



Intelligence and Terrorism Information
Center at the Israel Intelligence
Heritage & Commemoration Center

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During the last round of escalation in the Gaza Strip the terrorist organizations again made extensive use of Palestinian civilians as human shields.



Civilians called out by Hamas to form a human shield on the roof of a house in the northern Gaza Strip to prevent the IDF from attacking (Al-Aqsa TV, March 1)



Popular Resistance Committees Rocket fire from within a built-up area (PRC Muqawamah Website, February 27)

Overview

1. Using civilians as human shields, **which is in direct violation of the international laws governing the conduct of war**, is a **procedure common** among the Palestinian terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip. In recent years its use has been extended and honed for both **offensive** (rocket and mortar shell fire at Israeli civilians) and **defensive purposes** (preventing the IDF from hitting terrorist bases).

2. The Palestinian terrorist organizations' use of civilians in the Gaza Strip as human shields is manifested in the following ways, as was seen during the last round of escalation:

1) **Firing rockets** from densely populated areas and targeting population centers in Israel with the overt intention of harming Israeli civilians. Jabaliya, Beit Hanoun and other populated areas of the northern Gaza Strip are the preferred launching areas for attacking the western Negev towns and villages.

2) **Locating the terrorist operative infrastructure within the civilian population**: weapons (including rockets), bases, offices, headquarters, tunnels, lathes and weapons stores. During Operation Hot Winter IDF soldiers fought against Hamas operatives who established themselves inside civilian homes.

3) **Enlisting Palestinian civilians (including women and children)** through the use of terrorist-owned media and loudspeakers. That is done to call them to gather at the houses they expect the IDF to attack in order to serve as human shields.

3. The following are updated examples of the use of Palestinian civilians as human shields:

Firing Rockets at Israel from within Palestinian Population Centers

4. Hamas and the other Palestinian terrorist organizations turned populated areas in the Gaza Strip into launching centers from which to attack Israel. Prominent in the northern Gaza Strip were the Jabaliya refugee camp, Beit Lahia and Beit Hanoun, from within which rockets are systematically fired at Israel:



Rocket fire into Israeli territory from within a residential neighborhood of Beit Lahia (Photo courtesy of Israel's Channel 10 TV, February 27).



Rockets fired from a built-up area by the PRC's Zakariya Dughmush faction (the PRC's Muqawamah Website, February 23).



Hamas rocket fire from a populated area (Al-Aqsa TV, February 27).

[Click here for video](#)

Locating Hamas's Terrorist Operational Infrastructure within Populated Areas

5. During the last round of fighting the IDF hit Hamas lathes and weapons factories located in the heart of densely-populated residential neighborhoods. Placing a weapons factory within such neighborhoods endangers the local residents by exposing them to both the dangers of living near weapons and explosives and a possible attack by Israeli security forces.

6. The following are examples of weapons factories located within residential areas:



Lathe for manufacturing weapons, located in the Daraj neighborhood of Gaza City.



Weapons manufacturing factory located in the Shaboura neighborhood of Rafah.



Weapons manufacturing factory located in the Jabaliya refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip.

Mosque Used As a Terrorist Organization Base

7. In the last round of escalation IDF forces carried out an action in the Jabaliya refugee camp and the Sajaiya neighborhood on the outskirts of Gaza City. During their actions the soldiers met with resistance from terrorist operative squads located inside civilian dwellings. During the fighting two IDF soldiers were killed and seven wounded, one of them seriously.

8. **During operational activities an IDF force uncovered weapons in a mosque in the Jabaliya refugee camp.** They included a telephone-detonated charge, coils of wire for detonating charges, mortar shells, hand grenades and magazines for assault rifles. **At the mosque entrance there were coils of wire which would detonate charges from inside the mosque building and parts of magazines,** indicating that terrorist operatives used the mosque to shoot from.¹



Left: Weapons found in a mosque, among them mortar shells and hand grenades. Right: IDF forces on patrol in a mosque in the Jabaliya refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman, March 2)

¹ The terrorist organizations also exploited mosques during in Operation Autumn Clouds, November 6, 2006. Dozens of terrorists barricaded themselves in the Al-Nasr mosque in the village of Beit Hanoun in the northern Gaza Strip. The terrorists were rescued by a procession of 200 women who exploited the fact that the IDF would not open fire on them. For further information see our November 26, 2006 Bulletin entitled "The Palestinian terrorist organizations, have recently made more frequent use of civilians as human shields to protect their bases and operatives" at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/html/human_shield_e.htm.



Left: Coils of wire used to detonate charges. Right: Magazine for assault rifle and charges found in the mosque (IDF Spokesman, March 2).

Hamas Used Women and Children to Patrol and Gather Weapons during Operation Hot Winter (February 27 – Night of March 2, 2008)

9. Givati Brigade commanders who took part in Operation Hot Winter told interviewers that the fighting with Hamas operatives was waged inside buildings where civilian families lived. The Givati soldiers came upon Hamas squads waiting in ambush **in houses** and alleys. The commanding officers noted that in certain instances Hamas operatives deliberately sent **women and children** to carry out missions for them, including patrols and collecting the weapons of Hamas operatives who had been killed (Ron Ben-Yishai for Ynet, March 4).

10. In one instance the soldiers saw a child pick up the weapon of a dead Hamas operative and bring it to his comrades who were waiting around a corner. The Givati commanders stated that they had not shot at him, assuming he had been forced to retrieve the weapon by terrorist operatives. They also stated that IDF forces did their best not to harm non-combatant civilians and that instructions to that effect had been given before the operation (*Ibid*).



Left: IDF soldiers searching the Jabaliya refugee camp (northern Gaza Strip) (IDF Spokesman, March 2). Right: Palestinian terrorist operative with his weapons sitting in the doorway of a residential dwelling (Muhammad Salem for Reuters, March 1).

Enlisting Civilians as Human Shields

11. During Operation Hot Winter Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad called upon Palestinian civilians to go to buildings they expected the IDF to attack. They were to gather at the building and serve as human shields on the assumption that the IDF would not deliberately attack terrorist targets if many civilians were in the area. The same tactic was **used in the past** by terrorist organizations during IDF activities in the Gaza Strip during the second half of 2006² and again during the latest round of escalation.

12. **Hamas prime minister Ismail Haniya** encouraged the use of the tactic and even boasted of it. He told Al-Jazeera TV that he praised the Palestinians' "firm stand." As an example he said that the "occupation" threatened to blow up buildings but nevertheless, **hundreds and thousands of Palestinians had left their homes "in the middle of the night" and gone up on the roofs of the designated buildings** (Al-Jazeera TV, February 29).

13. On March 1 Hamas's Al-Aqsa TV interviewed a Palestinian named Abu Bilal al-Ja'abir, who lives in the northern Gaza Strip. He said that on March 1 the "occupation forces" telephoned him and threatened to blow up his house. He said that he "hung up immediately and called some friends who used loudspeakers to call out a crowd of people and they filled the roof of my house and stayed there until now to protect the house..." According to the interview,

² For further information see pages 29-34 our March 11, 2007 Bulletin entitled "Anti-Israeli Terrorism, 2006: Data, Analysis and Trends" at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/terrorism_2006e.pdf.

when other civilians heard about the treat they “left their homes and went to Bilal Ja’abir’s house **to form a human shield** in an attempt to prevent his house from being attacked...”



Civilians on the roof of the house of Abul Bilal Ja’abir serve as a human shield. The subtitle reads: “The occupation threatens to attack a house...and civilians go up against them [the Israelis]” (Al-Aqsa TV, March 1).

[Click here for video](#)

14. The following are examples of Hamas and PIJ media appeals to Palestinian civilians to rush to locations about to be attacked to serve as human shields:

1) Hamas’s Al-Aqsa TV and PalMedia Website appeals to civilians to form a human shield at the house of Abu al-Hatal in Al-Sha’f neighborhood because the IDF had threatened to blow it up (March 1).



The call for volunteers to form a human shield at Abu al-Hatal’s house (Al-Aqsa TV, March 1).

2) Hamas’s Al-Aqsa TV called upon the Palestinians in the northern Gaza Strip to go to the house of *shaheed* Othman al-Ruziana to protect it because the IDF was threatening to attack it (February 29).

3) Hamas’s Al-Aqsa TV called upon the residents of Khan Yunis to gather at the house of Ma’amoun Abu ‘Amer because the IDF was threatening to attack it (February

28). **An hour later dozens of Palestinians from Khan Yunis were reported to have gathered on the roof of Abu 'Amer's house to serve as human shields to prevent the house from being hit (Pal-today Website, February 28).**

4) Hamas's Al-Aqsa TV called upon Palestinians in the northern Gaza Strip to go to the house of *shaheed* Musab al-Ja'abir to protect it because Israel was threatening to attack it (February 29).

5) The PIJ's Radio Sawt al-Quds called upon civilian to gather around the house of Fawzi Abu al-Hamed in the Absan al-Kabira region to prevent it from being attacked by the IDF (March 1).