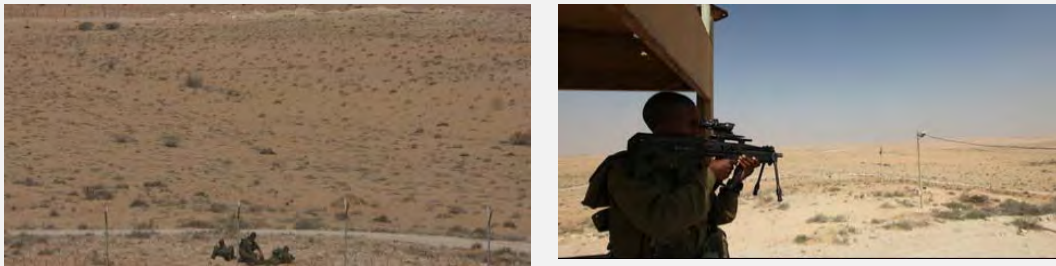




News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

June 13-19, 2012



IDF soldiers on operations along the Egyptian-Israeli border near where an Israeli civilian died in a terrorist ambush (IDF Spokesman, June 18, 2012).

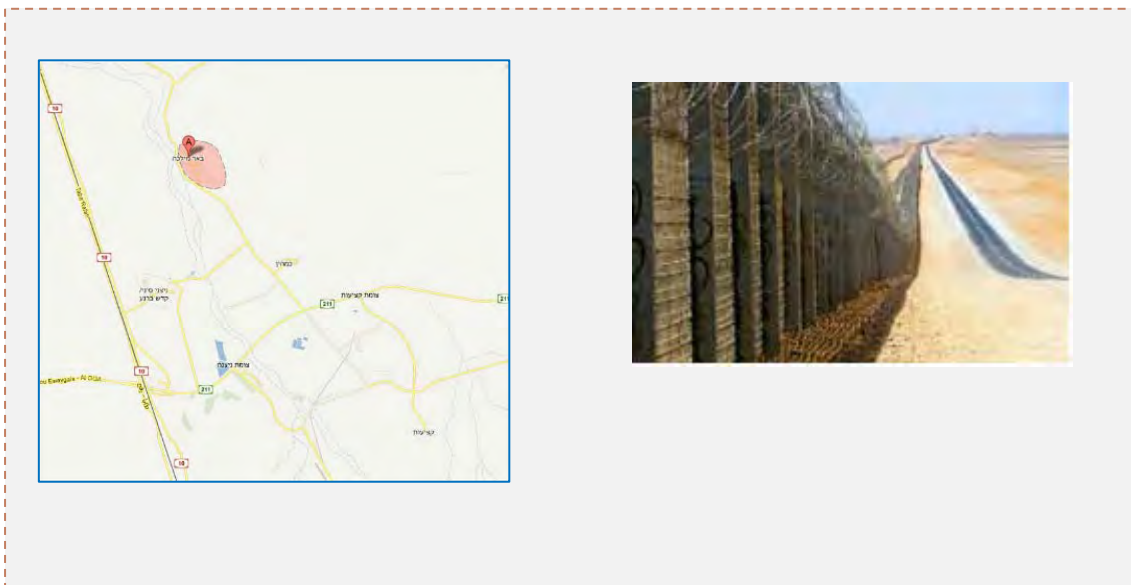
Overview

- **Terrorist activities escalated in Israel's south this past week.** A terrorist squad which infiltrated into Israeli territory from Egypt killed an Israeli civilian engaged in constructing the security fence along the Israeli-Egyptian. In addition, eight rocket hits were identified in Israeli territory, one north of the southernmost city of Eilat, one near the central Negev town of Mitzpeh Ramon, and six in the western Negev. In response the IDF attacked terrorist targets and squads in the Gaza Strip. **Note:** Throughout the day on June 19, dozens of rockets were fired from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory. (The continuation of the escalation will be reported separately.)
- This past week Hamas celebrated the victory of Mohamed Morsi, the Muslim Brotherhood candidate for president of Egyptian, even before the final results of the election were issued. Ismail Haniya, head of the de-facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip, held a press conference where he said that the Gazans had great hopes that Morsi would strengthen their capabilities to stand against Israel.

Important Terrorism Events Israel's South

An Israeli Civilian Killed in a Terrorist Ambush

- On June 18 a three-man terrorist squad infiltrated into Israeli territory from the Sinai Peninsula near the village of Be'er Milka along the Israeli-Egyptian border. The terrorist operatives crossed the border at a site where the security fence has not yet been constructed. They detonated an IED to attack two vehicles belonging to the contractor building the fence. At the same time, they launched an RPG (which missed its target) and opened fire with light arms. The shots caused one of the vehicles to fall into a ditch, **killing one of the passengers.**
- Several minutes later an IDF force arrived on the scene from its routine activities in the area. The soldiers identified the terrorist operatives in Israeli territory and opened fire, causing a powerful IED in the possession of one of them to explode. On the scene the soldiers found a helmet, a Kalashnikov assault rifle and a uniform. Local residents were asked to remain indoors as it was not certain whether the three had been killed or if one or more were still at large in the area. After a number of hours the IDF announced that the danger had passed (IDF Spokesman, June 18, 2012).
- The victim of the attack was Said Fashfasha, 35, from Haifa, married and father of four. He was employed by the contracting company constructing the security fence along the Egyptian border.



Right: The security fence being constructed along the Israeli-Egyptian border. Left: The site of the attack (IDF Spokesman, June 18, 2012).

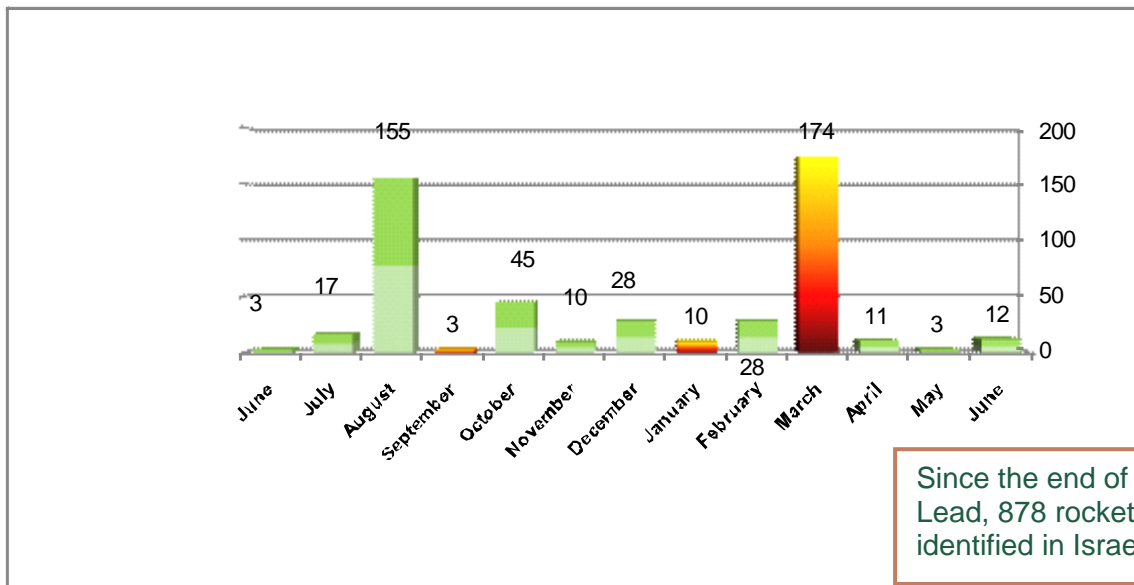
Escalation in Rocket Fire in Israel's South

- During the past week **eight rocket hits** were identified in Israeli territory (as of noon June 19). **Two of them were apparently fired from the northern Sinai Peninsula.** The other six were fired on June 18 and 19 and fell in the western Negev. All the rockets fell in open areas; there were no casualties and no damage was done.
- On **June 16** the remains of two 122mm Grad rockets were identified in Israeli territory, one near Udva (north of Eilat, Israel's southernmost city). A number of hours later the remains of the second rocket were found **near the central Negev town of Mitzpeh Ramon.** Both rockets landed in open areas; there were no casualties and no damage was done. Security sources were of the opinion that **the rockets were fired from the Sinai Peninsula.** **Note:** on the night of April 4, 2012, the remains of three rockets fired from the Sinai Peninsula were found in open areas near Eilat.
- On **June 18 and 19**, after intensive counterterrorism and preventive activities carried out by the Israeli Air Force in the Gaza Strip, six rockets were fired into the western Negev. One of them landed **near the town of Sderot and four near the coastal city of Ashqelon.** A number of terrorist organizations claimed responsibility for the rocket fire. Conspicuous was the announcement issued by Hamas' Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades taking responsibility for firing four rockets at the IDF base at Zikim, near Ashqelon fire (Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades website, June 19, 2012). The announcement was exceptional because until recently the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades had not claimed responsibility for rocket.



The picture accompanying the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades claim of responsibility for firing four rockets into Israel territory (Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades website, June 19, 2012).

Rockets Fired into Israeli Territory¹



Since the end of Operation Cast Lead, 878 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory.

Since the beginning of 2011, 617 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory; 242 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.

Other Attacks from the Gaza Strip

■ This past week **several attempts were made to attack Israeli civilians and IDF forces**. For example, on the morning of June 14 a sniper shot at an Israeli farmer working in a field near the security fence. He was extricated by an IDF force. His tractor sustained minor damage.

IDF Responses (as of the morning of June 19)

■ In response to the escalation in terrorist activity from the Gaza Strip, Israeli aircraft attacked a number of terrorist targets and terrorist squads preparing to launch rockets into Israeli territory:

- On the night of June 17 Israeli Air Force aircraft attacked a site for the manufacture of weapons in the southern Gaza Strip. The Palestinian media reported an attack on a "blacksmith's workshop" in Rafah and the wounding of

¹ The statistics do not include rockets fired which fell inside the Gaza Strip. As of June 19, 2012.

five Palestinians (Qudsnet website and Ma'an News Agency, June 18, 2012). IAF aircraft also attacked **a center for terrorist activity in the central Gaza Strip** (IDF Spokesman, June 18, 2012). The Palestinian media reported that the IAF attacked an Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades post in the western Gaza City neighborhood of Al-Zeitun (Qudsnet website and Ma'an News Agency, June 18, 2012).

- On the morning of **June 18** Israeli aircraft attacked **two Palestinian Islamic Jihad operatives** riding a motorbike near Beit Hanoun, **killing them both**. The PIJ announced that the two were operatives of its military wing and had been "killed in the line of duty" (Jerusalem Brigades website, June 18, 2012).



A motorbike damaged by the Israeli Air Force attack in the Gaza Strip (Wafa News Agency, June 18, 2012)

- On **June 18** IAF aircraft attacked a sniper squad operating near the security fence in the northern Gaza Strip. It was one of the squads which had recently attacked Israel with sniper fire (IDF Spokesman, June 19, 2012).
 - On the night of **June 18** IAF aircraft attacked a terrorist squad in the northern Gaza Strip preparing to fire a rocket into Israeli territory.
 - On the night of **June 18** IAF aircraft attacked a terrorist squad placing an IED near the security fence in the central Gaza Strip.
- Spokesmen for the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip denounced the IAF attacks:

- **Fawzi Barhoum**, Hamas spokesman, denounced what he referred to as "Israeli escalation," saying that its objective was to destabilize the Gaza Strip. He appealed to the terrorist organizations to employ a national strategy of "resistance" [i.e., terrorism] to "restrain Israeli aggression" (Alresalah.net website, June 18, 2012).
- **Khader Habib**, senior figure in the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, accused Israel of responsibility for the escalation and called on all the Palestinian terrorist organizations to respond (Al-Quds TV, June 18, 2012).
- **Ahmed al-Mudallal**, senior figure in the PIJ, said that if a real struggle broke out between Israel and the Palestinians, this time the military wing of his organization would not stop attacking even if Israel appealed to Egypt to stop the PIJ's attacks (The PIJ's Paltoday website, June 18, 2012).

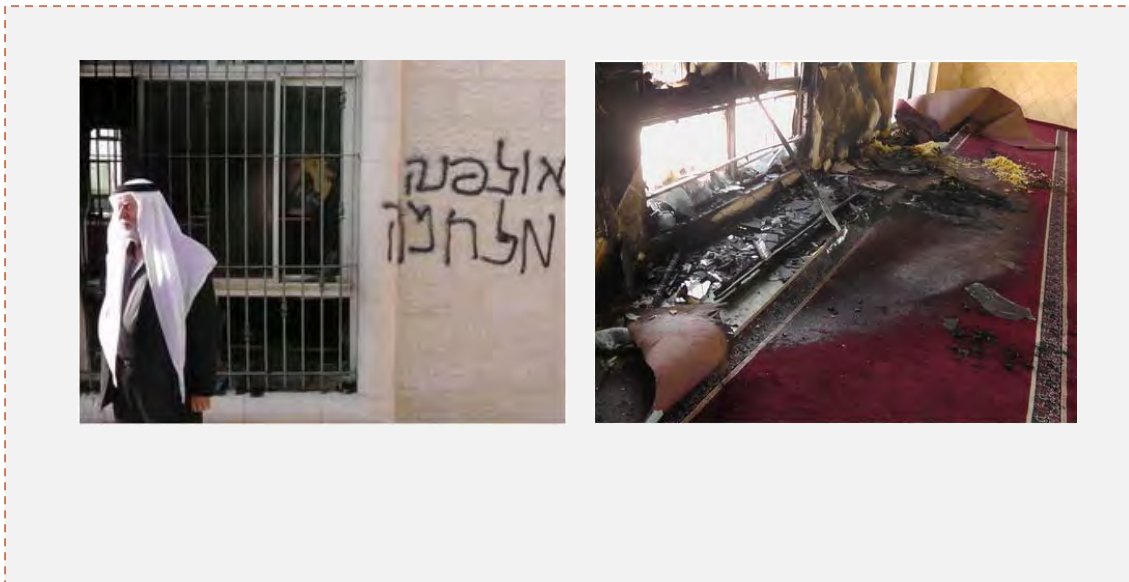
Judea and Samaria

Shooting (Possibly Crime-Related) in South Mt. Hebron

- On June 17 an Israeli truck driver told soldiers at a military roadblock that he had shot at several Palestinians who attacked him near the village of Yatir, south of Hebron. A police officer of the Judea and Samaria district said that an initial investigation revealed the attack had been an attempted robbery typical of the region (in recent months more than seven commercial vehicles had been robbed in the area). The Israeli civilian, who had been beaten, was evacuated to a hospital for treatment (Nana 10 website, June 17, 2012).
- The Palestinian media reported that two Palestinians had been killed and one wounded by "a settler who shot at them" (Palestine Online website, the PIJ's Paltoday website and Ma'an News Agency, June 17, 2012).

Jabaa Mosque Torched

- On the night of June 18 unknown persons set fire to the mosque in the village of Jabaa, southeast of Ramallah. Hebrew graffiti were sprayed on the walls. The arsonists were apparently members of the criminal "price tag" group. Israeli security forces are searching for suspects (NRG website, June 19, 2012).



Damage done to the mosque and graffiti on a mosque wall (Photo by Iad Hadad, Btselem, June 19, 2012).

The Situation in the Gaza Strip

The Gaza Strip Celebrates Morsi's Victory in the Egyptian Elections

- When the initial results of the Egyptian election were announced, Palestinians throughout the Gaza Strip took to the streets to celebrate the victory of Mohamed Morsi, the Muslim Brotherhood's presidential candidate. **Dozens of vehicles decorated with Egyptian and Hamas flags rode through the streets**, their passengers shouting slogans in favor of revolution in Egypt and their approval of Morsi's victory (Alresalah.net website, June 19, 2012).
- **Ismail Haniya**, head of the de-facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip, held a press conference to congratulate Egypt, saying that **Morsi's success was the success of the Egyptian revolution**. He said that the Gazans had great hopes **Morsi would strengthen their ability to stand against Israel** (Filastin al-Yawm, June 18, 2012).

Hamas Denies Its Operatives Went to Egypt to Foment Anarchy

- According to an item in the Egyptian newspaper Al-Sharq, 23 operatives from the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military-terrorist wing, infiltrated into Egypt through the tunnels under the Egypt-Gaza border to foment anarchy and chaos in Egypt on the eve of the second round of presidential elections (Al-Sharq, June 16, 2012).

■ Hamas **emphatically denied** the allegations:²

- **Abu Obeida**, spokesman for the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, claimed they were a "collection of lies without an iota of truth," whose objective was to sow dissension (Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades website, June 16, 2012).
- **Musa Abu Marzouk**, deputy head of Hamas' political bureau, denied the allegations and requested that the name of Hamas not be mentioned in connection with the elections in Egypt (Al-Hayat, June 16, 2012).
- **Yahya Musa**, senior Hamas figure, said that the allegations were baseless and that their objective was to influence the elections in Egypt (Alresalah.net website, June 16, 2012).

Palestinian Islamic Jihad Operative Interviewed by Western Media

■ **Ahmed Mudallal**, senior figure international he Palestinian Islamic Jihad, was interviewed by the Guardian's Jerusalem correspondent, Harriet Sherwood. The interview was posted on her Guardian blog (June 13, 2012).³ Its main points were the following (ITIC emphasis):

- The organization **keeps trying to abduct a soldier or Israeli civilian** because "This is our strategy. It's the only way to force Israel to release prisoners."
- The lull in the fighting is a "one of [the PIJ's] disagreements with Hamas," which, he says, "wants to keep its power."
- Islam, he said, is against killing women and children, but "the Israeli enemy... sees all Palestinian people as a target." Therefore, he says, "**We reserve the right to fire rockets as schools and as children.**"

²The Egyptian press published similar allegations in the past. For example, Egyptian paper claimed that Hamas operatives played an active part in the demonstrations in Tahrir Square. Hamas denied the allegation, claiming that it did not intervene in the internal affairs of other countries.

³http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/blog/2012/jun/08/gaza-live-blog?CMP=tw_t_gu

Palestinian-Israeli Relations

Meeting with Members of the Israeli Administration

■ **Saeb Erekat**, member of the PLO's Executive Committee, said that Mahmoud Abbas was examining the possibility of meeting with senior members of the Israeli administration, among them acting Prime Minister Shaul Mofaz. However, he said, there was no point in meeting if Israel did not respond to the demand to halt construction in the settlements, agree to the two-state solution and release the prisoners (Voice of Palestine, June 14, 2012).

Lebanon

Hassan Nasrallah Interviewed by the Iranian Broadcasting Authority

■ On June 14 Hassan Nasrallah, secretary general of Hezbollah, was interviewed by the Iranian broadcasting company. The interview was held in Arabic in **Beirut**. Nasrallah boasted of the military buildup Hezbollah had accomplished since 2006, claiming that "Hezbollah's missiles can reach any location in occupied Palestine." He stressed **the importance of Hezbollah's ties with Iran** (which, he said, "serves as a support for realizing the aspirations of the resistance [i.e., anti-Israeli terrorism]) and **expressed his deep animosity toward Israel** ("a cancerous growth") and the United States ("the Great Satan").

■ Asked whose interests he would prefer if a contradiction arose between the interests of Hezbollah and those of the [Islamic] nation and Lebanon, he said that **Hezbollah would always give preference to the interests of the [Islamic] nation [i.e., to the interests of Iran] and Lebanese government, as he had done for the past 30 years.**⁴

⁴For further information see the June 17 bulletin "Hezbollah as a Strategic Wing of the Iranian regime" (Hebrew). The English translation will be posted in the near future.

Propaganda Events

Aftermath of the Miles of Smiles Visit to the Gaza Strip⁵

■ During the Miles of Smiles 13 visit to the headquarters of the Palestinian Legislative Council in the Gaza Strip **Mahmoud al-Zahar**, head of Hamas' political bureau, said that he was looking forward to the beginning of a new era in which the borders drawn by Israel would disappear and the Council's headquarters would be "the capital of the great Islamic state" (Ma'an News Agency, June 13, 2012).

The Palestine Return Centre Organizes Activities for "Palestinian Refugee Week"

■ In a telephone interview, **Majid al-Zir**, head of the Palestine Return Centre (PRC),⁶ said that the center, in the heart of London, was organizing activities for "Palestinian Refugee Week." He said the objective of the activities was to put the Palestinian cause at the top of the world's agenda (Al-Aqsa TV, June 14, 2012).



The Palestine Return Centre

⁵On June 10, 2012, the Miles of Smiles 13 convoy entered the Gaza Strip through the Rafah crossing. It was composed of 109 activists from 17 countries, most of them Muslim states. Convoy members met with Ismail Haniya, head of the de-facto Hamas administration, who congratulated them on their arrival (Safa News Agency, June 11, 2012).

⁶The Palestine Return Centre is a Palestinian center for anti-Israeli propaganda established in London in 1966. It is affiliated with Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood, and several of its senior figures are Hamas activists who found asylum in Britain. For further information see the March 8, 2011 bulletin "The Palestine Return Centre: London-based center for anti-Israeli propaganda, affiliated with Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood, outlawed in Israel. It promotes the demand of the Palestinian refugees to return as a way of destroying Israel. Senior PRC figures send flotillas and convoys to the Gaza Strip and transfer funds to Hamas."

The Global Jihad

Al-Qaeda Leader Appeals to Egypt to Revoke the Peace Treaty with Israel

■ On June 17 one of Al-Qaeda's website posted the text of a speech given by **Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri**, who made the following points:

- **A call for Egypt to revoke the peace treaty with Israel:** he claimed that the only way to stop "Israel's crimes" was to institute Islamic religious law (the Shari'a) in Egypt and to revoke the peace treaty with Israel.
- **Praise for those responsible for blowing up the gas pipeline from the Sinai Peninsula to Israel.**
- **Accusing the Egyptian army of taking orders from the United States and being its slave:** al-Zawahiri called on the Islamic networks in Egypt to unite against America.