Israeli military says Gaza homes hiding Hamas tunnels

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<http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/israeli-military-identifies-gaza-homes-hamas-tunnels-49130959>

The Israeli military on Thursday said it has identified two residential buildings in the northern Gaza Strip as potential military targets after discovering Hamas militant tunnels underneath them.

The army released satellite images of the homes, located near the [Israeli border](http://abcnews.go.com/topics/news/world/1967-israeli-borders.htm), on Thursday, a day after it struck Hamas targets in Gaza in response to a rocket strike on southern [Israel](http://abcnews.go.com/topics/news/israel.htm).

Maj. Gen. Eyal Zamir, head of Israel's Southern Command, said the situation in Gaza is "stable, but volatile." But he said the two buildings in the photos would be legitimate targets in the event of a future conflict and would draw Israeli forces into densely populated civilian areas.

The military did not say how the tunnels had been identified.

One of the buildings identified was a six-story residential building constructed in the past two years, after a 2014 war with Gaza's Hamas rulers.

"The location of the tunnel shafts in these buildings is intended to disguise them under civilian cover," the army said in a statement. "In wartime, these exploited locations become legitimate military targets under international law."

[Israel](http://abcnews.go.com/topics/news/gaza-strip.htm) and Hamas are bitter enemies that have fought three wars since Hamas, an Islamic militant group that seeks Israel's destruction, took control of Gaza in 2007.

Israel came under heavy international criticism after the 2014 war because of heavy Palestinian civilian casualties. Israel says it does its utmost to protect civilians and blames Hamas for the casualties because the group uses civilian areas for cover.

During a 2014 war, Hamas used tunnels to attack Israeli targets. Israel destroyed over 30 tunnels during the fighting and has identified the tunnels as a strategic threat.

Israel began construction of an underground anti-tunnel barrier along the border last year. Zamir said the barrier was expected to be completed within two years.