



Published on *The American Task Force on Palestine* (<http://www.americantaskforce.org>)

[Home](#) > [Printer-friendly PDF](#) > [Printer-friendly PDF](#)

---

## Israeli official: Hamas rockets can reach Tel Aviv

Dan Perry

The Statesman

November 14, 2010 - 12:00am

<http://www.statesman.com/news/nation/israeli-official-hamas-rockets-can-reach-te...> [1]

November 15, 2010

**Article Author(s):** Dan Perry

**Media Outlet:** The Statesman

**Date:** November 14, 2010

**Source Link(s):** <http://www.statesman.com/news/nation/israeli-official-hamas-rockets-can-reach-te...> [1]

TEL AVIV, ISRAEL ? A senior Israeli intelligence official warned Sunday that Hamas rulers in the Gaza Strip have rockets that can travel 80 kilometers (50 miles) ? a longer range than previously reported, which would put the coastal metropolis of Tel Aviv within range of its launchers.

The official blamed Egypt, saying it was not doing enough to stem smuggling through a network of tunnels along the relatively short border between its Sinai desert and the Palestinian territory. An Egyptian security official reached for comment maintained that Egypt was combating the smuggling successfully.

The Israeli intelligence official said that Hamas, which seized control of Gaza in 2007, is "making very big efforts to build up their military capabilities ... building up their rocket capabilities in the Gaza Strip, and all this is happening because of one important thing: the smuggling of weapons through Egypt to the Gaza Strip."

Egypt, along with Israel, imposed an embargo on Gaza in June 2007 after Hamas militants took control of the area, but the Israelis and United States have repeatedly urged Egypt to do more to prevent weapons smuggling into the territory.

"Most of the tunnels that are used to smuggle these rockets and explosives and other weapons are in an area of three to four kilometers," or up to 2.5 miles, said the official, who is privy to high-level intelligence information and briefed foreign correspondents on condition that he not be identified.

"We see it in our intelligence. We have photos of this. In many places we can show photos of

Egyptian soldiers located less than 20 meters (yards) from the opening of a tunnel, and the tunnel is operating under his eyes, under his control, and nobody is doing anything about it."

"Egypt can stop all this smuggling of weapons within 24 hours if they want to do it," he said. "There are enough Egyptian troops and policemen ... located on this border."

Israeli lawmaker Arie Elad, a member of the parliamentary Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, who has access to classified material, confirmed the official's assessment.

"Egypt is not a country that large quantities of weapons can enter without the authorities knowing," he told The Associated Press, charging that Egypt allows Hamas to acquire arms in exchange for the Islamic militants leaving Egypt alone.

"They could easily train police to look for the smugglers and they don't," Elad said.

A senior Egyptian intelligence official said Egyptian security has been performing its duties successfully at the border with Gaza. He said they have intercepted 50 tons of explosives in the past two years and have been praised by Israeli intelligence for their work.

The Gaza-Egypt border is only about 8 miles (13 kilometers) long.

Egypt beefed up its presence at the border after Israel withdrew from the Gaza Strip in September 2005 and handed it over to Palestinian control. The smugglers responded by digging longer tunnels, penetrating past the immediate border area.

The Egyptians have found 675 tunnels since the beginning of this year, the security official said.

The United States has helped Egypt with advanced equipment to find out the tunnels through uncovering the underground movement and several Egyptians were trained in the U.S. to use these equipment. Egypt also built a steel wall along the border to prevent smugglers from penetrating into Egypt, though some smugglers have cut through it.

Although Hamas has largely halted its rocket fire since a fierce Israeli military offensive in early 2009, the Israeli security official said the group's aim remained to strike at Israeli cities.

"Today there are rockets which are reaching 70 and 80 kilometers (45 to 50 miles) in the Gaza Strip ... so it means that we can sit here and talk and a rocket can fall on our heads within five minutes," the official said.

That range would mean that rockets could reach Tel Aviv, Israel's business and cultural hub. About 2 million people live in the Tel Aviv area, which was targeted by Saddam Hussein's Iraq with Scud missiles during the 1991 Gulf War.

The assessment indicated that Hamas has improved its capabilities in recent months. Past assessments have said Hamas rocket range was closer to 60 or 70 kilometers, or roughly 40 to 45 miles.

On Sunday Israel's Channel 10 TV showed video of Israel's "Iron Dome" system knocking down rockets. The system is designed to protect Israel from rocket fire from Gaza and Lebanon. However, deployment has been delayed several times and now appears at least months away.

---

TAGS: [Border Crossings and Security](#) <sup>[2]</sup>[Security](#) <sup>[3]</sup>

[Events](#) | [Daily News](#) | [About Us](#) | [Resources](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Donate](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)

[!\[\]\(4729e517bc6a7cd81c8025b9646574fb\_img.jpg\) Front Page Features](#) [!\[\]\(90a2fb2f2c617b26262139ae4159c0a0\_img.jpg\) World Press Roundup](#) [!\[\]\(40394d85fb59f1a516df36b5a2680ad2\_img.jpg\) ATFP in the News](#) [!\[\]\(053a9c97005e586ce890308421354101\_img.jpg\) Policy and Analysis](#)  
[!\[\]\(7b5bf53e3c7529b40867fa602522e02e\_img.jpg\) Briefing Summaries](#)

---

**Source URL (retrieved on Dec 13 2019 - 6:28am):**

[http://www.americantaskforce.org/daily\\_news\\_article/2010/11/14/1289710800\\_1](http://www.americantaskforce.org/daily_news_article/2010/11/14/1289710800_1)

**Links:**

[1] <http://www.statesman.com/news/nation/israeli-official-hamas-rockets-can-reach-tel-aviv-1047114.html>

[2] [http://www.americantaskforce.org/security/border\\_crossings\\_and\\_security](http://www.americantaskforce.org/security/border_crossings_and_security)

[3] <http://www.americantaskforce.org/security>