



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

July 11-17, 2012



Mahmoud Abbas, Palestinian Authority chairman, gets a red-carpet reception in Saudi Arabia (Wafa News Agency, July 13, 2012).

Overview

- This past week sporadic rocket fire into the western Negev from the Gaza Strip continued, with three rocket hits identified in Israeli territory. In addition, a terrorist operative opened fire on an IDF force near the security fence in the northern Gaza Strip. Israeli Air Force aircraft attacked terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip and shot at a terrorist operative preparing to launch a rocket into Israeli territory.
- In Judea and Samaria attempts were made to abduct Israelis as hostages. Information was recently released reporting according to which in May 2012 the Israeli security forces exposed a terrorist cell in the Arab village of Hizma (north of Jerusalem) whose operatives were planning to abduct an IDF soldier.
- Mahmoud Abbas continues on his tour of Arab and European countries. In Saudi Arabia he met with King Abdallah and asked for financial aid. Khaled Mashaal visited Tunisia and Morocco. In Tunisia he made a speech in which he called for the liberation of all Palestine, stressing that the path of "resistance" [i.e., terrorism] was the preferred strategic alternative.

Important Terrorism Events Israel's South

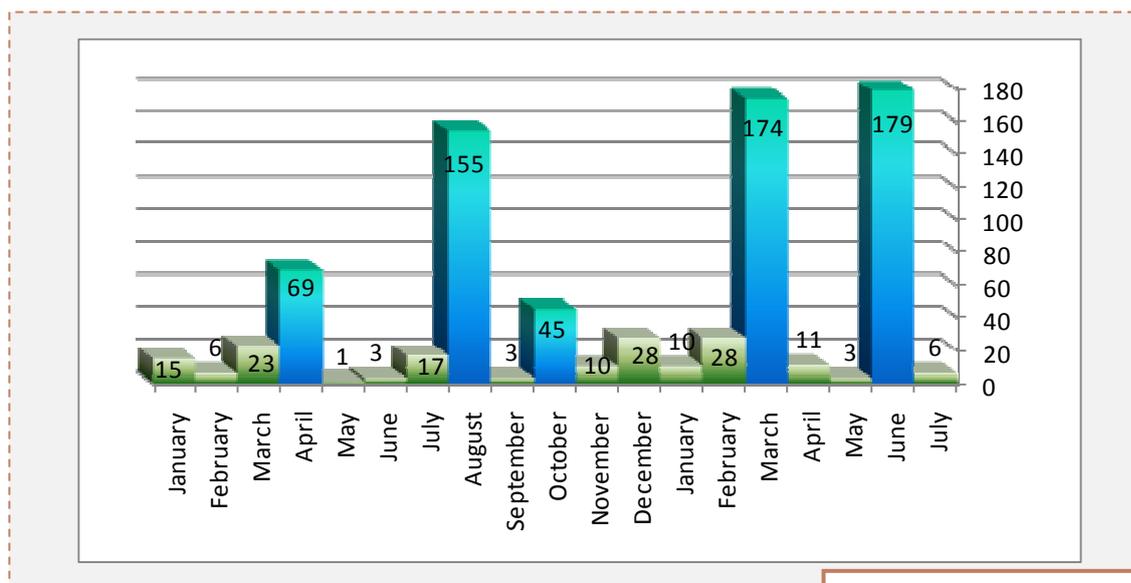
Terrorist Opens Fire on IDF Force

■ On the afternoon of July 13 a terrorist operative opened fire on an IDF force near the security fence in the northern Gaza Strip, close to the Erez crossing. The force returned fire and killed the terrorist (IDF Spokesman, July 13, 2012). The shots were fired from the same area as last week (July 9), when the commercial center at the Yad Mordechai junction was attacked with machine gun fire.

Rocket Fire

■ This past week sporadic rocket fire into the western Negev continued. **Three rocket hits were identified in Israel territory.** The rockets fell in open areas. There were no casualties and no damage was done.

Rockets Fired into Israeli Territory Since the Beginning of 2011



Since the beginning of 2011, 787 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory; 502 since the beginning of 2012.

Since the end of Operation Cast Lead, 1,051 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory.

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

1 As of July 17, 2012.

IDF Response

- In response to the July 9 rocket fire attacks on Israel, on **the night of July 9** Israeli Air Force aircraft struck a terrorist base and Hamas terrorist target in the southern Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman, July 10, 2012). The Palestinian media reported that three Palestinians in the *Sajaiya neighborhood in the eastern part of Gaza City had been injured* (Safa News Agency and the Paltoday website, July 12, 2012).
- **On July 12** IAF aircraft struck a terrorist operative in the northern Gaza Strip who was about to launch a rocket into Israeli territory (IDF Spokesman, July 12, 2012). The Palestinian media reported that an IAF attack on a base belonging to Hamas' Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades in the eastern Gaza City neighborhood of Al-Zeitun killed one of its operatives and seriously wounded two local residents. The Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military-terrorist apparatus, issued a formal statement of the death of one of its operatives (Alresala.net website, Ma'an News Agency, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades website, July 12, 2012).

Judea and Samaria

Detention of Terrorist Cell Planning to Abduct IDF Soldier²

- The Israel Security Agency recently reported that **in May** a joint activity of the Israeli security forces **exposed a terrorist cell in the Arab village of Hizma** (north of Jerusalem) **whose operatives were planning to abduct an IDF soldier**. The cell was headed by Rajib Musa Salah Salah al-Din, a Hizma resident affiliated with the **Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine**.
- Interrogation of the members of the cell revealed that they intended to stop their vehicle near a soldier and force him into the car. They kept an iron pipe in the vehicle which they planned to beat the soldier with if he tried to resist. They also had handcuffs and a hood.
- The operatives planned to keep the soldier hidden in a safe house or cave near Hizma and then, in return for money, to hand him over to the relatives of Palestinian terrorists imprisoned in Israel to be used as a bargaining chip for their release. They intended to approach the families of senior terrorists, such as **Ahmed Sadat**, leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine³ and Fatah leader **Marwan Barghouti**.

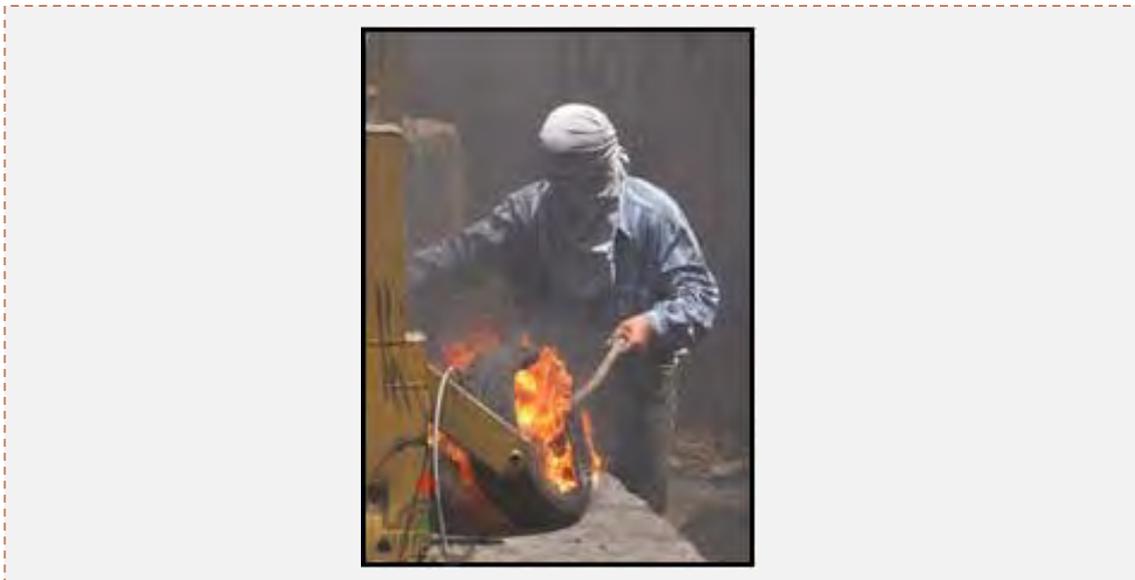
² According to the Israel Security Agency website, July 16, 2012.

³ **Ahmed Sadat** was secretary general of the PFLP and was responsible for the assassination of Israeli minister Rechavam Zeevi (October 17, 2001). After the assassination Sadat fled to the *muqata'a* (Arafat's headquarters) in Ramallah. After talks and contacts brokered by the United States and Britain he was tried in a Palestinian military court and imprisoned in Jericho. On March 14, 2006 he was caught and imprisoned in Israel. In December 2008 he was sentenced by an Israeli military court to 30

■ Interrogation of the cell operatives revealed that a number of times between December 2011 and January 2012 **they tried and failed to abduct soldiers near the Ma'aleh Adumim junction**, east of Jerusalem. They weighed the option of moving the attack to a location inside the Green Line, possibly one of the bus stops between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

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. In addition, there were several incidents of stones and Molotov cocktails being thrown at Israeli civilian and security vehicles.



Palestinian sets fire to a tire at a riot in Bila'in (Wafa News Agency, July 13, 2012).

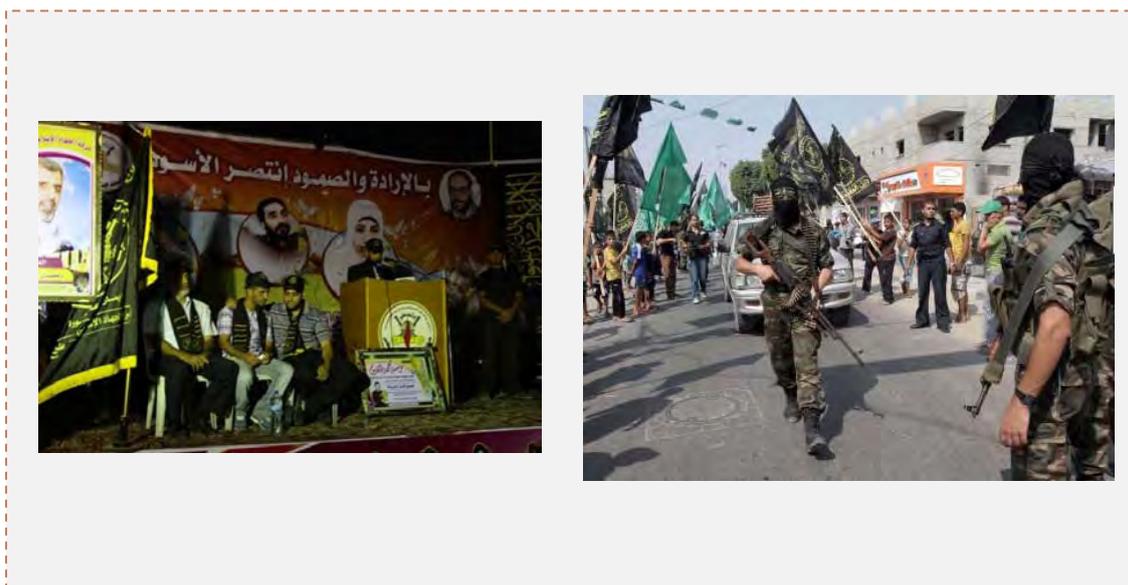
The Situation in the Gaza Strip

Palestinian Islamic Jihad Operative Released

■ Hundreds of Gazans, among them senior PIJ figures, held a reception for **Mahmoud Sarsak**, a Palestinian terrorist operative who went on a hunger strike in an Israeli jail. Mahmoud Sarsak, 25, a resident of Rafah, played for the Palestinian soccer team. He was detained in July 2009 at the Erez crossing en route from the Gaza Strip to Nablus and indicted for membership in the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. At the reception he and senior PIJ figures expressed satisfaction with his release and called it

years in prison.

a victory and an example of "strong, firm resistance" (Al-Ayam, July 11, 2012).



Mahmoud Sarsak received in Rafah with a military parade and festive ceremony organized by the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (Pictures from the Alquds.com and Paltoday.ps websites, July 11, 2012).

Aid Delegations from South Africa and Italy Reach the Gaza Strip

- Two more delegations bringing humanitarian aid entered the Gaza Strip through the Rafah crossing (Al-Quds TV, July 10, 2012):
 - **A delegation of several dozen activists from the South African organization SARA:** It was the fourth convoy to reach the Gaza Strip from South Africa. According to Walid al-Saadi, the organization's secretary general, the members of the delegation took it upon themselves, once they returned to South Africa, to expose the activities of the so-called Israeli occupation and to show the world the Palestinians' suffering.
 - **A delegation of activists from Italy:** A delegation calling itself "Music for Peace" arrived, sent by the Italy-Palestine Friendship Association. It brought medical equipment and ambulances.

Remarks from Senior Hamas Figures

Khaled Mashaal

- **Khaled Mashaal**, head of Hamas' Executive Committee, gave a speech at the ninth conference of the Islamist **Al-Nahda movement** during a visit to Tunisia. Regarding the Palestinian cause he said the following (Al-Quds TV, July 12, 2012):
 - **As to the negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians**, he said that the main Palestinian issues were "the **liberation of all the lands of Palestine**, the

liberation of Jerusalem, the return of the Palestinian people to its land and the release of the prisoners." In his opinion, history has shown that **the only way an occupied land can be liberated is with force and through "resistance"** [i.e., terrorism]. Therefore, the Palestinian "resistance" would continue to be the Palestinians' strategic path.

- He asked the Arab-Muslim states to keep the Palestinian cause at the top of their agendas, claiming that Israel was trying to suppress a popular awakening.



Khaled Mashaal speaks in Tunisia (Palestine-info website, July 12, 2012).

- From Tunis Khaled Mashaal went to Morocco.

Salah Bardawil on an Arrangement with Israel

- Senior Hamas figure **Salah Bardawil** praised newly-elected Egyptian president Mohamed Morsi for his statements about the Palestinian cause, saying that his "positive approach" had been manifested by increasing the number of Palestinians passing through the Rafah crossing. Asked about a possible arrangement with Israel, he said that the "Zionist enemy" was "a bloodthirsty occupier who uprooted [the Palestinians]." He said that the only way to deal with Israel was **with force**. Therefore, **Hamas' armed "resistance,"** he said, had to continue as the first among all forms of resistance used by Hamas until Palestine had been liberated (Qudspress, July 15, 2012).

Palestinian Authority Political and Security Activities

Mahmoud Abbas Visits Saudi Arabia

■ Mahmoud Abbas continued his political visits with a trip, on July 12, to Saudi Arabia, where he met with King Abdallah bin Abd al-Aziz in Jeddah and with other senior figures. Mahmoud Abbas asked the Saudis for financial aid. From Saudi Arabia he went through Jordan on July 16 and from there to Italy and the Vatican. He is expected to return to Ramallah on July 19, at the beginning of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

Saeb Erekat Meets with American Secretary of State Hillary Clinton

■ On July 15 Saeb Erekat, member of the PLO's Executive Committee and head of its negotiating team, met with American Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who was on a visit to the Middle East. He rejected her request that Palestinians return to the negotiating table and reach a national agreement to abandon violence. He said that Israel was the rejectionist and had taken unilateral steps in the occupied territories, giving as examples construction in the settlements and the continuation of detentions. He demanded that Israel halt the construction in the settlements, release the Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails who had been imprisoned before the Oslo Accords, and recognize a Palestinian state with the 1967 borders (Sawt Palestine, July 15, 2012).



Saeb Erekat meets with Hillary Clinton (Wafa News Agency, July 15, 2012).

The "Bader" Campaign to Boycott Israeli Products

■ The National Initiative movement, headed by **Mustafa Barghouti**, said in an announcement that the second stage of the Bader **campaign to boycott Israeli products** had begun. He said this stage would focus on Israeli dairy products. At a ceremony held to begin the second stage of the campaign, Barghouti said that lowering the consumption of Israeli products would mean more jobs for the Palestinian work force. He also called for the so-called "popular protest" activities to be intensified (Al-Ayam, July 15, 2012).



The Bader campaign to boycott Israeli products: At the left, campaign organizers pour Israeli milk into a pail (Wafa News Agency, July 15, 2012).

Hamas Activists Released

■ The Palestinian Authority security apparatuses released three Hamas activists who had been imprisoned in the Bethlehem jail and gone on a hunger strike. Their release was apparently achieved through an agreement signed by the heads of the clans and respected public figures in Hebron on one side and the security apparatus in Bethlehem on the other. According to the agreement other Hamas activists are also supposed to be released (Palpress, Ma'an News Agency, July 16, 2012).



Summons to appear before the Palestinian Authority security apparatuses issued in Hebron for Hamas activists (Palestine-info website, July 17, 2012).

Hezbollah

Terrorist Attack on Israelis in Cyprus Prevented

■ A spokesman for the Cypriot police reported that on July 7 a young man had been detained in Limassol on suspicion of involvement in planning a terrorist attack. The man, whose identity was not revealed, was of Lebanese origin and carried a Swedish passport. According to police sources he arrived in Cyprus to participate in a terrorist attack to blow up either a plane or a bus. Photographs and documents found in his possession indicated that he followed the movements of Israelis visiting the island (Agence France-Presse and AP, July 14, 2012). According to the Cyprus media, **the terrorist operative belonged to Hezbollah.**

■ Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that **Iran was behind the affair.** He said that "...**After Iran sent its people to assassinate** – on US soil – the Saudi Arabian ambassador and to perpetrate terrorist attacks in Azerbaijan, Bangkok, Tbilisi, New Delhi and Africa, its intention to perpetrate attacks in Cyprus has now been exposed. The international community needs to fight the greatest exporter of terrorism in the world"⁴ (ITIC emphasis).

Drone Possibly Belonging to Hezbollah Crashes in North Lebanon

■ According to reports in the Lebanese media, on July 14 a drone crashed in the Beqaa Valley near Baalbek in an area used by Hezbollah for training. Immediately

4 <http://www.pmo.gov.il/PMOEng/Communication/Spokesman/2012/07/spoketguva140712.htm>

following the crash Hezbollah security forces cordoned off the region and declared it a closed security area. A security source in Lebanon said that a technical failure had occurred in an experimental flight conducted by Hezbollah with an unmanned aerial vehicle. The aircraft, according to the source, had been manufactured in Iran and was intended to function as a bomber (Lebanese News Agency, July 14, 2012). Hezbollah denied ownership of the aircraft belonged (Al-Nahar, July 15, 2012).