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Jihad homes hiding military arms & ammo result in civilian casualties on attack

Israel to probe 'unexpected' civilian casualties in Gaza strike

The IDF claimed that according to the information available to them, at the time of the strike, **no civilians were expected to be harmed** yet the home of Rasnu Abu Malhous was hit killing family members including his children

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Israel's military pledged Friday to investigate unexpected civilian casualties in a strike **targeting Islamic Jihad in Gaza**, where a ceasefire agreement remained fragile after fighting left 34 Palestinians dead.

Underscoring the frailty of the truce, a volley of rockets was fired from the coastal strip into the Jewish state after the deal officially took effect on Thursday morning.

Israel hit back with strikes early Friday against Islamic Jihad, the second most powerful Palestinian militant group in Gaza after Islamist movement Hamas which runs the enclave.

Hours before the ceasefire was due to begin on Thursday, Israel hit the **family home** of Rasmi Abu Malhous, who it described as **an Islamic Jihad commander**.

The strike -- in Deir al-Balah, in Gaza -- **killed** Abu Malhous, **his two wives and five children**, according to the Palestinian health ministry in the strip.

Islamic Jihad said Malhous was **"known as a person affiliated** with Islamic Jihad **but he was not a commander"**.

Israeli military spokesman Jonathan Conricus said that the target, "like many others, had the tactic of hiding ammunition and military infrastructure in their own residence".

The army acknowledged civilian casualties but said they were unanticipated.

"According to the information available to the IDF (Israel Defence Forces) at the time of the strike, no civilians were expected to be harmed," it said Friday.

"The IDF is investigating the harm caused to civilians by the strike," it said in a statement to AFP.

11.15.19

Pompeo urged Kurds to repatriate identified foreign jihad detainees on Thursday

Anti-Islamic State coalition at odds on jihadi detainees

Washington wants fighters sent back to their home nations and either prosecuted or rehabilitated there while Europe does not want to try its Islamic State nationals at home, amid concerns of fresh attacks

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The United States on Thursday pressured members of a global coalition fighting Islamic State to allow foreign fighters to be repatriated but despite consensus on the gravity of the problem, disagreements on whether and how to send people back persisted.

Foreign ministers from the global coalition against Islamic State convened in Washington to discuss the next step against the jihadi group after Turkey's Oct. 9 incursion into northeast Turkey and the U.S. decision to reduce its presence there.

While Islamic State has lost nearly all its territory in Syria and U.S. forces killed its former leader last month, it is still seen as a global threat.

Dealing with some 10,000 Islamic State fighters detained in northeast Syria, as well as their families, is among the coalition's top concerns.

"No one should expect the United States or anyone else to solve this problem for them," Nathan Sales, U.S. coordinator for counterterrorism, told a briefing at the State Department.

Washington wants fighters sent back to their home nations and either prosecuted or rehabilitated there. Europe does not want to try its Islamic State nationals at home, citing

the difficulty in collecting evidence as well as concerns about a public backlash and the risk of fresh attacks on European soil.

"Our view is that it is not a feasible option ... to ask other countries in the region to import another country's foreign fighters and pursue prosecution and incarceration there," Sales said.

He also said the relatively stable situation regarding foreign fighters in Syria, who are held in prisons guarded by America's SDF Syrian Kurdish allies, might not last.

"It's Syria - we all know that things can change in the blink of an eye."

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian repeated the French stance that fighters "should be brought to justice as close (as possible) to the crimes they committed" - code for not bringing them home.

Following on his campaign promise of withdrawing U.S. troops from foreign conflicts, President Donald Trump shocked U.S. allies last December by saying Washington was pulling out all its troops from Syria.

Since then, Trump has changed his mind several times and last month decided to keep a residual force in the northeastern part of the country, focusing on preventing Islamic State from staging a comeback and attacking the oilfields there. Washington is also keeping control of the air space.

On Wednesday, U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper said once the partial U.S. withdrawal was finished, the U.S. military would still have roughly around 600 troops in Syria, down from about 1,000 before Trump's withdrawal order last month.

"The United States has decided to maintain military assets in northeastern Syria to continue the fight against Islamic State and to support our local partners. This is good news," Le Drian said, saying France would also maintain its presence.

Still, the U.S. decision to reduce its footprint has left some of its Western and Arab allies, in addition to Kurdish forces in the region, feeling burned.

"The landscape of Syria has changed," a foreign diplomat told reporters on condition of anonymity ahead of Thursday's meeting. "The players who are shaping the future of Syria ... (are) mainly Russia, Iran and Turkey."

The Turkish incursion, which Trump opposed but facilitated by withdrawing a handful of U.S. troops in Ankara's way, has upended the region.

The U.S. withdrawal and Trump's reluctance to spend U.S. blood and treasure to secure the Middle East underscored a wider trend of waning U.S. influence and the need for nations to draw to powers such as Russia and China, the diplomat said.

Earlier, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had also urged members of the coalition fighting Islamic State to step up their funding to help restore infrastructure in Iraq and northeastern Syria, parts of which were severely damaged by conflict.

11.15.19

Israelis sue Hamas, freezing 500+ million of terrorist transfer funds in US

Israelis sue Hamas for compensation after family members die

If successful the families say, they will have prevented funds from Hamas that could be used to launch terror attacks against more Israelis as well as bolster the organizations strength in controlling the Gaza Strip

Elisha Ben Kimon | Published: 11.15.19 , 22:03

Five Israeli families will file a law suit against Hamas in Jerusalem District Court on Sunday, seeking NIS 500,000,000 in damages from the terrorist organization in compensation for family members killed in terror attacks.

The families who were to be represented by Shurat HaDin, Israel Law Center, argue that financial ramifications may adversely affect the terror organization's ability to instigate terror attacks.

In a groundbreaking move, the families have added to their class action suit three money changers who have worked in the service of Hamas and facilitated the transfer of funds from Iran to the Gaza rulers.

"Make no mistake, Hamas are all terrorists," said Herzl Hajaj, father of Shir, a 22-year old soldier who was murdered in Jerusalem.

"This is a terror organization and we should not try to reach any (diplomatic) agreements with them."

He added: "It is vital to take financial measures against them as there is an entire monetary scheme in play making them a profit from killing Jews."

There is slim chance that the suit will be successful or that the compensation received will be anything other than very low. Yet the case is unique because of the three money

changers, who have assets and bank accounts in the United States that have already been confiscated.

If the court finds in favor of the plaintiffs, legal action could be taken in the U.S. to claim those funds.

Nitsana Darshan-Leitner, the head of Shurat HaDin who is representing the families said: "This is an ongoing battle but the only way to weaken these terror groups is to target their source of funding.

"Money is what allows Hamas to control the civilian population in the Gaza Strip, it allows their production of rockets and mortars and it allows them to maintain an army of killers ready to do their bidding."

She also expressed the hope that by targeting "their funding channels, we may bring them down."

11.13.19

UN envoy in Cairo seek end to Gaza fighting by martyr rules of military conflict

UN envoy in Cairo as efforts grow to end Gaza fighting

Mladenov to meet with Sissi on terms for possible truce between Israel and Islamic Jihad as Egypt 'opens channel' with U.S. and EU; terror group's leader says conditions not ripe for end to hostilities triggered by killing of military commander

Associated Press, Ynet|Published: 11.13.19, 18:05

UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Nickolay Mladenov arrived in Cairo on Wednesday as efforts grew to deescalate the worst bout of fighting between Israel and Gaza militants in recent months.

Mladenov landed in the Egyptian capital from Tel Aviv and was scheduled to meet with President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, Egyptian officials said.

The officials said Egypt's general intelligence agency has stepped up communications and has "opened channels" with the U.S. and the European Union.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief the media.

Egypt often acts as a mediator between Israel and Gaza militants, and brokered a ceasefire deal to end the previous round of fighting in Gaza in May.

That deal to bring calm to the area appeared threatened Tuesday after a pre-dawn Israeli airstrike in Gaza killed senior Islamic Jihad commander Baha Abu al-Ata.

Militants in Gaza responded with hundreds of rockets fired into Israel, and the IDF has carried out a number of airstrikes in Gaza targeting Islamic Jihad.

Despite Israeli declarations that "quiet will be met with quiet," Islamic Jihad on Tuesday dismissed the possibility of immediate ceasefire 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 (Prime Minister Benjamin) 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 conflicts