



[Home](#) [News](#) [Sport](#) [Radio](#) [TV](#) [Weather](#) [Languages](#)

UK version **International version** | [About the versions](#)

[Low graphics](#) | [Accessibility help](#)

News services
Your news when you want it



The News in 2 minutes

[News Front Page](#)



- [Africa](#)
 - [Americas](#)
 - [Asia-Pacific](#)
 - [Europe](#)
 - [Middle East](#)
 - [South Asia](#)
 - [UK](#)
 - [Business](#)
 - [Health](#)
 - [Science/Nature](#)
 - [Technology](#)
 - [Entertainment](#)
-
- [Video and Audio](#)
 - [Have Your Say](#)
 - [In Pictures](#)
 - [Country Profiles](#)
 - [Special Reports](#)

Last Updated: Friday, 18 May 2007, 23:59 GMT 00:59 UK

Attacks strike terror in Gaza and Israel

By **Katya Adler**
BBC News, Jerusalem

Gaza is not an easy place to live at the best of times.

One of the most crowded areas of the world, where unemployment is high, people are poor and the economy crippled by an international boycott and Israel withholding desperately-needed Palestinian tax-revenues.



Israel has carried out a series of air strikes on Hamas targets in Gaza

More than 50% of Gazans are 17 years old or younger. Most feel they have no prospects at home but no way to get out.

Foreign powers control all of Gaza's borders; opening and closing them at will. Gaza is also awash with illegal weapons.

This is an ongoing, explosive mix of internal and external pressures. all of which need to be addressed.

Caught in crossfire

And now there is a power battle going on, which reaches up to the highest levels of Palestinian politics.

Fatah gunmen are loyal to the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas; Hamas gunmen to the Palestinian Prime Minister, Ismail Haniya.



Abbas and Haniya have announced several factional ceasefires

This makes the situation sound clear-cut. But far from it.

Mr Abbas and Mr Haniya have repeatedly announced ceasefires between their factions.

Their politicians have even joined together in a fragile unity government. Yet the street battles in Gaza have erupted once again.

According to the UN Office for Humanitarian Affairs, more than 150 Palestinians have died and more than 650 have been wounded in internal violence since the beginning of the year.

MIDDLE EAST CRISIS

[In Depth](#)

LATEST NEWS

- [Israel backs tougher Gaza action](#)
- [Fresh violence hits Gaza Strip](#)
- [Israelis held over 'hate' murder](#)
- [Gaza faction boosts police ranks](#)
- [Israel 'is reshaping' Jerusalem](#)

FEATURES AND ANALYSIS

Double terror
A spiral of violence spells misery for both sides in the conflict, writes Katya Adler.



- [Under rule of the gun](#)
- ['Wake-up call' for Israel](#)
- [Olmert's support crumbles](#)
- [Wave of discontent in Israel](#)
- [Timeline: Alan Johnston missing](#)
- [Palestinian rivals: Fatah & Hamas](#)

VOICES

[Israeli views on Halutz](#)
[Palestinian viewpoints](#)

PROFILES

Hezbollah

RELATED BBC SITES

- [SPORT](#)
- [WEATHER](#)
- [ON THIS DAY](#)
- [EDITORS' BLOG](#)

LANGUAGES

RELATED INTERNET LINKS

- [Israeli foreign ministry](#)
 - [Palestinian National Authority](#)
- The BBC is not responsible for the content of external internet sites

TOP MIDDLE EAST STORIES

- [Lebanese troops battle militants](#)
 - [Israel targets Hamas politician](#)
 - [Seven US soldiers killed in Iraq](#)
- | [News feeds](#)

MOST POPULAR STORIES NOW

- [Branson's US airline to take off](#)
- [Your Pictures: Chapelcross](#)
- [Lebanese troops battle militants](#)
- [Israel targets Hamas politician](#)
- [Coin toss decides Philippine poll](#)

[Most popular now, in detail](#)

This spells more misery for ordinary Gazans, many of whom spent this week huddled in their homes for fear of getting caught in the crossfire.

Things got so bad that an Egyptian security delegation stationed in Gaza publicly appealed to the warring factions for a lull, so people could go food shopping and get to the mosque for Friday prayers without dodging flying bullets.

Deterrents

And then there are the Israeli air strikes.

Israel says it is conducting pin-point attacks on Hamas targets in Gaza after the movement's military wing announced this week it was aiming volleys of rockets at Israeli towns.

Israel's military has made cockpit footage publicly available to show the high-tech precision of its air strikes. But in crowded Gaza, innocent bystanders often get hurt.



Close to 100 rockets have recently been fired from Gaza into Israel

But Israel has said it will do "whatever it takes" to stop the rocket fire from Gaza.

In addition to the air strikes, it has stationed a number of armoured vehicles on and just over the Israeli-Gaza boundary - to act as a deterrent, it says.

Yet Israelis and Palestinians are holding their breath for a possible ground invasion.

The fact is, though, that neither Israeli incursions, nor air, nor artillery strikes have stopped the rocket fire from Gaza in the past.

To a greater or lesser extent, it has been a constant over the last six years. And will continue, say armed Palestinian groups, as long as Israel occupies land they view as Palestinian.

'Powerlessness'

Israelis bristle when they hear these rockets described as "crude" or "home-made", though that is what they are.

Although they rarely kill, they are designed to. And now after five days in which they say close to 100 rockets were fired from Gaza, Israel's authorities are under pressure to act.

Night after night, Israelis watch powerful pictures on news broadcasts of their fellow countrymen, living close to the Gaza border, screaming through the streets as sirens wail.

They see footage of homes, schools and synagogues directly hit by rockets. They want their government to do something but few trust it will act for the best.

Still fresh in Israeli minds is the Lebanon War last summer. Thousands of Katyusha rockets rained down on the north of the country, fired by the Lebanese Hezbollah movement.

Israel's army - viewed as the most powerful in the Middle East - was unable to stop them.

A similar sense of powerlessness, anger and frustration with their leaders is creeping across Israel now.

 [E-mail this to a friend](#)

 [Printable version](#)

Most Popular Now | Traffic to this site is currently at a normal level

[Back to top ^^](#)

[Help](#) | [Privacy and cookies policy](#) | [News sources](#) | [About the BBC](#) | [Contact us](#)