

Hizbullah trains Hamas to conduct rocket attacks on Israel

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TEL AVIV — Israeli military sources said Hamas, trained by the Iranian-sponsored Hizbullah, has become capable of firing hundreds of rockets into Israel.

The sources said Hamas has accelerated missile production, coordinated operations by launch squads and established a logistics network to ensure large-scale salvos.

"The days when Hamas could fire only five or 10 missiles a day are over," a military source said. "Hamas has demonstrated its capability to fire up to 100 Kassams a day."

In mid-January, Hamas fired 130 Kassam-class, short-range missiles in less than 72 hours. The sources said the heavy fire, amid Israeli air and ground strikes, demonstrated Hamas's ability to stockpile missiles, rapidly deploy them to launch sites and coordinate operations.

The sources said Hamas has overcome several technical hurdles that prevented sustained missile fire. They cited the production of standard explosives, which could be stored for long periods, and the import of standard fuzes.

At the same time, Hamas has extended the range of the Kassam to about 18 kilometers, enabling sustained attacks on the Israeli city of Ashkelon. The sources said Hamas, despite rare launches, has stockpiled hundreds of extended-range Kassams.

Hamas missile strikes have also been facilitated by the use of remote-control launches. The sources said Hamas has learned from Hizbullah how to prepare a battery of up to 12 missiles in a bunker. The battery could then be elevated by remote control, fired and then returned underground.

"It marks a significant escalation in capabilities and limits our ability to retaliate," the source said.

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