**IDF: Over 100 bombs, grenades hurled at troops during Friday’s Gaza riots**

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Over 100 improvised bombs and grenades were hurled at Israeli troops during Friday’s riots at the Gaza border, the military said Saturday.

The army released footage of the violent demonstrations, which it said were the worst in two months, depicting attempts to breach and sabotage the security fence.

It also said IDF forces were still engaged in the controlled detonation of unexploded bombs and grenades.

Meanwhile in Gaza Saturday funerals were held for the seven Palestinians killed in the previous day’s violence, including two teen boys.

Tens of thousands of Palestinians protested along the Gaza border fence, throwing hand grenades, bombs, rocks, and burning tires in clashes with IDF troops, who responded with tear gas, live fire, and air strikes.

The protest was one of the largest and most violent in recent weeks and comes following the break down of indirect talks with Israel over a cease-fire and warnings that the terror group Hamas, which rules Gaza, was gearing up for another conflict.

Seven people were killed, including a 12-year-old and a 14-year-old, and at least 210 Palestinians were wounded, including an 11-year-old boy, who was in a serious condition, according to the Hamas-run Gaza health ministry. It said 90 of the wounded were hit by live fire.

The ministry identified three of the dead as Nasser Mosabih, 12, Mohammed al-Houm, 14, and Iyad Al-Shaar, 18, and said they were shot. The other four were in their twenties.

The IDF said about 20,000 Palestinians took part in violent protests, spread out among a few locations along the Gaza security fence.

In two cases IAF aircraft carried out strikes against grenade throwers, the army said, noting there were no injuries to IDF forces.

One of the strikes was on a Hamas post, the army said.

IDF troops also responded with tear gas and other less-lethal riot dispersal means as well as live fire “in accordance with the rules of engagement,” the army said.

Also, Palestinians launched several fire balloons into Israel, causing at least 16 blazes near Israeli towns near the Gaza Strip, a spokesman for the Israeli Fire and Rescue Services said. Firefighters were working to extinguish them.

The UN called Saturday for Israel and Hamas to rein in the violence. “I am deeply saddened by reports that seven Palestinians, including two children, were killed, and hundreds of others injured, by Israeli forces during demonstrations in the Gaza Strip yesterday (Friday),” the UN’s humanitarian coordinator for the Palestinian territories, Jamie McGoldrick, said in a statement. “I call on Israel, Hamas and all other actors with the ability to influence the situation, to take action now to prevent further deterioration and loss of life.”

The riots have increased in recent weeks, going from a weekly event to near nightly protests since Hamas halted indirect talks with Israel aimed at a ceasefire. The humanitarian crisis in Gaza has also worsened and reconciliation talks with the Palestinian Authority have broken down.

Hamas, which rules the Gaza Strip and actively calls for Israel’s destruction, has increased the pace of rioting and demonstrations against Israel, and created new units tasked with sustaining tensions along the border fence including during nighttime and early morning hours.

Almost every evening, thousands of Gazans now gather for violent demonstrations at the Erez crossing and elsewhere, as part of Hamas’s attempts to signal to Israel that it wants an economic solution to the Gaza Strip.

The Egyptian efforts to reconcile Hamas and Fatah have not borne fruit at this stage, and the possibility of a long-term ceasefire with Israel has apparently stalled, Thursday’s analysis by Times of Israel’s Avi Issacaharoff said. The economic situation has once again reached an unprecedented low, stoking fury among Gazans that is being directed against Israel, the PA, Hamas, and even Egypt.

On Friday, the Haaretz daily quoted Israeli security sources as saying that Hamas is preparing for war, bolstering its forces significantly over the past few weeks.

That assessment is not new, IDF sources told Haaretz, having warned repeatedly that the situation is more likely to escalate than to calm down. However, recently the army noted that the terror group appears to actively be readying itself for a limited conflict with Israel. It is only a question of when Hamas will decide to go to war, the paper said.

Israeli officials believe there are two main causes pushing Hamas toward military escalation, the newspaper report said — the failed reconciliation talks with PA President Mahmoud Abbas’s Fatah party, which controls the West Bank and has maintains a chokehold on Gaza’s finances in a bid to pressure Hamas to cede control of the territory; and the ongoing humanitarian crisis of the enclave under the Israeli-Egyptian blockade, made worse in recent months by the US slashing its aid to the PA and its funding for UNRWA, the UN body responsible for the welfare of Palestinian refugees, which funds schools and major relief projects in the Strip.

The surge of violence in Gaza began in March with a series of protests along the border that were dubbed the “March of Return.” The clashes have included regular rock and Molotov cocktail attacks on troops, as well as shooting and IED attacks aimed at IDF soldiers and attempts to breach the border fence.

Gaza protesters have also launched incendiary kites and balloons into Israel, sparking fires that have destroyed forests, burned crops, and killed livestock. Over 7,000 acres of land have been burned, causing millions of shekels in damages, according to Israeli officials. Some balloons have carried improvised explosive devices.

Israeli fire has killed at least 140 Palestinians during the protests since late March, according to AP figures. Hamas has acknowledged that dozens of the fatalities were its members.