



## News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

May 2-8, 2012



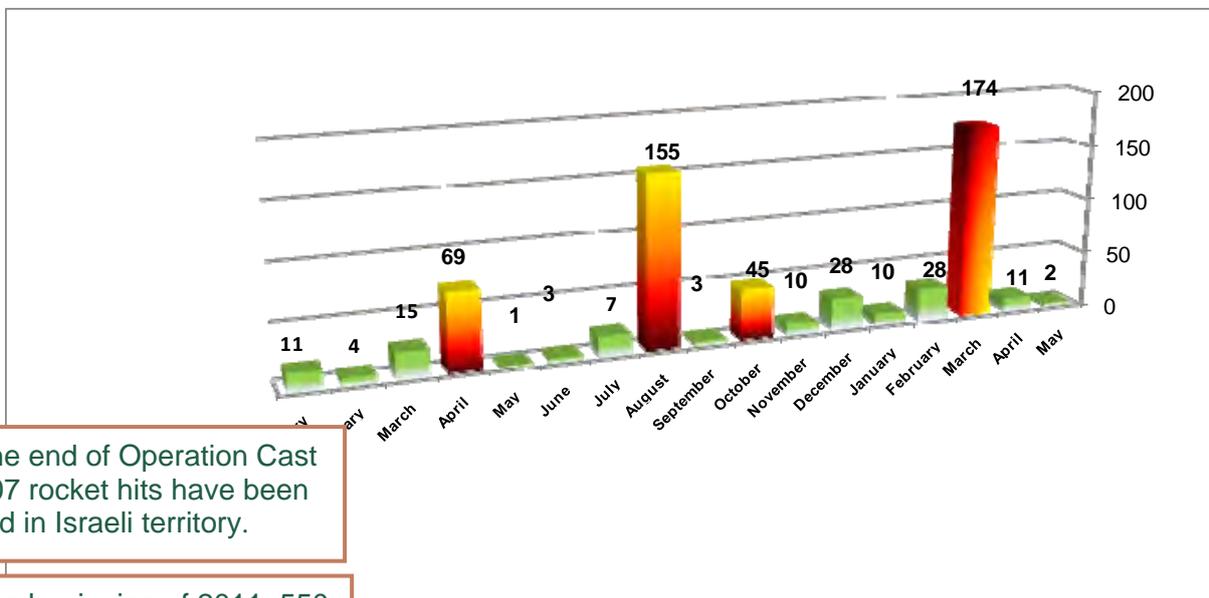
**Palestinians burn the Israeli flag at a demonstration held in Ramallah in support of Palestinian terrorist prisoners held in Israeli jails. The demonstration was authorized by the Palestinian Authority (PALDF website, May 5, 2012)**

### Overview

- This past week sporadic rocket fire from the Gaza Strip into the Israel's south continued. Two rocket hits and one mortar shell hit were identified in the western Negev. In response IDF aircraft struck a tunnel in the northern Gaza Strip used for terrorist activities.
- Palestinian terrorists imprisoned in Israeli jails continue their hunger strike, led by senior terrorist operatives who were involved in mass-casualty suicide bombing attacks. The Palestinians and the Arab League are appealing to the UN to exert pressure on Israel to accede to the terrorists' demands. Solidarity demonstrations have been held in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip.
- Senior Palestinian Islamic Jihad figures threatened violent action if one of the hunger strikers should die. Asked to respond, Mahmoud Abbas tried to calm the situation, saying that the Palestinian Authority would not give its support to an "armed resistance."

## Important Terrorism Events – Israel's South

- This past week two rocket hits and one mortar shell hit were identified in the western Negev, falling in open areas. There were no casualties and no damage was done.
- On the morning of May 1 shots were fired at an IDF force engaged in routine anti-terrorism operations near the security fence in the central Gaza Strip. There were no casualties. Two armored vehicles incurred minor damages. In response IDF aircraft and armored forces returned fire (IDF Spokesman, May 1, 2012). The Palestinian media reported that a Palestinian in eastern Khan Yunis had been injured by the IDF fire (Safa News Agency, May 1, 2012).



Since the end of Operation Cast Lead 807 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory.

Since the beginning of 2011, 550 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory; 225 since the beginning of 2012.

**Notes:** The figures for March include 50 rockets intercepted and destroyed by the Iron Dome aerial defense system during the most recent round of escalation. In April three rockets were fired at Israel's southernmost city of Eilat.

## Israeli Aircraft Activity

- In response to the rocket fire, on the night of May 1 Israeli aircraft attacked a tunnel in the northern Gaza Strip used for terrorist activity (IDF Spokesman, May 2, 2012).

## Judea and Samaria

### Internal Palestinian Tension over Security in the Jenin District

- **Qadoura Musa**, the governor of Jenin, died of a heart attack last week **after unknown persons shot at his house**. The shots were apparently fired because a **Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorist operative was killed** in the village of Beir al-Basha when Palestinian Authority security forces tried to arrest him.
- Following the events, Mahmoud Abbas summoned the commanders of the Palestinian security forces to his office in Ramallah. He expressed his sorrow at the death of Qadoura Musa and said **the Palestinian Authority would respond strongly to anyone who attempted to destabilize security or threaten the PA with anarchy**. He also announced the appointment of **Talal Dweikat** as the new governor of the Jenin district; Dweikat was the governor of Tulkarm for six years (Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda, May 4, 2012).
- Mahmoud Abbas also instructed the Palestinian security forces to act throughout the districts of Jenin and Tubas **to restore order and apprehend those who were involved in shooting** at Qadoura Musa's house (Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda, May 5, 2012).

## The Situation in the Gaza Strip

### Measures to Ease the Lives of the Residents of the Gaza Strip

- The Israeli ministry of defense and the Israeli government coordinator for the territories have instituted additional measures to ease the lives of the residents of the Gaza Strip, among them the following (Website of the Israeli government coordinator for the territories, May 7, 2012):
  - Transferring the sum of 75 million NIS from Judea and Samaria to the Gaza Strip;
  - Doubling the number of vehicles imported into the Gaza Strip from 40 to 80 a week;
  - Increasing the number of daily exit permits for Gazan businessmen;
  - Increasing exports from the Gaza Strip to Judea and Samaria (especially date snacks).

## The Fuel Crisis

■ **So far no solution has been found for the Gaza Strip energy crisis.** On May 2 the central information administration of the Gaza Strip's energy authority warned that the power plant would cease operations. It added that the fuel which arrived in Egypt on board a Qatari tanker had not yet been delivered, and that contacts for its delivery were ongoing (Safa News Agency, May 1, 2012).

## The Ministry of Education of the De-Facto Hamas Administration Furthers Islamization

■ **Osama al-Muzeini**, minister of education in the de-facto Hamas administration, participated in the festive opening ceremonies for prayer rooms in two schools, one of them at the Dalal al-Mughrabi school (named after the suicide bomber of the 1978 Coastal Road terrorist attack). He said that **his ministry had recently inaugurated 165 prayer rooms in government schools throughout the Gaza Strip.** The rooms, he said, were part of a ministry of education plan to have a prayer room in every school. He said that he regarded Islamic education and ideology as of supreme importance for students, because "[religious] education comes before teaching."

## The Hunger Strike of the Imprisoned Palestinian Terrorists

### Overview

■ **The Palestinian terrorists imprisoned in Israeli jails continue their hunger strike.** According to reliable information, 1,600 security prisoners have been on a hunger strike for the past three weeks. The prisoners in general and the hunger strikers in particular are under constant medical supervision. A doctor and medical staff are in attendance in every prison to monitor prisoner health. Prisoners are also entitled to request a second opinion, complementary treatment and appointments with specialists.

■ According to our information, **the hunger-striking prisoners were convicted or suspected of terrorist activity.** Some of them were convicted of the premeditated murder of Israeli civilians. About 750 of them belong to Hamas, 360 to Fatah, 250 to the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and 170 to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. **Six prisoners in administrative detention are also on a hunger strike.** The two most prominent belong to the PIJ and have been striking since March. **Judges**

**determined that their PIJ activities constituted a threat to society and that they had to be incarcerated.**

■ Terrorist operatives involved in mass-casualty attacks are among the leaders of the strike. They include:

- **Abbas al-Sayyid**, a senior Hamas operative sentenced 35 consecutive life sentences for responsibility for **the suicide bombing attack at the Park Hotel in Netanya** (March 27, 2002). The terrorist attack killed 30 civilians and wounded 160, forcing Israel to undertake Operation Defensive Shield.
- **Muhannad Shrim**, a Hamas operative, sentenced to 29 consecutive life sentences for his involvement in **the attack at the Park Hotel**.
- **Jamal al-Hur**, a Hamas operative, sentenced to five consecutive life sentences for carrying out terrorist attacks and involvement in murders, among them **the terrorist attack at Café Apropro** in Tel Aviv on December 21, 1997, in which three young women were killed.
- **Wajdi Joudeh**, a senior Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine operative, who was involved in the **suicide bombing attack at the Geha Junction in the greater Tel Aviv** area on December 26, 2000, in which four civilians were killed and 24 wounded.

■ **The Israel Prison Authority treats prisoners and detainees according to international conventions.** Beyond basic conditions, prisoners are allowed freedom of religion and worship, and visits from lawyers, members of the Israeli parliament and representatives of the Red Cross. They also receive benefits not specified by international conventions, such as being able to purchase items at the prison commissary, the receipt of newspapers, the possibility of holding books and watching television and the possession of personal items, among other things. Various other privileges, such as university studies, which were previously given to prisoners, were revoked when they were exploited for other, inappropriate uses. Contrary to Hamas claims, Israel did not commit itself to improving prisoner conditions as part of the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal.

### **Palestinian Appeal to Arab and International Bodies**

■ **Representatives of the Arab League Council** discussed the issue of the hunger-striking prisoners and **will launch an international political and media campaign to exert pressure on Israel.** They will also appeal to various international forums, including the following (Wafa News Agency, May 6, 2012):

- Lodging an appeal with the **UN General Assembly** to ask for legal opinion from the International Court of Justice in the Hague regarding the legal status of Palestinian and Arab prisoners in Israeli jails.
- Sending **international committees** to investigate the conditions in Israeli jails.
- Appealing to the **UN Human Rights Council** in Geneva.



The Arab League discusses the striking Palestinian terrorists (Press TV, May 7, 2012)

■ **Riyadh Mansour**, the permanent Palestinian observer in the UN, sent a letter to the UN secretary general, the president of the Security Council and the head of the General Assembly stating that the situation in the territories was deteriorating as a result of Israel's provocations and illegal actions against the Palestinian people. **He also expressed concern for the condition of the Palestinians who were on a hunger strike to protest the system of administrative detention.** Mansour called for an accounting with Israel in international courts and institutions such as the Security Council. He also referred to the settlements, noting Israel's announcement to continue construction in south Jerusalem (Wafa News Agency, May 5, 2012).

### Support Rallies and Demonstrations

■ The Palestinian Authority and Hamas are also holding daily strikes, demonstrations and rallies in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip to express their support for with the hunger-striking terrorists. Solidarity tents were erected in many locations and serve as attractive places for senior figures to visit. Prominent was **a Hamas rally held in Ramallah on May 6, which, exceptionally, received authorization from the Palestinian Authority, and a simultaneous Fatah demonstration held in the Gaza Strip with Hamas authorization.**



Hamas demonstration in support of the hunger-striking Palestinian terrorists, Ramallah (PALDF website, May 5, 2012)

### Threats of Violent Action

■ Senior members of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad threatened to respond if any Palestinian prisoner died as a result of the hunger strike:

- **Khaled al-Batash** said during a march in Gaza City that the PIJ's military wing and the "Palestinian resistance" [i.e., the terrorist organizations] **would act to release prisoners, and threatened that Israel would bear the responsibility for the death of every prisoner** (Filastin al-Yawm, May 1, 2012). He said that the **PIJ had decided to respond against the settlements and settlers for the death of every Palestinian prisoner** (The PIJ's Paltoday website, May 2, 2012).
- At a solidarity rally in Gaza City **Muhammad al-Hindi** repeatedly threatened that "the fall of every prisoner on a hunger strike in an Israeli jail will **give birth to the third intifada**" to "teach Israel a lesson and avenge [the death]."

■ However, **Mahmoud Abbas acted to calm the situation**. At a press conference he convened at the end of his visit to Tunis he was asked about the possibility of the outbreak of a third intifada caused by the demand for the release of the prisoners. He answered that the Palestinian Authority called for "**a peaceful popular resistance,**" saying that they would not agree to another "armed resistance." He added that **Hamas was also calling for calm** and demanding that all the [terrorist] organizations, especially those in the Gaza Strip, **not launch rockets** (Voice of Palestine Radio, May 1, 2012).

## Hamas' Political Activity

■ **Osama Hamdan**, responsible for Hamas' external relations, claimed that for the past several months **Hamas had secretly been in contact with five EU members**. He said that among the issues discussed were Hamas' policies vis-à-vis Israel and its stalled reconciliation with the PA. According to other sources within Hamas, the five countries were Britain, France, Holland, Austria and Sweden. Official sources in Britain, France, Austria and Holland **denied that their governments had had contacts with Hamas** (AP, May 2, 2012) . **Note:** Hamas is on the EU's list of terrorist organizations and its members are forbidden to enter into a dialogue with it.

## Propaganda Events

### Nakba Day Events

■ Preparations continue for Nakba Day (May 15) events, which may be incorporated into the Palestinian protest against the issue of the Palestinian terrorists. The situation so far is as follows:

- **The Gaza Strip:** Rallies and marches will be held in the various districts and refugee camps. The **main march will be held in Gaza City** and directed toward the UN's Gaza legation. There will also be exhibitions and meetings dealing with Palestinian heritage (Al-Quds, May 6, 2012).
- **Judea and Samaria:** The main march will be held in **Yasser Arafat Square in Ramallah**. Rallies and other events will be held in the various districts and refugee camps.
- **Lebanon:** There is activity on the social networks, including registration for the "march of the return," which is supposed to take place along the Israeli-Lebanese border. So far not much interest has been shown (Facebook).

### The European Viva Palestina Convoy

■ George Galloway<sup>1</sup> reported that the Viva Palestina convoy was currently on its way from Bradford to the Gaza Strip, where it is supposed to arrive on May 15 (Nakba Day). He said the convoy was in Bulgaria and would soon enter Turkey.

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<sup>1</sup>George Galloway is British, a member of the radical left, hostile to Israel and a Hamas supporter. He was recently made a MP from Bradford. Galloway is very active in organizing aid convoys to the Gaza Strip as part of the Viva Palestina campaign.

■ **Disagreement broke out within the convoy regarding passage through Syria,** leading to the withdrawal of some of the participating groups. Unwilling to pass through Syria, they said they would fly directly to Cairo. They claimed that the passage of a humanitarian delegation to the Gaza Strip through Syria could be used by the Syrian regime to make political capital. George Galloway claimed that passage through Syria did not imply support for the Syrian regime. Reportedly, Galloway himself did not join the convoy on its journey but will join in when it reaches its destination (Convoy blog and Twitter, May 2, 2012).



**George Galloway collects donations in Bradford for support of the de-facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip before the convoy departs (YouTube)**