

Egypt sent arms to Fatah with Israel's help

By [Global Research](#)

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Editorial Note

Egypt and Israel are arming Fatah, with a view to triggering a civil war within Palestine. This process of arming Fatah paramilitary groups must also be seen in the broader context of US-Israeli war plans in relation to Iran and Syria

Global Research, 3 January 2006

Egypt has sent a large quantity of weapons through Israeli territory to support forces loyal to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah party, an Israeli security official said on Thursday.

"In coordination with Israel, Egypt delivered a large quantity of guns and munitions to Abbas' forces", the Israeli official said on condition of anonymity because the arms shipment had not been officially confirmed by Israel, the Palestinians or Egypt.

Israel's Haaretz daily also reported that "a load of 2,000 Kalashnikov AK-47 assault rifles as well as 20,000 cartridge clips and two million bullets were transferred to Fatah's armed groups in the Gaza Strip, in coordination with the Israeli army."

The paper said the weapons had been transported by a convoy of four trucks from Egypt into Israel through the Kerem Shalom crossing point to the south of Gaza, and had been taken to the Karni crossing further north where they were received by Palestinian Authority security services loyal to Abbas.

The arms shipment followed discussions among Israeli, Egyptian and American officials and was decided upon at a summit on Saturday in Jerusalem between Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and President Abbas, Haaretz said.

Meanwhile, Israeli public radio said there would soon be another delivery of weaponry from Jordan to Abbas' forces in the occupied West Bank.

Correspondents say the arms transfer is an extraordinary show of support by Israel, Egypt and Jordan for President Abbas, who is locked in a power struggle with the ruling Hamas party.

Reports say Israel initially rejected the idea of sending weapons to Fatah, for fear they would be used against it. But the recent meeting between Abbas and Olmert and Israel's desire to make Fatah defeat Hamas apparently have overridden these concerns.

Palestinian and Egyptian officials declined comment. But Israel's cabinet minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer appeared to confirm the agreement, telling Army Radio that the weapons transfer was aimed at giving Abbas "the capability to hold his own against those organizations that are trying to spoil everything."

Hamas and Fatah have been struggling for power since the resistance group won the legislative elections last January. Political tensions between the two rival factions turned violent earlier this month after Abbas announced plans to call early elections following the collapse of unity government talks with Hamas.

At least 17 Palestinians have been killed in the fighting, which included an assassination attempt on Hamas' Prime Minister Ismael Haniya, who left Gaza on Thursday to resume a trip to Gulf states that had been cut short by the violence.

Haniya was headed first to Saudi Arabia, then to Kuwait, Qatar and Jordan, where he and Abbas have been invited for talks by King Abdullah II.

Asked before leaving whether the meeting with Abbas would take place, Haniya told reporters that preparations were "still under way," but gave no additional details.

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