



## News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

October 10-16, 2012



Rocket fire from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory continues. Left: one of the rockets that fell in the southern Israeli city of Netivot. Right: Damage done to a civilian home in Netivot (Pictures by Nili Trachterman, courtesy of Tarik Publications, Israel, October 12, 2012).

### Overview

- This past week rocket fire from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory continued. Seven rocket hits were identified. Some of them were long-range rockets which hit the southern Israeli town of Netivot and the surrounding area. The IDF attacked terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip, hitting two senior terrorist operatives who belonged to a network affiliated with the global jihad.
- The Palestinian Authority continues its political activities to promote a vote in the UN General Assembly for non-member status of a Palestinian state. According to Mahmoud Abbas and other Palestinians, when the Palestinian Authority receives non-member status, the Palestinians will be willing to return to negotiations with Israel to discuss the issue of the final status arrangement, based on the two-state solution.

## Israel's South Important Events

### Israeli Security Forces Counterterrorism Activities in the Gaza Strip

■ As part of the IDF's counterterrorism activities, on the night of October 12 Israeli Air Force aircraft struck a motorbike carrying two passengers in the Jabalia refugee camp. **The two were terrorist operatives affiliated with a global jihad network in the Gaza Strip.** One of them was **Hisham Ali Abd al-Karim Saidani, aka Abu al-Walid al-Maqdisi**, who was a senior operative in the Jihad wal-Tawhid network and a cofounder of a relatively new group calling itself the **Shura Council of the Jihad Fighters of Greater Jerusalem** (IDF Spokesman, October 13, 2012). According to reports from the Palestinian media, the other terrorist operative was **Ashraf Sabah**, 42, one of Saidani's aides (Ma'an News Agency, Filastin al-Yawm and Filastin al-'Aan, October 13, 2012).



The motorbike ridden by Abu al-Walid al-Maqdisi and his aide in the Jabalia refugee camp in the Gaza Strip (Wafa News Agency, October 13, 2012).

### Continuing Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire

■ This past week **seven rocket hits** were identified in Israeli territory, some of them long-range 122-mm rockets which fell in and around the southern city of **Netivot**. One of the rockets launched on October 12 fell in the yard of a civilian residential dwelling. One man was treated for shock and the house was damaged. In addition, a number of mortar shells were also fired, falling in open areas. There were no casualties and no damage was reported.

■ Several organizations claimed responsibility for the rocket and mortar shell fire, among them the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP Facebook page, October 14, 2012) and the Popular Resistance Committees (Website of the organization's military-terrorist wing, October 14, 2012). Responsibility was also claimed by networks affiliated with the global jihad, among them the Shura Council of the Jihad Fighters of Greater Jerusalem (Global jihad forum website, October 10, 2012) and a network calling itself "Taliban Palestine" (Global jihad forum website, October 14, 2012).

### IDF Response to the Rocket Fire

■ In response to the rocket and mortar shell fire Israeli Air Force aircraft struck a number of terrorist targets and rocket firing squads in the Gaza Strip:

- **October 14:** During the morning hours IAF aircraft struck a squad of terrorist operatives in the southern Gaza Strip who were making final preparations to launch rockets into Israeli territory (IDF Spokesman, October 14, 2012). In the afternoon IAF aircraft struck a terrorist squad in the central Gaza Strip a short time after it had launched mortar shells into Israeli territory (IDF Spokesman, October 14, 2012). The military-terrorist wing of the Popular Resistance Committees said in an announcement that the two killed in the strike were the commander of the organization's artillery unit in Deir al-Balah and an operative from the same unit. According to the announcement, they were killed after they had launched five mortar shells into the Israeli village of Kissufim (Website of the PRC's military-terrorist wing, October 14, 2012).
- **October 13:** IAF aircraft struck a center for terrorist activity in the northern Gaza Strip and two terrorist targets in the central Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman, October 13, 2012).
- **October 10:** IAF aircraft struck a terrorist tunnel in the northern Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman, October 10, 2012). The Palestinian media reported that the strike damaged a post belonging to Hamas' military-terrorist wing in Beit Lahia (Filastin al-'Aan, Wafa and Ma'an News Agencies, October 10, 2012).

### Hamas Reactions to IAF Strikes

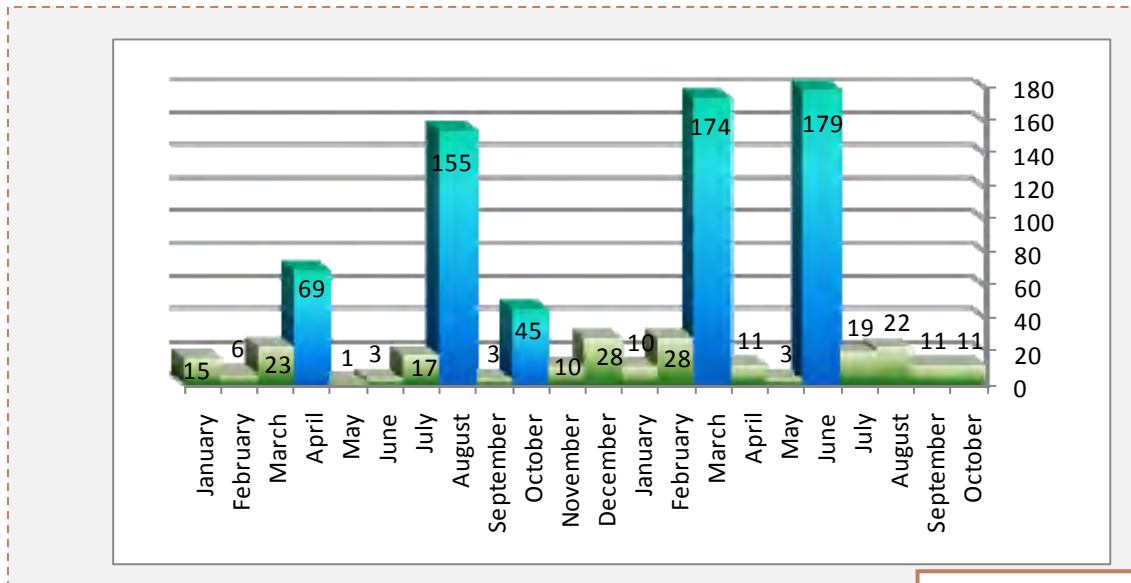
■ Hamas spokesmen reacted strongly to what they referred to as "Israeli escalation" and related it to "an Israeli attempt to drag the Gaza Strip into a confrontation before the Israeli elections" (completely ignoring and making no reference to the continuing

rocket fire from the Gaza Strip into Israel). However, **Mahmoud al-Zahar**, a member of **Hamas'** Executive Committee, said that Hamas **was committed to the lull agreements with Israel which had been brokered through Egyptian mediation and agreed upon by all the Palestinian [terrorist] organizations** (BBC, October 14, 2012).

■ The following were the main reactions given by Hamas:

- **Taher al-Nunu**, spokesman for the de-facto Hamas administration, accused Israel of having initiated the latest round of escalation and that the steps taken by the Palestinian organizations in the Gaza Strip were in response. He denied Hamas administration involvement in the attacks but mentioned that during the last round of escalation there had been a joint Hamas-Palestinian Islamic Jihad response (Al-Jazeera, October 14, 2012). Interviewed by Al-Aqsa TV, he warned Israel not to think that the Gaza Strip had become part of the Israeli government's election campaign (Al-Aqsa TV, October 14, 2012).
- **Fawzi Barhoum**, Hamas spokesman, said that the latest round of escalation was part of an Israeli plan to make political capital before the elections (Fawzi Barhoum's Facebook page, October 14, 2012).
- **Islam Shahawan**, spokesman for the ministry of the interior of the de-facto Hamas administration, said that what he called Israel's "aggression" was the result of internal problems and the failures of the current Israeli government. He said that the Hamas ministry of the interior had declared it was fully prepared to preserve stability and calm (Al-Aqsa TV, October 14, 2012).

## Rockets Fired into Israeli Territory since the Beginning of 2011<sup>1</sup>



Since the end of Operation Cast Lead, 1,110 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory.

Since the beginning of 2011, 847 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory; 562 since the beginning of 2012.

## Judea and Samaria

### Riots at the Friction Points

■ This past week as well there were violent demonstrations at the traditional friction points throughout Judea and Samaria. Rioters threw stones at the IDF forces, who in certain instances used riot control equipment to disperse the demonstrators. In addition, in a number of instances stones and Molotov cocktails were thrown at Israeli civilian and security vehicles.

<sup>1</sup> As of October 14. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.



Friday demonstration at Nabi Salih (Wafa News Agency, October 12, 2012).

## The Situation in the Gaza Strip

### The Anniversary of Gilad Shalit's Release

- Plans are currently being made in the Gaza Strip to mark the first anniversary of the deal which led to the liberation of abducted Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit in return for the release of Palestinian terrorist operatives imprisoned in Israeli jails. The events are planned for October 15-18; their slogan is "Keeping the faith with the released [prisoners]."
- Among the events planned are the following (Filastin al-'Aan, October 15, 2012):
  - A rally in front of Red Cross headquarters in the Gaza Strip, during which a document will be presented to the Red Cross describing the condition of the Palestinian terrorists released to the Gaza Strip.
  - A festive ceremony sponsored by Hamas attended by terrorist operatives who participated in the abduction and featuring a video documenting it.
  - A festive session of the Legislative Council.
  - A march in the northern Gaza Strip.



Logo of the events marking the anniversary of the prisoner exchange deal (Filastin al-'Aan, October 15, 2012).

■ Interviewed by the Israeli website Walla! on the anniversary of the prisoner exchange deal, **Mahmoud al-Zahar**, deputy head of Hamas' Executive Committee and in charge of negotiations for Hamas, said that **the main conclusion drawn by Hamas was that exerting pressure was the only thing that influenced Israel**. He added that the released prisoners had become important **factors in supporting the Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip**. Some of them, he said, were now leaders in "the political and other arenas," exploiting their experience in international and especially Israeli issues (Walla! News, October 12, 2012).

## The Palestinian Authority

### Activity to Promote the Palestinian Appeal to the UN General Assembly

- PA activity to promote its appeal to the UN General Assembly for recognition as a non-member state continues. According to Saeb Erekat, **the appeal will be lodged next month** (November 2012). Senior PA figures have also stated that UN recognition will lead to a Palestinian return to the negotiating table with Israel.
- To that end Mahmoud Abbas held a number of meetings, among them the following:
  - On **October 10** he held a meeting with consuls and representatives of European Union countries, during which he said he hoped EU members would

support the Palestinian bid to the UN. He also said that the PA agreed that EU documents regarding the Palestinians would be the basis for a return to negotiations with Israel. **He said that as soon as the Palestinian Authority received non-member status in the General Assembly, the Palestinians would be willing to return to the negotiations and would discuss the final status arrangement** (Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda, October 10, 2010).

- Meeting with members of the Israeli Knesset (parliament) in Ramallah, Mahmoud Abbas said that after the Palestinian Authority received non-member status in the UN, it would return to negotiations with Israel based on implementing the two-state solution (Wafa News Agency, October 13, 2012).



Mahmoud Abbas meets with Israeli Knesset members in Ramallah (Wafa News Agency, October 14, 2012).

■ **Saeb Erekat**, a member of the PLO's Executive Committee, said that **the United States would not be able to prevent the UN General Assembly session next month** where the vote on Palestinian membership would be held. He said that an affirmative decision **would make it possible for the PA to return to negotiations**, because recognition of "Palestine" as a state under occupation would serve as a source of authority for the Palestinian demand that Israel withdraw to the 1967 lines, as well as recognition of the illegality of the settlements and the annexation of Jerusalem (Voice of Palestine Radio, October 15, 2012). Saeb Erekat said in an interview that receiving non-member status in the UN would give the PA **access to the International Court where the Palestinians could sue Israel** (Ma'an News Agency, October 13, 2012).

## Hezbollah

### Hezbollah Sends a Drone into Israeli Airspace (Follow-Up)



Hezbollah video simulating sending the drone, referred to as the "[Hussein] Ayoub operation," over Israel (Al-Manar TV, Lebanon, October, 2012)

- On October 11, 2012, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah gave a speech focusing on the drone sent into Israeli airspace. The information he provided was biased and clearly intended as propaganda. Its main objective, in our assessment, was to reinforce Nasrallah's position in Lebanon in view of the increasing criticism of the aid and support Hezbollah extends to the Syrian regime.
- The main points of his speech were the following (Radio Nur, October 11, 2012):
  - **Claiming responsibility for sending the drone:** Hezbollah, said Nasrallah, had carried out "a very high-quality and important operation" by sending an advanced reconnaissance drone from Lebanese territory into Israel from the sea on an intelligence-collecting mission. The mission was called "**the Hussein Ayoub operation**," named for one of the founders of Hezbollah's aerial forces, who died under circumstances Hassan Nasrallah did not mention.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> **Hussein Anis Ayoub** was from the village of Salaa in the Tyre district. He was formerly commander of Hezbollah's aerial forces and is considered as having made the greatest contribution to Hezbollah's aerial wing. He was involved in several showcase terrorist attacks against IDF forces in south Lebanon. He died on March 4, 1996, in an attack in the central sector of south Lebanon in which four IDF soldiers were killed. His family "joyfully" received the news that sending the drone into Israeli territory was named for him and pictures of him were put up in the streets alongside Hezbollah flags (Radio Nur, October 12; Al-Manar, October 13, 2012).



A picture of Hussein Ayoub alongside Hezbollah flags near his family's home in Salaa, Lebanon, after the drone was launched (Al-Manar TV, Lebanon. October 13, 2012).



Hussein Ayoub, for whom sending the drone into Israeli territory was named ( Hamas forum, October 13, 2012).

- **The drone's route:** Hezbollah, said Nasrallah, directed the plane over the sea for hundreds of kilometers and then turned it eastward over Israel's south ("occupied southern Palestine"). Once over Israeli territory it flew dozens of kilometers until it was downed by the IAF near the southern town of Dimona, according to Hezbollah claims.
- **Drone type:** Nasrallah did not mention the type of drone. He said the mission had been a demonstration, the first of its kind, of Hezbollah's improved aerial capabilities, and that the drone was superior to those used in the Second Lebanon War. He said the drone was not Russian but rather **Iranian, and had been manufactured and assembled by superior professional Hezbollah activists** ("The Lebanese," he said, "should be proud of having young people with brains like these.")
- **Propaganda and the battle for hearts and minds:** Nasrallah boasted about the drone's penetration deep into Israeli territory and represented it as a first in the achievements of Hezbollah and the "resistance movement" [i.e., the terrorist organizations]. He claimed the drone had flown for hundreds of kilometers in a region paved with Israeli, American, NATO and UNIFIL radar without being discovered, until it was finally shot down, which, he said, was "natural and expected, and it was not [to be considered] an [Israeli]

achievement." The penetration into Israeli airspace, he said, embarrassed Israel, which had boasted that its airspace could not be breached.

- **Hezbollah will continue sending reconnaissance drones over Israel:** Hezbollah, claimed Nasrallah, had the "natural right" to operate reconnaissance flights into "occupied Palestine" as long as it chose. That was because of the Israeli violation of Lebanese airspace and the helplessness of the Lebanese government. Therefore, he said, "this flight was neither the first nor the last, with the aid of Allah, may he be praised and exalted."



Hassan Nasrallah delivers a speech claiming responsibility for sending a drone to penetrate Israeli airspace (Al-Manar TV, Lebanon, October 11, 2012).

## Lebanese and Iranian Reactions

- Iranian spokesmen boasted of Hezbollah and Iran's achievement **using themes similar to those used by Nasrallah:**

- **Ahmad Vahidi**, Iranian minister of defense, said that Hezbollah's drone flight demonstrated the helplessness and weakness of Israel ("the Zionist regime"). He claimed that in view of Israel's frequent flights over Lebanon, Hezbollah regarded the drone incursion as its "natural right." As to the fact that the plane was of Iranian manufacture, and regarding the support Iran gave Hezbollah, he said that "**Iran's capabilities are very high**, and they are available to serve the Islamic nations" (FARS News Agency, Iran, October 14, 2012).

- **Hassan Rowhani**, representative of supreme leader Ali Khamenei in Iran's national Security Council, claimed the drone had flown over sensitive areas and had been a "painful blow" to Israel (ISNA, Iran, October 14, 2012).
- **Fouad Siniora**, head of the Al-Mustaqbal ("Future") party faction in the Lebanese parliament and one of Hezbollah's opponents, responded to the drone by saying that **the decision to send it had been Iranian, because dispatching it required technology possessed only by Iran**. He said he was concerned that dispatching the drone would entail a risk for Lebanese national security and might embroil Lebanon in an Israeli response and in regional and international struggles (NOW Lebanon news site, October 14, 2012).

## Propaganda Events

### Estelle En Route to the Gaza Strip

- **The *Estelle***, which set sail on October 6 from Naples, continues its voyage toward the Gaza Strip. The ship is currently near Crete and is expected to reach its destination in the coming days (Gaza's Ark website, October 15, 2012).
- Activists aboard the ship issued a declaration stating that they had undergone training during the voyage to prepare themselves for non-violent resistance should Israel take over the ship (Gaza's Ark website, October 15, 2012).
- **Amjad al-Shawa**, coordinator for the Campaign to Break the Siege of the Gaza Strip, said that despite Israeli threats the ship's organizers were determined to reach the port of Gaza and that preparations were being made in the Gaza Strip to receive it (Al-Quds TV, October 9, 2012).



Left: Reception for the Estelle in the port of Naples. Right: The Estelle anchored in Naples (Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades website, October 14, 2012).

### New Initiative from the Organizers of the Fly-In to Israel

■ The organization calling itself "Welcome to Palestine" officially announced on its website that it was planning another campaign to show solidarity with the Palestinians. This time **the organization will try to send a delegation to the Gaza Strip through Egypt**. The target date for arrival in Cairo is December 25 and **the entrance into the Gaza Strip is planned for December 27** (Organization website, October 10, 2012). Behind the new initiative are those who orchestrated the protest fly-in in July 2011 and the march to the Allenby Bridge in August 2012. In both cases most of the activists were refused entry into Israel.

### Plaque Awarded to the Family of Suicide Bomber Hanadi Jaradat

■ On October 13, lawyers belonging to the Cairo-based Arab Lawyers' Union<sup>3</sup> held a festive ceremony in Jenin to award a plaque to the family of suicide bomber Hanadi Jaradat, who blew herself up in the Maxim restaurant in Haifa in October 2003.<sup>4</sup> The plaque was presented to mark the anniversary of her death. It was another example

<sup>3</sup> The **Arab Lawyers' Union** was founded in 1944. It is an umbrella organization for all the lawyers' unions in the Arab world. Its headquarters are in Cairo. **The organization advises the UN's Economic and Social Council and UNESCO**. It is also a member of the International Criminal Court's union of lawyers, the French International Lawyer's Union (UIA) and the international Legal Assistance Consortium (ILAC). Among its stated objectives are the promotion of the legal profession in the Arab world and the struggle against all forms of imperialism.

<sup>4</sup> Hanadi Tyasir Abd al-Malek Jaradat was a suicide bomber from Jenin who blew herself up in the Maxim restaurant in Haifa on October 4, 2003. **In the attack 21 Israeli civilians were murdered and 51 wounded**. Among the murdered were two families and four children, including a one-year-old baby girl. **Hanadi Jaradat was a lawyer and a member of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad**.

of turning terrorists into role models for the Arab-Muslim world in general and the Palestinians in particular.



**Left: A member of the Arab Lawyer's Union presents a framed plaque to the family of suicide bomber Hanadi Jaradat to mark the anniversary of her death. Right: The plaque ( Hamas forum website, October 13, 2012).**