

Israeli Jets Attack Targets Across Gaza, Killing 3

By [Global Research](#)

Global Research, January 10, 2010

[Ma'an News Agency](#) 8 January 2010

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Gaza - Ma'an - Israeli warplanes carried out a series of raids on sites throughout the Gaza Strip late Thursday night, witnesses said and Israel's military confirmed.

Three citizens were killed and two others injured in the Israeli raids that targeted a tunnel near Rafah crossing south of Gaza.

Medical sources in Abu Yousif An-Najjar hospital identified the dead as Barakat Abu Shalouf, Odai Abu Heesh, 15, and Naser Al-Mahmum, 22.

Muawiya Hassanein, the Gaza Health Ministry's director of ambulance and emergency services said the jets struck four areas in total.

Early reports from Al-Jazeera said a missile killed one Palestinian and injured two inside a smuggling tunnel along the Gaza-Egypt border. Locals reported to Ma'an that smoke was rising above the tunnel area just after midnight.

At least two missiles landed in the southern Gaza Strip city of Khan Younis, one of them near a school, and a third between Khan Younis and Rafah. Jets were still flying overhead the area early into Friday morning.

Two missiles struck what was described as a military target in the Gaza City neighborhood of Zaytoun. Residents said a missile hit the center of the nearby An-Nuseirat Refugee Camp.

According to an Israeli military spokeswoman, the targets included a weapons manufacturing facility in Gaza City and three tunnels, two along the Egyptian border and another near the border with Israel in central Gaza. She said the third tunnel was intended to facilitate attacks on Israel.

The official said the airstrikes, among the most wide-scale attacks since Israel's devastating assault last winter, came in retaliation for the 10 mortar shells reportedly launched toward southern Israel on Thursday. The military wing of the Popular Resistance Committees said a total of 14 mortar shells were launched in three rounds on Thursday.

The military spokeswoman told Ma'an Israel "will not tolerate the firing of rockets by terror organizations at Israel and will continue to respond against attempts to disrupt the calm in Israel's southern communities."

The three mortar barrages were the largest attack on southern Israel since the end of its Operation Cast Lead, which left some 1,400 Palestinians dead. Projectiles have been intermittently launched at Israeli targets in clusters of two to four, with no more than two

barrages in a single day. The PRC said the first launch of two launches included eight, and the second an additional four mortars.

After the first two launches, Israeli forces dropped hundreds of thousands of leaflets into areas in northern and eastern Gaza (pictured above), warning Gazans to stay away from the border area. Shortly after the third attack, Palestinians in Jabaliya reported hearing explosions, although no evidence of Israeli artillery fire or airstrikes was reported.

One of the projectiles landed near the Kerem Shalom crossing, prompting its closure.

‘Take responsibility for your future’

The leaflets, which residents said were dropped in northern and southern Gaza, warned Palestinians not to approach within 300 meters of the Israeli border, and against digging tunnels into Egypt.

One reported that the “prohibited zone” includes border areas in Beit Lahiya, Beit Hanoun, and Jabaliya in the north, Khan Younis, Khuza’a, and Abasan in the center, and Rafah in the south. A second warned Palestinians against using tunnels to circumvent the Israeli blockade of the territory.

“Terrorists, tunnel owners, and the smugglers of military equipment know for certain that the continuation of terrorist attacks, the smuggling of military equipment, and the digging of tunnels will be targeted by the IDF [Israel Defense Forces], but they continue to work in your residential areas and seek refuge among you,” according to the flier, which was written in Arabic.

“The digging [of] tunnels under your houses and the smuggling of military equipment into Gaza constitutes a threat to your lives, the lives of your children, and family, and your property,” it added. “Do not stay idle and let the terrorists use you. They will not stand beside you when harm is done to you and your property. ... Take responsibility for your future.”

The leaflet also lists an email address and a phone number urging Palestinians to provide information about smugglers and tunnel operators.

A military spokesman confirmed that the leaflets were dropped from air force planes, warning that anyone who comes within 300 meters of the border is “putting themselves at risk,” warning against weapons smuggling.

The spokesman said “the IDF will operate against anyone who harbors terrorists.”

Following the first wave of mortar attacks, Israel announced that the Kerem Shalom crossing point was closed after sources said a mortar shell fired from Gaza landed in the area. Palestinian officials said between 86 and 96 trucks had been scheduled to deliver aid to Gaza.

Israel shut down its borders with Gaza after the elected Hamas government took full control of the territory in June 2007. The closure has reduced imports of vital goods to one-fifth of pre-blockade levels and prevented the Strip’s 1.5 million residents from leaving.

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