

# Israel's Pounces in Gaza

March 3, 2008

Monday's commentators across the Middle East are unanimous in their choice of subject. The *Jordan Times* writes, in an editorial, that it is [indefensible](#) if the UN Security Council fails to adopt an appropriate resolution on the latest Israeli violence against the Palestinians in Gaza, when it meets on Monday. Ghassan Charbel, writing in *Al Hayat* in Lebanon, says Israel can [assassinate](#) many Gazans but it cannot assassinate Gaza. In Israel, *Haaretz* says it is extremely important to define the goals of the [Israeli operation](#) in the Gaza Strip, and asks whether it is aimed at calming Israeli public opinion, or at creating a new military situation on the ground. The *Jerusalem Post* says no matter how much the simple facts of this current conflict are ignored or wilfully obscured, they must not be forgotten. Israel, it says, is fighting to stop the [bombardment](#) of its cities. Columnist Hassan Hanizadeh, writing in the *Tehran Times*, criticises the UN Security Council, the European Union, and the organizations that, he says, claim to be defenders of human rights, for their silence about the [brutal assault](#) on the Palestinians and the humanitarian tragedy unfolding. Yossi Alpher, a former senior adviser to former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, writing in Lebanon's *Daily Star*, believes the Palestinian Authority is making reasonable progress on its [security obligations](#) and deserves more reciprocation from Israel.

Also in today's papers:

### ***Christian Science Monitor***

- In an editorial, also on the conflict in Gaza, the paper calls for restraint on the part of Israel, saying it will give it [moral strength](#) to find a solution and avoid Hamas's trap of forcing an overreaction.

### ***Daily Telegraph***

- Commentator Con Coughlin, commenting on the suspension of peace talks by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, writes that whenever Abbas is faced with a tough choice, he will invariably go for the [easy option](#).
- In an editorial on Russia's "sham election," the *Telegraph* says that as during Soviet times, Russians have trudged [dutifully](#) to the polls. Everyone, it says, knows who will win, but the process must be given a patina of respectability.

### ***Financial Times***

- In an editorial, the paper calls for continued pressure on [Kenya](#) to make sure that last week's power sharing agreement sticks. The accord is as promising as could be hoped, says the *FT*, but it is not yet secure.
- In a further editorial, on the upcoming general election in Spain, the paper writes that the campaign has been a [dispiriting spectacle](#).
- Columnist Wolfgang Münchau, writing on the same subject, believes the eventual winner will spend the next four years cleaning up an [economic mess](#) of a scale not witnessed in Spain in modern times.
- Wanja Lundby-Wedin and John Monks of the European Trade Union Confederation call on the European Court of Justice to strike a better balance in its rulings between companies' freedom to provide services and the right of workers to [equal pay](#).

### ***Guardian***

- In an editorial, the *Guardian* says Israel does not have a clear [military strategy](#) in Gaza. No matter how many Hamas leaders are killed, it will never be able to wipe the Strip clean of the movement, says the paper.
- Azzam Tamimi of the Institute of Islamic Political Thought writes that the military onslaught of the past few days has made it clear that the Israeli leadership is not interested in any [peaceful exit](#) from the current predicament.
- Columnist Jonathan Steele, commenting on Russia's presidential election on Sunday, writes that, with the new president a [Putin protege](#), Russia, like China, will continue on a path of modernising under authoritarian rule.

### ***Gulf Times***

- In an editorial, the paper comments on Sunday's visit to Iraq by the Iranian president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, describing it as a [diplomatic coup](#) and an historic high-profile meeting of minds with his counterpart Jalal Talabani.

### ***Independent*** (London)

- In an editorial, also on the Gaza conflict, the paper expresses hope that a change in the White House will bring about an end to the policy of offering Israel unreserved support, restore a degree of fairness to America's [Middle Eastern diplomacy](#) and prompt a more proactive attitude on the part of the U.S. in general.

### ***Moscow Times***

- Vladimir Ryzhkov, a former deputy in the State Duma, describes Sunday's [presidential election](#) in Russia as the latest, and most significant, chapter in a whole series of actions taken by the Kremlin to eliminate free and fair elections in the country.
- Vladimir Frolov, president of LEFF Group, disagrees. While acknowledging that the choice appeared to be limited and the election not really contested, he believes this was caused mostly by a lack of credible alternatives to Putin's course rather than by the [Kremlin's manipulation](#).

### ***New York Times***

- In an editorial, the *Times* welcomes the fact that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has decided to go forward with a visit to the Middle East this week, and calls on her to [push urgently](#) for a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas.
- In a further editorial, on the global food shortage, the paper puts the blame on shortsighted policies in the United States and other wealthy countries, which are diverting crops to environmentally dubious [biofuels](#).
- In a further editorial, the *Times* criticises the U.S. Senate for its failure in last year's energy bill to extend vital [tax credits](#) to producers of wind, solar and other renewable fuels.
- Columnist Roger Cohen writes in praise of the efforts of former United Nations Secretary-General [Kofi Annan](#) in helping to broker Kenya's power-sharing agreement.

### ***Times of London***

- In an editorial on Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's visit to Iraq, the paper says that if Tehran is as [benign](#) in its intentions as it claims, there are many steps that it could take which would convince others of this, especially in Iraq.

### ***Wall Street Journal***

- In an editorial the *Journal* debunks the notion that the new Russian president, Dmitri Medvedev, will be a [liberal champion](#).
- Columnist Mary Anastasia O'Grady is concerned about the criticism of the North American Free Trade Agreement by the Democratic Party candidates Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, and the effect this may have on modern, [democratic capitalism](#) in Latin America.
- Peter Charles Choharis of Choharis Global Solutions believes that the United Nations Security Council should consider employing contract armed forces to [protect civilians](#) and relief workers in Africa.
- In an editorial, the *Journal* applauds Thailand's central bank for lifting the last remnants of its [capital controls](#), saying that the countries that liberalize the most will attract the most investment.

### ***Washington Post***

- Columnist Anne Applebaum describes Russia's presidential election as [farcical](#), but says Russians maintain the democratic rituals that give them a semblance of legitimacy in order to stave off Western-inspired popular discontent.
- Richard N. Perle of the American Enterprise Institute, in an op-ed, says that despite what he calls Putin's [ICBM-rattling](#), the U.S. should decrease its nuclear forces.