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09.07.22

Israel 10-month investigation raids homes of 60 arms dealers serving terrorist

09.07.22

Israel Police arrest dozens in major illegal arms bust

As part of 10-month covert investigation, dubbed Operation Gates of Heaven, undercover police informant purchased dozens of different firearms from illegal arms dealers in Israel, West Bank; hundreds of detectives, special forces raid homes of some 60 suspects Elisha Ben Kimon | Published: 09.07.22, 14:00

Israel Police arrested dozens of suspects Wednesday in an extensive crackdown on an illegal arms trafficking ring in Israel and the West Bank.

As part of the ten-month covert investigation, dubbed Operation Gates of Heaven, an undercover police informant purchased dozens of different firearms from illegal arms dealers who were known to the police.

The investigation shined a light on a branched weapon trafficking network featuring organized crime gangs from the Arab sector both in Israel and the West Bank. The police informant purchased M16 and AK47 rifles, Carl Gustaf submachine guns, and handguns, among other types of guns, as well as two kilograms of cocaine. The affair has revealed evidence and forensic materials that allegedly indicate trade and possession of weapons on a large scale that is also suspected to have served terrorist activity on top of organized crime.

After the investigation matured, hundreds of detectives — backed by Israel Police, Border Police and IDF special forces — raided the homes of 60 suspects across Israel and the West Bank.

Forces seized two handguns, as well as large amounts of ammunition and cocaine, and confiscated around NIS two million in cash money (\$580,000). Also on Wednesday, Israeli security forces arrested 25 Palestinian suspects and seized firearms in an extensive overnight crackdown on terrorist activity throughout the West Bank and the Jordan Valley.

Troops captured a pistol, three M16 rifle cartridges and as well as some NIS 6,000 (\$1750) in funds suspected to be earmarked for terrorist activity.

One member of a suspected arms trafficking ring was arrested in the al-Far'a refugee camp south of Tubas. A Palestinian who hurled explosives at Israeli forces was shot and later died, according to the Palestinians

No casualties were reported on the Israeli side.

09.06.22

Mossad chief heads to US meetings to dissuade Iran nuclear deal

09.06.22

Mossad chief heads to Washington for meetings over Iran nuclear deal

David Barnea is set to meet with intelligence and security officials in attempt to prevent impending agreement from being signed, or at the very least harden U.S. stance toward Iranians

Itamar Eichner | Published: 09.06.22, 14:01

Mossad Director David Barnea took off overnight Monday for the United States, where he will hold a series of meetings with senior intelligence officials in an effort to dissuade Washington from reviving the nuclear deal with Iran.

Barnea's trip is part of Israel's effort to sabotage agreement, or at the very least harden the U.S. stance toward Tehran during negotiations over the deal's terms. The intelligence chief is also expected to meet with officials from Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), White House, and National Security Council (NSC).

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Yair Lapid on Monday met with an American delegation from both political parties, led by senior senators Lindsey Graham and Bob Menendez. At the meeting held in Jerusalem, Lapid presented the Congress members and senators with the latest regional developments and stressed Israel's stance on the nuclear deal. "Israel acts, and will continue to act to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear state," Lapid said.

Opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu also met the members of the delegation and claimed Lapid attempted to torpedo Barnea's expected speech in front of the United States Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

The prime minister's office strongly denied this accusation and argued that the date for the speech has not even been set, and it is expected to be held in the coming weeks. United States Ambassador to Israel Tom Nides also appeared before the American delegation and made it clear that "the U.S. understands the aggression of Iran. We will never tie Israel's hands in the need to defend itself.

"President Joe Biden spoke with Lapid and repeated the message we stand by Israel to make sure Iran never obtains a nuclear weapon," Nides said. "It is also in our national and security interest as we repeated over and over again."

The ambassador added the U.S. would like a diplomatic solution to this matter, but only under conditions the president laid out before his European colleagues.

"There are many gaps that must be bridged before we actually agree to the deal. Joe Biden has shown he sticks to principles, and his principles are that he supports the State of Israel and its security," Nides added.

"We know the positions of many of the senior Israeli officials who oppose the signing of the agreement. Among the best things about the current government is that we are in contact with the Israelis every day on this issue, including with the head of Mossad, and he is welcome to come to the United States and meet with his colleagues. Barnea is doing a great job and we would love to have him anytime he wants."

09.05.22

Liz Truss new Britain prime minister to tackle cost of living utilities 80% jump

09.05.22

Liz Truss named as Britain's next prime minister

Conservative party candidate begins hand down from Boris Johnson, becoming the party's 4th PM since 2015; Truss to face major issues opposition blames on her predecessors

Reuters| Published: 09.05.22, 15:04

Liz Truss was named as Britain's next prime minister on Monday, winning a leadership race for the governing Conservative party at a time when the country faces a cost of living crisis, industrial unrest and a recession.

After weeks of an often bad-tempered and divisive leadership contest that saw the foreign minister face off against former finance minister Rishi Sunak, Truss came out on top in a vote of Conservative Party members.

The announcement triggers the start of a handover from Boris Johnson, who was forced to announce his resignation in July after months of scandal saw support for his administration drain away.

He will travel to Scotland to meet Queen Elizabeth on Tuesday to officially tender his resignation. Truss will follow him and be asked to form a government by the monarch.

Long the front-runner in the race to replace Johnson, Truss will become the Conservatives' fourth prime minister since a 2015 election. Over that period the country has been buffeted from crisis to crisis, and now faces what is forecast to be a long recession triggered by sky-rocketing inflation which hit 10.1% in July.

Foreign minister under Boris Johnson, Truss, 47, has promised to act quickly to tackle Britain's cost of living crisis, saying that within a week she will come up with a plan to tackle rising energy bills and securing future fuel supplies.

Truss has signaled during her leadership campaign she would challenge convention by scrapping tax increases and cutting other levies in a move some economists say would fuel inflation.

That, plus a pledge to review the remit of the Bank of England while protecting its independence, has prompted some investors to dump the pound and government bonds. Kwasi Kwarteng, widely tipped to be her finance minister, sought to calm markets on Monday, by saying in an article in the Financial Times newspaper that under Truss there would need to be "some fiscal loosening" but that her administration would act in "a fiscally responsible way".

Truss faces a long, costly and difficult to-do list, which opposition lawmakers say is the result of 12 years of poor Conservative government. Several have called for an early election - something Truss has said she will not allow.

Veteran Conservative lawmaker David Davis described the challenges she would take on as prime minister as "probably the second most difficult brief of post-war prime ministers" after Conservative Margaret Thatcher in 1979.

"I actually don't think any of the candidates, not one of them going through it, really knows quite how big this is going to be," he said, adding that costs could run into tens of billions of pounds.

Truss has said she will appoint a strong cabinet, dispensing with what one source close to her called a "presidential-style" of governing, and she will have to work hard to win over some lawmakers in her party who had backed Sunak in the race.

The Institute for Government think-tank said Truss would have a weaker starting point than any of her predecessors, because she was not the most popular choice among her party's lawmakers.

First, she will turn to the urgent issue of surging energy prices. Average annual household utility bills are set to jump by 80% in October to 3,549 pounds, before an expected rise to 6,000 pounds in 2023, decimating personal finances.

Britain has lagged other major European countries in its offer of support for consumer energy bills, which opposition lawmakers blame on a "zombie" government unable to act while the Conservatives ran their leadership contest.

In May, the government set out a 15 billion-pound support package to help households with energy bills as part of its 37 billion-pound cost-of-living support scheme.

Italy has budgeted over 52 billion euros (\$51.75 billion) so far this year to help its people. In France, increases in electricity bills are capped at 4% and Germany said on Sunday it would spend at least 65 billion euros shielding consumers and businesses from rising inflation. (\$1 = 1.0049 euros) (\$1 = 0.8715 pounds)

09.05.22

Israel advances plans for new Jewish East Jerusalem neighborhood

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Planned Givat HaShaked neighborhood is the newest addition to a cluster of Jewish projects on the southern edge of East Jerusalem labeled as 'settlements' by Palestinians and rights groups

Associated Press, Ynet| Published: 09.05.22, 21:19

Israeli authorities on Monday advanced a plan to build nearly 500 homes in a new Jewish neighborhood in Jerusalem that rights groups say will further sever it from the nearby Palestinian city of Bethlehem and the southern West Bank.

The planned Givat HaShaked neighborhood is part of a cluster of Jewish projects on the southern edge of East Jerusalem, many of which have already been built up into full-fledged residential neighborhoods. Critics say they further undermine any hopes for a two-state solution.

Ir Amim, an Israeli rights group that closely follows developments in Jerusalem, said the plan for the neighborhood was approved on Monday to be deposited for objections, a key step in a bureaucratic process that could continue for months or years before construction begins.

There was no immediate comment from the Jerusalem municipality. City officials, who consider the projects to be ordinary Jewish neighborhoods, have previously said they are committed to building in all areas of Jerusalem for the benefit of Jewish and Arab residents.

Israel captured the West Bank and East Jerusalem in the 1967 Six-Day War and has built settlements across both territories that are now home to some 700,000 Jewish settlers. The Palestinians want both territories to form part of their future state and view the settlements as the biggest obstacle to peace. Most countries consider the settlements to be illegal.

Israel annexed East Jerusalem in a move not recognized by the international community and considers the entire city its unified capital. Palestinian residents of the city claim to face systematic discrimination, especially when it comes to urban planning, making it extremely difficult for them to build new homes or expand existing ones.

The U.S. and other Western countries have pressed Israel to rein in settlements, with little success. Israel's outgoing government, which included dovish parties and even an Arab faction, approved the construction of thousands of settler homes despite U.S. objections.

The latest project will be built adjacent to the Palestinian neighborhood of Beit Safafa, which is already mostly encircled by settlements, further preventing its growth. "While there's constant investment, robust development for Israelis, there's a complete suppression of urban planning (for Palestinians), which ultimately serves as a mechanism of displacement for Palestinians because it pushes them out of the city," said Amy Cohen, the director of advocacy for Ir Amim. "They have no means to build or expand their neighborhoods."

09.05.22

Hackers leak information of 30,000 Israeli students and teachers

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Group claims in broken Hebrew it leaked data as revenge for government's mistreatment of teachers; cyber experts suspect these are pro-Iranian or pro-Palestinian hackers using social grievances to mask their identity

Yuval Mann | Published: 09.05.22, 20:56

Hackers leaked on Monday the private information of 30,000 Israeli teachers and students and are putting records of an additional three million up for sale.

The group, which goes by the moniker The Generous Thief, posted to its Telegram channel files containing first and last names, ID numbers, birth dates, home addresses, phone numbers, emails, and more.

The data was most likely stolen from the Center for Educational Technology (CET), a nonprofit dedicated to integrating pedagogical innovation and advanced technologies into the Israeli education system. Its online learning platform serves tens of thousands of Israeli students every year.

On Monday, CET said that it found "indications of a cyber incident" during its preparations for the opening of the school year and that it was working with the National Cyber Directorate to amend the situation.

CET noted, however, that its online learning systems were working as usual.

"We are investing the necessary resources and carrying out all the tests and actions in coordination with the relevant parties. The web is rich with disinformation and fake news," company officials said.

The students whose information has been compromised are no longer part of the education system as all of them were born in the 1990s or early 2000s, raising questions about how up-to-date the leaked data is.

Posting in broken Hebrew, the hacker group presented itself as a collective that wishes to exact vengeance on the government for what they deem its mistreatment of teachers.

"Okay enough! Finally in this period you truly harmed the teachers," the group wrote. "What do they think if now we bother them? To start taking our rights back we broke into the biggest educational technological center (CET) in Israel. And it continues."

The mistake-ridden tirade raised suspicion among cyber experts that the group behind "The Generous Thief" were actually pro-Iranian or pro-Palestinian hackers who are trying to use a recent dispute between the government and teachers' unions to mask their true identity.

Cybersecurity firm Check Point told Ynet that it has seen a clear rise recently in malicious attacks against Israeli targets by pro-Iranian or pro-Palestinian hackers using Telegram.

"The fact that these attacks are reported at a high pace, in close intervals to other security events, shows that the central purpose of the attackers is to create a resonance around these attacks," the company said.

"Although the information exists there, it does not necessarily match their claims, there is no doubt that there are things here that should not happen. From embarrassing

information to long records of names, birth dates, passwords, and phone numbers - these are tools that in the digital era are worth a lot to hackers."

09.04.22

Lebanon flotilla rallies at Israel oil and gas fields border ahead of Beirut mediation

09.04.22

Lebanon flotilla rallies at Israel sea border ahead of talks

Protesters carry Lebanese flags and banners, with slogans in Arabic, French, and Hebrew expressing what they say is Lebanon's right to its maritime oil and gas fields

Associated Press | Published: 09.04.22, 21:31

Lebanese protesters on Sunday sailed down the country's coast in dozens of fishing boats and yachts toward Israel, days before a U.S. envoy is expected in Beirut to continue mediating in a maritime border dispute between the two countries.

Lebanon and Israel, which have been officially at war since the latter's creation in 1948, both claim an area of some 860 square kilometers (330 square miles) of the Mediterranean Sea.

Lebanon hopes to exploit offshore gas reserves as it grapples with the worst economic crisis in its modern history. Lebanon and Israel kicked off maritime border talks almost two years ago.

Sunday's flotilla carried Lebanese flags and banners, with slogans in Arabic, French, and Hebrew expressing what they say is Lebanon's right to its maritime oil and gas fields.

"We are demanding our right to every inch of our waters," Aya Saleh, one of the protesters on a fishing boat, told The Associated Press. "And we are sending a message from the Lebanese people."

Lebanese and Israel navy vessels were present, though no tensions occurred.

Amos Hochstein, a senior adviser for energy security at the U.S. State Department, has shuttled between Beirut and Jerusalem to mediate the talks. He was last in Beirut in late July, when he informed Lebanese officials of Israel's response to a proposal Lebanon made in June, and signaled optimism after his trip.

According to Lebanese President Michel Aoun's office, Hochstein notified adviser and deputy parliament speaker, Elias Bou Saab, that he will visit Beirut later this coming week. Lebanese media have speculated that both countries could soon reach an agreement.

However, tensions between Lebanon's Iran-backed militant Shiite group Hezbollah and Israel have also simmered in recent months surrounding the border talks.

The Israeli military in early July shot down three Hezbollah unarmed drones flying over the disputed Karish gas field in the Mediterranean.

Lebanese caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati criticized Hezbollah, saying the move could pose risks to the country. Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah in an interview that month said the militant group can locate and strike Karish and any other Israeli gas field.

09.01.22

Syrian FM letter to UN cites Israel for closing Damascus & Aleppo airports

09.01.22

Syrian FM says Israel 'playing with fire' after overnight strikes

Faisal al-Meqdad says Israel putting the regional military and security situations at risk of explosion, In letter to the UN security council minister says Aleppo airport runway put out of commission and navigation equipment destroyed; says Damascus airport also suffers infrastructure damage in strike

Reuters, Ynet| Published: 09.01.22, 19:43

Syria's foreign minister Faisal al-Meqdad, said on Thursday that Israel was "playing with fire" following Israeli strikes near Damascus and on Aleppo's international airport the previous evening.

On Wednesday, A missile attacks attributed to Israel, damaged the Aleppo airport and soon after a second attack also attributed to the Israeli military, was reported in the Damascus area.

The strikes resulted in material damage only, according to state news agency SANA, which said Syria's air defenses shot down a number of Israeli missiles around the capital. In a letter to the UN security council, the minister confirmed that the airport runway was damaged and put out of commission and that navigation equipment was also destroyed.

In the letter, Syria said the Damascus airport was also hit causing damage to infrastructure there as well as the navigation systems.

The Syria civil Aviation Authority said earlier that the Aleppo airport is closed for maintenance work on its only runway but did not mention the strike.

There was no immediate comment from Israeli officials.

The UK based Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition group to the Damascus regime, said that three of the missiles hit the military airfield near the Aleppo airport, causing explosions in the Iranian warehouses there.

The Russian forces in Aleppo knew of the attack in advance, the rights group said adding that they had raised their level of alert in the airport 30 minutes before the strike occurred.

In comments reported by SANA on Thursday, Syria's top diplomat said Israel was threatening regional security.

"Israel is playing with fire and is putting the regional military and security situations at risk of an explosion," the agency reported him as saying.

"Syria will not remain silent regarding the repeated Israeli attacks and the Israelis will pay the price sooner or later."

Israel has staged numerous strikes in Syria in recent years, mainly targeting alleged weapons convoys or stores belonging to allied fighters from Iran.

In June, Syria blamed Israel for aerial attacks on its main international airport in Damascus that put the site out of commission for several weeks. Israeli defense officials say the civilian airport has been used regularly by Iran to transport weapons and militias.

09.01.22

Poland demands 1.3 trillion dollar war reparations from Germany

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Poland demands 1.3 trillion dollar war reparations from Germany

Following release of report detailing the cost of the war, Poland turns to Germany for 'open negotiations' about reparations amount; 6 million, among them 3 million Jews, killed in the war; Germany says compensation for the war was payed in full

Associated Press| Published: 09.01.22, 19:22

Poland's top politician said Thursday that the government will seek the equivalent of some \$1.3 trillion in reparations from Germany for the Nazis' World War II invasion and occupation of his country.

Jarosl w Kaczyński, leader of the Law and Justice party, announced the huge claim at the release of a long-awaited report on the cost to the country of years of Nazi German occupation as it marks 83 years since the start of World War II.

"We not only prepared the report but we have also taken the decision as to the further steps," Kaczyński said during the report's presentation.

"We will turn to Germany to open negotiations on the reparations," Kaczyński said, adding it will be a "long and not an easy path" but "one day will bring success."

He insisted the move would serve "true Polish-German reconciliation" that would be based on "truth."

He claimed the German economy is capable of paying the bill.

Germany argues compensation was paid to East Bloc nations in the years after the war while territories that Poland lost in the East as borders were redrawn were compensated with some of Germany's pre-war lands. Berlin calls the matter closed.

Poland's right-wing government argues that the country which was the war's first victim has not been fully compensated by neighboring Germany, which is now one of its major partners within the European Union.

"Germany has never really accounted for its crimes against Poland," Kaczyński said, claiming that many Germans who committed war crimes lived in impunity in Germany after the war.

Top leaders including Kaczynski, who is Poland's chief policy maker, and Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki attended the ceremonial release of the report at the Royal Castle in Warsaw, rebuilt from wartime ruins.

The release of the three-volume report was the focus of national observances of the anniversary of the war that began Sep. 1, 1939, with Nazi Germany's bombing and invasion of Poland that was followed by more than five years of brutal occupation. The head of the report team, lawmaker Arkadiusz Mularczyk, said it was impossible to place a financial value on the loss of some 5.2 million lives he blamed on the German occupation.

He listed losses to the infrastructure, industry, farming, culture, deportations to Germany for forced labor and efforts to turn Polish children into Germans.

A team of more than 30 economists, historians and other experts worked on the report since 2017. The issue has created bilateral tensions.

The war was "one of the most terrible tragedies in our history," President Andrzej Duda said during early morning observances at the Westerplatte peninsula near Gdansk, one of the first places to be attacked in the Nazi invasion.

"Not only because it took our freedom, not only because it took our state from us, but also because this war meant millions of victims among Poland's citizens and irreparable losses to our homeland and our nation," Duda said.

In Germany, the government's official for German-Polish cooperation, Dietmar Nietan, said in a statement that September 1 "remains a day of guilt and shame for Germany that reminds us time and again not to forget the crimes carried out by Germany" that are the "darkest chapter in our history" and still affect bilateral relations.

Reconciliation offered by people in Poland is "the basis on which we can look toward the future together in a united Europe," Nietan said.

Poland's government rejects a 1953 declaration by the country's then-communist leaders, under pressure from the Soviet Union, agreeing not to make any further claims on Germany.

An opposition lawmaker, Grzegorz Schetyna, says the report is just a "game in the internal politics" and insists Poland needs to build good relations with Berlin.

Some 6 million of Poland's citizens, including 3 million Jews, were killed in the war.

Some of them were victims of the Soviet Red Army that invaded from the east.

08.31.22

Israel strikes Aleppo & Damascus runways & weapons from Iran to Hezbollah

08.31.22

Syria says Israel strikes Aleppo and then Damascus

Syrian news agency says four Israeli missiles target runways and nearby warehouses, causing fire; second strike attributed to Israel comes less than one hour later, targeting the Damascus area

Daniel salami| Published: 08.31.22, 21:38

Syrian state news agency SANA reported on Wednesday that Israel fired missiles at the Aleppo airport, causing damage.

According to the report, four missiles hit the airport runways and nearby hangers, causing a fire. No injuries were reported.

Less than an hour later, Sana reported a second Israeli strike, this time on the Damascus area claiming Syrian air defenses were activated against "hostile targets."

Syria said earlier this year that Israel fired missiles from the Golan Heights, at targets south of Damascus, including the capital's airport.

Less than a day later, the Syrian ministry of transportation said that it had suspended all flights to and from the international airport.

The UK based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an group in opposition to the regime, reported that warehouses used by the Iran backed Hezbollah group and other Shi'ite militias, were targeted and that the control tower was also hit.

Ynet reported last May that Iran and Hezbollah had begun transporting weapons on civilian flights to Syria, including small components that can be easily hidden.

The use of civilian flights was meant to avoid detection by Israeli and western intelligence agencies, who were monitoring the transportation of weapons from Iran to Hezbollah.

08.31.22

Over 1,100 dead in Pakistan floods in worst monsoon by glacier melt since 2010

08.31.22

Over 1,100 dead in Pakistan floods in worst monsoon season in decades

Aid groups warn of more casualties to come as diseases spread and remote areas become inaccessible; monster monsoon puts a third of the country underwater, displacing tens of millions

The Media Line, Ynet| Published: 08.31.22, 14:08

Over 1,100 people have died and 33 million have fled their homes in what appears to be the worst monsoon season in decades, the Pakistani government said.

The United Nations on Tuesday appealed for \$160 million in humanitarian aid following mass flooding in several regions, including Punjab, Balochistan, Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Between one million and two million livestock animals have died, and millions of acres of agricultural land are under water.

The floods in Balochistan Province were caused by glacier melt, a local rescue team manager said.

The monsoons bring heavy rains that are vital for Pakistan's agriculture-heavy economy, but when they become too strong infrastructures collapse and floods occur. The Pakistani military along with national and international aid organizations is trying to reach flood-hit areas and rescue survivors.

"There's water everywhere. People climb trees trying to escape, animals drown. There are bodies floating in the water. It's very hard, and I wish I could express in English how difficult it is, but I simply don't have the words," Abrar Ul Haq, chairman of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society, said.

"I don't remember a catastrophe this big. We will need to invent a new word to describe it, because 'floods' just doesn't express it," he said.

Ul Haq said from Islamabad more about the details of the crisis hitting Pakistan.

"The situation is terrible, and the **monsoon only continues**. We try to help where we can, but our ability is tiny when you compare it to the scale of the catastrophe. We are present in 23 districts, while **over 100 districts are under water**. One-third of the country is flooded," he said.

The challenges in providing aid, he explains, are only growing.

"Thirty-three million people are displaced, and many are out of reach. Roads are under water, and only helicopters, which we don't have, can reach most places. There are small islands where people gather and wait, but there is no electricity and therefore no communication, so we can't even get their calls for help," Ul Haq said.

Ihtisham Khaliq, a manager at the Alkhidmat Foundation Pakistan, took part in rescue efforts over the past few days, and he too describes a humanitarian disaster.

"We had bad floods **in 2010 [when a total of 1,985 people died]**, but never something like this. Almost all of Pakistan is affected by this, but underdeveloped areas have it the worst," he said.

The Foundation "works on two levels. The first one is trying to rescue people from the water. We use boats, horses and, many times, the shoulders of our volunteers to grab people and transfer them to the safe side of the floods," said Khaliq.

Alkhidmat's Twitter account shows rescue videos, where people improvise flotation devices to escape the waters.

"The other level is trying to supply relief to people," continued Khaliq. "We try to provide flood-hit areas with kitchens and cooked food, as famine is one of the major risks. We also provide shelters – we built 2,000 tents all over the country for people who lost their homes."

As six million people are estimated to have lost their homes to the floods, providing shelter is one of the most pressing needs. A food crisis is also expected, as the floods destroyed huge areas of onion and tomato fields, destroying basic ingredients in the Pakistani kitchen.

Food prices in Pakistan rose by nearly 40% in the last two days, and the government is considering importing vegetables from arch-enemy India.

The floods are creating a health crisis as well. Many of the refugees are in densely populated areas with no surviving infrastructure, and are exposed to contaminated water. “One very big challenge we have is that many people lost access to potable water,” Ul Haq said. “What we need more than anything is disinfection kits for water. Norway helped us with kits that could help around 10,000 families.”

The Red Crescent Society head added a request for help: “We want to ask the Red Cross of America to help us. America has always been a friend of ours, and we need its help now.”

Khaliq also emphasized the developing danger.

“In areas where the water level has gone down, we try to provide medical care. Big masses of people near untreated water sources could very easily start to have infectious diseases, and we already see that starting to happen. The most common disease we see is diarrhea, and it’s already starting to spread,” he said.

The biggest challenge ahead of Pakistan, said Khaliq, will be to rehabilitate the millions who lost their homes. At least 1.5 million houses will have to be built, but that can only happen after the monsoons end and the weather stabilizes. That will take at least another month, he said.

“What worries me most are the shops and livestock gone with the water. People lost their entire livelihood, and that’s not something you can just buy back. They have nothing,” Ul Haq said.

“Suicides already started. We try to provide psychological support for people in trauma, and there are many: kids who watched their family members drown, and many others,” he added.

While the rescue forces race against time to save people, many are still out of reach, meaning the real number of victims is higher than the official estimate.

“The areas hardest hit are the remote ones. In many places the road is under water and there is no access to them. When people arrive to a city after they fled from the danger, we can try to help them, but so many are stuck in places we just can’t reach. We’re making efforts to arrive there as well, but it might take time,” Khaliq said.

Ul Haq and Khaliq agree that Pakistan is desperate for any aid it can get, but most of all it needs financial assistance.

“The **most important thing for Pakistan right now is financial aid.** We need international attention and aid because what’s happening here is really a catastrophe,” Khaliq said.

“I want to ask people to make any donation they can, for a year ahead. Even two or three dollars every month, for a year, would help us,” Ul Haq said.

The story is written by Adi Koplewitz and reprinted with permission from The Media Line.

08.30.22

IDF identifies Gaza civilians who facilitated Jihadi rocket fire into Israel

08.30.22

IDF identifies Gaza civilians who facilitated Jihadi rocket fire into Israel

According to military, at least two such rocket attacks launched from private properties of civilians who cooperated with Islamic Jihad fell short in Gaza, causing multiple civilian casualties

Elisha Ben Kimon | Published: 08.30.22, 23:40

The IDF published on Tuesday the names of Palestinian civilians who helped facilitate terrorist rocket attacks from the Gaza Strip into Israel during the latest round of violence in the Palestinian enclave earlier this month.

According to the IDF Spokesperson's Unit, at least two such rockets that were fired from private properties of civilians who cooperated with the Islamic Jihad terrorist group fell short within Gaza.

One of the Islamic Jihad misfires crashed in the city of Jabaliya at 9:03am on August 7, killing two civilians. The location from which the missile was fired is owned by the Gaza City municipality, headed by Dr. Yahya al-Sarraj.

"Sarraj chose to take care of the terrorist organization Islamic Jihad more than the residents of the city he heads, and abused public space which belongs to the residents of the city for terror. This is how he harmed his citizens directly," the IDF Spokesperson's Unit said.

Another rocket that fell within the Gaza Strip was fired from property belonging to Bakr Hamadan Imran Shamalh, whose brother is a trainer in Islamic Jihad's marine force. "He facilitated a failed rocket launch from his property, which hit a civilian building in Gaza City and was broadcast live on [Lebanese] Al Mayadeen channel at 3:13pm," the military said.

The Hamadan Imran Shamalh family took an active part in terrorist activity by allowing the firing of rockets from areas owned by them, causing harm to Gazan civilians. The terrorist groups in Gaza cynically abuse its civilians and fire rockets from urban areas, and this is another proof of that."

According to IDF data, over 200 of the 1,100 missiles fired by Islamic Jihad during the 55 hours of the conflict fell short within Gaza, nearly one of every five rockets.

Some rockets crashed within populated areas, killing at least 14 uninvolved civilians, among them children, and injuring more than 100, according to the IDF.

The IDF maintains that most Palestinian civilian casualties during Operation Breaking Dawn were the result of Gaza rockets. Military officials familiar with the details attribute this statistic to Islamic Jihad's inferior rocket manufacturing capabilities compared to Gaza rulers Hamas, who stayed out of this most recent campaign.

"A part of Islamic Jihad's rockets are simply road signs its operatives tore down, stuffed with improvised explosives and turned into makeshift rockets, often based off of video tutorials on YouTube," the officials said.

“Just as we’re improving from one round to the other, so does the enemy, and we can’t underestimate it, but in this case, the rockets are easy to make, without standards, that are often made in an amateurish and dangerous fashion.”

Footage from Gaza of launches that circulated recently, some taken by civilians, shows rockets deviating from their trajectory and crashing to the ground shortly after.

There are no air raid sirens in Gaza to warn civilians of incoming rockets.

Gaza terrorist factions, unlike the IDF, do not employ what Israel terms "roof knocking" — the practice of dropping non-explosive or low-yield devices on the roofs of targeted civilian homes as a prior warning of imminent bombing attacks to give the inhabitants time to flee.

Furthermore, most rockets are stored in and fired from the heart of densely populated areas which often harms nearby civilians.

08.30.22

Pro-PA UN rights chief leaves office Aug 31, replacement yet to be named

08.30.22

UN rights chief slams Israel over blocked staff visas

Michelle Bachelet, outgoing UN commissioner for human rights, says her office will continue to report on situation in Gaza and West Bank; 'What are they trying to hide?' she asks

AFP| Published: 08.30.22, 14:49

Outgoing UN rights chief Michelle Bachelet blasted Israel on Tuesday for failing to issue or renew visas for her staff to monitor the human rights situation in the Palestinian territories.

The United Nations high commissioner for human rights said it raised questions as to what Israel was "trying to hide" and vowed that her office would continue to report on the situation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

"In 2020, the 15 international staff of my office in Palestine -- which has been operating in the country for 26 years -- had no choice but to leave," Bachelet said in a statement. "Subsequent requests for visas and visa renewals have gone unanswered for two years. During this time, I have tried to find a solution to this situation, but Israel continues to refuse to engage."

She said that as a member state, Israel had to cooperate with the UN in good faith and allow its officials to carry out their duties.

"Israel's failure to process visa applications that are necessary for my staff's access is inconsistent with these standards," Bachelet said.

The former Chilean president -- who leaves office on Wednesday after four years as the UN rights chief -- said Israel's treatment of her staff was part of a "wider and worrying trend to block human rights access" to the Palestinian territories.

"This raises the question of what exactly the Israeli authorities are trying to hide," she said.

Her statement said that in 2021, Israeli forces killed 320 Palestinians -- "a 10-fold increase on the number killed in 2020" -- and injured 17,042 people, six times the 2020 figure.

The UN recorded the highest number of incidents of settler violence since recording began in 2017, and arrests of Palestinians doubled last year.

"So far in 2022, Israeli forces have killed at least 111 more Palestinians," said the statement.

Despite the visa situation for international staff, Bachelet's office said it was still monitoring compliance with human rights obligations and providing technical assistance. "We publicly report on violations by Israel, but also on violations by the State of Palestine, by Hamas in Gaza and Palestinian armed groups," said Bachelet.

"We will continue to deliver on our mandate. And we will continue to demand access to the occupied Palestinian territory for our staff, in line with Israel's obligations as a UN member state."

Bachelet's successor has yet to be appointed by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres.

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Ynet-News, August 28, 2022 – Sunday

08.28.22

Israel hit Syria arms depot of missiles; explosions lasted five hours after the strike

08.24.22 – We- - - News – Wednesday

US responds to EU to revive Iran pact rather than a legally binding treaty

08.23.22 – Tu- - - News Placed in August 23 spot – Wednesday

Turkey warmly welcomes Abbas & defends its vision of a two-state solution

08.23.22 – Tu- - - News Placed in August 23 spot – Tuesday

Bennett makes last-minute plea for Biden to not sign Iran deal; Gantz heads to US

08.23.22 – Tu- - - News – Tuesday

Iran dropped some key demands for nuclear deal; with US negotiator Ned Price

08.22.22 – Mo- - - News Placed in August 21 spot – Sunday

German leader approval drops for tolerating comments by Abbas

08.22.22 – Mo- - - News – Monday

Israel warns Hezbollah attack on gas field may mean war; at negotiations in June