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# HUMAN SHIELDS

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The deliberate abuse by terrorists of  
children and civilians

A TESTIMONIAL REPORT BY IDF SOLDIERS

## WITH APPRECIATION

This Report has been published thanks to the support of many individuals whose only goal is to share the truth, and create a balanced and objective presentation of the conduct of the IDF.

We thank everyone who supported this project. We are especially grateful to the dozens of witnesses who shared their stories, and to the dedicated My Truth professional and lay team who worked day and night to bring this project to fruition.

Special thanks to Dan Topaz and the Mazal Group for their support of this project in memory of Private Rami Blumenfeld ז"ל who was killed in battle fighting the Hezbollah on the second day of the First Lebanon War (June 7, 1982) at the entrance to the city of Tzidon, Lebanon.

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**A Testimonial Report by IDF Soldiers**



Printed in Israel, November 2018



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## About **My Truth**

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‘My Truth’ is a non-partisan organization comprised of active reserve-duty soldiers. Its purpose is to provide education regarding the IDF's activities and the code of morals under which its soldiers serve.

IDF soldiers face complex situations that are unparalleled in the world. In recent years, there has been growing and unceasing criticism of the IDF; criticism which blatantly ignores the facts on the ground, the context, and the overall picture. My Truth seeks the objective truth and presents an unbiased and balanced representation of the dangers, complexities, and moral dilemmas faced by IDF soldiers in combat and throughout their service.

‘My Truth’ was founded following a public outcry for a balanced and fair discussion of IDF activity which includes the complex realities under which it operates. ‘My Truth’ fulfills its mission through open and transparent testimonies by reserve soldiers in which they speak first-hand about their personal experiences in military service. The organization provides education in Israel and around the world of the IDF’s moral code in combat, stemming from its belief that this is a Tikkun Olam and will serve to advance and preserve the high norms of the IDF while preserving the reputation of its soldiers.

The organization's leaders, activists and supporters come from all corners of Israeli society. While they hold diverse political views, they have a shared aspiration to preserve the strength and moral standing of the IDF soldiers. ‘My Truth’ regards IDF soldiers as an Israeli social and national consensus and strongly opposes those who seek to promote political agendas through slander and lies.

# Introduction

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“My Truth” was founded four years ago with a single goal; to share the deeply complex security challenges faced by the IDF daily as it maintains unprecedented standards of morals and ethics. Hundreds of first-hand testimonies from IDF soldiers representing diverse backgrounds and military roles, have revealed the risk combat soldiers face as they balance their duties with this ethical code.

Contrast the ethical dilemmas faced by Israeli soldiers with the combat doctrine of their enemies. Hamas and other terrorist organizations long ago concluded that their best chance of success is in the court of public opinion. Through effective and well-funded propaganda campaigns, they seek the world’s sympathy by demonizing the State of Israel.

In April 2018, Hamas launched a new tactic; mass demonstrations at the fence on Gaza’s border billed as “non-violent” protests. These protests do not follow in Gandhi’s footsteps. Civilians are used as human shields for Hamas terrorists who aim to get close enough to the fence to target IDF soldiers and to infiltrate into Israeli communities. These “demonstrations” followed a wave of terror attacks primarily executed by women and teenage boys.

How do you combat terrorists who seek to hide behind women and children? How do you respond to attacks initiated from schools and hospitals? Hamas and its compatriots know that the IDF will absorb a high cost in its efforts to avoid harming these human shields.

This Report comprises dozens of first-hand testimonials by IDF reserve soldiers, officers, and other security forces. They document the use of the Palestinian civilian population as human shields by terrorists. These immoral and inhumane actions put the innocent in harm’s way and violate international law. And yet, the international community is silent.

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The testimonials herein include: the use of ambulances to carry combat weapons, terrorists and ammunition; rocket attacks launched from kindergartens; shooting attacks from terrorists located at schools and mosques; planned attacks specifically targeting Israeli civilians while using Palestinian women and children as human shields; violations of humanitarian cease-fire agreements; and much more.

The documented human rights violations are divided into three categories:

### **1. Use of children in aid of terrorism and combat needs.**

Sadly, there is recurring use of children armed with explosives to attack IDF soldiers. The assumption is that children are less suspect than adults. In some testimonies, the child at issue appears unaware as to what he was instructed to carry. Thanks to alert IDF soldiers, grave injury or death was prevented.

### **2. Use of vulnerable populations to conduct terror actions.**

It has become commonplace for terror attacks to be undertaken by women. Research has shown that many of these women were pressured into service for reasons including atoning and/or making amends for dishonoring their family. And, there is the ever-present incentive of the generous financial allowance provided by the Palestinian Authority to the families of terrorists.

### **3. Turning humanitarian spaces into combat zones.**

Terror organizations know that Israel continually identifies and maps humanitarian locations such as schools and medical facilities. Israel does this to avoid harm to civilians. Palestinian terror organizations use this to their advantage by focusing activity at these locations. No space is safe. Mosques, schools, child care centers, and hospitals have been used to launch rockets and

## Introduction

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other attacks, store ammunition, and hide terrorists.

There are two themes consistent throughout the Palestinian use of human shields: **Fear** and **Brainwashing**. Terror organizations force children and adult civilians into action through intimidation and threats. Failure to act is considered an act of treason and the consequences can be torture or death. Simultaneously, children are taught from a very young age that Israel is their enemy and that those who kill Israelis gain honor, fame, and wealth. Their “education” is sophisticated and even children are savvy enough to know that they may have a greater chance of success than adults.

The international community has ignored these abuses. While Israeli soldiers are held to the most rigorous ethical military code in the world, Palestinian organizations regularly violate the most basic of human rights without comment.

“My Truth” has published this Report to share the IDF’s daily reality with those who previously received their information only from social media and international media outlets who have failed to objectively cover these issues.

The reader should ask:

What would I do if an armed child was running towards me?

Do I stop the speeding ambulance coming towards my checkpoint to check for explosives?

The first-hand testimonies herein share the heart-breaking and incomprehensible reality of IDF soldiers who put themselves at risk rather than put human shields in harm’s way. They face an enemy who willingly sacrifices its own people and has utter disregard for basic human rights.

Terrorism is not a problem faced solely by the State of Israel. Like the concerns for human rights, It is a world-wide phenomena. The near absolute silence from the international community due to political or other agendas, presents not only a danger to Israel but to the entire free world.

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- Images and videos used in this project are provided for illustration purposes only and are archival material.
  - All images are authentic and were taken as part of efforts to document actions within Palestinian terrorist organizations, but may not be directly linked to the specific incidents in this Report.
  - All testimonials were approved by the Israeli Military Censor.
  - The testimonies provided were transcribed and proofread for the benefit of the readers.



## **Ambassador Ron Prozor**

Head of the Abba Eban  
Institute of International  
Diplomacy, IDC Herzliya

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## **Seek Truth**

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During my career at the Foreign Ministry, particularly as its Director-General and as the Ambassador to the United Nations and London, I stood on the front line of Israel's international diplomatic battles. It was a never-ending daily struggle to share the truth.

Not my truth, or the Israeli government's truth – simply The Truth.

In an era when facts are fluid and “fake news” owns the headlines, Israel's advocates repeatedly need to share its most basic truth; Israel is the only state in the world that has been in constant battle for over 70 years. A battle waged against terror organizations and hostile countries. A battle fought against diplomatic terror and unrelenting smear campaigns, which sought to demonize and delegitimize Israel and its place among nations. While Israel is committed to international law and to the protection of human rights, terror organizations like Hamas are flagrantly lawless with utter disregard for even its own people.

This type of conflict – a State combating terror organizations - is called asymmetric warfare because it gives an inherent advantage to the terrorists. The rules that apply to the law-abiding state do not apply to terrorist organizations. What we see, especially in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, is that the international community exercises an unfair and offensive triple-



*What we see, especially in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, is that the international community exercises an unfair and offensive triple-standard against Israel*

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standard against Israel; one standard for non-democratic countries, terror organizations and the Palestinian Authority; a second standard for democracies, and a third, unique standard, that essentially cannot be met for the State of Israel.

Unsurprisingly, I confronted this triple standard most often while serving as Israel's Ambassador to the UN. My tenure included two military operations in Gaza: Operation Pillar of Defense (November 2012) and Operation Protective Edge (Summer 2014). Daily condemnation efforts were waged against Israel, all based on lies, distortions, and at best, half-truths. While fighting these endless charges, I endeavored to bring about a focus on the war crimes committed by Hamas and other terror organizations in the Gaza Strip. These terrorist actions not only harmed Israeli citizens, but also the Gazan populace. My efforts were met with blind eyes and deaf ears.

Obtaining the facts was easy. Some were documented first-hand, even from UN personnel. For example, when Hamas concealed rockets in UNRWA schools in Gaza, it was UNRWA personnel who discovered and reported the illegal use of their facilities. What happened next? They did what seemed right in their eyes and returned the rockets to Hamas. To this day, I wonder if these rockets, hidden in Gaza schools, eventually hit schools or kindergartens in Israel. The international community's response to this episode was so quiet that even Israel's most sophisticated listening devices could not intercept it.

*Even when television cameras caught Hamas launching rockets towards Israel from a hospital, no response emerged from the international community*

During the same period, Hamas and its partners regularly used women and children as human shields, putting them in severe danger. Testimonials constantly arrived regarding:

- Hamas not only hiding, but also firing rockets towards Israeli cities from within population centers in the Gaza Strip;
- Hamas forcing children to locate IDF soldiers, at which point they would open fire in the direction of the child and soldiers;
- Hamas using humanitarian ceasefires

to re-arm and build outposts in civilian homes.

Even when television cameras caught Hamas launching rockets towards Israel from a hospital, no response emerged from the international community. This era demonstrated the UN's triple standard in a level that can only be considered diplomatic terrorism against Israel.

This diplomatic terrorism obliges us, as Israel's representatives, to fight for truth, to prove the liars wrong, and to provide unceasingly real-time facts to the public and media in Israel and abroad.

This obligation is where I see the importance of organizations like "My Truth." They hold a mirror to those voices who seek demonize Israel, while forcing recognition of the truth. Not a narrative, not a story or opinion – just the truth. This answer is the best one to the "fake news" surrounding us.

The lies of Hamas will continuously be forgiven and excused. Israel does not have the luxury of any inaccuracies. Rather, Israel must be completely truthful, honest, sincere, and even harsh.

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This is the reason the first-hand testimonies published by “My Truth” are so powerful and persuasive.

The proverb says that the lie has no legs. Unfortunately, I have learned that even without legs, lies spread faster and further than the truth. And yet, we shall not give up on the truth because without it, we will never win.

This document, by “My Truth,” takes another step toward the light of truth.

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## **Professor Irwin Cotler**

Founder and Chair of the Raoul Wallenberg  
Centre for Human Rights

Former Minister of Justice and Attorney  
General of Canada

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## **Truth is the First Casualty of War**

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Nowhere does this notion find greater noxious expression than in the Arab-Israeli-Palestinian conflict in general, and the Hamas assault on Israel in particular. Under cover of the fog of war, the truth is obscured and facts are obfuscated, while false moral equivalencies pass for seemingly equitable moral imperatives.

This clouds – if not corrupts – the understanding and the ability of the international community to protect human rights and uphold International Humanitarian Law, providing moral protective cover to Hamas as it harms Palestinians and Israelis alike through the exploitative use of human shields to provide physical protective cover to Hamas atrocities. This includes:

Deliberately – and indiscriminately – bombarding Israeli cities, towns, and villages with missiles. Indeed, these widespread and systematic attacks targeting Israeli civilians as a matter of state policy constitute a violation of the Rome Statute and the law of international conflict. As even the Palestinian representative to the UN put it, “each and every” rocket launched by Hamas at Israeli civilians is “a crime against humanity.” Israelis have largely been secured by the country’s Iron Dome defense system from what would otherwise be tragic death and destruction; however, these assaults are nevertheless



*As even the Palestinian representative to the UN put it, “each and every” rocket launched by Hamas at Israeli civilians is “a crime against humanity”*

intended to terrorize an entire civilian population, and have significant psychological consequences.

Moreover, the Hamas rocket and missile attacks exploit Palestinian civilians as human shields, if not hostages, as they are launched from civilian enclaves and civilian infrastructure, and where Hamas seeks to deploy human shields not only to immunize itself from a lawful Israeli response, but even seeks to deliberately invite and incur Palestinian casualties.

Second, Hamas not only fires rockets and missiles, but stores weapons in civilian enclaves, embeds combatants in Gaza’s civilian infrastructure, builds an underground city of terror tunnels from which to launch assaults on Israeli civilians, and even deploys civilians on rooftops to again both invite and incur Israeli strikes.

The consequence is that Israeli counter-strikes tragically may entail a large number of civilian casualties. As UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon – who was not known for being pro-Israel – put it, “We condemn the use of civilian sites – schools, hospitals and other civilian facilities – for military purposes.”

Third, there is the crime of perfidy in the use and abuse of human shields wherein Hamas misappropriates and misrepresents international humanitarian symbols and religious institutions for terrorist purposes, such as storing weapons in UN facilities, transporting terrorist combatants in an ambulance, or firing rockets from mosques, schools, hospitals, and culturally protected sites.

Fourth, there is the particularly egregious use of children as human shields. Hamas recruits children for combatant or terrorist purposes, such as suicide bombings, while indoctrinating and inciting children to hate and kill Jews. Such actions are a cruel and dehumanizing violation of recognized children's rights. In addition, the threatened abduction and illegal hostage-taking of Israeli children – facilitated by the terror tunnels – is a standing violation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Fifth, Hamas engages in state-sanctioned incitement to hate and genocide – a standing violation of International Humanitarian Law – by calling publically for the destruction of Israel and the killing of Jews wherever they may be – calls anchored in the anti-Semitic Hamas Charter, which blames Jews for all the evils of humankind, and which corrupts and criminalizes the young and vulnerable.

Sixth, and of more recent vintage, Hamas has engaged in the mobilization, transportation, and indemnification of civilian human shields - including women and children - in the widespread and systematic eco-terrorism involved in the burning of farms and forests, synagogues and schools.

Taken together, the systematic and widespread character of the above actions constitutes Crimes Against Humanity, the ultimate in international criminality. These acts must be prosecuted and punished to the fullest extent of the law.

Seeking to adhere to the highest standards of international law and human rights norms, Israel has responded in a measured manner, while prioritizing the preservation of human life, both of Israelis and Palestinians. Indeed, while Hamas exploits Palestinian civilians as human shields as they target Israeli civilians to be murdered and maimed, Israel has sought to minimize Palestinian casualties while seeking to rescue Palestinians from harm's way.

This is dramatized and humanized by the story of IDF officers Hadar and Tzur Goldin – whose testimony is featured in this publication – and for whose family I serve as pro-bono international legal counsel.

From June 1 to July 7, 2014, Hamas fired nearly 450 missiles upon Israeli

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*while Hamas exploits Palestinian civilians as human shields as they target Israeli civilians to be murdered and maimed, Israel has sought to minimize Palestinian casualties*

civilians and dug terror tunnels into Israeli civilian centers. To counter this threat, Israel commenced Operation Protective Edge.

As part of this Operation, Hadar's unit was responsible for protecting the engineering team working under fire to safely dismantle these terror tunnels, which were often built from inside civilian structures such as schools in Gaza. At the same time, his twin brother Tzur commanded a rescue company tasked with safeguarding civilians and rescuing the Palestinians used by Hamas as human shields.

An international campaign of dehumanization, demonization and delegitimization commenced. It featured clichés such as “cycle of violence,” "false moral equivalences", and even "unconscionable allegations of Israeli 'genocide'."

Ceasefires were put forth – but only Israel ceased – and Hamas continued to fire. During one humanitarian ceasefire brokered and sponsored by the U.S and UN, Hamas took advantage of the agreement to murder and seize the remains of Hadar Goldin. Tzur Goldin was called away from rescuing Palestinians used as human shields by Hamas, to rescue his own brother who was being abducted by Hamas.

But it was too late. In violation of the UN-mandated and U.S.-brokered humanitarian ceasefire, and flagrantly flouting the basic principles of International Humanitarian Law, Hamas continues for over four years now to illegally withhold the remains of Hadar Goldin and prevent proper burial in accordance with the tenets of his faith. Meanwhile, the Palestinian Authority

*this publication by “My Truth” is as timely as it is important. It exposes and unmask to the world this pervasive and pernicious perpetration of atrocities by Hamas*

condemns Israel and seeks its international censure, while offering pay to those who slay.

While Israel seeks to abide by the International Law of Armed Conflict, the Palestinian leadership are in standing violation of it. Yet, the public discourse – and international action – are inverted. Whether it be a media inquiry or a UN inquiry, Israeli guilt is presupposed and a “sentence first – verdict afterwards” approach to dealing with Israel prevails, as in United Nations resolutions which predetermine Israeli criminality while exonerating Hamas atrocity.

Mired in misunderstanding at best, such efforts marginalize, if not sanitize, atrocities committed by Hamas, thus further encouraging their use of human shields and human rights abuses.

Accordingly, this publication by “My Truth” is as timely as it is important. It exposes and unmask to the world this pervasive and pernicious perpetration of atrocities by Hamas, and the hateful culture of criminality and impunity that underpins it.

Through clear and compelling eyewitness testimony, this work documents the truth in great and graphic detail, highlighting Hamas’ use of human shields, with important sections on “child abuse in the name of terrorism”; “weaponizing the weak”; and Hamas’ cynical use of “civilian infrastructure as terror bases.”

I trust that the plight and pain of the Palestinian and Israeli peoples – to which this publication by “My Truth” bears witness – will be addressed and redressed, fostering a peaceful coexistence. Hamas’ standing violations of International

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Humanitarian Law, and its use and abuse of human shields, is at the core of this conflict. In confronting the truth of the issue, this work makes an important contribution to our common cause of peace and justice.

Ultimately, truth and justice will prevail.

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*Part 1*

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**Child Abuse in the  
Name of Terrorism**

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*The exploitation of children; tools  
of terrorism and use as human  
shields*



| 1

## *They were simply shooting at us between the children's heads*

**Ravid Alfassi**, Captain (res.)

Unit: **Infantry -**

**Golani Special Forces**

Area: **Gaza Strip**

Year: **2007**

During my military service I was a team leader in Golani Special Forces. I had led soldiers in combat in Lebanon, the West Bank and Gaza. After the Second war of Lebanon, the main threat to Israel was Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Hamas was conducting daily missile and mortar attacks on the cities and villages in Israel surrounding the

Gaza Strip. My mission as a team leader was to stop the shooting that was done mainly from the farming areas to the east and north of the city of Gaza. I remember a saying from one of the Hamas leaders at the time about us Israeli soldiers. He said that when the Israeli soldiers will enter Gaza they won't find themselves fighting only against several thousand Hamas soldiers, they will find themselves fighting against 1.5 million people who love death more than they love life and want to be Shahids (martyrs). That's what he said and that's how I felt, that we were fighting against the entire city and not just the terrorists.

In that mission we entered the Gaza Strip at 1 or 2 am, advancing very carefully between the olive trees. We located our target's launching site at the middle of a neighborhood and set an ambush in an olive plantation nearby. We waited the whole night, and then, at about 5 am we were spotted. The first morning farmers have understood that there are IDF forces in the area, perhaps they saw our tracks from the border. Anyway, they understood that there are troops around and naturally called Hamas. A bit later, at 5:30am, I saw a group of 10-15 children, no older than 6 or 7 running around the plantation. I did not understand why would they come here, why would Hamas send children? Eventually I learned that young children are just short enough to be able to run around an

olive plantation to look for us, without being slowed down by the branches.

It took the kids about 10 to 15 minutes to find us. Once they found us they cheered and started pointing at us while shouting and smiling. Less than a minute later, we started taking machine gun and AK 47 fire, all that while the kids were still there.

I remember thinking we should not fire back with massive arms because the kids are still there, but Hamas- they did not care, they were simply shooting at us between the children's heads. We took cover and hid behind the trees and then, about 2 minutes later, RPG missiles started flying at us. At that point we had to leave so we went around one of the buildings and started to fight back.

What struck me the most from that day was the realization that we genuinely do not fight only against Hamas, but against the entire city, and also, how successful Hamas is with gathering the civilians in Gaza to fight against us, including children. Hamas sends children to trace armed soldiers, and then starts fighting while the children are still there. We are fighting in Gaza to protect the Israeli citizens in the cities and villages around the Gaza Strip, to protect their kids and families. On the other side, Hamas is using its own children to fight us. Its unimaginable that we are going to the front line to protect our children back home and they are sending their children to the fight.

*I remember thinking we should not fire back with massive arms because the kids are still there, but Hamas- they did not care, they were simply shooting at us between the children's heads*



Watch the testimony:  
[mytruth.org.il](https://mytruth.org.il)



| 2

## *They gave him a NIS 100 and sent him to commit a suicide attack*

**M.K. Micky Levy,**  
Police Major General  
(retired)

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Unit: **Israel Police -  
Jerusalem District (chief)**

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Area: **Jerusalem**

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Year: **2002**

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Both as head of Judea and Samaria District and the head of Jerusalem District in the Israeli Police, I took part in numerous operational debriefings. A substantial number of cases in which women and children were carrying out the terror attacks received even deeper attention. I remember the case of a child who broke his teacher's car window, panicked and ran away. The terror organizations reached him, gave him NIS 100, which he gave his mother and equipped him with an explosive belt. He was then sent to a military checkpoint to commit a suicide attack on the soldiers, or in the event he would successfully manage

to pass through the checkpoint, in an Israeli city center.

The manipulation of a young child to make him a suicide bomber shocked us completely. It compelled us to modify our perspective and operational concepts and to start treating children as suspects.



Watch the testimony:  
[mytruth.org.il](https://mytruth.org.il)





| 3

## *Within seconds it exploded*

### **Nadav Ania**

Sergeant First Class (res.)

Unit: **Infantry - Orev Golani**

Area: **Nablus**

Year: **2007**

The events took place in the winter of 2007, as part of Operation Hot Winter in The Casbah (the old city) of Nablus, which was then the stronghold of terror in the Samaria region. Our mission was to locate weapons and wanted people and, since this was a large mission, it involved several units. As I was leading the team we reached a crossroad. My commander asked me to take a look at the alley to make sure there

was no danger to the rest of the team. As I entered the alley, I spotted dozens of young children at the ages of 5-11, standing in front of me, shouting, cursing in Arabic and Hebrew and throwing stones at me.

This was no coincidence. I sensed the event was well planned and these children were trained how to respond when encountering soldiers. As I was standing and waiting for my team to pass, I noticed that what I'd thought was a stone thrown at me was not exactly a stone. This so called "stone" had a fuse attached to it, it was a bomb. Within seconds it exploded. Fortunately for me I was only slightly injured.

During my service I took part in many combat events, but this was the first time I had to face actual children in a combat zone, throwing stones and using firearms. It was a shock for me and all my teammates.

I remember it as a change in my perspective. The enemy sends its children to fight and forces you to cope with an unfamiliar situation. They send little children, knowing the IDF's commands not to shoot young children, even if they throw rocks. While the soldiers face this dilemma, the terrorists hide behind the



children, using them as human shields. From the terrorists' perspective it is a win-win situation. If the child hits the soldier or enables the terrorist to hurt him, it is a success, and if the soldier hurts the child in self-defense it is a success in demonizing the IDF in the world's opinion. At the time it was a surprise, today it is most certainly not. Using children as human shields is the standard method of operation for the terrorists we combat.

*As I was standing and waiting for my team to pass, I noticed that what I'd thought was a stone thrown at me was not exactly a stone. This so called "stone" had a fuse attached to it, it was a bomb. Within seconds it exploded*



Watch the testimony:  
[mytruth.org.il](http://mytruth.org.il)



## | 4

# *Within minutes he brought dozens of civilians to the rooftop*

**Yonatan Branski,**  
Colonel (res.)

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Unit: **Southern Corps**  
(operations officer)

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Area: **Gaza Strip**

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Year: **2007**

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Between 2005-2007, I served as the Southern Corps Operations Officer. As a part of my duties, I participated in planned attacks, mostly of terror arsenals, based on current intelligence. We quickly learned that Hamas, understanding our sensitivity to local civilian casualties, had started to hide its arsenal in the lower floors of residential high-rise buildings.

In return, we developed a method for destroying these arsenals without endangering the civilians. Before attacking such an arsenal, we issued a specific warning to the families living in the building. Only after the building was evacuated did we launch a very targeted attack and destroyed the arsenal without any civilian casualties. This method was used successfully time and again. It is very difficult to imagine that the families living in those buildings were unaware of the massive arsenal that had been set on the lower floors.

I recall one evening we were planning such a response to an attack. The warning about the impending attack had been relayed by a person who we knew had a direct relation



*This method was perfected by Hamas. In future conflicts in Gaza, we witnessed how this tactic became more and more predominant. We witnessed Hamas using mosques, hospitals, medical clinics and kindergartens as arsenals and rocket launching grounds.*



to the arsenal. However, instead of evacuating the building so the civilians would not be harmed, we saw him go out of the house and gather people from the street. Within minutes, he brought dozens of civilians to the building's rooftop. They knew that we were watching them with our drones so they made themselves very visible, all to prevent us from destroying the arsenal.

This was only one example of many during which Hamas uses civilians as human shields. This method was perfected by Hamas. In future conflicts in Gaza, we witnessed how this tactic became more and more predominant. We witnessed Hamas using mosques, hospitals, medical clinics and kindergartens as arsenals and rocket launching grounds. On some occasions, they even used UN facilities.



Watch the testimony:  
[mytruth.org.il](https://mytruth.org.il)



| 5

## *I immediately understood that this girl is under fire*

**Ran Bar Yoshafat,**  
Sergeant First Class (res.)

Unit: **Infantry Special Forces - Maglan**

Area: **Jenin**

Year: **2002**

The year 2002 was a very hectic period in Israel. It was during the Second Intifada when terrorists would go into Israeli towns and cities and explode in buses, cafés, shopping malls,

killing innocent civilians, children, seniors...

One time my team and I were in Jenin (in the West Bank) on a special mission looking for a group of terrorists. It was an

urgent mission as it was clear that if we do not catch this group of terrorists soon they will launch an attack on an Israeli city and kill innocent civilians. During the search we have entered a building and I was assigned to be the first person to enter the room. The second we entered the building we immediately started taking fire from all directions. So, while people are shooting at me, I kicked down the door and entered the room that according to intelligence was where the terrorist was supposed to be, and what I saw in front of me was a little girl. I don't know if she was 9 or 10, but she was a little girl. For a second there I froze, I was like... whoa! I did not expect to see this. I kept taking on fire from the back while I saw this little girl in the middle of this dark room. I remember thinking to myself what the hell is happening here? After a few more seconds, I heard terrorists shooting at the little girl from the window.

Now, whoever served in a combat unit know it is very easy to distinguish M-16 from AK-47. We (the IDF) use M-16 and shoot in single shots. The terrorists use AK-47 and shoot in long bursts. Therefore, it was easy to understand that these

are the terrorists who are shooting at the little girl and not our forces. And so, I ran to the little girl and grabbed her, using myself as a human shield to protect her as I was wearing a bullet-proof vest.

Later on, I remember thinking a lot about what happened, it was not a scenario I was used to. I knew terrorist plan to murder children on our side, unfortunately I was used to that. But I had never expected that they would use their own children just to vilify the IDF.

That is what we realized that had happened. They were willing to sacrifice this little girl,

just so the IDF would get a bad image. For them it is a win-win situation. Either we accidentally kill this girl and the IDF would suffer in the world public opinion or we will not be able to complete our mission successfully.

Unfortunately, this phenomenon had become a main strategy by now. Inciting little children to terror is something we know, and not only the soldiers. As civilians we are exposed to it as well, with the constant reports regarding the Palestinians education system that teaches its kids that the Jews are descendants of monkeys and pigs. It is very frustrating as it is turning the children to an active part of the conflict.

*I was assigned to be the first person to enter the room. The second we entered the building we immediately started taking fire from all directions. So, while people are shooting at me, I kicked down the door and entered the room*



Watch the testimony:  
[mytruth.org.il](https://mytruth.org.il)



## | 6

# *The Molotov thrower is surrounded by children and there is nothing I can do*

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### Hagai Altshuler

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Unit: **Infantry – Armored forces support (Alon)**

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Area: **Beit Lehem**

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Year: **2017**

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During Passover 2017, because of the peak in visitors at the Rachel's Tomb site in Beit Lehem, my platoon was sent to reinforce a local outpost and was constantly called out to deal with riots. The violent protests had a fixed ritual. We would be leaving the outpost and in front of us were waiting 1,000-2,000 people, with little children situated in the front as a buffer, acting as a human shield.

The children were elementary schoolers, around the age of 10-11, the same as my younger siblings. As soon as the gate was to open we would receive a barrage of stones and Molotov Cocktails which we avoided by taking cover behind the protective concrete blocks that were situated there for that purpose. Afterwards, we would start closing on the main instigator using our observation outpost or drowns.

Everybody knew that the main instigator was that person wearing the Keffiyeh who always stands next to the same specific store and is visibly surrounded by children. The instigator used to stand with a bullhorn, shouting and inciting the protestors. At the same time, every person who wanted to perform a more violent attack, such as throwing a Molotov Cocktail, prepared the bottle at the back and then started moving forward to commit the attack after surrounding himself with children, knowing we would not hurt him. It used to give me the creeps.

I recall one event in particular. I was situated in a pillbox (a tall armored

*Everybody knew that the main instigator was that person wearing the Keffiyeh who always stands next to the same specific store and is visibly surrounded by children*



observation post) and my duty was to observe and support cover for the rest of the platoon dealing with the riot down below. I noticed one person organizing many bottles in a box next to him. Suddenly, he lit up the bottles and started throwing them at our troops. My commanding officer asked me if I see the person who is throwing the Molotovs, and I answered that I did. When he asked me immediately why I am not opening fire at him I answered that the Molotov thrower is surrounded by children and there is nothing I can do, it was not possible to hit the thrower without risking the children.

This situation was particularly hard for me. I enlisted after Operation Protective Edge and we were constantly busy in taking care of our children, and make sure they reach a shelter during a missile attack alarm. It hurt me on the personal level to think about my younger siblings at home running for shelters, when on the other side, the Palestinians take their own children away from shelter and cynically use them on the front line as human shields.



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| 7

## *What the hell can you do with 10 Shekels after being exploded to pieces?*

**Itay Reuveni,**  
Sergeant First Class (res.)

Unit: **Infantry -  
Paratroopers**

Area: **Nablus**

Year: **2004**

During 2004, several months prior to my discharge, my battalion was stationed in the Nablus area. It was the time of the Second Intifada, perhaps not its peak as it was during 2001-2002, but still the Palestinian city centers remained terror strongholds that executed numerous terror attacks in the heart of Israel. Our missions were diverse, they varied from routine security to targeted counter terror operations deep

inside hostile territory. One of the sector's major points of interest was Hawara Checkpoint that, by the way, does not exist anymore, and was the southern entry and exit point of the city of Nablus. I served as the Battalion CO's (commanding officer) radio operator and therefore experienced things from his point of view, unlike a standard soldier.

It was an early morning in March that year when I joined the Battalion CO and his team to Hawara Checkpoint following a report of suspicious activity in the area. As we arrived to the checkpoint we approached a female MP (military police) that was on duty and was in the middle of inspecting a young boy maybe 8 or 9 years old. By her side, on the concrete wall, was a child's Spiderman backpack. I picked up the backpack to inspect it and immediately noticed something suspicious – the bag was too heavy. I opened the bag to inspect its content and found an explosive device with a cellphone attached to it hiding in the bottom of the backpack underneath games and dolls. At that point, the CO and the MP called for an “explosive device routine” and quickly cleared

the area of people. I grabbed the boy and pulled him behind our jeep that we used as a shield. The assumption was that the device can explode in any second and the fear was from a combined terrorist ambush. The situation was unimaginable. On the one hand we are facing a boy carrying a bomb and on the other hand it is pretty obvious that he is terrified and does not have a clue regarding what was in the bag. Eventually a specialist came and detonated the charge in a controlled manner.

The most amazing thing was revealed in the boy's interrogation. The boy revealed that he was given the backpack and sent to the checkpoint for 10 Shekels (\$2.5). The terror activists simply sent him to the checkpoint without explaining anything. I remember thinking to myself what the hell can you do with 10 Shekels after being exploded to pieces? Needless to say that if had the bomb indeed exploded there would have been many Palestinian casualties from the people in the checkpoint.

*I picked up the backpack to inspect it and immediately noticed something suspicious - the bag was too heavy. I opened the bag to inspect its content and found an explosive device with a cellphone attached to it hiding in the bottom of the backpack underneath games and dolls*



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[mytruth.org.il](https://mytruth.org.il)



## | 8

# *The boy turned himself in, and we understood he is wearing an explosive belt*

**Avihai Shorshan**  
Sergeant First Class (res.)

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Unit: **Infantry – Orev Golani**

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Area: **Gaza Strip**

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Year: **2007**

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At the end of 2007 Israel was under constant attacks. The towns and villages surrounding the Gaza Strip were attacked daily by missiles and mortar bombs. “Iron Dome” (rocket intercepting system) and the rest of the defense systems we have today were yet to be developed. In order to prevent these attacks we used to set ambushes around the launching sites inside the Gaza Strip. Our mission was to

catch the Hamas firing squads in the act and neutralize the launchers.

The following events started exactly like this. We entered into the Gaza Strip at night and stationed ourselves on a roof of an industrial building, a soap factory in Beit-Hanun, which was overlooking a rocket launching site. At morning we received an intelligence report saying that we have been exposed and that Hamas knows our location. That report’s implication was that we should prepare ourselves for defense until nighttime when we could make our way back to Israel. We went down from the roof into the factory and made the necessary defense preparations. The building was surrounded by a wall and we positioned soldiers on all sides to guard from the doors and windows. It was not long, maybe an hour or two, before one of the guards identified a person climbing over the surrounding wall, a young boy, maybe 10 or 12 years old. The soldier managed to stop the boy without hurting him. The boy practically turned himself in, and we understood he was wearing an explosive belt. The boy took off the belt and stood almost naked and we pulled him inside the building. At

nightfall, a few hours later, we made our way back to Israel and took him with us for interrogation.

The really amazing part of the story was revealed at the interrogation. The boy was a little older than we first thought, he was 15 years old, and apparently he was targeted by Hamas. The boy was from a struggling family with no father and a sick mother and Hamas wanted to take advantage of him.

Hamas activists who knew about his sensitive situation waited for him outside his school and got him in a taxi. They took him home, told him to change clothes and gave him NIS 50. Then, the activists told him that there are Israeli soldiers in the soap factory, and promised him another NIS 50 if he will go there with the explosive belt. He told us that he did not understand what the belt was for and what it does. Only at the end, when he got just nearby the surrounding wall and the Hamas activists helped him to jump over it did he understand the meaning of his orders and turned himself to us.

At that point, 2.5 years in the service with 6 months to go, I have already seen drama. However, such a case when Hamas is so cynically taking advantage of a young teenager from a struggling family and sends him to commit a suicide attack without even understanding his actions, I did not believe could be possible. It has changed my way of thinking for good.

*The boy was from a struggling family with no father and a sick mother and Hamas wanted to take advantage of him. Hamas activists who knew about his sensitive situation waited for him outside his school and got him in a taxi*



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| 9

## *This boy is the building's insurance against an air strike*

**Dolev Ohayon,**  
Sergeant First Class (res.)

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Unit: **Infantry Special Forces - Rimon**

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Area: **Gaza Strip**

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Year: **2014 - Operation Protective Edge**

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After a month of intense fighting during Operation Protective Edge, a humanitarian ceasefire between Israel and Hamas was declared. We were excited to return to Israel, but after about 45 minutes we received an urgent call to return to our vehicles and enter back into Gaza. As we started to organize we were briefed on what happened: Another force in the Gaza Strip was hit by Hamas fire, which was carried out despite the humanitarian ceasefire, and there were casualties in our forces, two dead, and a soldier who was kidnapped. In the Israeli culture a kidnap event is very traumatic. The reality has already proven that the consequences of kidnapping are so severe to the point of releasing thousands of convicted terrorists, most of whom have been proven to return to terror. Therefore, one could assume that this incident was occupying the highest ranks of the military and the government.

We drove to the scene as quickly as possible. We arrived and unloaded at a safe distance and started to run toward the area where, according to intelligence, the abducted soldier might be. During this run, which



*During this run, which was really crazy, I noticed something I thought was not right. I saw a boy, maybe 10 years old, handcuffed to a pillar. At a glance, while running, the boy seemed not really aware of what was happening around him. I thought he might be mentally retarded*



was really crazy, I noticed something I thought was not right. I saw a boy, maybe 10 years old, handcuffed to a pillar. At a glance, while running, the boy seemed not really aware of what was happening around him. I thought he might be mentally retarded, because he was walking around the pillar so calmly and comfortably as shells fell in the background and shots were heard from all sides. On the one hand it made me think that maybe he has been there for so long he simply got used to it. On the other hand, I could not help but wonder whether he was tied by Hamas at this point for a reason. Perhaps there is something in the building behind him that Hamas wants to protect. After all, this boy is the building's insurance against an air strike.

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Note - This incident occurred as part of the kidnapping of Captain Hadar Goldin, RIP



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## *Part 2*

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# **Weaponizing the Weak**

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*Turning society's most  
vulnerable into weapons of war*



## | 10

# *As long as she kills Israelis she is allowed to also kill Palestinians*

**M.K. Avi Dichter,**  
Director of the Israel  
Security Agency (retired)

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Unit: **Israel Security Agency  
(Shin Bet)**

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Area: **Gaza Strip Border**

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Year: **2005**

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Between 2000 and 2005 I headed the Israel Security Agency (Shin Bet), those years were the peak of the Second Intifada. During that time we had many dilemmas, weather or not to allow Palestinians to cross from Gaza into Israel for special reasons, mainly medical treatment. I remember a case of a woman that like many others, received a special permit to cross into Israel for medical treatment due to a severe illness. After the first round of treatments, she returned to Gaza, and was immediately recruited by Hamas to sneak in a bomb on her body in order to explode herself in Israel. She was given an explosive belt and was guided to cross to Israel and explode

herself in the Be'er-Sheva hospital, amongst as many Israelis as possible. She agreed.

Furthermore, she was instructed that in a case she gets detected by the metal detector at the crossing site she should explode herself immediately. At that point she hesitated. She told the operators that obviously there will be other people from Gaza at the crossing, women, children. Their response was that as long as she kills Israelis she is allowed to also kill Palestinians. When she asked why should she get detected by the metal detector, if, as they told her, there are no metal parts in the bomb, they answered that although it is true that there are no metal parts in the bomb itself but the detonator is made of steel, and there is no knowing of the sensitivity of the metal detector so it might activate. She

did some more thinking and recalled that several months beforehand she broke her arm and was inserted with a metal fixture during an operation at a local hospital that might activate the metal detector. The operators did not hesitate. They took her to a local clinic where her arm was cut open and the metal fixture was extracted. After that she was sent to commit the terror attack.

Thank god we had previous information about that woman. We did not know the name but we knew a woman was supposed to come to the crossing carrying a bomb. We blocked her before she entered, identified her, questioned her and found out about her entire story. We saved her life. More than that, we saved Palestinian lives, and above all, we saved Israeli lives. A few years later we had the same case all over again with another woman, almost identical. I can assure you that even today there are still people from Gaza who are crossing into Israel for medical treatments and there are still cases that those people are being recruited by Hamas to carry out terror attacks. The dilemma continues.

*At that point she hesitated. She told the operators that obviously there will be other people from Gaza at the crossing, women, children. Their response was that as long as she kills Israelis she is allowed to also kill Palestinians*



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| 11

## *In retrospect it turned out that the fainting was just a ruse*

**Dror Dagan,**  
Sergeant First Class

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Unit: **Infantry medic -  
Duvdevan**

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Area: **Beit Lehem**

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Year: **2004**

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It was near the end of my military service, after a terror attack in bus No.19 in Jerusalem. A suicide bomber got on the bus and blew himself up, leaving dozens injured and 11 dead, Hamas claimed responsibility for the attack. After a few days the IDF Intelligence traced the head of the terror squad who was from Bethlehem. My unit's mission was to capture him. The operation itself was very complex and dangerous. We arrived the terrorist's house by surprise around noon and entered inside. In one of

the rooms we found the terrorist's wife along with the grandmother and his three children. The wife was pregnant and when she saw us she fainted, or at least that was what we thought.

I was the team's medic and at that moment I did not care whether she is the wife of a terrorist or not, she is a person and it was my job to take care of her. I pulled out my medical equipment, gave her water and measured her pulse, even though I felt that my life was at risk. The assumption was that there might be more people with the terrorist since senior terrorists like him are never alone.

In retrospect it turned out that the fainting was just a ruse. The terrorist's wife simply wanted to create a commotion in order to alert her husband about the raid. At first, she talked and screamed, then suddenly became silent. Since I was only a medic and not a physician I wanted a doctor to examine her just to be 100% sure she is ok. We called our doctor and in the meanwhile conducted a search inside the house, later we learned that it had a double wall inside. It all



happened very fast, the terrorist came out from the double wall and opened fire. Several of my teammates were hurt and me as well. I took one bullet to the eye that came out from the back of my head and one bullet to the chest that hurt my spine.

I am lucky to be alive. Had I have not called the doctor of fear to the terrorist wife's life, who pretended to faint, I do not know if I would have survived. What saved me eventually was that doctor who was called for the impersonator and ended up taking care of me. Within 20 minutes I arrived at Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem in critical condition and until this day I am paralyzed from the chest down.

*at that moment I did not care whether she is the wife of a terrorist or not, she is a person and it was my job to take care of her. I pulled out my medical equipment, gave her water and measured her pulse, even though I felt that my life was at risk*



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| 12

*We prayed that he would stop, come to his senses and turn around – but he did not*

**Dolev Ohayon,**  
Sergeant First Class (res.)

Unit: **Infantry Special Forces – Rimon**

Area: **Gaza Strip**

Year: **2014 – Operation Protective Edge**

As part of Operation Protective Edge, we received information about a terrorist squad hiding in a certain building. When we reached the building our mission was to settle in it, secure ourselves and to wait for further instructions. We entered the building and I examined it in order to identify points from which we could view and control the territory. When I entered the children's room I noticed an open study book which teaches Arabic letters on the table. When I turned it upside down, I saw its cover showed a masked man holding an

RPG rocket on his shoulder. I was shocked. I thought to myself that when I was a child, I wrapped my notebooks with pictures of soccer teams or my favorite cartoon figures. I realized I am in a completely different place.

Later that day, as we were securing ourselves and guarding the house, we received a notification from a nearby force about a figure that was seen moving in our direction. We looked through the window and identified a figure riding on something. It was hard to identify it exactly because the figure was moving between buildings. Only when it reached the main road did we understand that the figure was a person on a wheelchair. Between myself I wished that he would just turn around because I knew exactly where this was going. I understood who sent him and what his destination was.



*Later that day, as we were securing ourselves and guarding the house, we received a notification from a nearby force about a figure that was seen moving in our direction. We looked through the window and identified a figure riding on something*



We gave him all the possible warnings. We warned him on the loudspeaker, we fired warning shots in the air and additional warning shots at a safe distance from him. He did not stop, he kept moving towards us. Even when we reached the point that by our rules of engagement we had to fire at him, we all still prayed that he would stop, come to his senses and turn around – but he did not. Had he turned around we would have done nothing to him. Eventually we had to shoot him because he came too close and had put us in real danger. Afterwards, when we examined the scene, we saw the person, we saw the wheelchair and underneath the chair we identified a powerful explosive device that was meant to us. This was a cynical and vicious abuse of a disabled person.



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| 13

## *This man could have been my grandfather*

**R.T.\*,**

**Sergeant First Class (res.)**

Unit: **Combat Intelligence**

Area: **Gaza Strip Border**

Year: **2018**

On April 2018 I was called to reserve duties as a sniper, due to the “Right of Return” protests that took place by the border (in those protests there were numerous attempts to tamper with the border fence, place explosive charges and to breach it in an attempt to attack IDF forces or to commit terror attacks). Snipers are the main resource the IDF has for such situations where you have to detect and neutralize terrorists hiding inside a big crowd.

We were there for several weeks. Every Friday we got up to our posts early in the morning and waited to the protesters. It went like this: In the morning a small group of people came early to check the area and gradually, more and more people would arrive. Sometimes there were dozens of buses unloading people nonstop, among them were women, children and seniors and also wounded and handicapped people. After they deployed and gathered they would start moving towards the fence while throwing stones and rocks and of course launching the notorious “terror kites”. From such a close range we could clearly see, even without our sniper gear, that armed Hamas activist were hiding among the civilian crowd that included many women and children.

\*Due to information security regulations it is not possible to publish the full name of the witness

*From such a close range we could clearly see, even without our sniper gear, that armed Hamas activist were hiding among the civilian crowd that included many women and children*



One of those Fridays, in one of the protests, a small group of people ran forward past the no-entry line which is about 80 meters from the fence, the line that they know is forbidden for them to pass. After moving quickly they went behind some small little hill with rocks and sand and suddenly picked up a very large slingshot in order to shoot rocks at us. The thing that shocked me the most, was when an elderly man with a walking stick that was old enough to be my grandfather started to walk from the large crowd at the back all the way to these people at the front, carrying a plastic bag with two Molotov Cocktails. What he did was simply transferring the Molotov Cocktails to the rioters at the front because he knew that we would not shoot an elderly person. It was a hard moment for me seeing this man who could be my grandfather do such a thing.



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| 14

## *The civilian protest was orchestrated just to sneak in a car bomb*

**Ram Biran,**  
Lieutenant (res.)

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Unit: **Infantry Special Forces - Rimon**

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Area: **Gaza Strip**

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Year: **2014 - Operation Protective Edge**

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During Operation Protective Edge I was a team leader in my unit. We fought in the south of the Gaza Strip and on the second week, we entered the outskirts of Rafah. Our mission was to create a buffer zone between the eastern neighborhood outside Rafah and the city itself, remove the civilians who were in that neighborhood and then begin our combat mission inside the neighborhood itself. We went in (the Gaza Strip) at night and in the morning we reached the outskirts of the designated neighborhood. In that morning the IDF had already sent leaflets to inform the local citizens in the neighborhood that they have

a safe passage to evacuate to Rafah. Consequently, during the day many people left the neighborhood and went to Rafah and we let them to pass freely.

At some point during the day a large group of people arrived including women and children.

They reached the entrance to the neighborhood and started raising flags and shouting all kinds of things. At some point they simply went back into the neighborhood and disappeared. After they left, we noticed that they had left some vehicle there, right by the entrance, where we had to go in later. At the end of that day, the ceasefire had ended and our mission was to enter the neighborhood to locate tunnels and terrorists that were there according to our intelligence.



*our mission was to enter the neighborhood to locate tunnels and terrorists that were there according to our intelligence*

As we were about to enter, the unit commander told us to halt because the vehicle that was left there by the crowd earlier struck him as suspicious. He ordered a tank to fire a shell at the vehicle and as soon as it hit the car there was a very large explosion followed by secondary explosions that made it clear that this was really a car bomb. In retrospect we understood that the entire civilian protest was orchestrated by Hamas in order to sneak in the car bomb.



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## | 15

# *Who profits from death and who chooses life*

**Tzur Goldin,**  
Lieutenant (res.)

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Unit: **Infantry -**  
**Paratroopers**

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Area: **Gaza Strip**

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Year: **2014 - Operation**  
**Protective Edge**

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During Operation Protective Edge I served as a deputy commander of an infantry company. Throughout three weeks of intensive clashes, I participated in countless encounters with Hamas terrorists, including tunnel fighting, rocket units, etc. One of my special missions was commanding an extraction force. I was in charge of extracting wounded and dead, among them were my soldiers and friends. I also took part in numerous events where Hamas used the local civilian population against us.

One of those missions included an extraction of 30-40 Palestinians civilians who got trapped between the forces and were used by Hamas as a human shield. We evacuated them, gave them some of our food and water, brought them to a safe place, guarded them and provided them with medical supplies. We pretty much

saved their lives from Hamas. As an officer and a combat trooper, in both the standing IDF service and reserves, it is important to me that people will know the very complex reality that the IDF faces. IDF soldiers have to protect the people of Israel, but at the same time, not fall into Hamas' "moral traps" and enable its immoral wrong doing against its own population.

I personally am not worried as I know that behind any command given or an action taken by the IDF soldiers and officers there is a long tradition of ethics,



*One of those missions included an extraction of 30-40 Palestinians civilians who got trapped between the forces and were used by Hamas as a human shield*

morals and expertise at the highest levels. Such tradition gives us the tools to overcome the most complex scenarios and enables our soldiers to live through them and save lives. I believe that this truth needs to be told out loud and eventually the world will understand who profits from death and who chooses life.



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| 16

*They understood we do not check women so rigorously out of respect and changed their tactics accordingly*

**M.K. Micky Levy,**  
Police Major General  
(retired)

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Unit: **Israel Police -  
Jerusalem District (chief)**

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Area: **Jerusalem**

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Year: **2002**

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In 1999 I was Director of the Judea and Samaria District of the Israel Police and in 2000, I was appointed as Head of the Jerusalem District. Between 2000 and 2004, the Second Intifada raged in Jerusalem. Keep in mind that at that time, Jerusalem had none of the security measures it has today, there was no security wall and no technological apparatuses. During that period, there were 52 suicide bombers, out of which 12 were captured and 40 managed to explode. There were 11 car bombs placed, out of which 6 were neutralized and

5 exploded. There were 10 explosive device ambushes, out of which 5 exploded and 5 were neutralized. The Israeli body count was 252 murdered, with over 1500 injured. 7 days a week, around the clock, Jerusalem was under attack, sometimes even several attacks per week. The terror organizations attacked wherever possible. I'm talking about 18 months of constant shooting events from Bethlehem at Gilo at innocent civilians, buses full of children.

On January 2002, 10:30AM, a female suicide bomber arrived to Jaffa Street after successfully smuggling an explosive charge using a Red Crescent ambulance where she worked. She tried to enter the Atara Café, but was pushed away by the security guard. She then moved to the crosswalk, crossed the street that



was crowded with civilians and blew herself up in the middle of the street. Since the explosion was out at the open, the blast scattered; one person was killed and 32 were injured.

I especially remember this event because it was the first time that a woman executed a suicide attack in Jerusalem. The terror organizations understood that, out of respect for the women, we do not check them as rigorously as men and they adapted their tactics accordingly. It made us change our operational concept, adding more policewomen and female combat soldiers to our security forces to be able to check female suspects among the Arab population.

*She tried to enter the Atara Café, but was pushed away by the security guard. She then moved to the crosswalk, crossed the street that was crowded with civilians and blew herself up in the middle of the street*



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| 17

## *It was clear that the shooters felt at ease among the civilians*

**Gilad Segal,**

Sergeant First Class (res.)

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Unit: **Counter Terror K-9**

Unit - **Oketz**

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Area: **Gaza Strip**

Year: **2004**

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During my final service period in the Counter Terror K-9 unit, I was stationed in the Gaza Strip area. It was before the Gaza Disengagement (the 2004 unilateral withdrawal of all IDF forces and Israeli settlements from the entire Gaza Strip), and we had daily operations directed to stop the terror organization efforts to smuggle weapons and rockets into Gaza and carry out terror attacks. As dog handlers our mission was to join other forces in operations and to be the first ones to enter

a house to make sure it is clear from terrorists or explosives. I remember one operation in particular in which I joined a Golani Brigade (infantry) unit where we conducted an “Almanat Kash” (setting an observation and fire outpost in a local apartment building). Besides my dog handling training I was also a sharpshooter, so I was able to join and help the team in manning the posts.

When it was my turn to take over I saw what was going on down on the street and it was apparent that one of the forces' location was revealed. The street was full of civilians in the middle of a violent protest that included shouting, rioting and rock throwing at our forces. Among the civilians, who also included women and children, I identified three or four armed men with AK-47, firing at our revealed force from between the civilians. From my still uncovered post I could clearly see one of the armed men, standing in the middle of the commotion and firing. It was clear that the shooters felt at ease among the civilians. Though they were changing locations from time to time, they did not act like they were in



*Among the civilians, who also included women and children, I identified three or four armed men with AK-47, firing at our revealed force from between the civilians. From my still uncovered post I could clearly see one of the armed men, standing in the middle of the commotion and firing*



combat and could potentially get hurt. We were in a tough situation, we were not able to take down the shooters without risking hitting civilians. I'm sure that they (the shooters) knew what was going on in our heads, and that they are more or less safe.

The thing that shocked me the most was the understanding of the distorted reality in Gaza. When you compare that child you just saw in the street to the little kid you once were, you think

of how he can just stay there when a person is shooting right over his head. The kid stays there, against all natural instinct to run for cover, and acts like there is nothing wrong with this situation. Unfortunately, this was not an isolated case, it was one of many cases that represents the terror organizations' methods.



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| 18

## *A human chain which acted as a human shield*

**Avihai Shorshan,**  
Sergeant First Class (res.)

Unit: **Infantry - Orev Golani**

Area: **Benjamin**

Year: **2011**

In winter 2011 I was assigned with my reserve unit on a routine security mission in the Benjamin sector in the West Bank. One day, when I was in a patrol unit, we received a call about a violent riot near one of the settlements. As we arrived there we easily spotted the riot. However, it was not a regular riot such as those we were already been accustomed to, for the first time we have identified a deliberate strategic use of “human shield”.

What do I mean? As we got close to the riot we clearly saw that the protestors were aligned in rows. At the first row stood elderly people, at the age of 50-60 and older, definitely not kids. They were the village elders, some wore ties and decent

clothes. In one hand they held a phone or a camera pointed at us and in the other they held the person next to them. In that manner they created a chain of 20-30 people, which acted as a human shield for the people in the back. And who was in the back? 100-200 youths who were throwing stones, rocks, sticks and whatever they could grab at us.

They simply threw the objects above the heads of the people in the first row who protected them. It reminded me a vision of a Roman army, where the foot soldiers are standing in the first row and behind them are the archers. However, in our case the foot soldiers were elderly civilians and instead of weapons

*In one hand they held a phone or a camera pointed at us and in the other they held the person next to them. In that manner they created a chain of 20-30 people, which acted as a human shield for the people in the back*



they were holding cameras. This situation was very problematic for us. The violent attackers in the back were essentially protected by the front row in such a way we could not use our riot control instruments without risking hurting the elderly people on the front who were not actively attacking us.

I have already witnessed human shield situations in my service where terrorists used children against their will to protect themselves. However, this was the first time I saw how it is done in such a planned and calculated fashion. There was a lot of thought and a clear plan in making this front line and its meaning – the way it would appear to the press as there were so many cameras at the scene. It was a deliberate and proactive use of elderly civilians, who may have not actively took part of the violence, but definitely enabled it. Doing so the rioters could both attack us and create a favorable media situation for themselves.



Watch the testimony:  
[mytruth.org.il](https://mytruth.org.il)



## | 19

# *We received intelligence that a woman suicide bomber is on her way to the area*

**Tamir Oren,**  
Captain (res.)

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Unit: **Infantry -  
Paratroopers**

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Area: **Gaza Strip**

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Year: **2009 - Operation  
Cast Lead**

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Throughout Operation Cast Lead, every day at a certain hour, there was a so-called 'humanitarian corridor'. This meant that we, as soldiers, evacuate a certain route that is known to all the residents, in which they can safely pass through. Transfer ambulances, transport vehicles, food and water, all in order to give the civilian population time to recover and organize. It was something that was official and known and we did it every day. One of those days I was the officer in charge of the corridor and we received

intelligence that a woman suicide bomber is on her way to the area. This type of specific and relevant information is usually very reliable. During that time, the humanitarian corridor was open with women, adults and children passing through. I understood that in the current situation it will be very difficult to trace and identify the woman suicide bomber.

I was faced with the dilemma. On the one hand, whether to keep the humanitarian corridor open knowing that if I keep letting the people pass it will be much easier for the woman-bomber to attack. On the other hand, as the officer in charge, as an IDF commander, I wish to give the civilian population time to recover and a place to reorganize because I strongly believe that this is the moral and proper thing to do.

This was a very difficult dilemma and naturally, every decision I would have



made would have been acceptable by the higher command. Eventually, I decided to keep the corridor open because I believed that even though we are at war, there is still a place to give the non-involved citizens the time to recover and prepare for what is about to come. Naturally, I did not ignore the alert, I thickened the posts and called for more soldiers to the sector to be on the lookout.



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| 20

## *Guys, there are warnings about a donkey carrying explosives*

**Dolev Ohayon,**  
Sergeant First Class (res.)

Unit: **Infantry Special Forces - Rimon**

Area: **Gaza Strip**

Year: **2014 - Operation Protective Edge**

One of the missions we received during Operation Protective Edge was to arrive at a suspicious house that according to intelligence contained weapons and was also in a strategic position to control the area. We reached the house, settled in it and passed a few days of routine. As part of this routine, from time to time we received various intelligence reports about all sorts of dangers, such as car bombs, snipers, or any other information.

I remember one of those days when I was watching through the window of the house and below me a donkey past with two white sacks. I remember thinking how strange it was that in an area where I had not seen a single person a donkey is passing by. I laughed to myself and even told the friend behind me to come see the donkey. After a few minutes we got a report on the radio, half in disregard and half in jest, "Guys, there are warnings about a donkey carrying explosives". At that moment there was a lot of laughter because we did not really believe that animals could be used for such a low purpose. Then I remember myself saying, "I saw a donkey here a few minutes ago with white sacks on it". Immediately everyone got a little deterred and took the report seriously. In the end it was verified, the donkey I saw did have explosive bags on it.



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*Part 3*

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**Civilian  
Infrastructure as  
Terror Bases**

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*Militarizing mosques, schools,  
and medical personnel*



| 21

## *After 5 or 6 hours in the checkpoint, suddenly an ambulance appeared*

**Lital Shemesh,**

Sergeant (res.)

Unit: **Military Border Police**

Area: **Hebron**

Year: **2004**

I served as a Border Police combatant between 2002-2005, as the Second Intifada was storming in Israel. During that period suicide bombers blew themselves up in coffee shops, restaurants and buses, sometimes even 2 or 3 times a week. These were horrible times.

I remember one incident, when I was in a checkpoint outside of Hebron. After 5 or 6 hours in the checkpoint, suddenly an ambulance appeared, inside it lay a pregnant Palestinian woman crying and shouting in Arabic. I did not fully understand what she said, but I understood I need to clear this ambulance as fast as I can. On the other hand, I knew that terrorists constantly use women, children, disabled people and

ambulances to carry out their attacks. I decided to thoroughly examine everyone on the ambulance, including the pregnant woman. During the inspection we found an explosive device under one of the seats. At that moment I knew that had I let the ambulance cross toward Israel unchecked, it would have arrived at Haifa, Netanya, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem... only god knows what might have happened and how many innocent Israelis would have lost their lives. Until this day I do not know if that Palestinian woman knew she was cooperating with the terrorist organizations, in many cases those civilians did not know they were being used.



The thought of using an ambulance, a vehicle meant to save people's lives, to perform a terror attack, is inconceivable. I wish not to believe these are the ways the terrorists act. Sometimes I think, that it is as if while we, the IDF, are playing by chess rules, they play soccer and you simply can't win such a game.

*I decided to thoroughly examine everyone on the ambulance, including the pregnant woman. During the inspection we found an explosive device under one of the seats*



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| 22

## *A slide, a swing, a rocket launcher*

**Yonatan Branski,**  
Colonel (res.)

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Unit: **Tank Division**  
(deputy commander)

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Area: **Gaza Strip**

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Year: **2014 - Operation**  
**Protective Edge**

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In the summer of 2014 I took part in Operation Protective Edge, as a Combat Commander of an armored division. As part of my duties, I was based in the division HQ and managed the different combat efforts alongside other senior staff. It was a serious task. A division is a rather big operation to run and manage. During the ongoing fighting that took place for over a month, there were many times when Hamas used civilian infrastructures for warfare purposes such as missile launching grounds, weapons storage and other

purposes that served its terror infrastructure. I have witnessed many times such use of mosques, UNRWA clinics, schools and kindergartens. Hamas knows the IDF war practices and moral principles regarding such locations and that it is highly sensitive and hopes that we would refrain from responding to attacks coming from those locations.

I wish now to refer to a specific incident that was especially clear, although as I mentioned, was not uncommon. Using various methods, we identified a rocket launch placed in the middle of a kindergarten playground in a neighborhood in northern Gaza. Hamas's had planned to launch the missiles using a timer or remote control cable since they knew that as soon as they launched the missile, we would locate its location and attack it. In this case, they were using both a remote launch, as well as a kindergarten playground, as an attack location. They did that because they understood that we would not knowingly attack this launch location. This entire incident was documented by drone and we

recorded the launch coming straight out of the kindergarten. To say this was a complete surprise for us? Not really. We are all familiar with this human shield practice used by Hamas for years now. Hamas has mastered this practice. Yet, every time, I find myself shocked by another red line that they cross.

In the IDF, we mark our maps with all those "sensitive locations", all the hospitals, mosques, kindergartens, schools, etc. During attacks, as soon as we spot a launch, we determine its location and can immediately watch it on our monitors. You watch and see a children's slide, next to it the kindergarten, and in between there is a rocket launcher. I hope that during that specific time there are no children at the kindergarten.

However, we know that Hamas does not choose these locations randomly, they know that those places are marked "sensitive" on our maps. They deliberately put the rocket launchers between the swing and the slide. You watch this on the monitor and cannot escape the thought of "oh my God, they are using children as part of this war".

*as soon as we spot a launch, we determine its location and can immediately watch it on our monitors. You watch and see a children's slide, next to it the kindergarten, and in between there is a rocket launcher*



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| 23

## *Missiles were launched from this school*

**Tamir Oren,**  
Captain (res.)

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Unit: **Infantry -  
Paratroopers**

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Area: **Gaza Strip**

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Year: **2009 - Operation  
Cast Lead**

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At the beginning of Operation Cast Lead, I led my company of about a hundred soldiers, to the Gaza Strip. On the first night we received a mission to reach a building from which rockets were fired daily for several months. We arrived at the designated building and saw something that did not surprise us – the building out of which hundreds of missiles were fired daily was a school. We entered the school to search it. We located an explosive device on the manager room's door and in one of the classrooms we found a map of Israel covered with blood and above it was inscribed "murder all the Jews". This school was booby-trapped. They were waiting for us with weapons and explosive devices, and the only thing that was missing was someone to push the button and blow up the whole school with us inside.

In my view this is inconceivable. We fight to protect our citizens and our families and children, and what they did was firing from a civilian population at another civilian population, knowing that they were endangering the lives of their people perhaps even more than ours. It's



something that I personally find hard to apprehend. I saw it throughout the fighting, whether it was in schools, kindergartens, UN buildings, these things happened again and again over the two weeks I was in the Gaza Strip.

*We located an explosive device on the manager room's door and in one of the classrooms we found a map of Israel covered with blood and above it was inscribed "murder all the Jews"*



Watch the testimony:  
[mytruth.org.il](https://mytruth.org.il)



## | 24

# *It is crystal clear, you do not open fire on an ambulance*

**Yarden Freiman,**  
Captain (res.)

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Unit: **Tank Division**

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Area: **Gaza Strip**

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Year: **2014 - Operation Protective Edge**

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I served as an Armor Officer during my regular service, but I want to talk about an event that took place in 2014, when I served as a Reserve Officer. My rank is Captain and as an officer, my role during Operation Protective Edge was not in the field as a Tank Commander, but rather as a Tactical Officer in the war room directing armored forces, sitting alongside the regional command. One evening, we had a fierce battle in the northern Gaza Strip. Hamas terrorists were entrenched in a compound called the women's academy from which they fired at our troops. The following morning, a humanitarian ceasefire was declared. The routine is that we approve humanitarian ceasefires in order to allow

civilians in fighting zones to resupply with water and medical necessities.

During that time, we received a phone call from the District Coordination and Liaison. They informed us that an ambulance was on its way to the compound and asked us to verify we would not fire at it. The request was, of course, approved. It's crystal clear you do not open fire on an ambulance at all and especially during a humanitarian cease fire. We do, however, follow the events on our monitors. We saw the ambulance reaching the school area. The doors opened, and... nothing! No medicines! We then saw two big healthy men running towards the ambulance carrying a long cylindrical cargo which appeared to be a rocket launcher that they likely had planned to fire upon us later. The



*One evening, we had a fierce battle in the northern Gaza Strip. Hamas terrorists were entrenched in a compound called the women's academy from which they fired at our troops. The following morning, a humanitarian ceasefire was declared*



men closed the doors, the ambulance started withdrawing and all we could do was to just helplessly watch them go...

As a father who cares deeply about his children's happiness and welfare, I understand that the other side's mentality is completely different. Instead of using the emergency resources they have to help themselves, they cynically use them to gather more fire power to keep shooting at us.



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| 25

## *Schools should not have bullet holes*

**Ran Bar Yoshafat,**  
Sergeant First Class (res.)

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Unit: **Infantry Special Forces - Maglan**

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Area: **Jenin Region**

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Year: **2002**

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During advanced training, we were stationed in a base next to an Arab village. Occasionally we would take fire from the village's school. This shooting has put us in an impossible situation. One option was to open fire on the school (that might have children in it), while the other option was to risk our life by not returning fire. It was very frustrating.

I recall one time they fired from the school in the middle of the night. We realized that at this late hour there is no chance that there are children in the school, but still. This scenario was so unreal. Why would people use a school to shoot at us? I knew the other side doesn't like us, but I never imagined

that they would use their own facilities, their own children, their own schools, just to attack us. They were hurting themselves and it felt like they would rather hurt themselves. They would rather hurt themselves just for the odds of hurting us as well.

Eventually we fired back. It was around midnight and no one is at school at midnight. They were shooting at us and we returned fire. In the morning, I remember I looked at the school and it had bullet holes in it. I remember thinking to myself it should not be like that. Schools should not have bullet holes.



*I never imagined that they would use their own facilities, their own children, their own schools, just to attack us. They were hurting themselves and it felt like they would rather hurt themselves. They would rather hurt themselves just for the odds of hurting us as well.*



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| 26

*Our main goal is to remove civilians from the combat areas, theirs is the exact opposite*

**Yonatan Branski,**  
Colonel (res.)

Unit: **Infantry Brigade**  
**(commander)**

Area: **Gaza Strip**

Year: **2009 - Operation**  
**Cast Lead**

During Operation Cast Lead I was the Chief Commander of an infantry brigade operating in the northern Gaza strip. Part of the intelligence we had was about explosive devices set along the routes they expected us to use. Think about it, these are paths within neighborhoods, with people living on both sides. This is not a deserted area. People live there with large explosive devices under their feet waiting to explode on IDF forces.

To be precise though, some of the traps were located specifically to hurt only us, but were placed in residential areas on purpose. This was incomprehensible. These mining practices existed before Cast Lead and of course, after it as well. Our main goal is to remove civilians from the combat areas, their goal is the exact opposite.



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| 27

## *This attack was planned based on an exploitation of our moral values*

**Tzur Goldin,**  
Lieutenant (res.)

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Unit: **Infantry - Givati**

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Area: **Gaza Strip**

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Year: **2014 - Operation Protective Edge**

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This is the story of my brother, Hadar Goldin, that was killed and kidnapped on August 1st during a humanitarian ceasefire during Operation Protective Edge

This story finds me after three weeks of intensive combats, soon after we entered the last ceasefire of the operation (which was a humanitarian ceasefire). We were briefed that hopefully this will be the last ceasefire, and that there is a complete ban

on the use of live ammunition towards all suspects and basically anyone who isn't shooting directly at us. The ban also included no movement of tanks, or any massive firepower. I was sent on a patrol a few hundred meters from the location where Hadar was soon to be killed and kidnapped. During that time, Hadar and his company, were on a patrol as well. It was 8:45 am, 15 minutes into the ceasefire. One of the soldiers noticed an enemy scout from a distance. A scout who under regular combat circumstances where there is no ceasefire, would most likely be neutralized, probably with use of deadly force.

Because the ceasefire was in effect, as far as we were concerned, Bnaya Sarel, the company commander, decided to try and catch the scout and bring him for questioning. He took a 6-men squad, divided it into two teams of 3 men and Hadar, Liel Gidoni and him started to advance towards the scout. What they did not know was that the scout was part of a well-arranged ambush of 13 Hamas special forces terrorists that included a tunnel attack squad, a kidnapping squad and a scouting squad. Sarel's squad got caught in the ambush and most likely were all severely wounded right away and Hadar was kidnapped into the tunnel after being shot.

The second team commanded by Eitan Fund, the company deputy commander who later received a commendation for his actions in this incident, arrived to the scene soon after. Fund concluded that Hadar was probably kidnapped into the tunnel he found and took a small team and

headed into the tunnel to try and retrieve Hadar. While Fund was searching in the tunnel, a “standard kidnapped soldier” procedure was operated by the IDF command. A few minutes later Fund found some of Hadar's gear in the tunnel, and concludes that he was shot, and was most likely killed.

This all happens on a Friday. I was a few hundred meters away from the incident on a patrol mission and was part of the force intended to support and rescue Hadar's squad. I still have the map of the area with the path marked to the destination where Hadar was. I was ordered to go out towards the security fence on the Gaza border to pick up some tunneling equipment, but that was only a false pretense to get me out of there. When I got to the fence I was told by an officer that Hadar was kidnapped, and that I'm going home.

Today, four years later, I understand the irony in that whole incident. This ambush, attack and kidnap were all planned based on a manipulation of our moral values, exploiting the humanitarian ceasefire and our moral codes and sensitivity to human lives of any side. Hamas terrorists exploited the humanitarian ceasefire to kill and kidnap Hadar while only one week before than I risked my life to rescue 30-40 Palestinians civilians from Hamas who were using them as a human shield (see Tzur Golding's other testimony in this booklet). I think there is no better example of the differences between us and them. We, the IDF, do everything in our power to protect our civilians as well as theirs, while Hamas exploits our good will and its own citizens to attack our civilians and soldiers.

## *What they did not know was that the scout was part of a well-arranged ambush of 13 Hamas special forces terrorists*



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| 28

## *A real bunker inside a mosque*

**Tamir Oren,**  
Captain (res.)

---

Unit: **Infantry -  
Paratroopers**

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Area: **Gaza Strip**

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Year: **2009 - Operation  
Cast Lead**

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Throughout Operation Cast Lead, as part of our combat mission, my soldiers and I went from door to door, from house to house, according to precise intelligence, to look for weapons, explosives and mines. The places where I found weapons were unimaginable. These were places where weapons are not supposed to be. Places where children play, places where people work. Here are a few examples: mines between mattresses in a bedroom, explosive charges under beds, kindergartens full of explosives and missiles, a mosque where we found weapons – a real bunker inside a mosque. In my eyes, all these things are inconceivable. Hamas knew very well that we would not attack these places and would not even go inside them, and therefore exploited this fact to hide its activists and terrorists and to conceal explosives and missiles.

At the beginning of the fighting, we did not open fire at kindergartens, mosques, UN facilities or at anything that was international, educational or civilian. After a few days of fighting, however, when we realized that there were explosives, missiles and rockets even in those places,



*At the beginning of the fighting, we did not open fire at kindergartens, mosques, UN facilities or at anything that was international, educational or civilian.*

we began entering them and found the weapons that were hidden in them. At the second week of fighting, when we saw and realized that Hamas, as a tactic, was taking advantage of our restraint. We began to initiate and to attack those places directly and by air. We realized that if Hamas is cynically using civilian locations, then from our point of view, they are legitimate and relevant targets. In my opinion, the decision to return fire to those places saved the lives of many soldiers in the field and also the lives of civilians at whom those launchers and missiles were directed.



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| 29

## *Hamas understood that they could fire without any response from the IDF*

**Ben Mor,**  
Sergeant First Class (res.)

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Unit: **Infantry Special Forces - Maglan**

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Area: **Gaza Strip Border**

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Year: **2009 - Operation Cast Lead**

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During Operation Cast Lead I was a part of a target designation team. Meaning, a team that is located within Israel and is watching inside the Gaza Strip and directing attacks towards enemy targets. Whether it is artillery or a helicopter attack, the directions must be very specific and precise. If there is a rocket launch from inside the Strip into Israel, we must see exactly where it was fired from and verify what is in the vicinity and whether the place is clean. Meaning, that there are no uninvolved civilians in the area or an ambulance passing by. Only then there is a permission to launch a counter attack.

During the operation, there was a humanitarian ceasefire every day between 13:00 and 15:00. What it meant was that regardless to the status of the troops on the ground or the security situation the IDF decided unilaterally not to attack. What happened on a regular basis was that every day during those hours there were massive rocket attacks towards Israel because Hamas understood that they could fire without any response from the IDF. In any



*the directions must be very specific and precise. If there is a rocket launch from inside the Strip into Israel, we must see exactly where it was fired from and verify what is in the vicinity and whether the place is clean*



such event we had several options: to attack from the air, to send infantry troops or to do nothing and respect the ceasefire. I remember there was a discussion about it, but eventually it was very clear what we should do. Once we decided it was clear, we refrained from retaliation.



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| 30

*It was then clear that they had cynically used the ambulance to escap*

**Shlomo Golan,**  
Sergeant First Class (res.)

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Unit: **Infantry - Egoz Golani**

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Area: **Ramallah**

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Year: **2002 - Operation  
Defensive Shield**

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The following events took place in 2002 during Operation Defensive Shield where I served in Egoz infantry unit. Our mission was to enter the Muqata'a in Ramallah, which was Yasser Arafat's center of government at that time. We arrived at Bet-El, and from there we continued by foot with the other forces. Our objective was to take control of a tall building near the Muqata'a.

It was a rainy night, with hail coming down, not nice weather at all, therefore the walk took us a long time. We located the house from the outskirts of town and our lookout spotted armed men inside. We and another platoon were supposed to take control of that house and the building next to it. The other platoon went in before us and we waited for them to signal us once they were done before entering ourselves, to avoid friendly fire. We knew there were armed men in that building and we made preparations accordingly. Suddenly, we spotted an ambulance driving fast from the building.

When we finally entered, the building was



*We knew there were armed men in that building and we made preparations accordingly. Suddenly, we spotted an ambulance driving fast from the building*



empty, even though we have clearly spotted armed men there beforehand. It was evident that those people managed to escape right before we entered, there was even a warm pot of coffee on the stove. When we further cleared the building we found ammunition and combat gear, proof that armed men had been there, very close to the Muqata'a, in a strategic position. It was then clear that they had cynically used the ambulance to escape. They knew we would not open fire on a medical care vehicle.



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| 31

## *We entered the mosque and immediately identified a tunnel*

**Ram Biran,**  
Lieutenant (res.)

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Unit: **Infantry Special Forces - Rimon**

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Area: **Gaza Strip**

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Year: **2014 - Operation Protective Edge**

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At the entrance to one of the neighborhoods in the Gaza Strip, right at the first intersection, there was a very large mosque that we had intelligence regarding a tunnel that was inside the mosque. We entered the mosque, went down the cellar and immediately identified the tunnel. It was a small room with a tunnel inside it and another small tunnel shaft beside it that went into the wall. We also found there Hamas speckled military uniforms. We understood that it was a main junction of tunnels. There was a smaller tunnel that connected the houses of the neighborhood and another well-organized tunnel with concrete and a ladder that went down, apparently very deep. In retrospect, we found out that the tunnel crossed into Israel.

We identified the tunnel and waited for the designated special force to investigate it and see where it goes. During that time there was still combat activity taking place in the houses around us, and we were trying to identify to where the tunnel actually connects while maintaining readiness for anything coming out of it. Part of the team was in the room where the shafts were



*At some point, five terrorists started running towards the mosque. We recognize them from about 20 meters away and the machine gunner opened fire*



and the other part was upstairs, on the second floor securing the area. Simultaneously, the rest of the unit was flanking and clearing the houses in the direction of the tunnel in search for terrorists. During the scan, they identify all kinds of weapons but did not encounter terrorists. At some point, five terrorists started running towards the mosque. We recognize them from about 20 meters away and the machine gunner opened fire taking four of them down. The fifth terrorist manages to enter the mosque and started going down the staircase into the basement in order to escape into the tunnel. We identified the fifth terrorist and shoot him down. He actually reached right up to us, into the basement where the tunnel was.

Apparently the terrorist did not know we were inside and their goal was to escape into the mosque which is the main junction of the tunnels. The terrorists use the mosque as a base for tunnels and escape to it, with the belief that we will not be there. But we were ready for them and managed to take them out.



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This Report presents testimonies regarding the use of the Palestinian civilian population by Palestinian terrorist organizations for offensive terror actions and as human shields.

The testimonies herein are the first-hand accounts by former IDF combat soldiers and senior members of the Israeli security forces. They include observations of blatant human rights violations by Palestinian organizations, particularly against its own civilians. These documented cases include: the use of ambulances, clinics and medical personnel for terrorist aims; the use of women and children as human shields; violations of humanitarian ceasefires and many other instances which show the cruel and inhumane use of a civilian population by its own organizations.

This Report has been published to record the common and frequent use of human shields and the exploitation of civilians by Palestinian terrorist organizations. While these actions are obvious and flagrant violations of international law and human rights, they are almost completely ignored by the international community, even the human rights organizations. The video testimonies accompanying this Report document the systematic violation of human rights, causing harm to Israeli and Palestinian civilians alike.

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For the full testimonies project visit:

[www.mytruth.org.il/en/human-shields](http://www.mytruth.org.il/en/human-shields)

