

Ynet-News-Nov-14-Thursday

11.14.19 - - News Placed in Nov 17 spot – Sunday

IDF coordinated with Shin Bet security service in Tuesday precision target of Jihad

11.14.19 - - News Placed in Nov 15 spot – Friday

Thursday afternoon

IDF restored Gaza border crossings, public gatherings & 15 mile fishing zone

11.14.19 - - News Placed in Nov 16 spot – Saturday

Russian police set permanent helicopter base in north-east Syria border with Turkey

11.14.19

IDF coordinated with Shin Bet security service in Tuesday precision target of Jihad

IDF hails Gaza operation of 'initiative, subterfuge and surgical precision'

Brig. Gen. Zilberman tells Ynet that Islamic Jihad commander killed after he could not be 'swayed from path of terrorism'; care taken to avoid dragging Hamas into conflict; 450 rockets fired at Israel in two days, with Iron Dome felling 90% that targeted population centers

Yoav Zitun |Published: 11.14.19 , 13:31

The IDF on Wednesday praised its soldiers for what it said was a successful mission in Gaza over the past few days, involving personnel from across the branches of the military working together with "initiative, subterfuge and surgical precision."

The army confirmed a ceasefire had been reached with Islamic Jihad in Gaza after two days of violence sparked by the killing of the group's military commander, although some rocket fire from Gaza continued to target southern Israel on Thursday morning.

"The targeted killing on Tuesday of Islamic Jihad commander Baha Abu al-Ata was a unexpected attack by Israeli forces carried out in coordination with the Shin Bet security service," Brig. Gen. Hidai Zilberman said.

He said that Israel had long been trying to stabilize the security situation on the Gaza border to provide calm for the residents of the southern communities.

"Unfortunately, we were unable to sway the Islamic Jihad commander from his path of terrorism," Zilberman said.

He branded Abu al-Ata an enemy not only of Israel but also of the residents of Gaza as he had sought to disturb efforts to reach an understanding between Israel and the Gaza factions.

The IDF believes Abu al-Ata was receiving directions from the organization's leadership in Syria, which was behind most attacks against Israel from Gaza in past years.

Preparations to target the Islamic Jihad commander were months in the making and the IDF conducted war games to test possible scenarios.

"Our plan was to hit only Islamic Jihad and separate Hamas from the hostilities," Zilberman said of the IDF's actions during the 48 hours of fighting. He said the terror group suffered a severe blow to its military capabilities during what the IDF has dubbed "Operation Black Belt."

Since Tuesday, at least 25 militants were killed by the IDF as they tried to launch missiles and anti-tank rockets towards Israeli population centers.

"We had intelligence officials from various disciplines working alongside commanders to direct the strikes," Zilberman said.

In total, 450 projectiles were launched towards Israel between Tuesday morning and the early hours of Thursday when the truce ostensibly took hold. Ninety percent of the rockets that were directed towards population centers were intercepted by the Iron Dome missile defense system. Sixty percent of the projectiles landed in unpopulated areas.

IDF aircraft carried out dozens of strikes on Islamic Jihad targets, hitting military compounds, weapons depots, training facilities, command centers, rocket launcher, naval vessels, tunnels and observation posts.

"We conducted the battle using initiative, subterfuge and surgical precision," the military spokesman said, saying the decision was made to take quality over quantity, which also ensured Hamas would not be hit.

"We've learned from past experience and improved our missile defense capabilities," he said, but conceded that there is always room for improvement.

"Islamic Jihad is not Iran or even Hamas so the IDF used a small part of its capabilities in this round of fighting," the IDF spokesperson said, adding the military is prepared for any number of events on Israel's various fronts.

"We are challenged by Iran, not only in Syria," he said. "This operation in Gaza was a window of opportunity and the IDF must now concentrate on the northern border."

Zilberman warned Israel would respond forcefully to any attack and continues to be vigilant and prepared for the resumption of fire from Gaza.

Defense Minister Naftali Bennett said Thursday that the new rules of the game are clear.

"The IDF will operate with full impunity and without restrictions against anyone attempting to cause harm to the population of Israel," he said.

"There will be nowhere to hide."

11.14.19

Thursday afternoon

IDF restored Gaza border crossings, public gatherings & 15 mile fishing zone

Iron Dome intercepts rockets over Sderot in fresh violation of ceasefire

Fearing such breaches, schools to stay closed in Ashkelon, Sderot and Gaza border areas Friday; Gazans call for fresh rocket fire as Islamic Jihad spokesman says fighters still have 'fingers on trigger' in anticipation of orders from group's leaders in Damascus
Elior Levy and Matan Tzuri|Last update: 11.14.19 , 23:25

Rockets were fired from Gaza at southern Israel on Thursday night, in a third violation of the ceasefire that came into effect in the early hours of the morning.

The Iron Dome missile defense system brought down two rockets over Sderot. Sirens sounded in Sderot and the Gaza border community of Shaar HaNegev at around 10pm. The Iron Dome missile defense system brought down two rockets over Sderot.

Fearing such truce breaches, Sderot municipality and local councils in the Gaza border area decided Thursday evening that local schools will remain closed Friday, despite a directive from the IDF Home Front Command to return to normal following the ceasefire with Islamic Jihad.

The city of Ashkelon said late Thursday that its schools would also remain closed Friday due to the ongoing rocket fire.

Meanwhile, demonstrations against the ceasefire took place in the northern Gaza Strip on Thursday evening.

The Gaza border communities have come under several rocket barrages after the ceasefire went into effect at 5:30am Thursday.

"Following the rocket sirens in the area, the forum of the heads of the Gaza border councils decided that tomorrow (Friday) there will be no studies at any educational institutions in the councils surrounding Gaza," the heads of the local authorities said in a joint statement.

"We are in contact with the IDF and are monitoring developments," the statement said, adding that, "The decision was made out of concern for students and educational staff."

The decision was met however with outrage from some local residents.

"It's the wrong decision that impacts adversely on our resilience, it's a surrender to terrorism," they said.

In northern Gaza, protesters took to the streets following a spontaneous social media drive to call for continued rocket strikes on Israeli population centers.

Abu Hamza, the spokesman for the Islamic Jihad military wing, said Thursday evening: "Our fighters in all military units still have their fingers on the trigger and are functioning in an integrated military system. They are at the disposal of the organization's leadership."

The fragile ceasefire has been violated by Gaza militants several times since it came into effect. At 5:23pm, sirens were heard in the regional councils Sdeot Negev, Eshkol and Shaar HaNegev. Iron Dome intercepted one rocket, and there were no injuries or damage reported.

At 10:54 am, five rockets were launched from the Gaza Strip at Israeli communities bordering the Strip. Iron Dome intercepted two of them.

In this case, too, there were no injuries or damage.

Between 6am and 7am, several more rockets were fired from the Gaza Strip into the Gaza-area communities, also without causing casualties or damage.

After a situation assessment, the IDF Southern Command and the Home Front Command decided Thursday afternoon to remove all the restrictions on the Gaza border area, such as limits to public gatherings.

The army also decided to return to regular routine at the Erez and Kerem Shalom crossings into Gaza and restore the fishing zone for Palestinians to 15 nautical miles off the Gaza coast.

The 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 Thursday that the missile defense system had had a 93% success rate.

11.14.19

Russian police set permanent helicopter base in north-east Syria border with Turkey

Russia sets up helicopter base in northern Syria after U.S. exit

Deployment comes less than month after American forces withdrawing from area were pelted with potatoes by local residents after Trump abruptly ordered them to leave country

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MOSCOW - Russia has begun setting up a helicopter base at a civilian airport in the north-eastern Syrian city of Qamishli, the Russian Defence Ministry's Zvezda TV channel said on Thursday, showing footage of helicopter gunships arriving there.

The new base is protected by Pantsir surface-to-air missile systems and three helicopters, including two Mi-35 gunships and a Mi-8 military transport helicopter, have already been deployed there, with more to follow.

Zvezda broadcast footage of Russian military police protecting the base. Armored vehicles and ground support crews for the helicopters were also shown, as was a weather station and a small doctor's surgery.

"This is the first group of Russian military helicopters here in northern Syria... It's a historic moment. From this day onwards our aviation group will operate permanently at Qamishli's city airport," said Pavel Remnev, Zvezda's correspondent.

The Russian deployment comes less than a month after U.S. forces withdrawing from the area were pelted with potatoes by local residents after President Donald Trump abruptly ordered them to pull back from parts of Syria.

Russia has previously started using military helicopters to patrol an area near Syria's border with Turkey in order to protect Russian military police working on the ground there.

The new base will allow them to do so more effectively, Zvezda said.

The patrols are carried out with Turkish forces and are designed to monitor an agreement struck by Moscow and Ankara after Turkey launched an offensive across its border with

Syrian rebels in October, seeking to push out Kurdish YPG fighters it views as a national security threat.