

## PALESTINIAN JIHAD FIRES 80 ROCKETS AT ISRAEL

FEB 25, 2020. The Palestinian Islamic Jihad pounded Israel **for a SECOND DAY**, firing 80 rockets – sure that Israel's reaction would be carefully calibrated a week before election day. After the first day, the Israeli air force **struck Jihad targets around Damascus** as well as scores of its sites in the Gaza Strip. By going into a second day of rocket fire, the Palestinian terrorist group directly challenged the IDF.

It also made Ashkelon, with its port and industrial zone, the largest Israeli town **under heavy rocket fire**. There were no casualties in the two-day Jihad blitz, although a food factory in Ashkelon took a direct hit, largely due to the high number of interceptions by Iron Dome defence batteries.

The IDF accompanied the waves of Palestinian rocket fire with **continuous air and tank artillery strikes against Jihad installations** and command centres and hunting down rocket teams. Then, early Monday evening, Islamic Jihad suddenly announced in a statement that **its retaliatory offensive was at an end**.

During the day, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu warned that if the violence continued, **Israel would resort to a comprehensive military operation in the Gaza Strip** that would include innovative, **surprise tactics never seen in previous IDF counter-terror operations**.

Defence Minister Naftali was more restrained. He told community and town leaders in the south, who had advised the population to keep schools closed for another day, not to expect the IDF to embark on a full-scale IDF operation in Gaza **before the March 2 general election**.

The Palestinian Jihad had therefore tossed the ball over to Israel. If the episode ends at this point, the terrorist organization may claim to have won the power to call the shots for starting and ending a confrontation with Israel when it pleases.

The Netanyahu government will almost certainly be guided in its response by an assessment of the majority voters' mood next Monday. For the time being, both the ruling Likud and the opposition Kahol Lavan have called off their election rallies for the duration of the security crisis in the South.

## UN SECURITY COUNCIL CALLS FOR SUPPORT OF A TWO STATE SOLUTION

25 February 2020 . The UN Security Council made a **rare show of unity** Monday when it called on all parties to **maintain their support for a two-state solution** to the Israel-Palestinian Arab conflict.

**"Council Members reiterated their support for a negotiated two state solution ... where two democratic [?] states, Israel and Palestine [?], live side by side in peace within secure and recognized borders,"** said a statement quoted by AFP and released by Belgium, which holds the rotating presidency, and supported by all 14 other members, **including the United States**.

**"All parties should refrain from undermining the viability of the two states solution in order to maintain the prospects for a just, comprehensive and lasting peace,"** the statement added, in an allusion to Israel's announcement last week on construction of new homes in Jerusalem.

As usual the UN simply demonstrates that the members have lost their collective minds?

## THE FORTUNATE ARABS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

FEB. 24, 2020, by **Bassam Tawil**

Meanwhile, there are other Arabs in the region who are more fortunate than the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza Strip: the Arab citizens of Israel. These citizens are lucky that they do not live under the rule of the corrupt and incompetent leaders of the Palestinian Authority and Hamas. These Arab citizens are fortunate because they live in Israel.

Here is more unwelcome good news regarding the Arab citizens of Israel: The Israeli government announced in 2018 that in the last two years, it has invested 4.5 billion shekels (\$1.3 billion) in the Arab regions. The government also announced that it would invest 20 million shekels (\$5.6 million) in the Arab high-tech market. Overall, the government has decided to invest 15 billion shekels (\$4.3 billion) in the Arab-Israeli sector by the end of 2020....

The \$50 billion dollars the Trump plan offered the Palestinians will end up being withheld because Palestinian leaders have something else on their minds: to continue enriching their own bank accounts at the expense of their people. No wonder, then, that when Arabs -- including Palestinians -- dream of a better life, they often dream of moving to Israel. No wonder, as well, that most Arab Israelis do not want to become part of a Palestinian state, and have been demanding to stay in Israel.

The two million Arab citizens of Israel have become the subject of envy by their Palestinian brothers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. An example of the successful and thriving life of Israeli Arabs can be seen in Arraba (pictured), a town located in the Galilee region in northern Israel. With a population of 26,000, Arraba is now one of the leading communities in the world in the number of physicians. (Image source: Yaakov/Wikimedia Commons)

Palestinians living under the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank and Hamas in the Gaza Strip can only dream about the quality of life their Arab brethren enjoy in Israel.

Thanks to the current leaders in the PA and Hamas, the Palestinian people are sunk in abysmal living conditions. Poverty, unemployment, and repression have been their lot for decade after decade. This is because the PA and Hamas have repeatedly rejected peace plans that offer prosperity to the Palestinians.

Recently, the PA and Hamas rejected US President Donald Trump's plan for Mideast peace, which includes a \$50 billion investment and infrastructure proposal to create at least a million new jobs for Palestinians. The plan calls for projects worth \$27.5 billion in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and \$9.1 billion for Palestinians in Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon. Projects "envisioned include those in the health care, education, power, water, high-tech, tourism, and agriculture sectors."