**Hamas Quietly Admits It Fired Rockets from Civilian Areas**

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Just two weeks after the end of the latest round of fighting between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, the *Associated Press* [ran this story](http://bigstory.ap.org/article/evidence-growing-hamas-used-residential-areas) on Friday, revealing more evidence about Hamas's use of residential areas as launching grounds for their rockets.

Throughout the seven-week conflict, Israel frequently charged that Hamas had been using schools, hospitals, and homes to fire rockets into Israel. The publicline uttered by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his surrogates was that Hamas [was committing "double war crimes"](http://www.jpost.com/Operation-Protective-Edge/As-casualties-in-Gaza-rise-PM-accuses-Hamas-of-double-war-crime-362160) by firing from heavily populated civilian centers (using human shields) into Israeli towns (to attack other civilians.)

What eventually became the story's slightly buried lede was the peculiar admission by Hamas itself that it had indeed fired from population centers, only by "mistake." As a senior Hamas official Ghazi Hamad told the *Associated Press*:

The Israelis kept saying rockets were fired from schools or hospitals when in fact they were fired 200 or 300 meters (yards) away. Still, there were some mistakes made and they were quickly dealt with."

He added, [inaccurately](http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/4580/gaza-population-density), that Gaza is "one uninterrupted urban chain."

Israel, by and large, bore the public relations brunt of the conflict's high death tolls, amid numerous reports that schools and apartment buildings were leveled by Israeli airstrikes, in some instances killing [multiple generations of Palestinian families](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/19/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-conflict.html). Even as this happened, Israeli officials maintained that they were responding to the source of Palestinian rocket fire and it was Hamas who was truly endangering Gazans.

The admission that Hamas had, in the AP's words, "at least at times" fired from places that endangered Palestinians does little to retroactively blanche Israel's blackened image.

During the war itself, India's NDTV captured a rare sight: the [entire launch process of a Hamas rocket](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/08/05/gaza-rocket-video_n_5651799.html), from the setting up of a cover tent to the assembly of the platform to the firing of the rocket from beside a hotel in what appeared to be a crowded Gaza neighborhood. The video caused some stirs, but nothing that roused tens of thousands of demonstrators into the streets of European capitals.

Also on Friday, the *Jerusalem Post*, citing "credible sources," greatly [upped the ante](http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/Exclusive-Hamas-threatened-UNRWA-personnel-at-gun-point-during-Gaza-war-375051) with a report that workers at the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in Gaza had their lives threatened by members of Hamas during the 50-day conflict with Israel.

In a number of incidents, Hamas terrorists threatened to kill UNRWA personnel if they revealed that the Islamist group was using the UN facilities for purposes of war, to ensure that they would not speak out about Hamas’s activities.  Details have also emerged of the fate of medical supplies and food that were intended to be distributed by UNRWA to residents of Gaza in need of humanitarian aid. On a number of occasions, armed Hamas operatives forcefully confiscated the supplies, taking them for their own use.

As we [noted](http://www.thewire.com/global/2014/07/hamas-rockets-found-in-second-united-nations-school/374874/) at the time, UNRWA admitted (twice) that Hamas rockets had been found in UNRWA facilities that the group claimed were not being used as shelters. The disclosures caused a considerable stir, but ultimately didn't shift the perception of the war. And neither will Hamas' new admissions.