**Hamas attacks from civilian population areas**

July 16, 2014

Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs

http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Terrorism/Pages/Hamas-attacks-from-civilian-population-areas-13-Jul-2014.aspx

As Hamas fires rockets on Israel, it systematically exploits [Palestinian civilians as human shields](http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Terrorism/Pages/Hamas-again-uses-Gazan-civilians-as-human-shields-July-2014.aspx) for military targets in Gaza. Hamas positions its rocket launching sites, weapons caches, and command centers in areas surrounded by civilian buildings, and stores explosives and weapons in and around schools, mosques, residential homes and other civilian infrastructures.

Mosques in the Gaza Strip are used not only for worship but also for [diverse military and political purposes](http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/article/20672), such as recruiting operatives for terrorist activity, storing weapons, meeting places for terrorist operatives, points of departure for terrorist attacks, training sites, places for firing rockets and mortar bombs and centers for political and ideological activity.

In order to limit casualties to innocent bystanders, the IDF uses a number of tactics including precision airstrikes on weapons caches, tunnels, and other terror targets.

As a warning tactic, the IDF targets buildings with loud but non-lethal bombs, meant to warn civilians that they are in the vicinity of a weapons cache or other target. This method is used to allow all residents to leave the area before the IDF targets the site with live ammunition.

On July 9, Palestinians fled a Hamas target after the IDF fired a warning shot. Moments later, other residents flocked to the roof to act as human shields. The Israeli aircraft called off the strike in order to avoid casualties.

In addition, leaflets are dropped prior to attacks on terror targets, warning civilians to leave the area. A sample leaflet reads:

"To the residents of Beit Lahia

The IDF intends to attack terrorist infrastructures and terrorist operatives from the air in the region east of Al-Atatra and Al-Salatin street, and to the north and west of the Jabaliya refugee camp.Israel attacks and will attack any region from which rockets are fired into its territory.Civilians must vacate their houses by 12:00 noon on 13/7/2014 and go to the south via the town of Jabaliya through Al-Fallujah street.The IDF activity will be temporary and short.Anyone who does not obey IDF instructions will endanger himself and the lives of his family.Be careful and be safe."

Hamas's Interior Ministry Spokesman in Gaza called on the population in northern Gaza Strip to ignore the IDF's warnings and to stay in their homes. He also urged those who had already left to come back immediately, endangering the lives of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.