



**Intelligence and Terrorism
Information Center**

News of Terrorism and the Israeli- Palestinian Conflict

(July 15-20, 2010)



**The Amalthea (Amal) unloads its cargo at the port of El Arish
(Hamas' Palestine-info website, July 18, 2010).**

Overview

- This past week quiet continued in the western Negev. One mortar shell was fired at an IDF force; there were no casualties. The Israeli security forces detained the Hamas squad which carried out the shooting attack on an Israeli police patrol car south of Mt. Hebron on June 14, which resulted in the death of an Israeli policeman and the wounding of two others.
- The Libyan ship Amalthea (Amal) reached the port of El Arish in Egypt and unloaded its cargo, which was transported to the Gaza Strip through the Rafah and Kerem Shalom crossings. There are Arab and European initiatives for other aid ships and convoys to the Gaza Strip, so far without specific dates.

Important Events

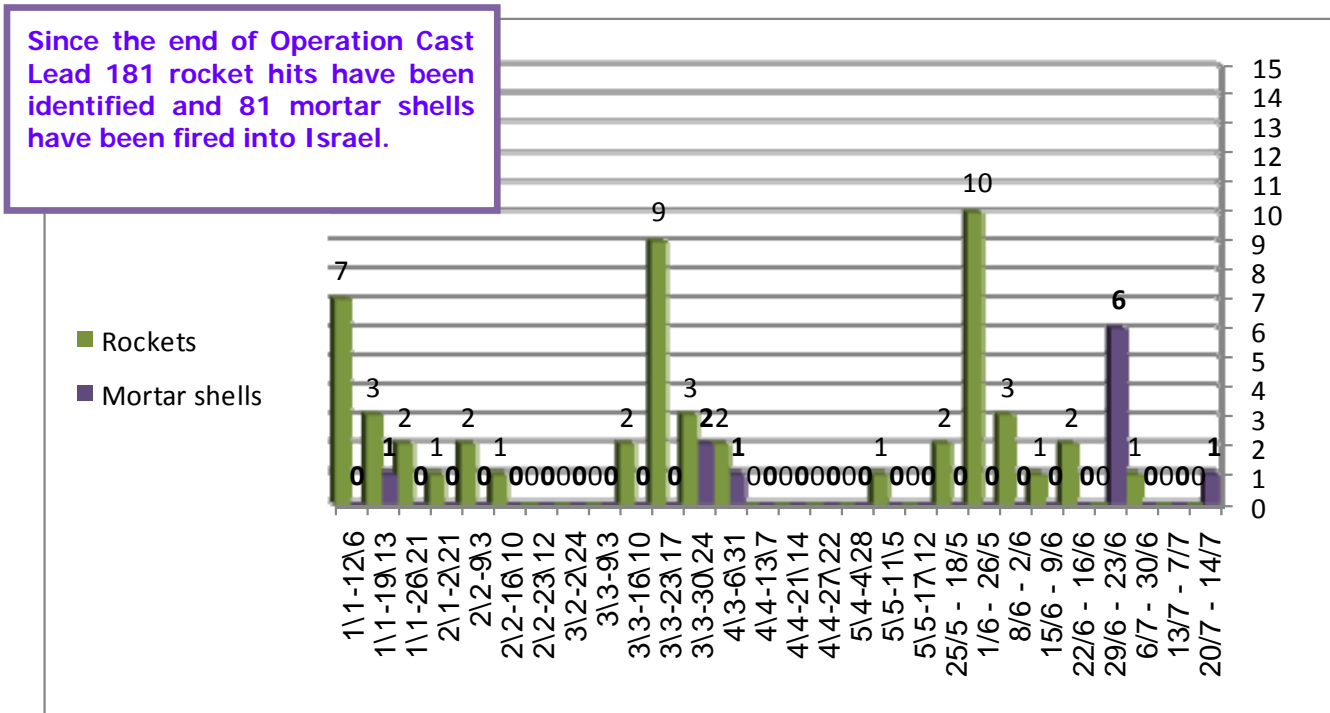
Gaza Strip

Rocket Fire

- During the past week no rocket hits were identified in Israeli territory. Several rockets fell inside the Gaza Strip.

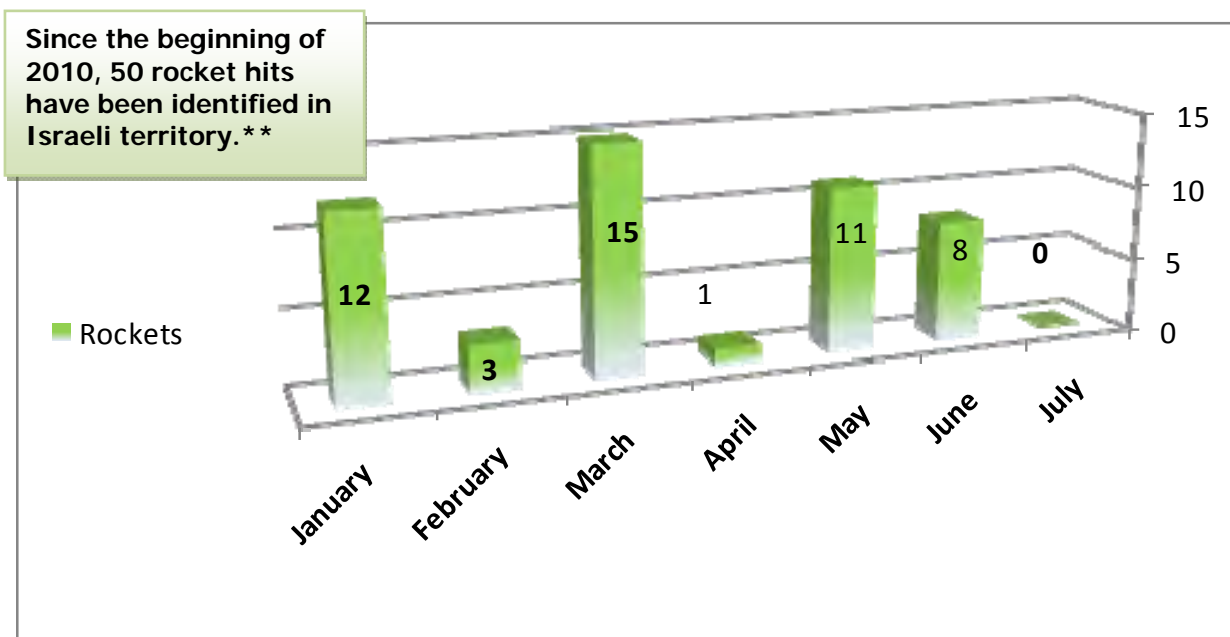
- On July 19 a mortar shell was fired at IDF soldiers engaged in routine patrols along the security fence. There were no casualties.

Rockets and Mortar Shells Fired into Israeli Territory¹



¹ The statistics do not include mortar shells fired at IDF soldiers patrolling the border fence which fell inside the Gaza Strip.

Rocket Fire 2010, Monthly Distribution*



*Rocket hits identified in Israeli territory. A similar number misfire and customarily land inside the Gaza Strip.

** As of July 20, 2010.

Judea and Samaria

Security Forces Detain Hamas Squad Responsible for Attack on Patrol Car

■ On June 22, in a joint Israel Security Agency-Israel Police-IDF activity, a Hamas squad was detained in the district south of Mt. Hebron. **On June 14 the squad shot at an Israeli police patrol car south of Mt. Hebron, killing one policeman and wounding two others.** During interrogation the operatives revealed that they had formed the squad several years ago. To carry out terrorist attacks they equipped themselves with weapons, including Kalashnikov assault rifles, and engaged in target practice.

■ At the beginning of the year the squad operatives decided to attack the police patrol car that drove along the main road to Hebron every morning. In preparation for the attack they carried out reconnaissance patrols and located a convenient shooting position. On the day of the attack they went to the location with another operative, who served as a lookout. When the patrol car passed by they fired at it, killing the driver and wounding two passengers. They then fled the scene, set fire to the car they had used and hid the rifles.



The police patrol car near Hebron after the attack in which an Israeli policeman was killed (Photo courtesy of Israel Channel 10 TV, June 14, 2010.)

- The interrogation revealed that the squad planned to carry out other terrorist attacks, including **the abduction of a soldier or civilian in the Etzion Block area north of Mt. Hebron**. To that end they patrolled the area and even bought wigs and skull caps to disguise themselves as Orthodox Jews (Israel Security Agency website, July 19 2010).

Counterterrorism Activities

- This past week Judea and Samaria were relatively quiet. The Israeli security forces continued their counterterrorism activities, detaining Judean and Samaritan Arabs suspected of involvement in terrorist activities and seizing weapons. Riots continued at various sites in Judea and Samaria, and an Israeli photographer was slightly injured when Arabs threw stones at her (IDF Spokesman, July 16, 2010).

Flotillas and Convoys to the Gaza Strip

Flotillas and Convoys Update

Libya

- The Libyan aid ship reached the port of El Arish in Egypt on the night of July 14. After a **delay caused by discrepancies between the bill of lading and the ship's cargo**, the cargo was unloaded on July 15 (BBC in Arabic and the Agence France-Presse, July 15, 2010). On July 18 the cargo began its journey to the Gaza Strip through the Rafah and Kerem Shalom crossings (IDF coordinator, July 19, 2010).



Left: Passengers from the Amalthea (Amal) at a reception with Ismail Haniya (Hamas' Al-Aqsa TV, July 18, 2010). Right: Trucks loaded with merchandise from the Amalthea pass through the Rafah crossing into the Gaza Strip (Al-Aqsa TV, July 18, 2010).

■ **Despite statements claiming the ship's documents indicated that the its original final destination was the port of El Arish** (Press TV July 13, 2010; Agence France-Presse July 10, 2010), official sources in Hamas and the ship's organizers continue claiming that the original destination was the port of Gaza and that **the ship changed course as a result of pressure from Israel:**

- Hamas issued an **official press release** claiming that "Israel forced the ship to change its course," and activists from the Popular Committee to Break the Siege organized a naval show in the port of Gaza to receive the ship (Hamas' Palestine-info website, July 14, 2010).
- **Ismail Haniya**, head of the de facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip, claimed that the ship managed to continue to the Strip "despite Israeli attempts to damage it beginning from its departure from Greece." He also called for more convoys, both naval and overland (Safa News Agency, July 18, 2010).
- **Jamal al-Khudari**, chairman of the Popular Committee to Break the Siege, claimed that the ship had withstood "**six Israeli attempts to halt it and use force to prevent it from reaching Gaza,**" including "a direct threat to attack it" (Ma'an News Agency, July 15, 2010).
- **Saif al-Islam Gaddafi**, head of the Libyan charitable society which dispatched the ship, said he was satisfied with the results of the voyage and the understanding he claimed had been reached with Egypt, and through Egypt with Israel. He said his organization had signed "a historic deal with Israel" in return for which the ship had changed course for the port of El Arish, and that according to the "deal" Israel would permit funds totaling \$50 million to be transferred from Libya to UNRWA for the rebuilding of the Gaza Strip. He said the agreement included the purchase of building materials and prefabricated houses (*Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, July 15, 2010).

Other Initiatives

■ Other initiatives to send ships and convoys to the Gaza Strip are in the planning stage, as follows:

- **Turkey:** **Bülent Yildirim**, chairman of the **Turkish Islamist organization IHH**, announced that preparations were being made for another "naval and overland convoy" to the Gaza Strip and that alongside the ships "there will be many surprises during the next three months" (Al-Quds TV, July 17, 2010).

- **Europe:**

- ✓ **The European Campaign to Break the Siege**, which participated in the Mavi Marmara flotilla, said that the sailing of Freedom Fleet 2 had been postponed but was expected to leave for the Gaza Strip at **the end of September or the beginning of October**. The organization claimed that the delay was caused by the many demands of activists from European countries to participate in the flotilla. The organization reported that the number of people asking to participate now stood at 9,000 and that the flotilla would include "an unprecedentedly large representation of media personnel" (Hamás' Palestine-info website, July 19, 2010).

- ✓ **George Galloway**, pro-Hamas former British MP, said that a new naval-overland convoy would set out from various locations around the world on September 12, 2010. He said that the convoy would include 60 ships "and not six" [as there were in the Mavi Marmara flotilla]...[and] 500 vehicles." Galloway said he hoped the convoys would arrive in the Gaza Strip at the same time from Qatar, Kuwait, Britain and North Africa (Al-Jazeera TV, July 15, 2010).

- ✓ **A group of Jewish activists from Germany** said they intended to send a ship to the Gaza Strip at the end of July. They claimed the ship would be small and carry symbolic humanitarian assistance, such as school bags, text books, games, infants' clothing, outboard motors and fishing nets (Al-Jazeera TV, July 17, 2010).

- **The United States:** A group calling itself USTOGAZA, made up of civilians and activists from various organizations, announced it would join the European flotilla and sail an American ship called The Audacity of Hope. The group said that it had begun collecting donations for the voyage (Al-Jazeera TV, July 18, 2010).

- **Libya:** According to the Libyan press, the National Libyan Committee to Support the Palestinian People has finished preparations for dispatching an overland aid convoy to the Gaza Strip. According to Nouri Bin Othman, the committee's general coordinator, the convoy will comprise 20 trucks carrying medical equipment, clothing, tents, writing

materials and foodstuffs. Libyan doctors who volunteered to work in the Gaza Strip will accompany the convoy (*Al-Bashir*, July 18, 2010).

● **Jordan:** The participants in the Ansar 1 convoy of 150 include members of trade unions, political activists, economists and clerics, including members of the Muslim Brotherhood. They have spent the past few days in Aqaba because the Egyptian authorities did not permit them to enter the Sinai Peninsula through the port of Nuweiba. The convoy members held a demonstration at the port of Aqaba to protest Egypt's refusal to let them enter (Suraya website, July 16, 2010).

The Events of the Turkish Flotilla – Continued

■ In view of the events which took place during the Turkish flotilla and the violence aboard the Mavi Marmara, a group of correspondents said in an announcement that they intended to sue Israel in a number of European countries. The suits will concern equipment taken from the correspondents and not returned, use of credit cards belonging to some of them and the death of a Turkish correspondent. They are demanding that Israel compensate them for damage, that their equipment be returned and that an international enquiry committee be established (Al-Jazeera TV, July 14, 2010). Turkish lawyers announced they would prepare a similar suit against Israel (Al-Quds TV, July 17, 2010).

■ In response to the German foreign minister's July 12 decision to outlaw IHH in Germany because of its ties to Hamas, the organization issued a statement to the effect that IHH in Frankfurt had no connection with IHH in Turkey. According to the statement the organization was in fact established in Germany in 1992 but ceased functioning in 1996 after the Turkish IHH was set up. The organization even presented a German court decision handed down on October 17, 2008, testifying to the fact that there was no connection between the organization operating in Germany and the one in Turkey (IHH website, July 17, 2010).



The posting on the IHH site denying links with the German organization (ihh.org.tr, July 17, 2010).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

The Situation at the Crossings

■ Since Israel began implementing its new crossings policy the number of trucks entering the Gaza Strip has grown by 60%, and work is in progress to increase the Gazans' capabilities to receive goods on their side of the Kerem Shalom crossing. In recent days 170 trucks a day entered the Gaza Strip through the crossing, half of them carrying food. In addition, trucks entered with equipment from the Turkish and Libyan ships, including gravel for building purposes. On July 19 an advanced CT machine and an X-ray machine were brought into the Gaza Strip, donations from the UN's World Health Organization, and greenhouse equipment donated by USAID (Israeli coordinator, July 14, 15 and 19, 2010).

The Peace Process

The EU's Catherine Ashton Visits the Middle East

■ On July 19 Catherine Ashton, the foreign minister of the European Union, began a three-day visit to the Middle East. Meetings have been arranged with Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman and the IDF coordinator for the territories. She has met with Salam Fayyad, prime minister of the Palestinian Authority, and has paid a visit to the Gaza Strip (without meeting representatives of the de facto Hamas administration) and East Jerusalem.

■ Ashton called for the release of abducted Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit and to allow the Red Cross to visit him. She said she objected to dispatching more flotillas to the Gaza Strip and called for the opening of the crossings, claiming that the so-called siege of the Gaza Strip was "unacceptable and useless." She also expressed support for the establishment of a Palestinian state and said that the position of the European Union was that the Gaza Strip should be part of a Palestinian state (RTTNEWS, July 19; Wafa News Agency, July 18; EU website, July 18, 2010).



Catherine Ashton visits the Gaza Strip (sdapem.wordpress.com, July 19, 2010).

Statements from Senior Palestinian Authority Figures Regarding the Negotiations with Israel

- **Mahmoud Abbas**, chairman of the Palestinian Authority, said that on July 29 the Arab Monitoring Committee would meet in Cairo and that it was expected to discuss the Israeli position on the American demands regarding borders and security. He said that if by September no progress had been made in the negotiations, the Arab countries had to formulate a joint position and perhaps also appeal to the UN Security Council (*Al-Sabil*, July 14, 2010).
- Salam Fayyad, Palestinian Authority prime minister, claimed that the diplomatic effort had to focus on the peace process and political problems and not on the formula for negotiations. He said that the negotiations failed because Israel had not frozen construction in the settlements (Wafa News Agency, July 18 and 19, 2010).