

Breaking: Hamas Fires Iranian-Made Cruise Missiles for First Time, Five Israelis Killed

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An Israeli security source has revealed to Tikun Olam that Hamas and Islamic Jihad have used a weapon never before seen in the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. Iranian-made cruise missiles, perhaps of the type which wiped out half of Saudi Arabia’s oil production, were [fired on Israeli targets](#) and [caused extensive damage](#) in communities in the south and around Tel Aviv. This development is under military censorship and Israeli media may not report this major new development. Five Israelis have been killed as well in the missile fire. Two Israeli Palestinians were killed in a neighborhood of Lod: because it is “unrecognized” under racist Israeli regulations, its 600 residents may not build bomb shelters to protect themselves and the municipality refuses to do so.

Reports that Hamas has these advanced weapons are not new. In fact, last year Avigdor Lieberman accused Netanyahu and defense minister Gantz of [covering up this information](#):

“Hamas is developing cruise missiles, cluster bombs and unmanned aerial vehicles with jet engines,” Lieberman said in the Knesset. “Do you know what it means for the residents of Israel if, God forbid, a conflict breaks out?”

“Do you know what price we will pay? Why is the prime minister hiding it? If I was you I would have summoned all the (regional council heads of Gaza border communities) to a meeting with the Defense Minister, so he could explain to them what he intends to do to fight against cruise missiles and cluster bombs,” Lieberman added.



Israel wantonly attacks civilian residential targets in Gaza (Source: Tikun Olam)

As you can see, his complaints were reported in Israeli media. But apparently, today the censor believes that Israelis have a short attention span; and she doesn't want to remind citizens that the weapons killing them are ones the IDF knew about a year ago and still cannot protect against.

In the past, Israel's Iron Dome anti-missile system intercepted many of the previous generation of rockets from Gaza. But the defensive system has [limited effectiveness against cruise missiles](#). Which is why so many have hit targets inside Israel and caused such extensive damage.

This places the latest escalation in violence in an entirely different context. No longer are we "merely" talking about Israel incitement against Israeli Palestinians over restrictions on access to their holy site, Haram al Sharif. Instead, Hamas has taken up the cause, broadening the conflict, possibly at the behest of Iran. The latter has many scores to settle with the Israelis: this includes key Israeli communication intercepts which permitted the US to locate and murder Qassem Soleimani; and even the assassination of the founder of the Iranian nuclear program, Mohsen Fakhrizadeh.

Iran has been itching for a fight. And Hamas appears eager and willing to oblige. This is a perfect example of the danger of a minor act of incitement leading to widespread conflagration. Of course, because Pres. Trump thumbed his nose at the Palestinians and waged a hostile campaign against Iran, the US no longer has any leverage or credibility in either place. And because Trump did nothing but coddle the Israelis, we have lost any capacity to jawbone them as well.

The US, UN, EU have all been not just ineffective, but pathetic in their attempts to ratchet down hostilities. Their feeble expressions of concern were met with a vague shrug by Israeli leaders and IDF generals.

Strong measures, such as those I advocated [here](#), are nowhere to be found. Politicians seem scared of their own tails as Gaza's children die. Pres. Biden and his secretary of state, Antony Blinken seem congenitally averse to saying an unkind word to Israel. As I noted in

yesterday's post, we've even put the kibosh on the most assertive statement formulated so far by the international community—a UN Security Council resolution. The world is standing back as Gaza burns. 30 dead as of today and an entire high rise apartment building toppled by Israeli missiles.

In Israel, we are seeing developments on the ground never seen before. Instead of universal support for military action, Israeli Palestinians have gone on the rampage in both their own and mixed communities. In Lod, in particular, Jewish residents have been told to remain locked in their homes as protesters roam the streets setting fire to vehicles and vandalizing synagogues. This level of social unrest is unheard of during wartime. Israeli police in inciting mass violence at Haram al Sharif, have kicked a slumbering tiger. And they are shocked when he roars in anger and seeks revenge.

The latest escalation offers a strange confluence of interests between Hamas and Bibi Netanyahu. As for the former, after canceling yet another round of elections, Hamas is eager to punish Mahmoud Abbas for his betrayal of Palestinian representative rights. In addition, Hamas relies heavily on Iran for aid and is willing, if not eager, to show off the new weapons provided to them by their patrons.

Netanyahu too is [more than pleased with this new round of fighting](#). First, whenever Israel attacks Palestine, the Israeli public credits the prime minister with toughness. Second, as long as there are chaos, sirens and rockets in the Israeli streets, Yair Lapid can make no progress in forming a new center-right government which will exclude him.

As long as chaos reigns, it suits both Israel's leader and Hamas. But of course, the victims of these cynical machinations are the Palestinians and to a lesser extent, the Israeli public.

Finally, it's rather shocking that in light of the [impending ICC investigation of Israel for war crimes](#) against Palestinians since 2014, Netanyahu hasn't realized that all of the acts of child murder seen in the past few days will bolster these charges and strengthen the chance for a court case and conviction of Israel's military and political leadership.

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Featured image: One of the cruise missile types Iran may have provided Hamas (Source: Tikun Olam)

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