



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

June 27-July 3, 2012



The Palestinian police suppress violent demonstrations in Ramallah (Hamas' palestine-info website, July 2, 2012). One of the demonstrations (on June 30) protested the planned (and cancelled) visit of Israeli Vice Prime Minister Shaul Mofaz.

Overview

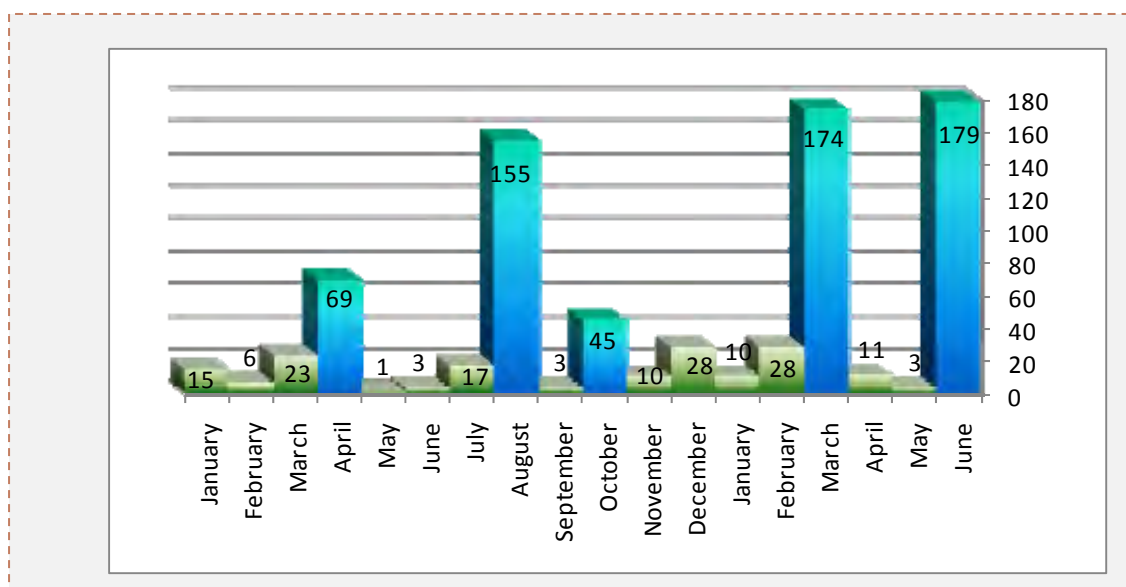
- At the end of the latest round of escalation, rocket fire from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory returned to its "routine" level. This past week three rocket hits were identified, one in the western Negev and two which were intercepted and destroyed by the Iron Dome aerial defense system. Israeli Air Force aircraft struck a squad of terrorist operatives in the northern Gaza Strip preparing to launch a rocket.
- The Gaza Strip continues to express high hopes after the election of Muslim Brotherhood candidate Mohamed Morsi to the post of president of Egypt. Senior Hamas figures appealed to him to ease traffic through the Rafah crossing between Egypt and the Gaza Strip so that the so-called "tunnel industry" could come to an end. The de-facto Hamas administration's interior minister said that the Muslim Brotherhood's victory was a victory for the "shaheeds and jihad," and called on the president-elect to support the liberation of Palestine "from the [Mediterranean] sea to the [Jordan] river."

Israel's South Important Terrorism Events

Rocket Fire

■ This past week **relative calm prevailed** after the latest round of escalation. However, on June 27 one rocket hit was identified in one of the western Negev communities. It landed near a chicken coop. There were no casualties but property was damaged. Two rockets targeting the southern city of Netivot were intercepted and destroyed by the Iron Dome aerial defense system.

Rockets Fired into Israeli Territory Since the Beginning of 2011¹



Since the end of Operation Cast Lead, 1,045 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory.

Since the beginning of 2011, 784 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory; 409 since the beginning of 2012.

Note: 162 of the rockets which landed in Israeli territory in June were fired during the round of escalation.

¹As of July 3, 2012.

Israeli Air Force Activity

- On the night of July 1 IAF aircraft struck a squad of terrorist operatives in the northern Gaza Strip preparing to launch a rocket into Israeli territory (IDF Spokesman, July 2, 2012).

Judea and Samaria

Events on the Ground

- 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.

Violent Clashes between Demonstrators and the Palestinian Police

- Two demonstrations held in Ramallah were violently suppressed by the Palestinian police:
 - On **June 30** Palestinian youths demonstrated to protest the visit to Ramallah planned by Vice Israeli Prime Minister Shaul Mofaz.
 - On **July 1** a demonstration was held to protest the violent clashes of the previous day's demonstration.
- Five local residents were injured in the clashes (most of them suffering from fractures); 12 Palestinian policemen who participated in dispersing the riots were also injured (Al-Ayam, July 2, 2012).
- On July 1 **Sayid Abu Ali**, interior minister of the Palestinian Authority, ordered the appointment of a committee to examine the events in Ramallah. He said that internal and legal steps would be taken after the committee had submitted its results and recommendations (Ma'an News Agency, July 2, 2012).



The Palestinian police suppress a violent demonstration in Ramallah (Hamas' palestine-info website, July 2, 2012).

Military Court Sentences a Hamas Terrorist-Operative to 54 Consecutive Life Sentences

- On July 1 a military court sentenced senior Hamas terrorist operative **Ibrahim Hamad** to 54 consecutive life sentences. Hamad was formerly the head of Hamas' military-terrorist wing in Judea and Samaria. **He was responsible for the planning and carrying out of a large number of suicide bombing attacks, causing the death of 46 Israeli civilians and the wounding of more than 400.** He was also found guilty of involvement in six attacks which were not carried out, including attacks in the Tel Aviv region and along railroad lines (IDF Spokesman, July 1, 2012).
- Hamas' military-terrorist wing promised in an announcement that the sentence would "have no value and never be carried out." It said that Hamas did not recognize "sentences handed down by the occupation" and added that Israel's trying "jihad fighters" for "resistance" [i.e., terrorism] had no international legal standing (Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades website, July 3, 2012).



Ibrahim Hamad (IDF Spokesman, July 2, 2012).

Unesco Adds Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem to World Heritage List

- Unesco's World Heritage Committee voted to accede to the Palestinian Authority's request to add the Church of the Nativity and the road leading to it in Bethlehem to its **World Heritage List**. Speaking before the World Heritage Committee in St. Petersburg, Riyadh al-Maliki, the Palestinian Authority's foreign minister, said that **the Palestinians' "natural and cultural heritage" was "in danger of being destroyed by the Israeli war machine"** (Wafa News Agency, June 29, 2012).
- **Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu** responded that in the past Unesco had shown itself to be prompted by political rather than cultural considerations, and that instead of taking steps to promote peace the Palestinians were taking steps to push peace further away. He added that the world needed to remember that the Church of the Nativity, which was sacred to Christianity, had been desecrated by Palestinian terrorists² (Website of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 1, 2012).
- The Palestinian Authority praised the Committee's decision:

²In April 2002, during the Palestinian anti-Israel terrorist campaign known as "the second intifada," 50 armed Palestinian terrorist operatives wanted by the IDF barricaded themselves in the Church of the Nativity and held an estimated 200 Palestinians hostage. Because of the sanctity and sensitivity of the site IDF forces did not break into the building but did prevent food from being delivered. The siege lasted 39 days during which some of the hostages attempted to escape. After negotiations an agreement was reached according to which the wanted terrorists would be evacuated to Cyprus or the Gaza Strip in return for the release of the hostages.

- **Salam Fayyad**, Palestinian prime minister, said that the Committee's decision stressed the global importance of "the holy Palestinian city" and its status among the peoples of the world. He said that such a decision increased the determination of the Palestinian people to establish an independent Palestinian state with the `967 borders and Jerusalem as its capital (Wafa News Agency, June 29, 2012).
- **Nabil Abu Rudeina**, Palestinian "presidential" spokesman, said that it was a historic day for justice and that the world had once again proved that it opposed the "occupation" and recognized the Palestinians' rights to an independent Palestinian state with the 1967 borders and Jerusalem as its capital (Wafa News Agency, June 29, 2012).

The Situation in the Gaza Strip

The De-Facto Hamas Administration Lodges Complaints with the UN against Israel

- The ministry of justice of the de-facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip said in an announcement that it had lodged an official complaint with the UN's Human Rights Council and General Assembly against Israel for its activities in the latest round of escalation. According to the complaint, **16 Palestinian civilians** were killed, among them four women and children. In addition, according to the complaint, Israeli warplanes attacked many civilian installations and agricultural areas. The Hamas ministry of justice demanded the establishment of a commission to investigate and try the Israelis who had carried out the attacks, their commanders and political leaders (Hamas' palestine-info website, June 26, 2012).
- As usual, **Hamas referred to terrorist operatives killed in fighting as "Palestinian civilians."** As far as we know, in the last round of escalation **16 terrorist operatives were killed, most of them involved in the fighting.** In addition, the facilities attacked were **terrorist bases or facilities used for terrorist purposes**, and not "civilian installations" or "agricultural areas," as falsely claimed in the complaint.

Egypt Seizes a Consignment of Weapons Meant for the Gaza Strip

- Security sources in the Egyptian interior ministry said that on June 29 they had

seized a consignment of weapons meant for the Gaza Strip. The weapons were seized near the border with Libya and consisted of **more than 300 rockets**, an estimated 130 of them long-range Grad rockets. According to the Egyptians, the consignment, which originated in the Libyan city of Sirte, was supposed to be delivered to the Sinai Peninsula and **from there to the Gaza Strip**. According to Egyptian Interior Minister General Mohamed Ibrahim, the seizure was the result of prior information. He added that it was the largest consignment of weapons intercepted by the Egyptian security forces to date (Ynet, June 29, 2012).

Hamas-Jordanian Relations

Khaled Mashaal Visits Jordan

■ A Hamas delegation headed by Khaled Mashaal visited Jordan on July 2. Khaled Mashaal met with Jordanian **King Abdallah** and senior members of the Jordanian administration, and he exploited the visit to meet with several **senior members of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan** and to visit the home of **Ihlam al-Tamimi**, a female terrorist operative released in the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal.³

■ Jordanian and Hamas sources stressed the success of the visit, but reiterated **that there had been no discussion regarding reopening Hamas' Jordanian office:**

- **Samih al-Maaytah**, Jordanian minister of information and media, and spokesman for the Jordanian government, said that discussing the reopening of a Hamas office in Jordan was not currently on the agenda (CNN, June 30, 2012).
- **Khaled Mashaal**, chairman of Hamas Executive Committee, said that it had been an excellent visit, conducted in an encouraging, friendly atmosphere. He said there would be more visits to follow. Asked about opening offices in Jordan, he said that Hamas' relations with Jordan were not measured by offices and that

³**Ihlam al-Tamimi** is a Jordanian who resides in Ramallah and found asylum in Jordan after her release. She aided and abetted the suicide bomber who carried out the suicide bombing attack at the Sbarro restaurant in Jerusalem, which killed 15 Israelis and wounded an estimated 100. She also collected intelligence before the attack. Interviewed by the Israeli media while still in prison she did not show remorse for the deaths of the innocent civilians for which she was responsible. In a video-taped interview with a Hamas website after her release on October 26, 2011, she was asked if she would carry out such an attack again if she could. She answered that **she would**, adding that she "**would do it again**, because the action was carried out with due consideration, with conviction [in its justice] and faith in Allah, may he be praised and exalted, because **the jihad fighter always looks forward to death as a martyr for the sake of Allah**, or to imprisonment or success...I was imprisoned, it was hard but I was released. **What is there for me to feel remorse about?**" (YouTube)

the issue was not currently on the agenda, and that what they were hoping for now was comprehensive relations (Al-Sabil, June 30, 2012).



Khaled Mashaal on a visit to Jordan (Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades website, July 3, 2012).

Mohamed Morsi Wins Egyptian Presidential Election

High Hopes in the Gaza Strip after Morsi Is Elected President

■ Ceremonies and celebrations continued to be held in the Gaza Strip to mark the election of Mohamed Morsi, the Muslim Brotherhood candidate for president. At a rally held in the northern Gaza Strip, **Fathi Hamad**, interior minister in the de-facto Hamas administration, stressed the ties between Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood movement, and said **that their victory was the victory of "the shaheeds and jihad."** He said that an Arab president should not rest until **"Palestine is liberated from the [Mediterranean] sea to the [Jordan] river."** He shouted to the crowd that there was no path but **"jihad and resistance"** [i.e., terrorism], and that they had to continue down that path until they "reach Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem" (Al-Aqsa TV, June 26, 2012).

■ Hamas activists in the Gaza Strip represented Mohamed Morsi's victory as **an opportunity to improve conditions at the Rafah crossing:**

- **Yousuf Rizqa**, Ismail Haniya's political advisor, called on the new president to lift the closure of the Gaza Strip and open the crossing to facilitate the delivery of building materials and the money allotted by Arab and international

organizations for the rebuilding of the Gaza Strip. He expressed confidence that the new-age Egypt would stand up for "Palestinian rights" and stressed that the Gazans had great hope that his election would improve the quality of their daily lives (Sama News Agency, June 25, 2012).

- **Khalil al-Haya**, a Hamas leader in the Gaza Strip, said that **lifting the closure of the Gaza Strip** was one of Hamas' fundamental demands of the new Egyptian leadership. He called on the new president to improve conditions at the Rafah crossing and urged him to **open it for commerce so that they could "get rid of the tunnel industry and [end] the commercial ties with Israel conducted through the Kerem Shalom crossing"** (Safa News Agency, date, 2012).
- Senior Hamas figure **Mahmoud al-Zahar**, on the other hand, said that the Gazans hopes that the new Egyptian president would improve their lives in every respect were too high, especially with regard to opening the crossing, freedom of movement, importing merchandise and finding a solution for the energy crisis (Alresalah.net website, June 25, 2012).

Propaganda Events

BDS Conference

- Plans are being made to hold a BDS (boycott, divestment and sanctions, the campaign to delegitimize and boycott Israel) conference in **Byron Bay, Australia, on August 12**. According to the organizers, its objective will be to raise awareness for the moral justice of a boycott of Israel. BDS founder **Omar Barghouti**, based in Ramallah, is supposed to make a speech which will be broadcast by video conference (Australians for Palestine website, June 28, 2012).