



## Schlaglicht Israel

### Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

#### 1. Nach dem Besuch des US Präsidenten Bush: Israel verschärft Sanktionen gegen Gaza

*Wenige Tage nach dem Besuch von US Präsident Bush verstärkten die Hamas und andere militante Gruppen den Raketenbeschuss aus dem Gazastreifen auf das israelische Gebiet, insbesondere Sderot. Die israelischen Streitkräfte (IDF) führten weitere Militäroperationen im Gazastreifen durch, bei denen am 15. Januar 2008 mit 19 Todesopfern und über 50 Verletzten so viele palästinensische Opfer beklagt wurden, dass von einer neuen Qualität der Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Hamas-Kämpfern und IDF gesprochen wurde. Seit dem Amtsantritt des Verteidigungsministers Ehud Barak im Juni 2007 wurden insgesamt 300 "Terroristen" in Anti-Terror-Aktionen getötet.*

*Die weitere Verschärfung der israelischen Sanktionen und die Reduzierung der Einfuhr von Gas und Treibstoff führte am 21.01.2008 zu Stromausfällen im Gazastreifen. Interantionale Proteste gegen die israelische Politik wurden immer lauter. Auch in Israel hinterfragten Kommentatoren, die Strategie der israelischen Regierung kritisch.*

#### Israel's real intention behind sanctions on Gaza Strip

"There is an enormous gap between the reasons Israel is giving for the decision to impose significant sanctions against Hamas rule in the Gaza Strip, and the real intentions behind them. [...] the real aim of this effort is twofold: to attempt a new form of "escalation" as a response to aggression from Gaza, before Israel embarks on a major military operation there; and to prepare the ground for a more clear-cut isolation of the Gaza Strip - limiting to an

absolute minimum Israel's obligation toward the Palestinians there. [...]

The decision on sanctions is also an attempt to give expression to the inclination to completely disengage from Gaza. In this way Israel is sending a message to the Palestinian leadership in the strip that it must seek alternatives, however minor, to goods and services coming from Israel. This touches on the day after the Annapolis summit." Amos Harel, Avi Issacharoff, HAA, 19.01.2008.

#### Dragged into Gaza

„The defense minister doesn't want it. The army chief thinks this is not the right time for a large-scale operation. Even Hamas isn't prepared to face a broad military incursion and continues to ask for a ceasefire through repeated secret messages. How odd. Nobody wants to see escalation in Gaza, yet everyone is doing everything to make it happen. [...] Ever since Hamas' Gaza coup, we have seen an escalating war of attrition being conducted on the Gaza border. [...]

Israel has been carrying out a series of intensive military operations meant to push the sovereign in the Strip, that is, Hamas, into a complete ceasefire on Israel's terms. In other words, Israel demands complete quiet from Hamas, but it also continues the economic siege and diplomatic isolation aimed at weakening Hamas to the point of losing its hold on power.

One of the important levers in accelerating this process is the effort to exact a high Palestinian casualty toll that is meant to prevent them from establishing themselves militarily on the border and deter them from carrying out attacks. [...]

The IDF registered a successful day in the framework of the policy to wear down the other side: More than 18 people killed and more than 50 wounded, most of them armed, and virtually all of

them members of Hamas, who up until a few weeks ago were off limits in terms of IDF operations.

Yet what will be the point where Hamas will reach the conclusion that it has nothing to lose? Another 100 casualties? Another 200? Another 300? Nobody knows. [...]

At which point will the combination of levers utilized by Israel produce the breaking point that would lead Hamas to breach the rules of the game and drag the IDF into Gaza? This precisely is the question security officials are grappling with: How far can we go without reaching that breaking point?" Alex Fishman, Ynet, 16.01.2008.

### Clueless in Gaza

"The Israeli public deserves a clear answer from its leaders to one fundamental question: What's the objective Israel aspires to achieve in the current Gaza Strip confrontation? Only after we have an answer we can create a strategy, argue over tactics, and hold discussions in the cabinet and with other bodies. [...]

When Hamas was almost down to its knees last month, pleading for a ceasefire, defense officials convinced us this was precisely the time to continue hitting it, and as usual they explained that calm would provide the group with precious time to prepare and arm itself for conflict.

This is of course a perpetual winning argument, yet the time has come to present a question to counter it: What is the objective of the war, and what will be considered victory?

If we are talking about putting an end to Qassam rocket attacks, then the current escalation only boosted the launching rate exponentially. [...]

A sovereign government must be able to identify connection between reasons and causes, means and targets - unless it was officially decided to hand over the management of the country to talkback writers." Uri Misgav, Ynet, 17.01.2008

### Our Punching Bag

"How do we try to calm hell? By making it even hotter. Every year we kill hundreds of hell residents, destroy homes and vehicles, and wait for everything to quiet down. This is how it works in Gaza. This is how it fails. [...]

There is no ground incursion that would salvage Sderot; because Sderot and Khan Younis and Beit Hanoun are tied together in a Siamese-city alliance with the same blood system. The deeper Gaza sinks, the more it goes hungry, the more it is

darkened, burned, pulverized, and beaten, the more we will see the rocket range grow. The firing range equals the depth of despair. Gaza will grow quiet only when it starts hoping.

This is much more complicated than any ground incursion, but Sderot will rest only when Gaza rests. I know this sad, sick, dusty, hungry, thirsty, unemployed, and hopeless hell. It will be there forever, next to us, and just like any burning place it will give off burning shrapnel as long as it's on fire." Yigal Sarna, Ynet, 20.01.2008.

## 2. Offene Grenze zwischen Gaza und Ägypten

*Am 23. Januar sprengte die Hamas den Grenzzaun, der Gaza und Ägypten trennt. Durch die Öffnung gelangten schätzungsweise 350.000 Palästinenser auf die ägyptische Seite und versorgten sich in Rafah und Al-Arish mit Gütern, die ihnen während der von Israel verhängten Sanktionen vorenthalten worden waren. Damit scheint der Druck, den Israel auf die Bewohner des Gazastreifens aufgebaut hat, mit einem Mal entwichen und die Politik der Sanktionen in Frage gestellt. Die Auswirkungen der neuen Situation auf den im November 2007 in Annapolis erneuerten Friedensprozess sind ungewiss. Zudem besteht die Sorge, dass die Israel feindlich gesonnene Kräfte in dem Chaos ungehindert an Waffen und Herstellungsmaterial für Raketen gelangen. Besonders kontrovers diskutiert wird die Verantwortung Ägyptens für die Sicherung der palästinensisch-ägyptischen Grenze, die bis 1967 die Verwaltung über das Territorium inne hatte.*

### Whose Monopoly Now?

"First there was delight. Senior officials in Israel said that Egypt had taken on this trouble called Gaza. You could almost hear the chadenfreude in their voices. After not wanting to hear about Gaza or its refugees for a generation, Egypt received both, explosively. Now, at last, there will be a responsible country, and not Israel, to deal with the refugees. Egypt will also have to safeguard the blasted gate, [...] prevent the passage of explosives and terrorists and supervise the behavior of Hamas, because otherwise it will bear the consequences. [...]

But this approach ignores two facts. First, it was not Egypt that breached the barrier. Egypt did what any humane country would be expected to do in this

situation, albeit quite belatedly. It allowed hundreds of thousands of crushed people to enter its territory to stock up on what they have been unable to buy in Gaza for months, nearly two years, in fact. Egypt's government capitulated to public pressure, as every government is expected to do. [...]

It is the Israeli government, with its failed policy, and not Egypt, that lost control of Gaza. The situation lurched out of the control of the decision makers who thought they could crush an entire population by stopping the supply of fuel and food and closing passages to commerce and the movement of people in need of medical care. They thought that these measures would foment a civil revolt against the Hamas leadership and thus end the Qassam rockets. [...]

What happened last week was not just the breaching of a fence. It was a strategic shift that showed Israeli policy in its unvarnished folly. The conception of waging a war on terrorism by imprisoning an entire territory behind a fence has completely collapsed. The policy that aimed to foment civil revolt against the Hamas leadership has crashed, the monopoly that Israel held on the peace process has vanished, and the Palestinian partner will now find it far more difficult to conduct negotiations with Israel. And there is one more dangerous development. In Sinai there are now terrorists who can easily cross the breached fence along the border with Egypt. Given all this, who needs to wait for the Winograd Committee report?" Zvi Bar'el, HAA, 27.01.2008

### **The real Gaza disengagement**

"This is an exceptional opportunity to shift responsibility for the Gaza Strip to Egypt. Let them provide food, electricity, water, and fuel. [...] Israel has been presented with a golden opportunity for diplomatic gains: Yesterday, in fact, was the beginning of the real disengagement from Gaza. Moreover, yesterday Hamas caused an absolute and complete disconnection between the Gaza economy and the West Bank economy, ahead of the emergence of two separate Palestinian entities. The moment huge quantities of goods entered the Strip without coordinating it with Israel, all duty agreements were in fact breached. From now on, Gazans would not be able to export even a matchbox to Israel or to the West Bank. [...]" Alex Fishman, Ynet, 24.01.2008.

### **The Weakest Link: Egypt**

"Yesterday it was Egypt's turn to fall into the trap laid by one of the most sophisticated productions ever seen in the Middle East: Hamas wrote, directed, and produced it in conjunction with the Muslim Brothers and with their main channel – al-Jazeera. The target audience: The Arab world, Israel, the United Nations, and Europe.

After Hamas failed in exerting pressure through the Qassams, it shifted to shaping perceptions. Israel starred in the first act, the one with the "hungry candlelight kids." Everything was filmed in advance: The Gaza parliament convening in the dark, hospitals collapsing, doctors begging for help. At the same time, protests that looked very impressive were organized and covered 24 hours a day on al-Jazeera.

The first to be moved were the moderate Arab states. Egypt started to be perceived as the weakest link. [...] The last thing Mubarak needs at this time is domestic charges that he is doing nothing in the face of the misery experienced by Gaza residents.

The moment Hamas realized Egypt was on the brink of collapse, it moved on to the second act: "Women with babies at the gates to Egypt," tears, shots, water cannons, and wounded women. The Egyptians were distressed, and closed a deal with Hamas: At six thirty in the morning, "the gates shall be opened."

Hamas blew up the walls and created an irreversible situation: There is no longer an obstacle – if the Egyptians want to prevent passage into their territory in the future they would have to rebuild the wall or shoot people.

Now, we are waiting for the third and fourth act. Should the Gaza siege be renewed, Hamas will renew its rocket attacks on Israel. When Hamas weakens diplomatically, it boosts its military activity. Hamas has not yet said the last word in creating a balance of terror vis-à-vis the IDF. At this time, Hamas is planning some kind of special operation, which it will try to carry out." Alex Fishman, Ynet, 24.01.2008.

### **Power and Politics: So, is the 'occupation' over?**

"A rosy scenario argues that Gaza is at last no longer Israel's problem; it's the clear responsibility of Egypt and Hamas. [...] In other words, now that the border is open, Hamas must begin worrying about the delivery of essential services and the population's welfare, something that would

necessitate a genuine cease-fire with Israel and the end to cross-border attacks.

A gloomier scenario would argue that the fall of the Philadelphi Corridor may have dire consequences for the Mubarak regime itself; that the Islamist triumph and Cairo's sclerotic management of the developing crisis will embolden the Muslim Brotherhood, which, for all we pundits know, is right now making quiet inroads into the Egyptian military. Further, on the internal Palestinian front, Hamas will seek to leverage its Gaza accomplishment by manipulating Abbas to end what's left of the EU and US embargo.

The Abbas approach of dealing with Israel - call it outward accommodation, the phased plan, whatever - has less credibility on the Palestinian street than ever. The Fatah chief will either further adapt his policies to Hamas, or quit to make way for a newly released Marwan Barghouti." Elliot Jager, JPO, 26.01.2008.

### 3. Streik an den Hochschulen beendet

*Gerade rechtzeitig, um das Wintersemester 2007/08 noch zu retten, ist der dreimonatige Streik an den Universitäten beendet worden. Die Professoren, deren Streikforderungen im Gegensatz zu denen der Lehrer keine Reform des Hochschulsystems sondern lediglich eine Erhöhung der Gehälter beinhalteten, erhielten eine 24,2 % Gehaltserhöhung. Unter dem Streik litten vor allem die Studierenden, da die Professoren nur die Lehre, nicht jedoch die Forschung mit Streik belegten.*

#### Deluxe Strike

"The strike of senior university lecturers ought to supply the professors with masses of material for future research and pad plenty of publications to help them justify the higher pay they won.

If these professors approach the subject with due academic objectivity, they will have to own up to the fact that their nearly three-month-long refusal to teach constitutes a textbook case on how not to manage a crisis and how not to resolve a conflict. The situation was mishandled badly by all concerned, except Histadrut Labor Federation chief Ofer Eini, the only one to walk away with enhanced esteem and clout. [...]

The unstated truth throughout was that the professors didn't ever fully strike and that they

continued to receive half their pay the whole time. Considering that their salaries - even prior to the deal they have now achieved - were not puny, they were not too badly off. They continued to arrive at their respective campuses and conduct their research, which is where their prestige is primarily invested. What they refrained from doing was teach, in the hope of pressuring the students to fight their fight and exert pressure on the Treasury. [...]

Had the strikers been kept off campus from the outset, the dangerous brinkmanship which threatened an entire academic year would have been averted. [...]

The fact that [the students] were betrayed by their ostensible role-models, and abandoned by the universities to which they pay tuition, will only deepen their alienation and disaffection and hone the message that it's each for him/herself, without a hint of solidarity with other components of the academic collective. [...]

The resources shelled out by the taxpayers will now go disproportionately to the wrong academic recipients and won't begin to address Israel's very serious higher education anomalies. The new work-dispute, declared Friday by the junior professors, proves it." Editorial, JPO, 20.01.2008

#### No Problems were solved

"[...] From the start, the lecturers lent their campaign a clear sectorial and professorial character, and shied away from cooperating with other groups such as school teachers and students. They did this consciously, and also because they had no choice. Had they gone on strike over the fate of higher education and the reduction of schooling resources, they claim they would have risked being handed back-to-work orders. The National Labor Court would have considered it "a quasi-political strike" over matters not of their concern - and compelled them to return to work, they say. That argument was leveled against the Secondary School Teachers Association, whose broad front may have been its stumbling block.

Now, when the fight over the senior faculty's wages has ended, we must admit that no essential problem was solved. The brain drain of Israelis heading overseas is mostly junior faculty, whom the professors did not include in their struggle. The senior and veteran lecturers looked after themselves - and there is nothing wrong with that - but that cannot be enough. [...]" Editorial, HAA, 22.01.2008

## Teachers tried to change the system and lost

"There is no question about it. The nerds from the university beat the enthusiasts from the Secondary School Teachers Organization (SSTO). The teachers took to the streets, went down to the beach, demonstrated in the city squares, captured people's hearts - and wound up with barely a 9 percent increase. The professors sat in their offices, at most convened a meeting or two, debated patiently and ended up with 24 percent. In a move that seems contrary to the Israeli nature, the teachers banged on tables and emerged with little. The professors, who spoke politely, emerged with a lot. [...]" Meron Rapoport, HAA, 28.01.2008

HAA = Haaretz  
HZO = Ha Tzofe  
JED = Jedioth Ahronoth  
Ynet = engl. Internetausgabe Jedioth Ahronoth  
JPO = Jerusalem Post  
MAA = Maariv

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Verantwortlich:

Hermann Bünz,  
Leiter der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Israel

Redaktion:

Ingrid Roß

Homepage: [www.fes.org.il](http://www.fes.org.il)

Email: [fes@fes.org.il](mailto:fes@fes.org.il)