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IDF killed Jihad commander Tuesday & 250+ revenge rockets fired at Gaza to Ashdod
(changed to 450 rockets by Thursday afternoon)

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11.11.19 –Mo - - News Placed in Nov 11 spot – Monday
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11.10.19 –Su - - News Placed in Nov 10 spot – Sunday
Defense minister Bennett confirmed Sunday joining Parties New Right & Likud

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Iran says IAEA finding uranium traces is a trap set up by Zionist Regime

11.14.19
IDF killed Jihad commander Tuesday & 250+ revenge rockets fired at Gaza to Ashdod

Rocket barrages hit central, southern Israel amid ceasefire efforts

Strikes directed at Rehovot, Yavne and other cities come shortly after attacks on southern cities, Gaza border communities and as IDF confirms fresh wave of attacks on Islamic Jihad in Gaza; terror group sets out truce demands for Israel

Amir Alon, Matan Zuri and Yoav Zitun|Last update: 11.14.19 , 00:05

Heavy rocket barrage were fired at cities in central Israel late Wednesday even as the IDF said it was striking targets in Gaza. Meanwhile, the UN and Egypt continued efforts to reach a ceasefire agreement and Islamic Jihad laid out its terms for such a truce.

Sirens were heard in Rehovot, Gedera and Yavne as well as in Ashdod further south shortly after 11pm. The Magen David Adom emergency service said it had so far not received any reports of injuries in the wake of the attacks.

"At this time, the IDF is renewing its attacks on Islamic Jihad targets in the Gaza Strip," the military said at around the same time.

The wave of rockets came soon after barrages were fired at Ashkelon and Ashdod and Gaza border communities.

The Magen David Adom reported that no one was hurt as a result of the rockets. Police forces were called to a scene in Ashdod, where rocket shrapnel hit very close to a residential building. Iron Dome intercepted at least five rockets.

The current round of violence began early Tuesday, with a predawn Israeli strike in Gaza that killed Islamic Jihad commander Baha Abu al-Ata. The organization vowed revenge and while Hamas expressed its solidarity, by Wednesday night it had yet to engage in the fighting.

The rocket attacks on Israel followed soon after Abu al-Ata's killing, and on Tuesday the south and large parts of the center of the country came close to a standstill as schools were closed and all non-essential workers were told to stay home or near a bomb shelter.

Rockets were intercepted by Iron Dome as far north as Tel Aviv, with attacks also targeting nearby cities of Holon and Rishon Lezion. The army said Tuesday that the missile defense system had had a 90% success rate.

The rocket fire continued Wednesday morning after an overnight lull.

On Wednesday evening, an elderly woman was moderately hurt in a rocket strike on an assisted living facility in Ashkelon.

The woman was taken to Barzilai Hospital in the city, where she was treated for injuries caused by flying glass, said Magen David Adom medic Dvir Baribo.

"When we arrived at the scene, we found a woman in her 70s who was fully conscious. There were many shards of shattered glass around," said Baribo.

"She suffered minor injuries to the face and limbs. We gave her primary medical treatment which included bandaging and stopping the bleeding and we evacuated her in moderate and stable condition to Barzilai Hospital."

Police sealed the area and staff from the Social Welfare and Social Services Departments were on the scene providing assistance.

The military said Wednesday that more than 250 rockets had been fired at Israeli population centers since the violence began Tuesday morning.

The rocket fire brought life in much of Israel to a standstill again Wednesday, as schools remained closed in communities near the Gaza border and restrictions on the size of public gatherings continued as the rockets rained down.

But talk of ceasefire continued Wednesday night as Islamic Jihad leader Ziyad al-Nakhalah outlined his organization's terms for a cease fire with Israel.

"We set clear conditions for Israel," he told Lebanon's pro-Hezbollah Al Mayadeen channel.

"An end to targeted killings in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, an end to attacks on civilians during the March of Return protests (Friday demonstrations along the Gaza border fence that often turn violent) and a commitment to abide by (existing) agreements pertaining to Gaza."

If Israel meets these terms, Nakhalah said, "a cease fire could take effect within days or even hours."

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told a special cabinet meeting earlier Wednesday that Israel has no interest in sparking a wider confrontation but warned Islamic Jihad that Israel would keep pounding its members until the rockets stop.

"They know we will continue to strike them without mercy," Netanyahu said. "They have one choice: either stop these attacks or absorb more and more blows."

No Israeli deaths have been caused by the rockets attacks, mostly thanks to the Iron Dome missile defense system, which Israel says has intercepted some 90% of the projectiles. A few homes suffered direct strikes, though, and there was a near miss on a major highway, where a rocket crashed down just after a vehicle had passed.

Seeking to keep the outburst under control, the Israeli military has restricted its operations to Islamic Jihad, and nearly all the Gaza casualties so far have been members of the militant group.

Gaza's Hamas rulers have yet to enter the fray -- a possible sign the current round of violence could be brief. Although larger and more powerful than Islamic Jihad, Hamas is also more pragmatic.

With Gaza's economy in tatters, it appears to have little desire for more fighting with Israel.

11.13.19

PM spars with Knesset Arabs on terrorist surgical strike method studied by other forces

PM spars with Arab MKs in Knesset session on Gaza

Row between Netanyahu and Joint List lawmakers came after announcement of three civilian casualties - including a child - in IDF airstrike in Strip

Ynet |Published: 11.13.19, 17:25

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu lashed out at the Joint List MKs during an announcement he gave the Knesset on Wednesday morning regarding the latest round of escalations in the Gaza Strip and the rocket attacks on Israel, following the killing of an Islamic Jihad military commander.

In his address, Netanyahu emphasized the government's attempt to not involve civilians in the fighting, and said that he had previously and currently declined to approve similar targeted killings by the IDF for fear of collateral and civilian damage.

He then went on to accuse the Arab MKs of encouraging terrorism with the aim of hurting civilians.

The MKs responded loudly and angrily, accusing him of lying and agitating against them. During the commotion, Joint List faction leader MK Ahmad Tibi was escorted out of the plenary under the order of Knesset Speaker Yuli Edelstein (Likud).

"If we are attacking prematurely and without warning, that is a war crime," Netanyahu said with sarcasm. "The real war crime is what these terrorists are doing in Gaza – their first goal is hurting civilians and using them as human shields. You are sanctifying their war crimes," Netanyahu told the Arab MKs.

"Yesterday I've heard of a protest supporting (Gaza), where a female MK asked for us to be branded as war criminals, this is unacceptable," added Netanyahu.

The prime minister said that the IDF is doing what no other army in the world is or has tried - surgically operating in an unprecedented way to maximize strikes on terrorists and minimize civilian casualties.

"The IDF's actions two days ago (the assassination of Baha Abu al-Ata) will be the subject of studies in the future, and is already being studied by other militaries around the world in an effort to achieve similar results," added Netanyahu.

The prime minister also claimed that during the 2014 war in Gaza, the Joint List's Ra'am-Ta'al faction requested that the attorney general begin investigating alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity perpetrated by him, then-IDF Chief of Staff Benny Gantz and then-Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon (Gantz and Ya'alon now head the Blue and White party).

"Unfortunately, this kind of behavior is repeated again and again by various elements," Netanyahu said. "In my opinion, this serves as a dual threat – to the soldiers and commanders of the IDF, who make unprecedented efforts to not hurt civilians, and by threatening the basic human principles that we must all unite and let the fight against terrorism continue."

Joint List MK Ofer Cassif walked out of the plenum in protest, saying later that: "Netanyahu is not sufficed with starving, killing and destruction in Gaza. Today he rubbed salt into the wound and lied and agitated in order to justify himself. The man who is sending an army to bomb a blockaded city, saying that we sympathize with terrorists? We exited (the plenum) because it was pointless to stay; even Netanyahu doesn't believe what he says anymore," said Cassif.

The shouting match between Netanyahu and the Arab MKs came following a report of three civilian deaths in Gaza in an IDF airstrike against a terrorist rocket squad in eastern Gaza. All three were from the same family and one of the fatalities was a child.

As of now, it seems the family were not involved with the rocket squad and their deaths could lead to further pressure on Hamas to join Islamic jihad in attacking Israel.

11.13.19

Israel operates on education or elimination to stop Jihad terror attacks

IDF: Islamic Jihad is regrouping after severe blows

The military warns terror group using rocket fire in tactical manner, firing rockets sparingly in order to extend its capabilities, says longer-range missiles expected to be used as well; spokesperson says Israel chose 'elimination' over 'education' for Abu al-Ata Liad Osmo and Elior Levy|Published: 11.13.19, 11:34

The Islamic Jihad terror organization in Gaza is regrouping, having fired more than 250 rockets at Israeli population centers as of Wednesday morning, an IDF spokesman said.

The military spokesperson said the group was reorganizing its forces after it sustained severe hits from the IDF, and was expected to fire more rockets.

The Iron Dome missile defense system has been deployed with an emphasis on the center of Israel, in expectation that Islamic Jihad would use some of its longer-range missiles to target Tel Aviv and other major cities. So far, the system has had a 90% success rate, the army said late Tuesday.

"Islamic Jihad has resumed its rocket fire. The organization is being measured in its use of rockets, launching one every seven minutes or so in the hope of prolonging its capability to attack Israel," the spokesman said.

"Islamic Jihad was shaken Tuesday after we targeted the commanders in charge of their rocket launching operations, but we expect them to regroup and attack further on Wednesday," he said.

According to the military spokesman, Hamas has so far stayed out of the conflict and the fatalities in Gaza are believed to be Islamic Jihad activists and not Hamas operatives.

But, he added, "it is a very delicate situation and we are continuing to prepare for escalation although we hope none will come."

Israeli reserve troops have not been called up so far.

The spokesman also gave more details about the targeted killing of Islamic Jihad commander Baha Abu al-Ata early Tuesday morning, which prompted the massive rocket barrage on Israeli communities.

"Israel has operated on two tracks in an effort to force Islamic Jihad to stop their terror attacks against us," he said. "One was education, but we ultimately chose the other - which was elimination."

The spokesman again made clear that Israel was not targeting Hamas in its strikes on the Gaza Strip.

11.12.19

Hamas rules out truce of united Jihad factions responding to martyr assassination

IDF: More than 190 rockets fired from Gaza; Hamas warns it has 'many options'

Israeli army bolsters Gaza border presence, says Iron Dome has intercepted dozens of rockets; Islamic Jihad rules out truce mediation 'while martyrs' blood is not yet dry' after Israel kills group's commander in predawn airstrike

Ynet | Last update: 11.12.19 , 19:40

The IDF said Tuesday evening that 190 rockets had been fired from Gaza since the morning hours, after the targeted killing of Islamic Jihad commander Baha Abu al-Atta in a predawn airstrike in Gaza City.

The Iron Dome missile defense system intercepted dozens of rockets, the army said, with a success rate of around 90%. More than half of the rockets landed in open areas, according to the IDF.

The killing sparked a massive barrage of rocket fire on Israeli towns and cities in the south and as far as Tel Aviv in the center of the country.

The IDF was bolstering its forces in the Gaza Division on Tuesday evening, deploying tank convoys and armored vehicles to the border as rocket fire continued.

Hamas warned Israel on Tuesday evening against escalating its strikes on Gaza .

"Israel is the one who has committed a crime and the world sees it," Hamas said.

"If the cycle of aggression is expanded, the resistance will have many options."

The IDF also said Tuesday evening that its aircraft had attacked two terrorist operatives of Islamic Jihad in the northern Gaza Strip as they were preparing to launch rockets.

A volley of rockets was then fired at the Sderot area, with Iron Dome intercepting at least one rocket.

Education Ministry director Shmuel Abuav told Ynet that as things stand, there will be no studies in educational institutions from Tel Aviv southwards on Wednesday, but a final decision will be made after a situation assessment and depending on developments in the coming hours.

The IDF said Tuesday afternoon it had launched multiple strikes on Islamic Jihad targets in the Gaza Strip after failing to calm the situation.

The IDF said its tanks had fired on three Islamic Jihad military positions in the Gaza Strip.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met Tuesday afternoon for a security briefing with Blue and White leader Benny Gantz, who headed the military during the 2014 war in Gaza.

Netanyahu met earlier with the security cabinet, IDF Chief of Staff Aviv Kochavi and Shin Bet Director Nadav Argaman.

At least 160 rockets were launched at southern and central Israel from Gaza after the strike that killed Abu al-Atta. The Iron Dome missile defense system intercepted at least 60 rockets, but a handful scored direct hits on houses, businesses and even a central highway.

Israel shuttered all educational institutions in the center and the south of the country and told people who were not in essential professions to remain home or near a bomb shelter.

In Netivot, a home suffered a direct injury; no injuries were reported. Earlier in the day, a house on Sderot also sustained a direct strike, but no injuries were reported there either.

Despite Israeli declarations that "quiet will be met with quiet," Islamic Jihad on Tuesday dismissed the possibility of immediate cease fire negotiations.

"It is too early to talk about mediation or communication,' the group said. "The martyrs' blood is not yet dry. The factions will not allow Netanyahu to use this crime for Israeli political purposes."

Islamic Jihad's leader in Gaza Khaled al-Batsh said: "The campaign against Israel is ongoing. We will not allow it to change the rules of our military conflict. We have no choice but confrontation and nothing will prevent us from responding to this assassination."

Hamas added: "The resistance has begun to respond and is united. The factions are meeting in the Gaza Strip.

11.10.19

Defense minister Bennett confirmed Sunday joining Parties New Right & Likud

Bennett confirmed as defense minister; Galant: Does not serve security of state
Move by Netanyahu sees New Right unite with Likud faction until end of current Knesset;
Likud minister and former top IDF officer is sole dissenting voice; Blue and White calls decision 'cynical' bid by prime minister to thwart New Right supporting Gantz
Ynet |Published: 11.10.19 , 14:18

New Right leader Naftali Bennett was confirmed Sunday as the new defense minister, taking the portfolio from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and cementing his party's union with the Likud.

The sole dissenting voice in the current government came from Likud minister Yoav Galant, a former senior officer in the IDF, who said that the move would not increase Israel's security situation.

"Israel is in a complex and sensitive period of security," Galant said before Bennett was confirmed. "This appointment does not serve the security of the state and therefore I will vote against it."

Announcing the appointment Friday, Likud said that the offer was made during a meeting between Netanyahu and Bennett at the Prime Minister's Office.

The two also agreed that Likud and New Right would immediately form a joint faction in the Knesset and commit to acting in lock-step until the end of the current parliament.

Bennett, who previously served as Netanyahu's education minister and Diaspora affairs minister, also reportedly agreed that if a solution to the current political deadlock is found and a new government established, he would be replaced as minister.

Bennett's partner in the leadership of the New Right, former justice minister Ayelet Shaked, did not receive a ministerial position as part of the agreement.

Blue and White officials also strongly criticized the decision to appoint Bennett, labeling it "inappropriate" and a "cynical appointment" to prevent New Right from joining a government led by Benny Gantz.

"As usual with Netanyahu the cynical appointment of Bennett was done out of narrow political and personal interests," the party said.

Bennett on Sunday vowed to work for the security of the state.

"Out of a deep sense of responsibility for the security of the State of Israel, I responded Friday to Prime Minister Netanyahu's request to serve as defense minister," Bennett said in a statement released after his confirmation Sunday.

"I have full confidence in the defense establishment, IDF fighters and commanders led by Chief of Staff Maj. Gen. Aviv Kochavi," he said.

"I have fought for Israel's security my entire life, in all my positions - in Sayeret Matkal, the Maglan Unit, the Security Cabinet and every public office," said Bennett.

11.10.19

Iran says IAEA finding uranium traces is a trap set up by Zionist Regime

Iran says reports of IAEA finding uranium at unnamed site is Israeli plot

Iranian Foreign Ministry calls reports of traces of uranium being found at a location Netanyahu once called Iran's 'secret atomic warehouse,' a 'trap' set up by 'the Zionist regime'

Reuters | Published: 11.10.19 , 12:06

Iran's Foreign Ministry on Sunday rejected as an Israeli "trap" reports that the International Atomic Energy Agency, the U.N.'s nuclear watchdog, found traces of uranium at an Iranian site that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called a "secret atomic warehouse".

Two months after it was first reported that samples taken at the site had shown traces of uranium, the IAEA on Wednesday told member states at a closed-door briefing that it had

found uranium traces at a site in Iran it did not name, but diplomats at the meeting said it was clearly the same place.

"The Zionist regime and Israel are attempting to re-open ... this file," Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said in remarks carried on state television.

"We have announced that this is a trap," Mousavi said.

"Hopefully the IAEA will maintain its vigilance."

The IAEA confirmed to member states that the traces from samples taken in February were of uranium that was processed but not enriched, and that the explanations provided by Iran so far did not hold water, diplomats said.

In 2018, Netanyahu, who vehemently opposed Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, called on the IAEA to visit the site immediately, saying it had housed 15 kg (33 lb) of unspecified radioactive material that had since been removed.

11.11.19

UN proposes plan to end Iraq economy driven protests with government reshuffle

UN mission proposes plan to end Iraq turmoil

World body lays out series of short- and longer-term measures to deal with crisis, including electoral reform and series of anti-corruption measures, after at least 319 protesters killed by security forces since unrest began last month

Associated Press | Published: 11.11.19, 10:44

The United Nations' mission for Iraq on Sunday proposed a roadmap out of the country's social upheaval, while Amnesty International said Iraq's crackdown on anti-government protests has descended into a "bloodbath."

At least 319 protesters have been killed by security forces since the economically driven protests and unrest began last month, according to the latest figures from the Iraqi Human Rights Commission released Sunday.

Iraqi security forces put up concrete barriers in central Baghdad to hamper and block the movement of protesters. The measures come after security forces last Monday violently cleared demonstrators from three flashpoint bridges in central Baghdad. By the end of the day, six anti-government protesters were killed more than 100 wounded.

The widening security crackdown reflects government intransigence and narrowing options for protesters who have been on the streets of

Baghdad and the mainly Shiite south's cities for weeks. Authorities shut down internet access and blocked social media sites several times amid the demonstrations.

The leaderless protests are targeting Iraq's entire political class and calling for the overhaul of the sectarian system established after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion. Security forces have used live ammunition, rubber bullets and tear gas to quell the protests.

On Sunday, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq urged the country's politicians to chart a way forward and proposed a roadmap, saying time is of essence.

In a statement it laid out a series of short and long-term measures to deal with the crisis, including electoral reform and a series of anti-corruption measures. As immediate measures, it called for the release of all peaceful demonstrators detained since Oct. 1, initiating a full investigation of cases of abduction and prosecuting and punishing those responsible for the excessive use of force.

Amnesty International said Iraqi authorities should immediately rein in security forces.

"The government of Iraq has a duty to protect its people's right to life, as well as to gather and express their views. This bloodbath must stop now, and those responsible for it must be brought to justice," said Heba Morayef, Amnesty International's Middle East and North Africa Director.

"All government promises of reforms or investigations ring hollow while security forces continue to shoot and kill protesters," she said.

The White House issued a statement Sunday night calling for a halt to the violence against the protesters.

"The United States is seriously concerned by continued attacks against protesters, civic activists, and the media, as well as restrictions on Internet access, in Iraq," said the statement from the press secretary. "Iraqis won't stand by as the Iranian regime drains their resources and uses armed groups and political allies to stop them from peacefully expressing their views. Despite being targeted with lethal violence and denied access to the Internet, the Iraqi people have made their voices heard, calling for elections and election reforms."

The U.S. called for "the Iraqi government to halt the violence against protesters and fulfill President (Barham) Salih's promise to pass electoral reform and hold early elections."

The protesters' most immediate demand is for the resignation of Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi's government. He's held the post for just over a year and is refusing to step down.

On Sunday, security forces closed roads near the Khilani Square with one-meter high concrete barriers, trying to block protesters from reaching Baghdad's landmark Tahrir Square, the epicenter of the protests, and the Sanak bridge.

At least 19 protesters were wounded when security forces used tear gas to repel them, according to police and hospital sources.

In the southern city of Nasiriyah, security and medical officials said 31 people were injured in confrontations outside the education directorate as security forces tear-gassed protesters trying to block employees from reaching the building in the city center. Among those wounded were two school students, the officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity in line with regulations.

On Saturday, five protesters were shot dead by live ammunition, while the sixth was killed by a direct hit to the head from a tear gas cannister, medical and security forces said.

The protesters were pushed back from the three bridges spanning the Tigris River toward the heavily fortified Green Zone, the seat of government. Protesters have tried to force their way across on an almost daily basis.

The deaths occurred as the protests intensified in the afternoon when demonstrators tried to get back to the bridges. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations.

The demonstrators complain of widespread corruption, lack of job opportunities and poor basic services, including regular power cuts, despite Iraq's vast oil reserves. They have rejected government proposals for limited economic reforms, and instead called on the country's political leadership to resign, including Adel Abdul-Mahdi.

"We consider the peaceful protests of our people as among the most important events since 2003," Abdul-Mahdi said in a statement Saturday that vowed to meet the protesters' demands for wide-ranging reforms.

He added that electoral reforms would be put forward soon along with "an important government reshuffle" in response to the protests the sectarian system imposed in 2003, though the statement didn't provide further details.