



## News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

June 20-26, 2012



Hamas terrorist operatives celebrate the election of Mohamed Morsi (PALDF forum website, June 25, 2012)

### Overview

- The latest escalated round of rocket fire attacking Israel's south, which lasted for six days, has ended. One hundred and sixty-two rockets landed in Israeli territory, most of them in the towns and villages flanking the Gaza Strip. Hamas' military-terrorist wing was dominant in firing rockets for the first time in a year. The Palestinian Islamic Jihad, which fired most of the rockets in the previous rounds, did not participate.
- The announcement of the victory of Mohamed Morsi, the Muslim Brotherhood candidate for the presidency of Egypt, was received with celebrations throughout the Gaza Strip. Hamas, including its military-terrorist operatives, openly expressed joy and enthusiasm. Senior figures said they hoped the president-elect would work to promote the Palestinian cause.

## Israel's South Important Terrorism Events

### The Latest Round of Escalation – Summary

- Between June 18 and 23 there was another round of escalation between Israel and the Palestinian terrorists in the Gaza Strip. It began after terrorist attacks along the Israeli-Egyptian border and after counterterrorism and prevention strikes carried out by IDF aircraft in the Gaza Strip. In response the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip initiated massive barrages of rockets **targeting towns and villages in Israel's western Negev**.
- The greatest number of rockets landed on June 22, when about 70 rockets hit the western Negev. **One hundred and sixty two rockets fell during the six days of attacks** (a similar number fell during the previous round in March 2012). The Iron Dome aerial defense system intercepted and destroyed several rockets targeting the southern cities of Sderot, Netivot and Ashqelon. The rockets damaged a number of buildings, including a school in Sderot. Two civilians were wounded and several suffered slight injuries, while several had to be treated for shock.



**Rockets which landed near towns and villages in the western Negev (Spokesman for the Eshkol local council, June 20, 2012).**

- Israeli Air Force aircraft struck terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip. Including squads preparing to fire rockets and mortar shells into Israeli territory. Several terrorist operatives were killed, among them an operative from a network calling itself **Tauhid wal-Jihad, affiliated with the global jihad**. The network has been involved in extensive terrorist activity directed against IDF soldiers and Israeli civilians for many

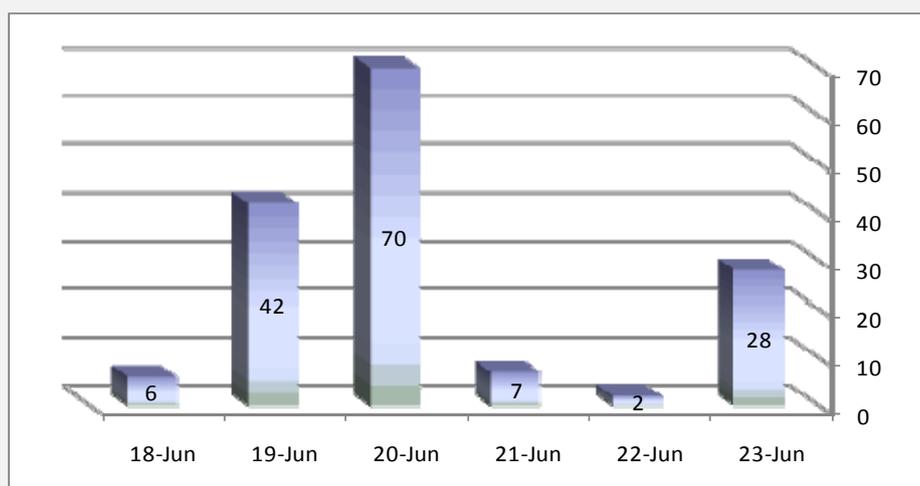
years, including the June 18 terrorist attack along the Israeli-Egyptian border. Recently the network had been making preparations for another attack (IDF Spokesman, June 21, 2012).

■ An Egyptian attempt to broker a ceasefire on June 20 failed and the attacks from the Gaza Strip were renewed after a few hours. **On the evening of June 24 a ceasefire arrangements was in fact reached and the area is now relatively quiet.** Since then three mortar shells have been fired into Israeli territory and two rocket hits were identified. There were no casualties and no damage was done.

■ **Three characteristics** of the last round of escalation were notable:

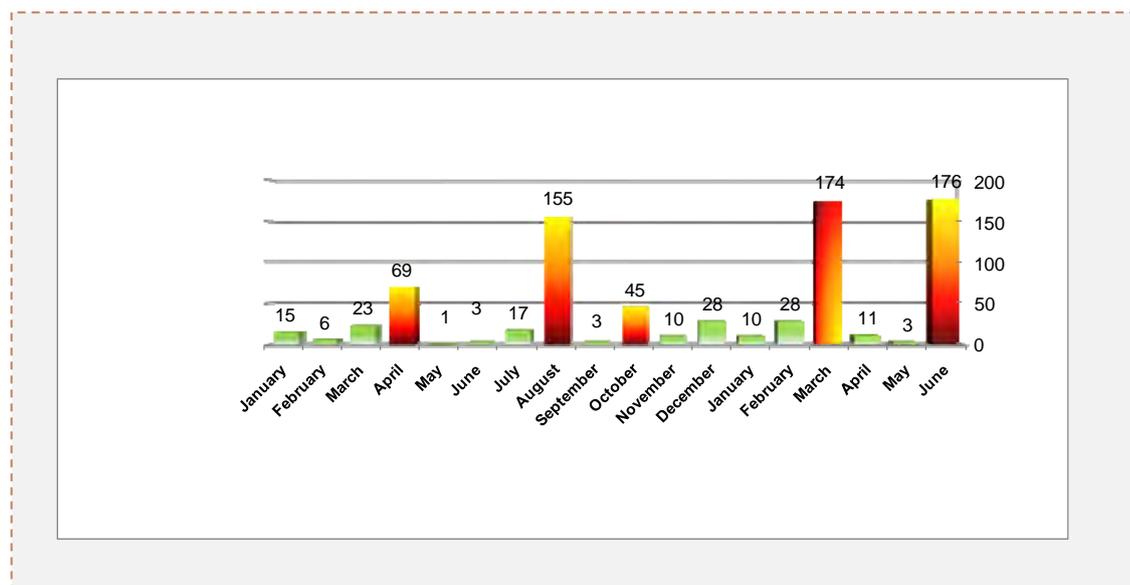
- **Most of the rockets fired had a range of up to 10 kilometers** (about 6.2 miles) and targeted the towns and villages flanking the Gaza Strip.
- **Most of the attacks (between June 18 and 22) were carried out by Hamas, which during the past year did not participate in rocket fire.**
- **The Palestinian Islamic Jihad, which fired most of the rockets in the previous rounds of escalation, did not participate.**

### Daily Distribution of Rocket Fire during the Current Round of Escalation



162 rocket hits identified in the most recent escalation  
Rockets Fired into Israeli Territory<sup>1</sup>.

## Rounds of Escalation since the Beginning of 2011



Since the end of Operation Cast Lead, 1,042 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory.

Since the beginning of 2011, 781 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory; 406 since the beginning of 2012.

### Judea and Samaria

■ This week as well there were riots at the traditional friction points in Judea and Samaria, especially the villages of Bila'in, Nili'in and Nebi Saleh. Rioters threw stones at the IDF forces, who in certain instances used riot control equipment to disperse the demonstrators.

### Mohamed Morsi Wins the Egyptian Election for President

#### Reactions in the Gaza Strip and the Palestinian Authority

■ The announcement of the victory of the Muslim Brotherhood candidate for Egyptian president was **received with an outpouring of joy in the Gaza Strip**, especially by Hamas. **Ismail Haniya**, head of the de-facto Hamas administration, and **Khaled Mashaal**, head of Hamas' Executive Committee, congratulated Morsi on his victory. Marches to the home of Ismail Haniya were held where there was a reception for Gazans who had come to congratulate him on Morsi's victory.

■ Mass marches were also held throughout the Gaza Strip, and there was a large rally

attended by the heads of the de-facto Hamas administration and senior Palestinian Islamic Jihad figures. Speakers at the rally said they hoped the president elect would work to promote the Palestinian cause (Al-Aqsa TV, June 26, 2012):

- **Ismail Haniya**, head of the de-facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip, said that Morsi's election on the same day Muhammad rose to heaven was a good omen for Jerusalem and Al-Aqsa mosque. He said he hoped "the Arab Spring will reach Palestine."



Ismail Haniya celebrates the election of Mohamed Morsi as president of Egypt (Hamas' palestine-info website, June 25, 2012).

- **Mahmoud al-Zahar**, a member of Hamas' political bureau, said that Hamas did not intend to drag Egypt into a war with any country, but stressed that Hamas would be available to Egypt.
  - **Muhammad al-Hindi**, senior figure in the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, congratulated the Egyptian people and said he hoped Egypt would "liberate Jerusalem and free the Palestinians."
- Morsi's victory led to **violent confrontations in El-Arish between Fatah and Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operatives**: five Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operatives infiltrated through the tunnels under the Egyptian-Gazan border into El-Arish and attacked Palestinian activists affiliated with Fatah living there.<sup>1</sup> Guns were used in the confrontation, and several Fatah activists were wounded (Al-Watan, June 25, 2012).

<sup>1</sup>About 180 Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade activists have been living in El-Arish since Hamas took over the Gaza Strip in June 2007 and expelled Fatah supporters.



Hamas terrorist operatives celebrate Mohamed Morsi's victory (PALDF forum website, June 25, 2012).

■ **Reactions in the Palestinian Authority were milder.** Mahmoud Abbas sent a communiqué to Mohamed Morsi congratulating him and wishing him success as president. He also said he hoped Morsi would support the Palestinian cause (Wafa News Agency, June 24, 2012). **Salam Fayyad**, Palestinian prime minister, also congratulated Morsi, calling his election "a historic turning point" (Ma'an News Agency, June 24, 2012). In the cities in Judea and Samaria celebrations were restrained. **Nimr Hamad**, political advisor to Mahmoud Abbas, said he was amazed at what he called the excessive reaction of the heads of Hamas to Morsi's victory (Palestine Online website, June 25, 2012).

## Propaganda Events

### The Al-Wafa 2 Convoy Reaches the Gaza Strip

■ **Ismail Haniya**, head of the de-facto Hamas administration, met with activists of the Al-Wafa 2 aid convoy which entered the Gaza Strip through the Rafah crossing. They came mainly from Arab-Muslim countries; the convoy had been organized by the Charitable Association for Supporting Palestinian People (ABSPP) of **Italy**. Haniya told the activists that the convoy had come to a Gaza Strip at a time of " **Jihad and resistance**" [i.e., terrorist organizations] and that supporting them was very important (Safa News Agency, June 22, 2012).

## Flotilla to the Gaza Strip

- The Swedish **Ship to Gaza** network announced that on Tuesday, June 26, a boat called the **Estelle** would set sail for the Gaza Strip from the Swedish port of Umea. En route to the Gaza Strip it will anchor at a number of ports in Sweden and other European countries (Flotilla website, June 26, 2012).



Top: The network's logo. Bottom: Hanan Nasser, currently in Sweden representing herself as a student from the Gaza Strip; in the background, the Estelle (Flotilla website, June 26, 2012).

## Call for a New Fly-In to Israel

- One of the fly-in websites issued a call for participants in another fly-in to Israel, scheduled for sometime between August 24 and 31. According to the organizers, this time it will be a "more sophisticated fly-in, and participants will fly to Amman in Jordan and from there enter Israel via the Allenby checkpoint.