



Gaza Rocket Barrage



Naftali Bennett speaks at a pre-election foreign-policy debate (photo by Mati Milstein/The Israel Project, via Wikipedia.com, (CC BY 2.0)).

Three Israeli soldiers were reportedly wounded during multiple barrages of mortar shells and short-range rockets fired by terrorist forces operating out of the Gaza Strip on May 29. Initially, at least 50 mortars and rockets were fired into southern Israel.

So far Israel has responded with targeted artillery and aerial strikes on terrorist positions in Gaza, but officials are hinting that the volatile coastal enclave could be facing a far more severe Israeli response if the escalation continues.

Seventy-five percent of children in Israeli communities near the border with the Gaza Strip showed up at school by 9:15 a.m. on Wednesday, despite a sleepless night of sirens due to rocket and mortar barrages fired by Palestinian terrorists.

“It was not an easy night for the residents here,” Education Minister Naftali Bennett said at a news conference outside a primary school in the Sha’ar Hanegev region. “Between midnight and the early hours of the morning, there was a series of Code Red sirens and running to the shelters. For many residents, that meant they had only 15 seconds to reach a shelter.

“I also spent the night at a family home in one of the communities, and I experienced this white night myself. It’s not easy, and yet 75% of the students have come to school, and I hope more will come later.”

“The heated situation on the Gazan side is neither accidental nor local,” he said. “The mastermind is an Iranian one, and the hands are of Hamas operatives. The State of Israel is engaged in a focused and consistent campaign against the head of the octopus in Iran. The octopus is operating its arms in Lebanon, Syria and Gaza to harm the State of Israel.

“Since we are conducting an economic, political and military campaign against Iran, it is trying to divert our attention and create provocations in Gaza through one of the tentacles. We must not drop the ball or lose focus.”

Bennett stressed that Iran is the central issue, and once that is resolved, the situation will be far calmer in all the affected countries.

He met with students at the school following the news conference.

The Israeli Air Force bombed dozens of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad facilities across the Gaza Strip in two rounds of air raids, on Tuesday afternoon and predawn Wednesday, amid the largest



A kindergarten in central Israel during a rocket alarm (photo by Siven Besa/The Israel Defense Forces via Wikipedia.com (CC BY 2.0)).

exchange between Israel and Gazan terrorist groups since the 2014 war. The escalation began with a barrage of mortar shells fired into southern Israel by Islamic Jihad on Tuesday morning, one of which landed outside a kindergarten shortly before the children arrived.



Sderot, Israel: A Qassam rocket is displayed in Sderot town hall against a background of pictures of residents killed in rocket attacks (Photo by Tom Spender via Wikipedia.com, CC BY-SA 2.0).

Over the course of 22 hours, from 7 a.m. Tuesday to 5:17 a.m. Wednesday, sirens were triggered at least 166 times in southern Israel, according to the IDF Home Front Command, by mortar fire, rockets or, in some cases, heavy machine gunfire.

A reported Egyptian-brokered informal ceasefire between Palestinian terror groups and Israel appeared to be holding on Wednesday morning, with both sides blaming the other for the flare-up.

Israel denied that it had reached an agreement, but a senior defense official, speaking on condition of anonymity, indicated to reporters that an understanding had been reached under which Israel would not conduct additional strikes in Gaza so long as no more rockets or mortar shells were fired. "If the launches are renewed, the attacks against Hamas will be intensified," the official said.

As of Wednesday morning, the military had yet to release a final tally for the number of projectiles fired at southern Israel from Gaza, but it is likely to approach 200.

By contrast, from the end of the 2014 Gaza war until Tuesday, approximately 80 projectiles were fired from Gaza into Israel, according to Israeli figures.

Dozens of the incoming mortar shells and rockets were intercepted by the Iron Dome missile defense system, which proved relatively successful for the first time against the short-range mortar fire. Others landed in open fields in southern Israel.

A small number landed inside Israeli communities, including a mortar round that directly hit a home in the Eshkol region and the shell that exploded in the yard of a kindergarten.

Parts of a rocket also struck a sports center in the town of Netivot, causing damage to the facility but no injuries. (*Israel Today, JPost, The Times of Israel*)



A missile from the Israeli Iron Dome is launched to intercept a missile coming from the Gaza strip (Photo by Nehemiya Gershoni via Wikipedia.com, CC BY-SA 3.0).

"He sent out His arrows and scattered the foe, lightnings in abundance, and He vanquished them"
(Psalm 18:1).

In Messiah,

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