Violence continued in the Gaza Strip for the third day today, bringing the total number of people killed in the clashes to eleven . Over 150 people have also been wounded, as Hamas offices and a bank were set ablaze, amid protests over pay.

Quote: *"In scenes reminiscent of the Lebanese civil war in the 70's and 80's, the confrontation quickly turned into street gun battles, with both sides using automatic rifles, pistols and hand-propelled grenades. At least three of the casualties were identified as innocent passers-by, including 15-year-old Hassan Abu al-Hatel.*

Terrorists from the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, which is affiliated with President Abbas' Fatah movement, have threatened to murder all of Hamas' leaders, including Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh himself. Haniyeh had ordered his 3000 strong terrorist force to break up the protests yesterday resulting in the violence, and only backed down after Egypt ordered Haniyeh to withdraw his army. This news comes as Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah party published a new report claiming that Hamas has smuggled over 1300 tonnes of weaponry across the Gaza-Egyptian border, in preparation for a new conflict with Israel. Hamas is also receiving help from Hizbullah to import long range Iranian rockets, and being given training in warfare tactics.

Quote: *"The report, drafted by Fatah's General Security Services and obtained by WND, stated Hamas has smuggled from the Egyptian Sinai desert between several hundred and 1,300 tons of advanced rockets; anti-tank and anti-aircraft missiles; rocket propelled grenades; raw explosives; rifles; ammunition; and other heavy weaponry.*

Last week Yuval Diskin , the head of Israel's Shin Bet intelligence service, accused Egypt of deliberating ignoring Palestinian smuggling taking place on the border, and refusing to act on information supplied by Israel about known smugglers.

Quote: *"In one incident, a Hamas convoy of 15 jeeps crossed one day and returned laden with arms and explosives. According to Shin Bet data already at that time, 3,000 rifles, 1.5 million bullets, 150-200 rocket propelled grenades and hundreds of kilograms of explosives had been smuggled in (Jerusalem Post, September 22, 2005).*

And today, an newspaper affiliated with Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khameini claimed that the fighting in Gaza is a Zionist and Western " plot " to overthrow the Hamas government.

Quote: *""The satanic partnership between the West and the Zionist regime exposes the hypocritical and deceitful protectors of democracy and those who lie on behalf of human rights groups in Europe and the United States," the article said. The Iranian newspaper claimed that the Palestinians will be "subject to savage attacks by the Zionists due to the fact that they voted for Hamas and the resistance in the last elections and not for the faction supported by the Zionists and the West. "This proves that in order to exercise its rights the Palestinian nation must liberate the territories occupied by the Zionists; resistance is the only way," the article said.*

Even though Iran and Hamas adhere to different traditions of Islam, Iran being comprised of mainly Shiite Muslims and most of the Middle East following the Sunni Muslim branch, one thing clearly unites both groups - a common hatred of Israel. With Syrian talk of war, Hamas making preparations, Hizbullah at large, Iran inciting hatred of Israel and Egypt unwilling to intervene, it may only be a matter of time before a second wider war breaks out in the region.

Source Jerusalem Post , YNet News , ZOA , YNet News