



July 31, 2014

## Operation Protective Edge – Update No. 17 (As of 1200 hours, July 31, 2014)



IDF activity in the Gaza Strip continues (IDF Spokesman, July 30, 2014)

### Overview

1. The existing format of Operation Protective Edge continues, while in the meantime political contacts have not led to a breakthrough. The IDF continues attacking terrorist targets from the air and its ground activity as well. The ground activity focuses on exposing and destroying attack tunnels. The activity is expected to come to an end within a number of days. Hamas and the other terrorist organizations continue clashing with IDF forces. The most serious incident was the explosion of a booby-trapped house which collapsed on the soldiers (killing three and wounding 12). At the same time, rocket fire into Israeli territory continues (approximately 110 rockets fell on July 30, 2014, an increase over the past few days).

2. **During the past few days the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip worsened**, the result of damage to the infrastructure (electricity, water and sewage disposal) and the mass displacement of local residents from combat areas. There are approximately 200,000-250,000 displaced persons in the Gaza Strip (more than 10% of the population), most of them currently in UNRWA shelters. An increase was also noted in the number of uninvolved civilians killed.

## The Ground Operation

### IDF Activity

#### Overview

3. On **July 30, 2014**, the IDF ground operation continued, focusing on exposing and destroying the terrorist tunnels. So far about half of the attack tunnels have been destroyed. At the same time, activities to destroy Hamas' terrorist infrastructure on the ground and from the air continue. On the morning of July 31, 2014, the fighting in Shejaiya was renewed, but there is also fighting in Jabaliya and the southern Gaza Strip.

4. On the afternoon of July 30, 2014, **IDF Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Benny Gantz** declared a humanitarian ceasefire between 1500 and 1900 hours. He said the humanitarian window would not be in force in areas where operational activity was being conducted (IDF Spokesman, July 30, 2014). Hamas spokesman **Sami Abu Zuhri** claimed that the humanitarian ceasefire declared by Israel was "media propaganda" because it did not include combat areas and could not be used to evacuate the dead and wounded (Alresala.net, July 30, 2014).

5. Regarding the continuation of the operation, **Major General Sammy Turgeman, commander of the Southern Command**, said that **within a number of days the IDF would finish destroying the attack tunnels known before the operation and those exposed during it**. He said heavy, ongoing fighting continued against Hamas and the other terrorist organizations. He noted that during the operation many terrorist operatives had been detained who had provided high-quality intelligence later used by the IDF forces on the ground. He said that the fighting was being conducted in a densely-populated urban area close to mosques and sensitive sites. Locating and destroying the terrorist tunnels was an operational challenge, because they were located dozens of meters below ground (IDF Spokesman, July 30, 2014)

6. Israel's Political-Security Cabinet met in the afternoon and instructed the IDF to continue forcefully attacking on Hamas and the other terrorist organizations, and to finish neutralizing the terrorist tunnels. The IDF decided to call up 16,000 more reserve soldiers (Ynetnews.co.il, July 30, 2014).

#### IDF Activity on July 30, 2014

7. On the afternoon of July 30, 2014, after a specific terrorist tunnel had been located, **an IED exploded in a booby-trapped house, causing it to collapse on**

**the soldiers. Three soldiers were killed and 12 were wounded.** Hamas' military-terrorist wing claimed responsibility. According to the announcement, they had tempted soldiers of a special unit to enter the booby-trapped house and then blown it up (Qassam.ps, July 30, 2014).

8. Other events included the following (IDF Spokesman, July 30, 2014):

- 1) On the morning of **July 30, 2014**, an IDF force identified a ten-man terrorist squad that had fired an anti-tank missile at them. An Israeli Air Force (IAF) aircraft was called in and identified and attacked the squad. The terrorist operatives were killed. Two IDF soldiers sustained minor injuries.
- 2) On the evening of **July 30, 2014**, an IDF force identified a terrorist operative who opened fire. The force returned fire, killing him.
- 3) On the night of **July 30, 2014**, IDF soldiers operating in the southern Gaza Strip killed a terrorist operative who had fired an anti-tank missile at them.



**Weapons found in a mosque in the Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman, July 30, 2014)**  
Click <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aWkjwfkx-qM> for the video.

## **Exposure and Destruction of Terrorist Tunnels**

9. During the past 24 hours **the IDF continued its activities to expose and destroy terrorist tunnels intended for attacks in Israeli territory**, clashing with terrorist operatives (IDF Spokesman, July 30, 2014):

- 1) On the morning of **July 30, 2014**, a number of tunnel shafts were exposed. An IDF force identified two terrorist operatives emerging from a shaft. The force opened fire and killed them.
- 2) In the early afternoon of **July 30, 2014**, an IDF force exploded a tunnel in the Gaza Strip.
- 3) On July 30, 2014, **two tunnel shafts were exposed in the cellar of a mosque**, which was also used by worshippers. Large quantities of weapons were found in the mosque. In another tunnel was exposed in a different mosque. According to the findings, the tunnel was used by terrorist operatives to attack IDF soldiers.



**Tunnel openings exposed in a mosque in the Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman, July 30, 2014)**  
Click <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5r6AYUy-ujo> for the video.



The route of the tunnel exploded by the IDF (IDF Spokesman, July 30, 2014)  
Click <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ztzMkKSvSKo> for the video.

## Air Attacks on Terrorist Targets Continue

10. In addition to the ground operation, the IDF continued attacking terrorist targets from the air. So far, more than 4,215 terrorist targets have been attacked in the Gaza Strip. The IDF Spokesman said that the IDF had increased IAF attacks during the past 24 hours, striking terrorist targets in and around Gaza City (IDF Spokesman, July 30, 2014).

11. On July 30, 2014, IAF aircraft attacked 110 terrorist targets, among them five houses of senior operatives that served as command and control facilities, terrorist squads that fired rockets at IDF forces or placed IEDs, attack tunnels and a site for the manufacture of weapons (IDF Spokesman, July 30, 2014).

## IDF and Civilian Losses

12. Fifty-six IDF soldiers and three civilians have been killed in Operation Protective Edge.

13. On July 30, 2014, three IDF soldiers were killed by an explosion in a booby-trapped house in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip. In the past 24 hours 27 soldiers were wounded. The soldiers who died were (IDF Spokesman, July 30, 2014):

- 1) **Staff Sergeant Gai al-Granati**, 20, from Tel Aviv. Served in an elite infantry unit. Killed during operational activity in the southern Gaza Strip.

2) **Staff Sergeant Matan Gottlieb**, 21, from Rishon Letzion. Served in an elite infantry unit. Killed during operational activity in the southern Gaza Strip.

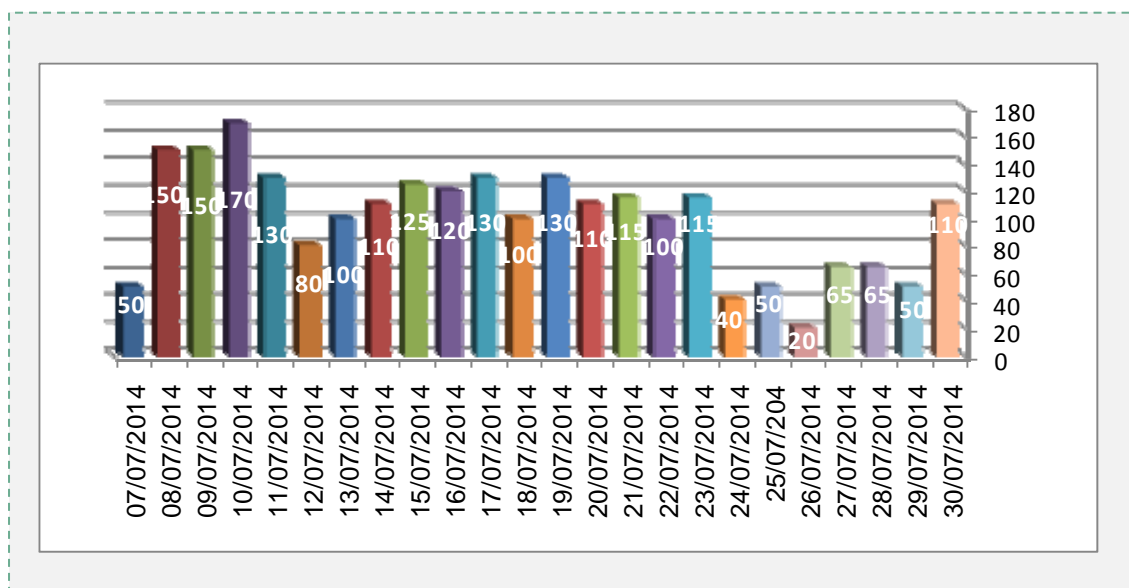
3) **Staff Sergeant Omer Hai**, 21, from Savion. Served in an elite infantry unit. Killed during operational activity in the southern Gaza Strip.

## Rocket Fire into Israeli Territory

14. **Since the beginning of the operation approximately 2,385 rockets have hit Israeli territory**, 1,200 since the beginning of the ground operation. The Iron Dome aerial defense system intercepted **more than 500**.

15. On July 30, 2014, rocket fire into Israeli territory increased and **110 rocket hits were identified**. Most of the rockets fell in the south of Israel. In the evening a number of rockets were fired at the coastal plain.

### Daily Distribution of Rocket Hits in Israeli Territory during Operation Protective Edge<sup>1</sup>



16. The military-terrorist wings of Hamas and the PIJ continue claiming responsibility for most of the rockets and mortar shells fired into Israeli territory and at the IDF forces operating in the Gaza Strip.

<sup>1</sup> The graph indicates rocket hits in Israeli territory and does not include the massive mortar shell fire into the western Negev or rocket launches that failed.



## The Gazan Population

17. According to ITIC information, **1,199 Gazans have been killed** since the beginning of the operation (as of noon, July 31).

18. The distribution (not final, as of noon, July 31, 2014) of the 1,199 Palestinians killed is as follows:

- 1) **345 terrorist operatives:**
  - A) **181 Hamas operatives**
  - B) **107 PIJ operatives**
  - C) **57 operatives** from other terrorist organizations
- 2) **370 non-involved Palestinians**
- 3) **484 Palestinians** whose identity is not yet known

## The Humanitarian Situation in the Gaza Strip

19. Valerie Amos, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, reported that 250,000 Gazans had vacated their houses. Of them, 200,000 had sought shelter in UNRWA installations. She said the UN's World Food Programme supplied emergency food assistance to 204,000 people, in addition to its regular food programs (Reliefweb.int, July 30, 2014).<sup>2</sup>



Gazans who found shelter in UNRWA schools (Wafa.ps, July 30, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> <http://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/under-secretary-general-humanitarian-affairs-and-emergency-0>

20. **Fathi al-Sheikh Khalil**, chairman of the Gaza Strip energy authority, reported that electricity in the Gaza Strip had been cut off, including electricity from Israel. He claimed that emergency generators could produce electricity for only a small number of hours. Private generators, he claimed, could not work because of a shortage of fuel (Al-Jazeera, July 30, 2014).

21. **Mahmoud Abbas**, chairman of the Palestinian Authority (PA), sent an official communiqué to the UN Secretary General declaring the Gaza Strip a humanitarian catastrophe zone. He demanded the secretary general, along with the international community, do what was required to verify the needs of the Gazans and provide support from the UN's international agencies (Wafa.ps, July 30, 2014).

22. The **World Health Organization** reported that on July 29, 2014, a shipment it sent of medical equipment worth \$1.4 million had reached the Gaza Strip. Contributions for the equipment came from Switzerland and Norway, and had been delivered through UNRWA (WHO website, July 30, 2014).

### Civilians Hit in the Market in Shejaiya

23. The Palestinian media reported that on the evening of July 30, 2014, a number of shells were fired at the market in Shejaiya (eastern Gaza City). According to reports, 17 Palestinians were killed and approximately 200 wounded. **Ashraf al-Qudra**, spokesman for the ministry of health in Gaza, claimed that among those killed were newspapermen and members of rescue teams. The IDF Spokesman reported that the event was under investigation and that videos and photographs were being examined. He said the IDF had been fired at from the area and that it was possible one of the shells fell in the market (Ynetnews.co.il, July 31, 2014).

24. However, the Palestinian media called the event a "slaughter." Hamas spokesman **Fawzi Barhoum** claimed it was a real act of slaughter and was proof of the mortal wound Hamas had inflicted on Israel. He claimed Israel was attacking in the Gaza Strip out of hysteria and wanted to exert pressure on Hamas by killing civilians (Alquds.com, July 30, 2014). Hamas spokesman **Sami Abu Zuhri** claimed that Israel was waging a "war of extermination" against the Palestinians on a backdrop of Arab and international silence (Al-Jazeera, July 30, 2014).

### UNRWA School Hit

25. On **July 30, 2014**, the Palestinians reported that tank fire had allegedly hit UNRWA's Abu Hussein school in Jabaliya, currently used as a shelter for Gazan



civilians. As a result 16 people were killed and several dozen were wounded. According to assessments, the school was hit by IDF fire. The school shelters about 3,000 Gazans who vacated their houses.

26. UNRWA spokesman **Adnan Abu Hasna** claimed UNRWA had reportedly told Israel "17 times" that displaced persons were in the school. He claimed the last time was a few hours before the attack. **The IDF Spokesman reported that the IDF forces near the school had been shot at and had returned fire.** So far it is not known what hit the school, IDF fire or fire targeting IDF forces. It was also reported that the IDF was investigating the incident (Haaretz.co.il, July 31, 2014).

27. The hit on the school caused a wave of strong condemnations from Palestinian and international sources:

1) **UN Secretary General Ban-ki Moon** claimed that all the evidence indicated that Israel was responsible for the attack. He called on both sides to end the fighting and agree to an immediate ceasefire without preconditions (UN.org, July 30, 2014).

2) **Bernadette Meehan**, deputy American National Security Council spokeswoman, said she was "extremely concerned that thousands of internally displaced Palestinians [in the Gaza Strip]...are not safe in UN designated shelters in Gaza. We also condemn those responsible for hiding weapons in United Nations facilities in Gaza..." (ITIC emphasis) (Haaretz, July 31, 2014).<sup>3</sup>

3) Hamas spokesman **Sami Abu Zuhri** accused the UN of responsibility for the Israeli attack on the school (Aa.com.tr, July 30, 2014).

## The Crossings – Update

### The Kerem Shalom Crossing

28. **Since the beginning of Operation Protective Edge 1,322 trucks carrying food, medicine and medical equipment have entered the Gaza Strip through the crossing.** Diesel fuel for the Gaza Strip power plant, gasoline and cooking gas have also been delivered. On July 29, 2014, of 158 trucks only 43 entered because of the intense rocket fire targeting the crossing.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.haaretz.com/1.608078>

## The Erez Crossing

29. **Jowad Awad**, minister of health in the national consensus government, said that another aid convoy of medicine and medical equipment would leave for the Gaza Strip, in collaboration with the Palestinian Red Crescent and the king of Saudi Arabia. The trucks are supposed to enter the Gaza Strip through the Erez crossing. Awad accused Israel of delaying the entrance of trucks which had previously arrived at the crossing despite the fact that they had all the necessary authorizations (Wafa.ps, July 30, 2014).

## Judea and Samaria

### Hamas Tries to Provoke the Palestinians in Judea and Samaria

30. **Hamas activists in Judea and Samaria are trying to provoke the Palestinians in Judea and Samaria to participate in anti-Israeli activities.** Hamas issued a statement calling on the Palestinian populace to declare Friday, August 1, 2014, a "day of rage" against Israel. According to the statement, after the Friday prayer protest marches and other activities would be held in support of the Gaza Strip (Alresala.net, July 30, 2014). On July 30, 2014, Hamas in Al-Najah University in Nablus issued an invitation to "a solidary march with the Gaza Strip and support of the resistance" after the evening prayer in the al-Haj Nimr mosque in Nablus on July 31, 2014 (Facebook page of Shabakat Filatin Lil-Hiwar name, July 30, 2014; Facebook page of the Islamic Bloc in Al-Najar University, July 30, 2014).

31. Hamas spokesman **Fawzi Barhoum**, interviewed in the Al-Shifa'a Hospital, asked why the Palestinian people in Judea and Samaria were not active, in view of the events in the Gaza Strip. **He called on the residents in Judea and Samaria to rise above political disagreements, declare a struggle, and take their cars and "run over Jews and kill dozens of Zionists"** (Alquds.com, July 30, 2014).



Notices calling on Palestinians to demonstrate. Left: Invitation to a demonstration in Bethlehem. Center: Call for the "March of 10,000." Right: Invitation to a demonstration in Hebron (Facebook page of Shabakat Filatin Lil-Hiwar, July 30, 2014)

## Contacts for a Ceasefire

32. According to an Egyptian news agency quoting "exclusive sources," Egypt is planning to change articles in its ceasefire initiative. One of the changes is expected to be the declaration of a five-day ceasefire during which talks will be held with the united Palestinian delegation, and include representatives from Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ). According to the sources, the aspiration is to force Israel to lift the siege and open the crossings. Other demands of Israel include extending the fishing zone, abolishing the "no-go" perimeter, the release of the operatives detained in Operation Brothers' Keeper and carrying out the fourth phase of prisoner release. Also mentioned was the establishment of an apparatus to monitor the implementation of the agreement, which would have representatives from the United States and Egypt (ONAeg.com, July 30 2014).

33. **Jen Psaki**, spokesperson for the American State Department, said that "the focus of the discussion right now continues to be on short-term cease-fires that can build on each other and serve as a mechanism for getting the parties together to have a discussion about the key issues... the United States...doesn't speak to Hamas...[but] we do speak to the Qataris and the Turks, who are serving as our interlocutors, as well as the Egyptians" (State Department website, July 29, 2014).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2014/07/229907.htm#MIDDLEEASTPEACE>

## The Propaganda, Political and Legal Campaigns



Poster showing the stages of the development of the "resistance," from the rock to the UAV (Facebook page of Shabakat Filatin Lil-Hiwar, July 30, 2014)

### Iranian Support for the Palestinian Terrorist Organizations

34. **Qassem Suleimani**, commander of the Iranian Qods Force, **issued a statement emphasizing Iranian support of the "resistance."** He claimed Iran would not stop defending the resistance and the Palestinian people "even for one second." He claimed the world would understand that disarming the resistance was "a false belief and will never happen." He compared Palestine to the eruption of a volcano that could not be stopped. He said that "when the time is right, we will take out our anger on the Zionists" (Farsnews.com, July 30, 2014). In response, **Ziyad al-Nakhala**, deputy secretary general of the PIJ, which is supported by Iran, said the statement expressed Iranian support for the resistance of the Palestinian people and it reinforced the bond between the Palestinian people and Iran (Al-Mayadeen TV, Lebanon, July 30, 2014).

### PBS Interviews Khaled Mashaal

35. On July 29, 2014, Khaled Mashaal, chairman of Hamas' political bureau, was interviewed by PBS' Charlie Rose in Doha. The interview, whose objective was to present Hamas' position to the American public, dealt extensively with the current fighting. Khaled Mashaal also answered questions regarding Hamas' position in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. He tried to represent Hamas as a pragmatic movement

that did not adhere to radical Islam ("In Hamas," he said, "we believe in modern Islam, we are not fanatics or fundamentalists...")

36. Khaled Mashaal said the following about the current round of fighting:

1) In answer to the question of **who began the fighting**, Khaled Mashaal blamed Israeli "aggression," changing the order in which the events occurred. He claimed the events began when "some teenagers were unaccounted for in the West Bank" [Hamas, he claimed, had no knowledge about who was behind their abduction and murder]. Netanyahu, he claimed, did not rein in the settlers, who burned Muhammad Abu Khdeir alive, **and then Netanyahu "moved to Gaza," where he started the "aggression" against the Gaza Strip.** The rocket fire, he claimed, was the Palestinian defensive response to Israel's "aggression." He claimed the rocket fire that preceded the Israeli response was only "an Israeli narrative."

2) As to **Hamas' conditions for a ceasefire and its position to the Egyptian initiative**, he said Hamas demanded the siege of the Gaza Strip be lifted. The siege had been a fact of life for the Palestinians for eight years, he said. All the border crossings had to be opened and an airport and sea port had to be built. Israel also had to release hundreds of prisoners who had been detained since June 12, 2014 (i.e., during Operation Brothers' Keeper). Hamas, he said, rejected the Egyptian initiative because it did not include lifting the siege and it had been released without previous consultations with the Palestinian factions in Gaza.

3) Khaled Mashaal was asked **why John Kerry's proposal for a one-week ceasefire had not been accepted.** Hamas, he said, appreciated Kerry's efforts to stop the bloodletting but, he claimed, it was not Hamas but the Cabinet of Israel that had refused the proposal. He blamed Israel for the failure of Kerry's proposal, as it caused the failure of the nine months of negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.

4) **Khaled Mashaal praised Hamas' alleged high moral standards.** Hamas, he claimed, avoided harming civilians [completely ignoring Hamas' massive rocket barrages which deliberately target the civilian population]. That was shown, he said, by the fact that Israelis who were killed were combatants, while most of the Palestinian casualties were civilians. Israel, he claimed, killed between 100 and 200 civilians every day while Hamas killed combatants [Khaled

Mashaal and other Hamas spokesmen do not mention the hundreds of terrorist operatives killed in the fighting, adding them to the total number of civilian dead].

37. Khaled Mashaal answered questions about fundamental issues in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict while whitewashing Hamas' refusal to recognize Israel and its efforts to destroy the State of Israel, as do all Hamas spokesmen in interviews directed at Western public opinion. Two central questions were dealt with:

**1) Was Hamas prepared to live in coexistence and peace with Israel?**

Khaled Mashaal repeatedly avoided answering, and when the interviewer insisted, said that when Israel withdrew from the Gaza Strip completely [Israel withdrew from the Gaza Strip completely eight years ago] and from the West Bank, and if the Palestinians received Jerusalem as their capital, and when the refugees returned [Khaled Mashaal has claimed that six million Palestinians refugees were from their "homeland"], then peace could be reached. It was Israel, he said, that had killed the peace process.

**2) Did Khaled Mashaal believe that the conflict could be resolved by violence?**

Khaled Mashaal replied that if the Palestinians did not achieve peace then the resistance was legitimate. Asked if he believed he could use military force to make Israel leave the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, he said "I do believe this, it is a conviction." He added that "every Palestinian can die so that the next generations can live peace and freedom."

## **Political and Legal Activity to Try Israel**

38. **Senior Palestinian figures lodged suits in the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague accusing Israel of committing "war crimes" during the fighting in the Gaza Strip.** Salim al-Saqa, minister of justice in the Palestinian national consensus government and Ismail Jabber, the attorney general of the court in the Gaza Strip, lodged a joint suit with a French law firm (Aa.com.tr, July 30, 2014). It was also reported that the Palestinian leadership had decided to join the Rome Convention as soon as possible, so that it could appeal to the ICC to try Israel for acts of slaughter committed in the Gaza Strip in the Palestinian territories on a daily basis, especially in the Gaza Strip (PNN TV, July 30, 2014).

39. **Riyadh al-Maliki**, minister of foreign affairs in the national consensus government, said **they were in contact with the attorney general of the ICC in The Hague to advance legal procedures against Israel.** He claimed it was one of the options open to the Palestinians but they had to take into consideration it was a



"double-edged sword," because an investigation would include not only Israel's "crimes" **but the acts of the Palestinian side. He claimed that was the reason that so far they delayed formally approaching the ICC** (Al-Arabiya Al-Hadath, July 31, 2014).