hamas</u> leaders in Gaza have some link to the university, including Prime Minister Ismail Haniya, who studied, taught and served as an administrator there.

At Al Azhar, established in 1990, there are more than 12,000 students, and most offices feature a large photo of Yasser Arafat, the longtime Palestinian leader and Fatah chief who died in 2004.

As political competition between <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah has increased in recent years, students from the two universities have waged occasional stone-throwing clashes, as happened last spring, but it has not escalated beyond that.

"Let us hope that what happened here was an exception," said Shaath, the Islamic University president. "Now it is time to rebuild everything that was destroyed."

Load-Date: February 25, 2007



Seeking common ground; Whether we like it or not, militant groups have millions of supporters in the Middle East -- we can't ignore them in the pursuit of peace

Ottawa Citizen

May 25, 2007 Friday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A15

Length: 893 words

Byline: James Clark, Citizen Special

Body

Canada's antiwar movement has recently been the subject of much discussion in the national press. At issue is the participation of Canadian delegates in an international peace conference in Cairo, and the relationship between progressives and Muslims in Canada.

This year marked the fifth anniversary of the Cairo Conference. Held in central Cairo at the national union of journalists, the 2007 conference attracted 2,000 delegates from the Middle East and around the world including trade unionists, elected members of Parliament, students, <u>women</u>'s organizations, peasants and farmers, civil liberties campaigners, pro-democracy activists, the antiwar movement and resistance groups. Every major political current and tradition in the Arab world was represented.

Twenty activists comprised this year's delegation from Canada, representing a variety of organizations including the Canadian Peace Alliance. Among the Canadian delegates were three Jewish activists, including a Holocaust survivor. They shared their experiences of anti-Semitism, expressed their support for Palestinian liberation and explained the difference between Zionism and Judaism. They were warmly received by the conference and spoke alongside activists of other faiths and political traditions who shared their opposition to war and occupation.

Some commentators have condemned the conference because groups such as Hezbollah, <u>Hamas</u> and Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood sent representatives.

Whether we like it or not, these groups are legitimate forces in the Middle East with millions of supporters. Hezbollah participates in Lebanon's national government, including in cabinet. *Hamas*, the democratically elected government of the Palestinian National Authority, enjoys a majority twice the size of Stephen Harper's minority Parliament. The Muslim Brotherhood forms the largest opposition bloc in Egypt with 88 elected MPs.

We don't have to agree with everything these groups stand for -- and we don't. But it's not up to us to decide who represents the people of the Middle East. That's up to them.

History shows that dialogue with all players is the only path to peace.

Seeking common ground; Whether we like it or not, militant groups have millions of supporters in the Middle East -- we can't ignore them in the pursuit of peace

During apartheid, antiracists who engaged the African National Congress were smeared and vilified. Nelson Mandela, then labelled a "terrorist," is today revered as an icon for peace, justice and equality.

This month, Sinn Fein's Gerry Adams joined British Prime Minister Tony Blair as Northern Ireland convened its historic power-sharing government. Decades earlier, Mr. Adams was called a "terrorist" and banned from speaking on the BBC.

Recently, Norway's deputy foreign minister met with Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, a leader of <u>Hamas</u>. Norway has recognized Palestine's unity government and called on the European Union to end sanctions. European parliamentarians have also met with <u>Hamas</u>, asking the international community to respect last year's election.

Co-operation between progressives and people of faith is nothing new. Socialists collaborated with Jews to resist the rise of fascism in the 1930s. Indeed, many leading socialists were of Jewish descent. Antiracist students worked with Baptist preachers in the 1950s and '60s as part of the civil rights movement. Anti-imperialists joined with Catholics inspired by Liberation Theology against U.S. intervention in Latin America in the 1970s and '80s. Today, antiwar activists and Muslims have united against racism and Islamophobia.

Despite this history of co-operation, some believe that such a relationship is not possible with Muslims. They argue that Islam is different from other faiths and that by working with Muslims, progressives somehow abandon their principles. This argument is wrong.

Progressives and Muslims are not two distinct and separate groups. In reality, many Muslims identify as both. There are Muslim socialists, Muslims in the New Democratic Party and left-wing Muslims. Their faith is not a barrier but rather what inspires them to seek peace, justice and equality.

Those who feel uncomfortable about Muslims in the antiwar movement usually demand more from the Muslim community than from other groups. Arguments about a woman's right to choose and same-sex marriage are never raised when a Catholic priest or an Orthodox rabbi speaks at an antiwar rally, and rightly so. Participation in the antiwar movement is based on a shared opposition to war and racism, and a recognition that we don't have to agree on every other issue in order to unite for peace. If it's not controversial for people of other faiths to be part of the movement -- who don't always agree with the left -- why is it controversial for Muslims?

It's because of Islamophobia. Sadly, this has been an effective tool for both the right and the left to create divisions within the movement. That's why antiwar activists have worked to build bridges between Muslims and non-Muslims in Canada, and between activists in the West and ordinary people in the Arab world. This is the true spirit of the Cairo Conference and what motivates the international antiwar movement: the faith that, when people of different backgrounds and experiences seek common ground, we can lay the groundwork for a world of peace and justice for everyone.

James Clark is an organizer with the Toronto Coalition to Stop the War and was a participant in this year's Cairo Conference.

Graphic

Photo: Hatem Moussa, the Associated Press; A <u>Hamas</u> supporter kisses a poster showing Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh. Critics have focused on the presence of groups such as <u>Hamas</u> at this year's Cairo peace conference in condemning a delegation of progressive Canadian activists. But <u>Hamas</u> forms a democratically elected government.;

Seeking common ground; Whether we like it or not, militant groups have millions of supporters in the Middle East -- we can't ignore them in the pursuit of peace

Load-Date: May 25, 2007



Internet cafes in the front line of new Gaza violence

The Times (London)

December 26, 2006, Tuesday

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Section: OVERSEAS NEWS; Pg. 40

Length: 755 words

Byline: Stephen Farrell in Gaza City

Body

* More than a dozen attacks carried out

* Owners nervous of Islamist threat

Using political violence be-tween <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah as cover, radical Islamists are bombing internet cafes, pool halls and chemists in Gaza to impose their own brand of fundamentalism.

Cybercafes have been singled out for allegedly allowing customers to download pornography. Chemists have been bombed for selling hallucinogens smuggled from Israel or through tunnels from Egypt, while pool halls are accused of encouraging immoral behaviour. A group calling itself the Swords of Islamic Righteousness is believed to have carried out more than a dozen attacks in recent weeks.

The previously unknown group issued a warning letter late last month threatening to "execute the laws of God". It claimed responsibility for "shooting rocket-propelled grenades and planting bombs at internet cafes in Gaza, which are trying to make a whole generation preoccupied with matters other than jihad and worship". The group also claimed unverifiable attacks on unveiled <u>women</u>, music shops and motorists playing loud music.

Many of Gaza's backstreet internet cafes have closed after the attacks. Many of those still open told The Times that they were nervous about the Islamist threat.

Security officials and human rights workers said that disintegrating law and order was also being exploited by gangsters and criminals. <u>Women</u>'s rights groups report an increase in "honour killings" of <u>women</u> suspected of adultery or immoral behaviour.

Police say that they are powerless to act or arrest those belonging to the powerful tribes behind much of the criminality, because members of the security forces are locked in a power struggle between President Abbas's secular Fatah movement and the Islamist <u>Hamas</u> of Ismail Haniya, the Prime Minister. At the recent funeral of two powerful clan members nominally attached to Fatah, mourners suddenly burst from the procession and shot at <u>Hamas</u> police guarding an electricity office in Gaza City. In the mayhem, three cars were set on fire and the building was looted; workers reported thousands of shekels stolen from the coffers.

Alaa al-Shawa's Gaza City internet cafe was one of about half a dozen attacked by bombers who planted a small explosive device near the window. The 27-year-old entrepreneur said that he did not allow porn in his shop but knew of other cafes that did. "I use censorship and block all such material. I don't think they were targeting someone in particular, I think they don't want internet cafes here, period," he said.

Internet cafes in the front line of new Gaza violence

"I went to the Palestinian Authority and to all the factions but no one can help you." He is one of the few to reopen, but said that he had no choice. "It is dangerous for my staff and I, but I don't have another way of making a living."

Since <u>Hamas</u> won elections in January many liberal Gazans have feared an Islamic crackdown on "decadent practices" such as the leisure industry and <u>women</u> going unveiled.

However, Fawzi Barhoum, a <u>Hamas</u> spokesman, said that it had nothing to do with the attacks, and condemned them. "<u>Hamas</u> is among those most damaged by the lack of security," he said. "Our programme of change and reform regarding corruption and vice is not based on any sort of violence or fighting, but in an educated, civilised way that represents the culture of the Palestinian people and their faith."

Brigadier-General Tawfiq Jabr Youssef, head of public relations for the Palestinian Authority police, said that they knew of 11 pharmacies suspected of dealing in illegal drugs and more than half a dozen that had been attacked.

Internet store owners estimate more than a dozen attacks on their premises.

Like many, he blamed the attacks on Israeli agents or collaborators seeking to undermine Palestinian society to benefit foreign powers. While the attacks on chemists could be the work of extremists, commercial rivals or gangsters, the internet bombings were, he said, most likely the work of Islamic extremists working within a conservative society in which many already harboured "very negative" attitudes to pool halls and the internet.

"Frankly some people have a dark vision of religion. They were raised under aggression and (Israeli) occupation and they don't have very much in their lives," the Brigadier said.

Mona al-Shawa, of the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, said that the situation in Gaza was the worst that she had known. "I have never felt scared like I feel now. If this happens to cafes, what will be next?"

ILatest news from the Middle East timesonline.co.uk/mideast

Load-Date: December 26, 2006



<u>Islands of learning in a sea of woe; Universities, a source of hope, are</u> dragged into Gaza unrest

The International Herald Tribune February 23, 2007 Friday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 5

Length: 1155 words

Byline: Greg Myre - The New York Times Media Group

Dateline: GAZA

Body

The computer center in the Islamic University's library is ankle-deep in ashes, and the few computers that survived a recent grenade attack and fire are misshapen and melted.

Just next door, at Al Azhar University, a rocket mangled the protective metal bars as it crashed through the windows of the president's office this month, trashing his desk and pocking his walls with shrapnel.

Many Palestinians never imagined that the violence on their streets would have spread to these institutions, sources of great pride to all Palestinians. But as infighting spun out of control at the beginning of this month, it consumed the major universities that represent one of the few hopes of a better life in tiny, impoverished Gaza.

Islamic University is closely identified with one of the main Palestinian factions <u>Hamas</u> while Al Azhar is a stronghold for its main rival, Fatah. For three days this month, from Feb. 1 to Feb. 3, the side-by-side campuses became a battleground for gunmen from the two factions while the universities were on winter break and largely deserted.

"I never thought this could happen," said Ahmed Bahar, a <u>Hamas</u> leader and the deputy speaker of the Palestinian Parliament, who toured the Islamic University on Sunday. "When we saw the university burning, it was like our hearts were burning because this institution is very dear to us."

<u>Hamas</u> and Fatah now say they will share power in a unity government, and the factional fighting has stopped. At the universities, the students have returned from their semester breaks, and workmen are repairing the damage. But the tensions linger.

"I have two sisters and many friends at the Islamic University," said Rasha Nejem, 22, a pharmacy student at Al Azhar. "But when I visited to see the damage, one girl told me, 'Get out of my university. You have no business here.""

When the fighting was at its worst, members of the Presidential Guard, who are linked to Fatah and are responsible for protecting Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, stormed onto the Islamic University campus on the night of Feb. 1 and remained the following day. They said *Hamas* fighters were shooting from the buildings and storing weapons at the university.

Islands of learning in a sea of woe Universities, a source of hope, are dragged into Gaza unrest

"The Islamic University was used as a base for <u>Hamas</u> gunmen," said Maher Makdad, a Fatah spokesman. "We didn't attack the university because it was a university, but because gunmen were firing from there."

The Presidential Guards left a trail of destruction that included significant damage to seven buildings, totaling \$10 million, according to Islamic University officials. The security forces said they confiscated <u>Hamas</u> weapons, but backed away from some of the accusations made at the time, including an assertion that eight Iranian weapons experts had been arrested at the university.

"They made all kinds of charges," said Kamalain Shaath, the president of the Islamic University. "They said we were holding an Israeli soldier, that there were Iranians and that we were keeping dead bodies here. They were all fabrications."

"Until now, I have received no convincing explanation as to why the university was attacked," Shaath continued. He said he did receive a call of support Jawad Wadi, the president of Al Azhar. However, Shaath said he has had no communication from Abbas, his office or the Presidential Guard.

Some of the most valuable parts of the campus were targets. Two rocket-propelled grenades were fired into the top floor of the library, setting a blaze that gutted the computer center. The intensity of the fire deformed the blades on the ceiling fans, which now droop down like wilted flower petals.

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There is no evidence that students from either institution were involved in the violence, but it showed that no place was immune.

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Islands of learning in a sea of woe Universities, a source of hope, are dragged into Gaza unrest

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"Let us hope that what happened here was an exception," said Shaath, the Islamic University president. "Now it is time to rebuild everything that was destroyed."

Load-Date: February 25, 2007



Rocket fire resumes after Israeli pullout: Homes, mosque destroyed in Gaza town

The Vancouver Sun (British Columbia)

November 8, 2006 Wednesday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A14

Length: 286 words

Byline: Ibrahim Barzak, Associated Press

Dateline: BEIT HANOUN, Gaza Strip

Body

BEIT HANOUN, Gaza Strip -- Israeli forces ended a weeklong offensive Tuesday aimed at halting rocket attacks from this northern Gaza town, leaving behind wrecked homes, uprooted trees and sewage-covered streets.

Hours after the pullback, the Palestinian rocket fire resumed.

Israel kept up its onslaught from outside Beit Hanoun, killing 10 Palestinians in air strikes, gunfire and tank shelling.

In one barrage Tuesday, five rockets hit the Israeli city of Ashkelon, 11 km from the Gaza border, the farthest the Palestinians' homemade weapons have reached into Israel. No one was hurt, the army said, but Israel hit back with artillery.

Palestinian leaders denounced Israel for continuing its offensive, but internal problems remained unsolved as negotiations dragged on to form a unity government in hopes of ending an international aid boycott.

In one incident Tuesday, two Israeli tank shells hit the house of Jamila Shanti, a <u>Hamas</u> legislator who helped organize a demonstration of <u>women</u> Friday that allowed dozens of <u>Hamas</u> gunmen to escape an Israeli siege on a mosque.

Shanti was not home at the time of Tuesday's attack, which Palestinian doctors said killed three people. <u>Hamas</u> said two of the three were soldiers who were firing rockets. The army said it was responding to an attack and had not targeted Shanti's home.

After the pre-dawn Israeli pullback, hundreds of Beit Hanoun residents milled around inspecting the damage. Homes in the town of 50,000 were damaged by tanks that ripped up asphalt, toppled trees and destroyed cars. The mosque that was the site of the standoff was reduced to rubble.

During an emotional funeral procession, tens of thousands of mourners filed behind ambulances carrying 23 bodies.

Load-Date: November 8, 2006



2 women die in standoff in Gaza

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

November 4, 2006 Saturday

THIRD EDITION

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A22

Length: 255 words

Byline: The Associated Press

Dateline: BEIT HANOUN, Gaza Strip

Body

Hundreds of Palestinian <u>women</u> streamed into a Gaza combat zone Friday to help free gunmen besieged by Israeli troops at a mosque. Two <u>women</u> who came under fire were killed and at least 10 wounded, but some gunmen managed to escape.

The <u>women</u>, many with ties to the Islamic militant group <u>Hamas</u>, left their homes after daybreak in response to appeals on the local **Hamas** radio station or telephone calls from friends and relatives.

By nightfall, they were celebrated as heroes, an unusual role in a deeply conservative society that tends to keep **women** on the sidelines. Until Friday, battling Israeli troops had been men's business in Gaza.

The mosque standoff came on the third day of Israel's fiercest bid in months to halt Palestinian rocket fire on Israeli border communities. The offensive began Wednesday, when Israeli forces took over the northern Gaza town of Beit Hanoun, close to the border with Israel.

In all, 35 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza since Wednesday, including 17 on Friday. Among those killed Friday were the two <u>women</u> protesters, both age 40, a 16-year-old boy, two medics and at least 10 militants. Most of the deaths Friday were a result of a series of Israeli airstrikes after sundown.

The army said the strikes targeted militants trying to plant explosives or launch rockets.

Addressing the actions of the women, Israeli Maj. Avital Leibovich said Hamas was exploiting women.

"They were using those poor <u>women</u> as human shields," she said. "This is a clear example of use of innocent population for terror."

Notes

World

2 women die in standoff in Gaza

Load-Date: November 4, 2006



Shortage fears spark long lineups in Gaza; Run on food and fuel after Israel closes Strip and cuts off gas supplies

The Gazette (Montreal)

June 18, 2007 Monday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A4

Length: 465 words

Byline: AFP

Dateline: GAZA CITY

Body

Palestinians formed long lineups outside supermarkets and gas stations yesterday as frantic residents stocked up on essential supplies fearing a long Israeli blockade after the *Hamas* takeover.

Israel closed off the tiny coastal strip and its 1.5 million residents after it was overrun by fighters from <u>Hamas</u>, an Islamist movement sworn to the destruction of the Jewish state.

The army also sent in troops to the north of the territory in what Israeli Deputy Defence Minister Ephrain Sneh said was a "preventive" action.

With the territory totally dependent on imports of food, fuel and other essential supplies, its residents are now flooding to stores and gas stations amid rumours stocks will soon run out.

"Everything is running out - flour, oil, milk, vegetables, cheese, canned food," said Samir Nasser, the owner of a small supermarket in western Gaza City. .

"We just want to feed our children," said one customer, Adnan, clutching packets of flour.

Israel has already halted deliveries of gasoline to the Gaza Strip, army radio reported, although it said fuel supplies for electricity generators were continuing for the moment.

The Israeli infrastructure ministry estimates Gaza has a minimum of two weeks' worth of reserves for car fuel, it said.

The new rulers of Gaza have sought to play down rumours of dwindling food supplies, branding them "propaganda" but admitted a continued closure of was dangerous.

"Israel can't keep its closure of the crossings for a long time," Hamas spokesperson Sami Abu Zuhri said.

"It's very dangerous if they keep doing so and we will not remain silent."

Shortage fears spark long lineups in Gaza; Run on food and fuel after Israel closes Strip and cuts off gas supplies

At the popular Zawya market, <u>Hamas</u> gunmen keep a close eye on shopkeepers to prevent price-gouging and "war profiteers."

One elderly woman complained her husband had not been paid for months. "I can't buy anything. We don't have any more money - my husband has not received his salary," she said.

While some Gazans stocked up on supplies, others sought to flee.

About 500 people, mostly <u>women</u>, children and the elderly, gathered at the main Erez border crossing with Israel, sitting on suitcases in the baking sun without food or water, witnesses said.

When one of them approached too close to the Israeli side of the crossing, an Israeli soldier warned them over a loudspeaker to "stay away."

"They were pushed back by soldiers firing in the air. Israel has no intention of allowing Palestinians to pass through. Only those who have special status (VIPs) can cross," an army spokesperson said.

International relief agencies have urged Israel to reopen the border to avoid a humanitarian crisis.

"The crossings remaining closed is not an option. The

Gaza Strip is entirely dependent on the importation of not just aid, but also commercial trade," said the head of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, John Ging.

Load-Date: June 18, 2007



Tragedy upon tragedy; LEADING ARTICLE; GAZA

The Independent (London)

November 9, 2006 Thursday

First Edition

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Section: EDITORIAL & OPINION; Pg. 36

Length: 460 words

Body

Yesterday was one of the most tragic days in Gaza for many years.

At least 18 Palestinian civilians, 10 of them children, were killed in the early morning when Israeli tanks shelled blocks of flats in the town of Beit Hanoun. A further 60 people were wounded in the attack. The Israeli army says the shelling was accidental and has launched an inquiry. But the damage has been done. In the eyes of most Palestinians this was a war crime. The response of the Syrian-based <u>Hamas</u> leader, Khaled Mashaal, was to declare the official ceasefire with Israel over.

This slaughter was a grisly coda to a tumultuous six-day Israeli military operation in Beit Hanoun. Last week there were extraordinary scenes when the <u>women</u> of the town marched past Israeli positions to shield a group of cornered gunmen. Two <u>women</u> were shot in the chaotic aftermath.

But, in truth, the whole of Gaza has been in tumult for months. Great damage has been inflicted on the Palestinian people since the Israeli army returned to the strip in June. A United Nations report yesterday outlined how homes and farms have been destroyed arbitrarily by the Israeli military. The bombing of the strip's power generator has prevented hospitals from functioning properly. The already ailing economy has collapsed entirely under a fierce blockade.

Israel claims its objective is to put an end to the volleys of crude Qassam rockets being fired from Gaza into Israel by Palestinian militants. Yet these rockets - though deplorable - have killed a very small number of Israelis in the past six years. So wildly disproportionate has been the Israeli response that it seems hard to believe this is not a collective punishment for the Gaza population for electing a *Hamas* government in January.

Whatever the truth, Israeli's policy is dangerously counter-productive. There is no evidence that these operations have substantially disrupted the firing of rockets. Nor is this pressure turning Gazans away from <u>Hamas</u>. And yet, even after this latest tragedy, the Israeli government vows to persist with the same heavy-handed tactics.

This is symptomatic of a drift in Israeli politics. Prime Minister Olmert has been gravely weakened by the disastrous invasion of Lebanon. And he has shown consistently poor judgement. Instead of pushing ahead with talks with the moderate Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas - something that would have helped to force the hand of <u>Hamas</u> - he has invited the far-right demagogue, Avigdor Lieberman, into his cabinet. Meanwhile, his progressive manifesto

Tragedy upon tragedy LEADING ARTICLE GAZA

promise of withdrawing from the West Bank appears to have been dropped. The punishment of Gaza is a failing policy being pursued by a failing administration. And it can only ultimately deliver more carnage of the sort seen yesterday.

Load-Date: November 15, 2006



Mother stands in the crossfire as Gaza violence tears her family apart

The West Australian (Perth)

June 15, 2007 Friday

METRO

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Section: GENERAL; Pg. 11

Length: 274 words

Body

Amal Hellis, a mother of two, marched into the crossfire in Gaza City to plea for peace in the war-torn territory.

"I am not afraid. I will die to save my family and to save Palestine," said Mrs Hellis, 35, whose youngest son Refaat, 17, is a *Hamas* militant, while her elder son Medhat, 19, is a member of the Fatah-controlled security services.

A few hundred Palestinians, including tribal leaders and Islamic Jihad militants, marched through the streets on Wednesday to protest at the mounting violence.

But as they approached the Al Ghifary tower near Gazas beachfront, bullets rained down from above. The abandoned 18-storey apartment block has been the focal point of fierce battles since <u>Hamas</u> militants threw a Fatah foot soldier off the buildings roof on Sunday.

The protesters scattered amid the gunfire and a black truck raced up the street with a gunman braced in the back firing a machinegun at the *Hamas*-controlled tower.

The marchers refused to bow to the violence. They mobbed a Fatah gunman, forcing him to lower his rifle, and then marched into the crossroads separating the factions. Young girls and old <u>women</u> draped in Palestinian flags stood defiant in the crossfire, chanting and trying to make their pleas for calm heard above the sound of gunfire.

For a brief moment, calm descended on the street. But within minutes, a shot picked off one of the protesters, a man of 20. They charged again into the gunfire, screaming for peace, but several fell to the ground as more shots rang out.

Hanna Jouda, a 17-year-old high school student, stood amid the mayhem and said: "The Jews never did to us what our own people are now doing to us."

Graphic

Street clash: Palestinians argue during a demonstration in Gaza City.

Load-Date: June 15, 2007



Unborn baby dies during Israeli night raid

The Independent (London)

May 12, 2007 Saturday

First Edition

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Length: 766 words

Byline: Donald Macintyre in Nablus

Body

The life of a 30-year-old Palestinian woman may have been saved by the unborn baby boy she lost when she was severely wounded during a gun battle between Israeli troops and militants.

Maha Katouni, was in intensive care in Nablus's Rafidia Hospital yesterday after major surgery for a bullet wound which medics say shattered the head of the foetus she was carrying in her seventh month of pregnancy.

Her family said she was shot in her third-floor bedroom as she went to comfort one of her three young sons who was crying because of the shooting which followed a pre-dawn incursion by Israeli troops into the Beit Alma refugee camp here.

Bassam Hashash, 35, the senior nurse on duty at the hospital's casualty ward, said the bullet had entered through her back, damaging the colon, and penetrating the womb. He added: "The foetus prevented the bullet from killing her because he took the bullet in his head."

The civilian casualty inflicted in the early hours of Thursday morning was the latest during a series of near-nightly raids residents say the army has been conducting in a search for militants in refugee camps in the West Bank cities of Nablus and Jenin. Palestinian officials say the raids are seriously undermining attempts to expand the highly fragile ceasefire in Gaza to the West Bank. No arrests were made in the 2am raid in the Beit Alma camp.

Mr Hashash and the wounded woman's brother, Ibahim Dayab, 33, insisted that the bullet had been fired by Israeli troops. The woman's husband, Rafat Katouni, had earlier told local reporters that the house was in the line of fire between Israeli troops and Palestinian gunmen but thought the bullet had come from the direction of the Israeli forces.

The Israeli military said that there had been an exchange of fire between troops and Palestinian gunmen and after a preliminary investigation it was "hard to say" from where the bullet which struck Mrs Katouni had been fired.

Mr Hashash said that beside injuries, which the family say could keep Mrs Katouni in hospital for three months, she would need psychological counselling for the loss of her baby. "The first thing she asked her family when they came to the hospital is 'what happened to my baby?' They told her that he had died."

Unborn baby dies during Israeli night raid

Mr Dayab, who works in an insurance company, said that his sister had been distraught to hear of her unborn son's death and added: "Of course I feel resentment. My sister is between life and death." He claimed that Israeli troops had fired "indiscriminately" and added of the night-time raids: "They want to scare us. They don't want us to live a normal life. They are trying to push us to the edge of despair." His mother, Fawzyeh, 57, said: "My daughter's life is in danger and she will not be able to have children again."

In a spate of raids in the West Bank and Gaza three weekends ago, Israeli troops killed eight Palestinians. While the majority of victims were militants, Bushra Wahash, a 17-year-old student, was shot dead as she prepared for an exam the following day. The army insisted after that shooting that it was responding to fire from the same building but this is strongly denied by the victim's family who said there were only <u>women</u> and a toddler in the house at the time.

Meanwhile in Gaza at least six people were injured in a fresh outbreak of fighting between Fatah and *Hamas* only 48 hours after a new deployment across Gaza of security forces designed to curb lawlessness in the Strip.

<u>Hamas</u> said the fighting began before dawn when members of the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas's national security forces detained a member of <u>Hamas</u>'s military wing, alleged to have been involved in firing on security forces overnight. <u>Hamas</u> militants then stormed the facility where the man was being detained, freeing him and wounding two national security force members in a gun battle.

On Thursday, Nabil Shaath, one of Mr Abbas's most senior aides in Gaza, was quoted as saying that a joint police force, with both <u>Hamas</u> and Fatah members wearing the same uniform, and answerable to the Ministry of Interior had been agreed between Mr Abbas and the Palestinian Prime Minister, Ismail Haniyeh of <u>Hamas</u>.

Elliot Abrahams, the hawkish US Assistant Secretary of State has reassured a group of Jewish Republicans that Washington's efforts on the Israel-Palestinian conflict are mainly aimed at lessening pressure from Arab and European states, according to Haaretz. The paper's Washington correspondent quoted sources present at the meeting as saying that Mr Abrahams had said that talks are sometimes no more than a "process for the sake of process".

Load-Date: May 12, 2007



United Palestine a dying dream

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

June 18, 2007 Monday

National Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A12; Matthew Fisher

Length: 733 words

Byline: Matthew Fisher, National Post

Dateline: NABLUS, West Bank

Body

NABLUS, West Bank -Last week's tumultuous events in Gaza present many challenges and a few opportunities for Palestinians, Israelis and the many friends and foes who have made it their business to try to shape events in this volatile, unpredictable region.

<u>Hamas</u>'s shockingly quick conquest of Gaza after five days of fighting last week was a catastrophe for those many Palestinians who have long dreamed of a united homeland. It has also sharply heightened Israeli concerns about how to deal with Islamic extremists who favour terror over negotiation and who probably cannot be defeated by conventional military means.

Furthermore, the routing of Fatah in Gaza was a crude rebuke to the United States and its allies, who had gone far out of their way to promote the interests of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and the grossly corrupt movement that the hapless leader inherited from Yasser Arafat.

The fall of Fatah in Gaza may have been the worst of it, but it was a dreadful week for the United States across the Middle East. Yet another prominent Lebanese politician that Washington supported was blown up in Beirut. A Shiite holy place was attacked in Iraq, once again en-flaming Shiites against Sunnis.

This comes at a time when a growing procession of American generals and the officers and foot soldiers who serve under them have become more and more frank about how badly their war in Mesopotamia has been going and how little help they are getting from their putative Iraqi allies in the army and police. As if this wasn't enough, the U.S. allies in Turkey have been attacking the U.S. Kurdish allies in northern Iraq.

The idea of a unified Palestinian state was always a bit of a stretch. This was not only because -- with the obvious exception of the continental United States and Alaska and Hawaii and a couple of less well-known examples such as Russia and Kaliningrad -- states such as Pakistan and Bangladesh that have been spread over two distinct territories with another country in between have failed miserably.

Gaza has always had more clan and tribal troubles than the West Bank, since the enclave was an artificial construct that took in most of its people as refugees from places that are now part of Israel. The West Bank has refugees, too, but most communities there have family roots that go back centuries.

United Palestine a dying dream

The West Bank has become relatively affluent because unlike Gaza, it has much better land, and therefore sustainable agriculture, and has much better educated people who, not uncoincidently, have many prosperous relatives in such Western countries as Canada and the United States.

West Bankers are also more pragmatic than Gazans. The reasons for this are many, but, it must be said, one of the factors has been that Palestinians in the West Bank are generally far less pious Muslims than Gazans.

All this suggests the possibility that despite sharp differences over the presence of Israeli troops in the West Bank, and the more than 400,000 Jewish settlers who live there and in east Jerusalem, there may be some common ground between Israel and West Bank Palestinians that could lead to fruitful discussions.

Several Palestinians took me aside in Nablus's crowded Old Quarter last week to whisper that they were overjoyed to finally be rid of the Gazans, with their harsh views on <u>women</u>, alcohol, Western education and culture, the Internet and so much else.

However, that these folks, in one of the few places where <u>Hamas</u> may be stronger than Fatah in the West Bank, felt that they still had to whisper their opinions tells its own story. This game is not quite over yet.

Notwithstanding recent events, it remains immensely difficult for any Palestinian politician to publicly state that the idea of a unified Palestine is dead. Other Arabs, and especially the Saudis, who sponsored a <u>Hamas</u>-Fatah unity government that barely lasted three months, will undoubtedly try to bring the factions together again.

Moreover, for all its fiery rhetoric about Fatah's Islamic shortcomings and its traitorous relations with Israel and the United States, <u>Hamas</u> must work out a modus vivendi with Fatah if donor nations are to ever open their wallets again. The only apparent way for <u>Hamas</u> to stave off total isolation from the world is to resume talking with Fatahland, as some Israelis are now describing the West Bank in order to differentiate it from what they call Gaza's Hamastan.

Graphic

Color Photo: Ibraheem Abu Mustafa, Reuters; Palestinians get fuel from a gas station in Gaza yesterday. An Israeli energy company said it had to cut back fuel supplies to the Gaza Strip yesterday, increasing pressure on <u>Hamas</u> after it took over the impoverished territory.;

Load-Date: June 18, 2007



Women shield mosque gunmen

Yorkshire Post November 4, 2006

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Length: 600 words

Body

Two die in Gaza siege as militants disguised by veils escape

Militants holed up inside a Gaza mosque besieged by Israeli troops escaped after hundreds of <u>women</u> streamed there to serve as human shields. At least two gunmen escaped disguised as veiled **women**.

Israeli troops fired toward the crowd of women, killing two and wounding at least 10, hospital officials said.

Soldiers seized Beit Hanoun on Wednesday in their fiercest bid in months to halt Palestinian rocket fire on Israel.

Twenty-three Palestinians, most of them gunmen, have been killed and 155 people have been wounded since the offensive began, the Palestinian Health Ministry said. More than 60 of the wounded were <u>women</u>.

The mosque became the focus of the fighting in Beit Hanoun after dozens of gunmen sought refuge from troops there on Thursday. Most were thought to belong to the military wing of the ruling *Hamas* party.

Israeli tanks and armoured personnel carriers surrounded the building, and the two sides exchanged fire throughout the night.

Israeli soldiers also threw stun and smoke grenades, and knocked down an outer wall of the mosque with a bulldozer, causing the ceiling to collapse.

<u>Hamas</u> radio broadcast a call to <u>women</u> to go to Beit Hanoun to shield the militants and by mid-morning, some 200 veiled <u>women</u> protesters gathered near the mosque surrounded by tanks and armoured vehicles.

As the <u>women</u> first approached, volleys of shots were fired toward them, sending the group rushing toward a nearby wall for cover, according to Associated Press Television News footage. In all, nearly 60 shots were heard. Two <u>women</u>, both age 40, were shot dead, and at least 10 others were wounded.

The army said the gunmen inside the mosque were able to take advantage of the demonstration to escape.

The army said troops spotted two militants hiding in the crowd of women and opened fire, hitting the two.

As the <u>women</u> rushed away from the scene, at least two men disguised in <u>women</u>'s clothes were seen being embraced by jubilant bystanders.

Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh of <u>Hamas</u> "saluted the <u>women</u> of Palestine ... who led the protest to break the siege of Beit Hanoun".

Women shield mosque gunmen

Mr Haniyeh urged UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan to witness firsthand "the massacres of the Palestinian people," and appealed to the Arab world to "stop the ongoing bloodshed."

A spokesman for *Hamas* said 32 gunmen escaped with the help of the *women*.

Dozens of protesters took sanctuary in a UN school in Beit Hanoun, fearing retribution by troops, said Imad Okal, an official with the UN Relief and Works Agency, who said he was in touch with people at the school.

Loudspeakers across Gaza called on people to come to demonstrations after Friday prayers to express solidarity with Beit Hanoun. Tens of thousands representing various Palestinian factions massed in streets,

Elsewhere, Israeli troops lowered their visibility, after two days of fierce fighting.

No airstrikes were reported, and residents said infantrymen had stopped patrolling the streets. Tanks and armoured personnel vehicles were in sight and snipers were positioned on about two dozen rooftops.

Militants have continued firing rockets, including two that landed in southern Israel, slightly wounding two people.

Separately, tens of thousands of mourners accompanied the coffins of four militants killed in Israeli airstrikes on Thursday filed through a main Gaza City street.

The violence coincides with efforts by the moderate Abbas to form a new government with <u>Hamas</u>. A top Abbas aide said on Thursday that the Palestinian president would seek new elections if talks do not produce results in about two weeks.

Load-Date: November 4, 2006



Palestinians freed to boost Abbas

Weekend Australian
July 21, 2007 Saturday
All-round Metro Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 13

Length: 682 words

Byline: Abraham Rabinovich, Jerusalem

Body

ISRAEL yesterday released 256 Palestinian prisoners as a goodwill gesture aimed at strengthening the status of the moderate Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, among his people.

The move came less than a month after Israel transferred to the Palestinian Authority more than \$US100 million (\$113.7 million) in frozen tax receipts in the wake of the dissolution by Mr Abbas of the <u>Hamas</u>-led government elected last year and his formation of an emergency government led by Fatah.

"We have began to free 256 prisoners, including six **women**," an Israel prison authority spokesman Ian Domnitz yesterday.

"They've been identified. They've been medically checked. They've had interviews with the Red Cross and this is the final stage."

After their release the prisoners -- almost all members of Fatah -- were bused to the Bitunya crossing point near Ramallah on the West Bank and handed over to Palestinian officials.

Boarding Palestinian buses, they were taken to the grave of former Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat in Ramallah.

In a ceremony presided over by Mr Abbas, the released prisoners laid wreaths on Arafat's grave and then dispersed to their homes in the West Bank.

The BBC reported yesterday that the release had attracted criticism from many Palestinians who maintain that 256 Palestinian prisoners out of some 10,000 is not enough.

In choosing prisoners to be released, Israel's principal criterion was that they not be members of <u>Hamas</u> or Islamic Jihad, that they not be residents of the Gaza Strip -- which was taken over forcibly by <u>Hamas</u> last month -- and that they not have "blood on their hands", that is, not to have been involved in the killing of Israeli citizens.

But it was not always for want of trying.

Some of the prisoners had been involved in shooting incidents and the preparation of bombs but had not succeeded in killing anyone.

Palestinians freed to boost Abbas

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert had rejected an initial list of prisoners drawn up by security officials because they included many men who were to be released anyway in the coming weeks. Palestinian officials had said this would make a mockery of the notion of a goodwill gesture.

All the prisoners released yesterday were said to have at least one year remaining to serve. The longest-serving prisoner among them still had two years to go on a 20-year sentence.

All the prisoners were required to sign a pledge not to take up arms against Israel after their release, not to engage in incitement against Israel and not work to undermine peace efforts.

One man who refused to sign was removed from the list but prison officials said he changed his mind and signed hours before the release.

Another prisoner declined to be put on the list, according to the Israeli media, on the grounds that he could not afford on the outside to pay for expensive medicines that he received free in prison.

An attempt to block the prisoner release in the High Court of Justice by relatives of Israelis killed in terror attacks was rejected by a 2-1 vote on Thursday.

The petitioners noted that in the past a significant percentage of prisoners released before the end of their terms had returned to terror activities.

However, the court majority held that the Government was entitled "to form its opinion according to overall security and political considerations".

The release of the Fatah prisoners is intended, at least in part, to offset the anticipated release of hundreds of <u>Hamas</u> prisoners, including those with "blood on their hands", in return for the release of a captured Israeli soldier, Gilad Shalit, who has been held by <u>Hamas</u>.

Negotiations for such an exchange have been going on for more than a year.

Israel would like to demonstrate that concessions can be won by moderates such as Mr Abbas through peaceful means.

Mr Olmert has indicated that other gestures, such as the removal of many West Bank roadblocks, are in the pipeline.

Israel last week granted amnesty to almost 200 militants from the Fatah-affiliated al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades who turned in their weapons and signed an agreement not to take up arms again against Israel.

Greg Sheridan -- Page 22

Load-Date: July 21, 2007



Top of the world

thespec.com

June 21, 2007 Thursday

Final Edition

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Section: CANADA/WORLD; Pg. A04

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Byline: The Hamilton Spectator

Body

<u>Hamas</u> supporters in Gaza burned a poster of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice during a protest yesterday.

Addressing the Palestinian people on television for the first time since the <u>Hamas</u> takeover of Gaza, Abbas angrily lashed out at the Islamic militants, accusing them of trying to build an "empire of darkness" in Gaza and pledging he would not talk to "murderous terrorists."

Abbas delivered the speech to a top PLO body, the Palestine National Council, seeking approval for his recent steps, such as declaring a state of emergency, firing the <u>Hamas</u>-led government and setting up an emergency cabinet of moderates aligned with his Fatah supporters.

At one point, Abbas also described in great detail what he said was a <u>Hamas</u> attempt to assassinate him. He said he obtained footage of <u>Hamas</u> members dragging large amounts of explosives through a tunnel they had dug under Gaza's main road -- the one he takes to get to his office -- and saying "this is for Abu Mazen," Abbas' nickname.

This kitten has been adopted only a day after being rescued by determined firefighters in Parkersburg, W. Va. It took two fire trucks, five firefighters, several animal rescuers and about 950 litres of water to get the animal out of a storm drain.

Animal control officers first tried coaxing the grey tabby out with encouraging words and food before giving up after about an hour and a half.

Firefighters then tried banging tools on one end of the pipe and flashing lights in hopes of driving him out the other end -- but that didn't work either.

It wasn't until firefighters flushed enough water through the pipe to wet the kitten's paws that the feline rushed into the hands of a waiting firefighter.

"Everybody was pretty tickled" when the cat finally emerged, said a fire department spokesman.

Anna Vlasman, a 72-year-old school bus driver in London, Ont., has claimed her half of a \$35 million Lotto 6/49 prize. The other half of the June 6 prize went to someone in Atlantic Canada. Vlasman and her husband of 52

Top of the world

years, also a school bus driver, were accompanied to lottery headquarters by their four children, eight grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Besides sharing with family, plans include a vacation, new car, some home renovations and maybe a cottage.

Native leaders and some premiers are in Cornerbrook, NL., for the first national aboriginal <u>women</u>'s summit in the hope of devising a long-term strategy to end a cruel cycle of poverty and violence. Beverley Jacobs, above, president of the Native <u>Women</u>'s Association of Canada, wants strategies to reduce the number of aboriginal <u>women</u> who are sexually assaulted, go missing or are murdered, as well as tackle the lack of native <u>women</u>'s property rights.

A second veteran Liberal MP in as many days has announced he'll resign early, opening his riding to a potential late-summer byelection. Jim Peterson, left, a former trade minister, will vacate his Toronto seat of Willowdale on July 12 instead of waiting until the next federal election. The Liberals have several candidates from last year's crowded leadership race sitting unelected on the sidelines, and the party would like to get them into Parliament as soon as possible.

Conservatives are promising to take their beefs with the Liberal-dominated upper chamber to the public this summer after a Tory bill to limit Senate terms was shelved indefinitely.

"These guys show that they are not responsible in their exercise of power -- why not just get rid of them?" said government House leader Peter Van Loan, above, as MPs agreed yesterday to wrap up their spring session two days ahead of schedule and head home till September.

Graphic

Photo: Reuters, GAZA STRIP; Photo: THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, UNITED STATES; Photo: THE CANADIAN PRESS, ONTARIO; Photo: THE CANADIAN PRESS, CANADA; Photo: Tom Hanson, the Canadian Press, CANADA; Photo: Canadian Press File Photo, CANADA

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