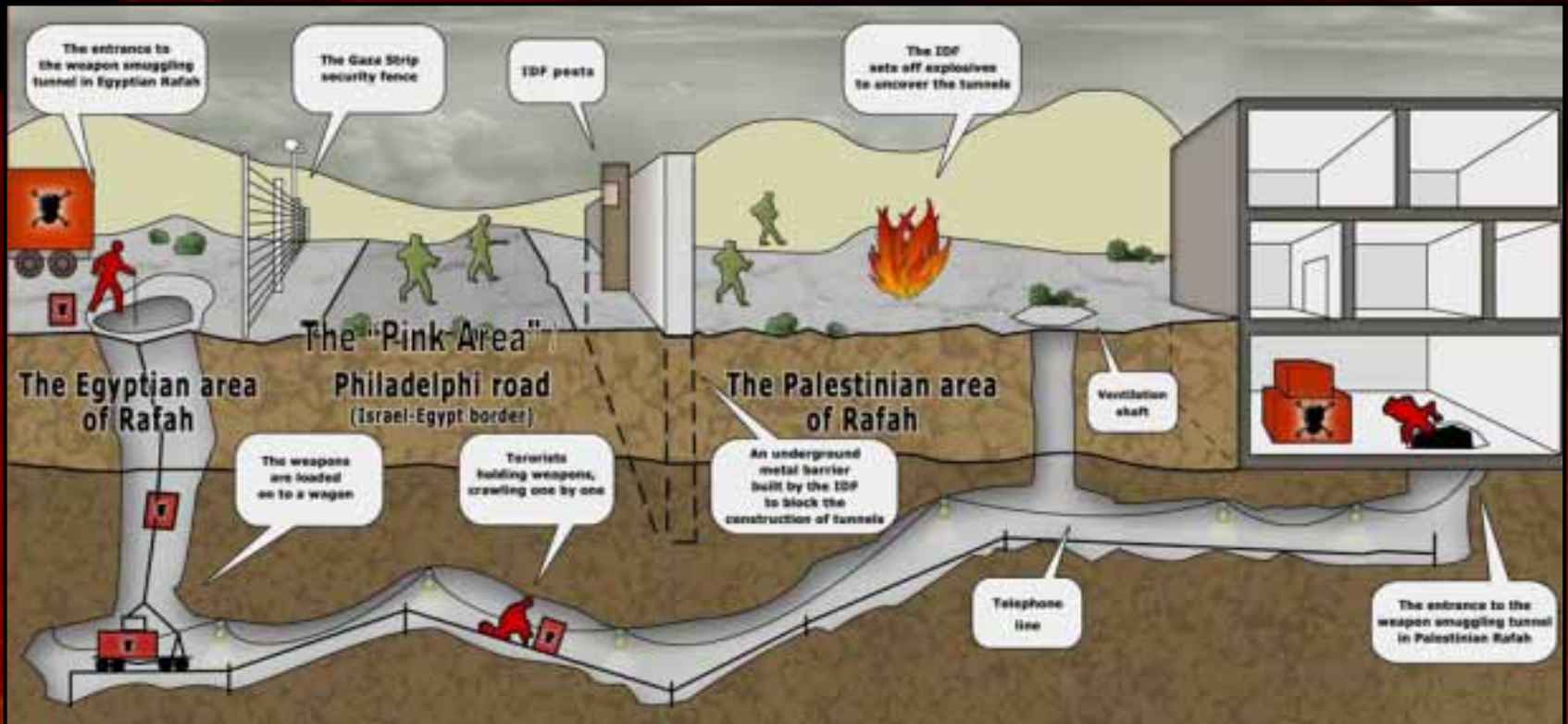


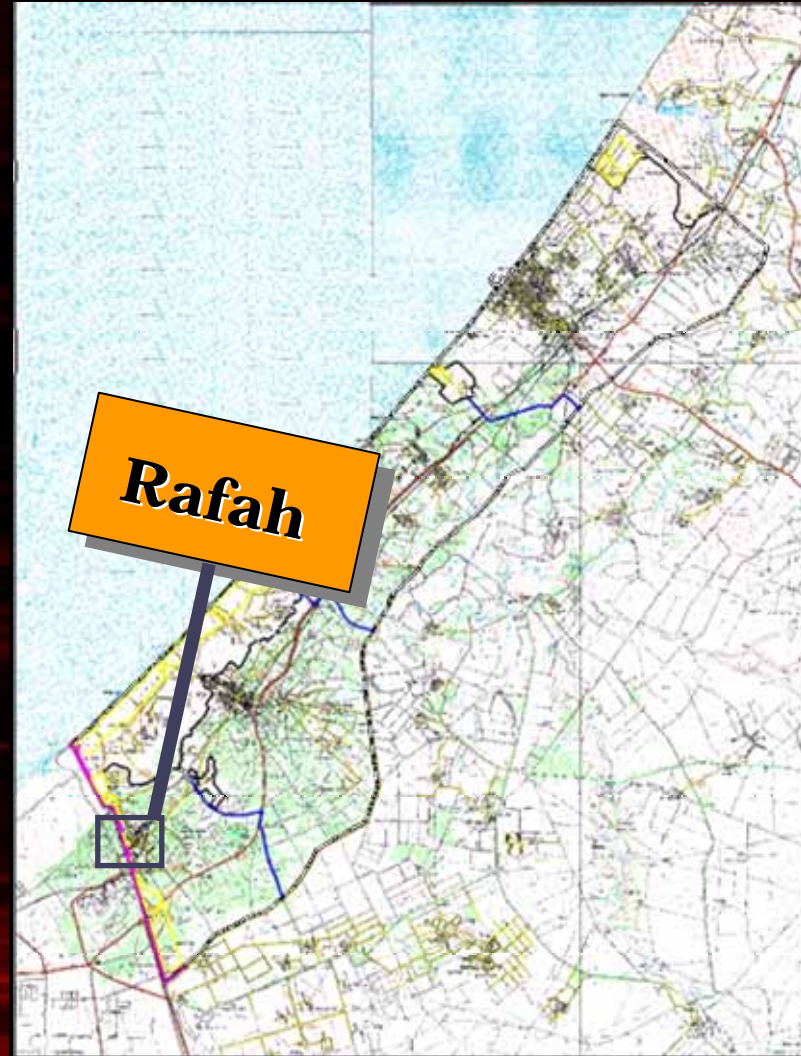


Weapon Smuggling through the Rafah Tunnels



The City of Rafah

- The smuggling “industry” began in Rafah in the 1980's, due to the city's economic state and it's geographical location. This smuggling mainly takes place through tunnels dug under the border.
- The development of this area's smuggling “industry” was simultaneous to the growth of the extremist Islamic infrastructure. This infrastructure utilizes these tunnels for terrorist and smuggling activity.
- Economic factors play a crucial role in recruiting local residents into the weapon smuggling “ industry”.

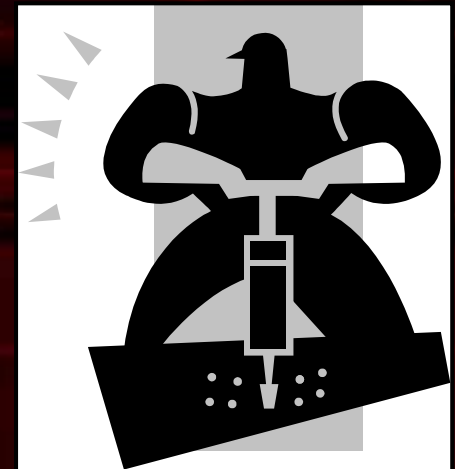


The Process of Constructing Tunnels

- The method of constructing tunnels is complex and has evolved over the years:
 1. Terrorist organizations (sometimes in cooperation with criminal elements) locate a Palestinian landowner who, in exchange for payment, is willing to provide his house or land for the building of a tunnel.
 2. A suitable opening for the tunnel on the Egyptian side is located. The tunnel opening is generally located within a house or on private property, in order to allow the smugglers to cross from one side to the other and to prevent the Egyptian officials from discovering the tunnel.
 3. A tunnel building expert (“engineer”) is chosen to oversee the construction of the tunnel, recruiting digging experts and providing them with the necessary equipment - electric and hand-held tools - for the job.

The Process of Constructing Tunnels (cont.)

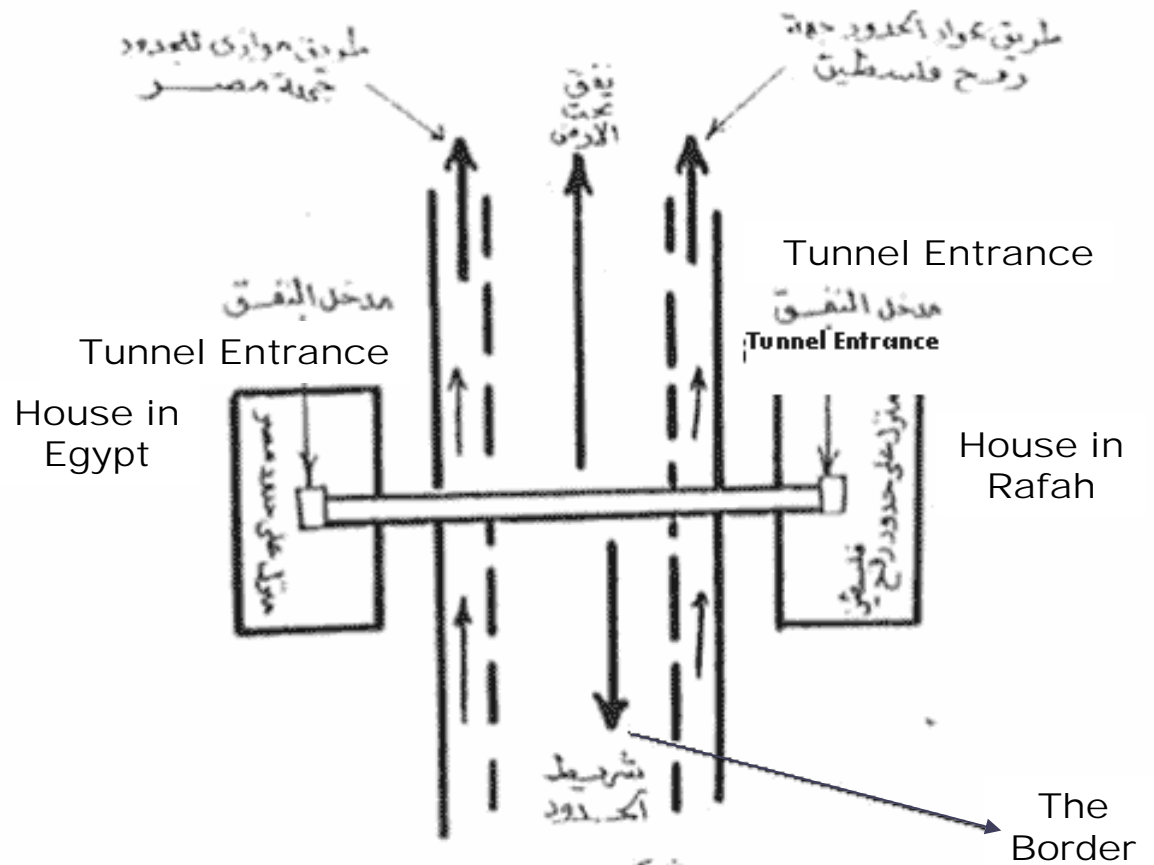
- The duration of tunnel construction may total anywhere from two weeks to two months, depending on the following conditions:
 - the number of workers digging
 - the digging equipment
 - the depth
 - length and width of the tunnel (which dictate the need for ventilation shafts).



Seized Map Smuggling Plan

Tunnel area in Egypt

Tunnel area in Rafah



شكل (١٠)

رسم توضيحي يبين كيفية بناء نفق
للتهرب على الحدود

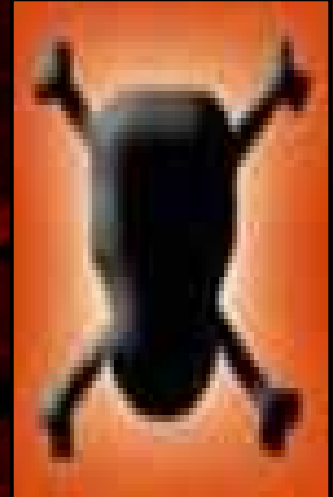
Avoiding Detection

- In order to avoid detection by the IDF, terrorists and terrorist organizations:
 - Build the tunnels in residential areas.
 - Keep the location of the tunnels a secret.
 - Spread rumors about digging tunnels elsewhere.
 - Dig tunnels at night.
 - Transport the earth and sand, disguised in flour bags, that has been dug up to other sites.
 - Attack nearby IDF posts and stage fire-fights as a distraction from explosions used for tunnel construction or from the actual smuggling operations.
- Tunnels are concealed in one of the following methods:
 - Covering the tunnel's entrance with furniture, cement, paneling or other objects.
 - Filling the entrance with sand, rags, wood, etc.
 - Using “double walls” to conceal rooms in which a tunnel entrance exists.
 - Digging the tunnels under showers, cabinets and sewage lids.

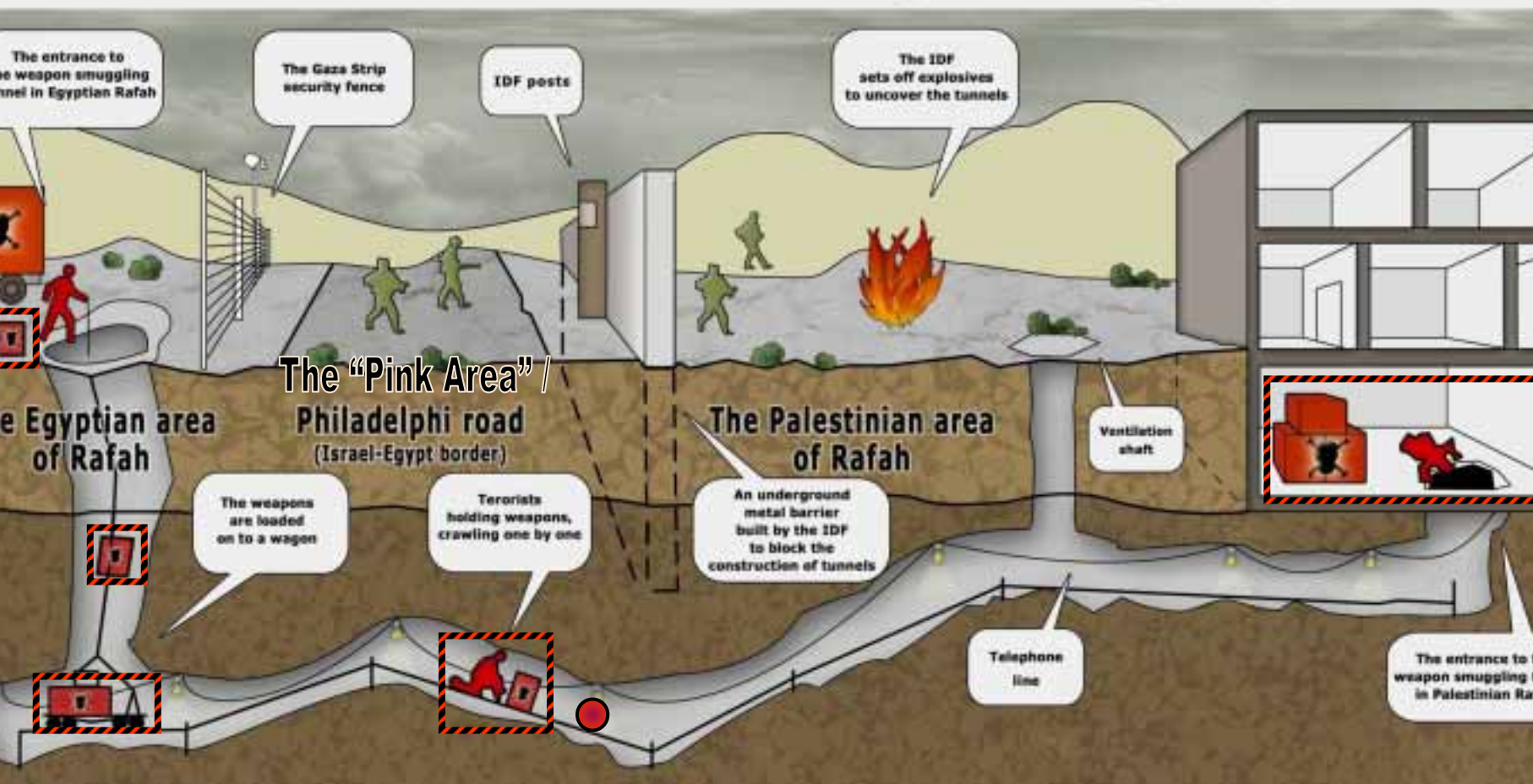


The Method of Smuggling

- Smugglers on the Egyptian side prepare the weapons and explosives at the entrance to the tunnel on Egyptian side of the border.
- Smugglers from the Gaza Strip cross over to the Egyptian side, through the tunnel, load the weapons and explosives onto a wagon and smuggle them back to the Gaza Strip.
- While the weapons are being smuggled, underground telephone lines keep the smugglers in contact with the surface, so that their activity can be coordinated in order to escape any IDF preventive activity.



An Illustration of the Rafah Weapon Smuggling Tunnels



Exposed Tunnel Entrance



The View from a Tunnel Entrance



Ventilation Shaft



Activities of Terrorist Organizations

Hamas

- Hamas' main weapon source is through the Rafah tunnels. Senior Hamas terrorists, contacts from Hizballah, Iran and terrorists in other countries oversee and aid in weapon smuggling.
- Carries out terrorist activity against the IDF in the Rafah area.

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine

- Throughout the current armed conflict, the PFLP has smuggled weapons and explosives to the Gaza Strip, aided by Iranian officials.

The Activity of Terrorist Organizations (cont.)

- Both Hamas and the PFLP are involved in digging tunnels under IDF posts and detonating explosives beneath them.
- The two most prominent instances of terrorist attacks on IDF outposts are:
 - **IDF outpost south of Rafah, 29.09.02:** 3 IDF soldiers were injured and a wall collapsed.
 - **IDF outpost west of Rafah, 17.12.03:** An explosion blew communications equipment and a generator over the border into Egypt. The roof and entrance of the post were destroyed.

The Role of the Palestinian Authority

- The Palestinian Authority has been aiding weapon smuggling since the beginning of the current armed conflict.
- The Palestinian Authority encourages residents to conceal tunnels inside their houses or on their property.
- Moreover, the Palestinian Authority itself, is active in smuggling weapons and explosives for the purpose of terrorism, into the Gaza Strip through the Rafah tunnels.



The Role of the Palestinian Authority

During the entire cease-fire period of summer 2003, the Palestinian Authority failed to deal with the smuggling of weapons into the Gaza Strip, as it was obliged to do. This smuggling, during the cease-fire, served to arm the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip and strengthen the terrorist infrastructure in the area.



Weapons Smuggled Into The Gaza Strip Since January 2003

- Since January 2003, large quantities of weapons have been smuggled into the Gaza Strip, including:
 - **Dozens of RPG rockets and launchers**
 - **Hundreds of kilograms of explosives**
 - **Hundreds of rifles (mainly AK- 47 Kalashnikovs)**
 - **Tens of thousands of bullets and other ammunition**
 - **Thousands of cartridges**



Terrorists subsequently use these weapons in terrorist attacks including suicide bombings.



Resident Protests

- There is growing opposition among the Palestinian civilian population to the tunnel building and weapons smuggling in Rafah.
- Over recent months Rafah residents have escalated their protests against the tunnels:

“No one benefits from these tunnels but a few residents, while we pay the price. We will not sit idly by. If the PA won't help us to close these tunnels - we'll do it ourselves...”

(Abdaalla Abtu-Mahsen, Border-side resident, as quoted in the PA's 'Al' hayat Aljadida', 16.10.03)

15.10.03, residents demonstrated outside the Palestinian Authority's Police and Preventive Security HQs demanding the sealing of the tunnels and giving the names of 4 tunnel owners/operators and demanded action be taken against them.

23.12.03, Following IDF preventive activity which damaged houses, several residents torched a house in which one of the tunnel entrances was found.

29.12.03, Dozens of enraged residents (who's houses which had been used as a tunnel exit and subsequently were damaged during IDF preventive activity) encouraged armed men to “kidnap” Ramzi Hoori, Arafat's COS, and Muhamad Alqidwa, the governor of Gaza – the protest was over the “negligence and lack of attention” to their situation on the Palestinian Authority's behalf.

–
The tunnels are “a severe phenomenon, more dangerous to the Palestinian society than to Israel's security”.

(Rashid Abu-Shbak, Head of the Preventative Security Apparatus, as quoted on the “Arabs48” website, 29.01.04)

29.12.03, Protesters set up tents outside public buildings, in protest against the Palestinian Authority's “Policy of Apathy”.

The Palestinian Authority's Reaction

- In order to lessen pressure from the local population, as well as to appear to the international community that the it was making an “effort”, the PA’s Security Apparatus conducted (on 23.08.03) a well publicized “operation” to expose tunnels and arrest smugglers.
- In actuality, this apparent “operation” had only minuscule results:
 - A few small-time smugglers were arrested and a handful of tunnels were exposed (which were sealed with only modest amounts of cement, enabling easy reopening of the entrances).
- The PA has started compensating house owners whose houses have been damaged or destroyed, constructing new concrete houses for them in the neighborhood of Tel-Sultan.
- This policy has led residents to the constructing of fictitious tunnels or spreading rumors about tunnels being located under their houses, in order to receive PA compensation after their houses are damaged or destroyed.

IDF Preventative Activity

Over the past year and a half, IDF forces have operated to prevent the smuggling of weapons into the Gaza Strip.

Steps taken by the IDF:

1. Constructing an underground barrier along the “Philadelphi Road” (“Pink Area”).
2. Erecting a wall, in order to create continuous cover from observation and fire, as well as a physical barrier. IDF outposts south and west of Rafah have been built



IDF Preventative Activity (cont.)

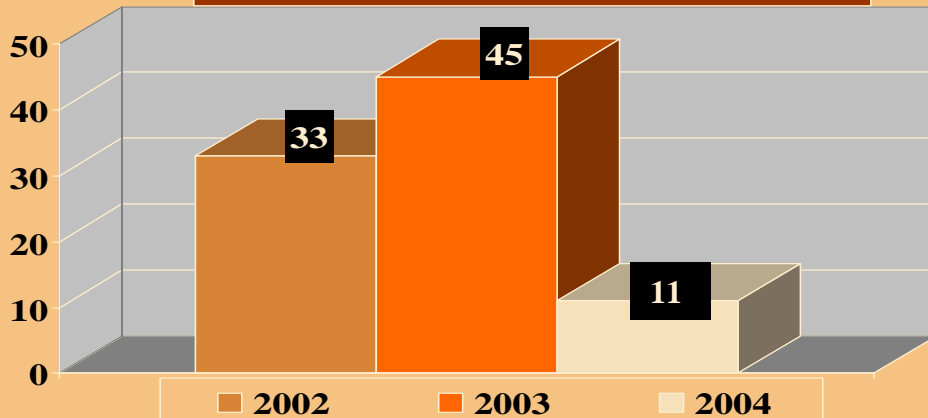
Targeted Activity:

Uncovering and Demolishing Tunnel Entrances

3. During 2003, the IDF uncovered and demolished **45 tunnel entrances**.



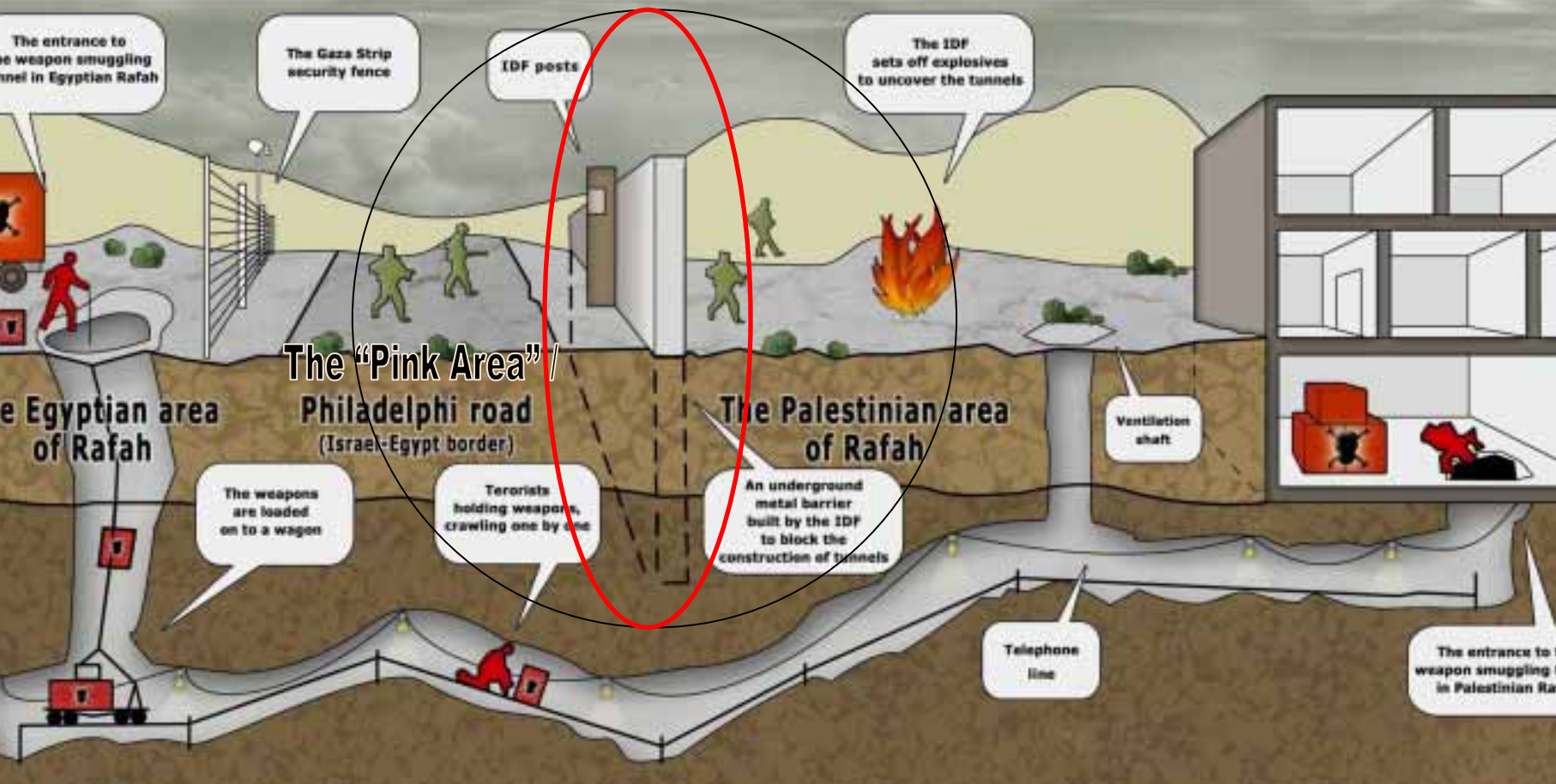
Tunnel Entrances Uncovered and Destroyed by the IDF



Approximately 10-15 tunnels are currently still active.

Since the beginning of the low intensity conflict (September, 2000), the IDF has discovered over 90 weapon smuggling tunnels.

An Illustration of the Rafah Weapon Smuggling Tunnels



Egyptian Preventive Activity

- In 2003, Egypt discovered **30 tunnel entrances.**
- In addition, the Egyptians have increased:
 - Patrolling along the border.
 - Ambushing alongside known smuggling routes.
 - Arresting smugglers and their accomplices (even though most they are rapidly released and then return to smuggling almost immediately).

Conclusion

The Raffah tunnels continue to be a vital source for supplying and smuggling weapons and explosives for the Palestinian terrorist organizations.



Weapon smuggling is run and managed by terrorist organizations with the **approval** and active participation of the **Palestinian Authority**.