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February 1, 2009

Middle East

Hamis Official Blames Rockets On Collaborators

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All Things Considered, December 29, 2008 · The rockets being fired from Gaza into Israel is the work of Israeli collaborators, says Ahmed Yusuf, political adviser to Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh. He says Hamas was willing to agree to a new cease-fire with Israel, but Israel hadn't lived up to its end of the bargain.

(Because of intense interest in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, NPR makes available free transcripts of its coverage. [View the free transcript of this story.](#))

Middle East

Israeli Planes Pound Gaza Targets



Alyson Hurt/NPR

Israeli warplanes pounded Hamas targets in Gaza for a third day Monday, hitting buildings and key installations linked to the Islamic group as Israel continued a major offensive that has killed more than 300 Palestinians.

Israel launched its deadliest attack on Gaza in decades Saturday in hopes of striking a knockout blow against Hamas, which controls the region. The offensive came in retaliation for

rocket fire aimed at civilians in southern Israeli towns after Hamas ended a six-month unilateral cease-fire.

The three-day death toll included seven children younger than 15 who were killed in two separate strikes late Sunday and Monday, medics said. Hospitals report that they are having difficulty coping with casualties.

Most of those killed since Saturday are thought to have been members of Hamas security forces. The United Nations agency in charge of Palestinian refugees said at least 51 of the dead were civilians.

The strikes appear to have hampered Hamas' rocket-launching capability, but a rocket fired at the Israeli city of Ashkelon killed a man there Monday and wounded several others. On Sunday, Hamas missiles struck near the city of Ashdod, twice as far from Gaza as

Ashkelon and only 25 miles from Tel Aviv.

Israel has declared the area around Gaza a closed military zone. In Jerusalem, Israel's Cabinet approved a call-up of 6,500 reserve soldiers Sunday in possible preparation for a ground offensive, an option that Israeli military leaders would not rule out.

Meanwhile, thousands of people throughout the Middle East have taken to the streets carrying images of the death and destruction in Gaza to denounce Israel's assault.

The Bush administration has blamed the renewed violence on the militant Hamas.

"In order for the violence to stop, Hamas must stop firing rockets into Israel and agree to respect a sustainable and durable ceasefire," White House spokesman Gordon Johndroe said.

Hamas has "shown its true colors as a terrorist organization," he said.

President-elect Barack Obama's senior adviser, David Axelrod, said the incoming administration "wants to be a constructive force in helping to bring about the peace and security that both the Israelis and the Palestinians want and deserve."

Axelrod, speaking on CBS' *Face the Nation* on Sunday, said Obama would "work closely with the Israelis. ... But he will do so in a way that will promote the cause of peace, and work closely with the Israelis and the Palestinians on that — toward that objective."

The European Union has called for a halt in the fighting but U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Monday admonished world leaders for not doing enough.

"I think regional and international partners have not done enough. They should do more," Ban said in a statement, his third in as many days on the subject of Gaza.

"They should use all possible means to end the violence and encourage political dialogue, emphasizing peaceful ways of resolving differences," he said.

Hundreds of demonstrators convened Sunday outside the Israeli embassy in London and in a predominantly Arab neighborhood in Paris to protest Israeli actions.

Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005 after a 38-year military occupation, but Israeli forces have repeatedly crossed into the territory to hunt militants firing rockets at Israeli towns.

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It's remarkable that we demonize Iran for its one-sidedness in this dispute while being equally one-sided ourselves. I am neither Arab nor Israeli and truly resent that my elected officials spend so much time meddling in this dispute. Don't we have enough AMERICAN issues that need attention to occupy our time?

Tuesday, December 30, 2008 4:34:46 PM

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yeh, yeh, that's it! they er, ah were shooting at themselves! yeh that's it!

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After listening to Ahmed Yusuf I believe that "Bhagdad Bob" is living in Gaza under an assumed name.

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Jeff Howard (zyxt) wrote:

"Hamas Official Blames Rockets On Collaborators"

And when asked on "The NewsHour," what was the reason for the renewed rocket attacks on Israel, their ambassador modified and improved the official response to this question by just refusing to answer it.

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Grace Sheffield (Grace7) wrote:

Just look at map of Israel from 1948 to today. It tells the whole story.

FREE GAZA ONE STATE NOW

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