



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

November 7-13, 2012



The remains of a rocket which hit the yard of a factory in Netivot (Photos by Daniel Hagbi for the Sderot Media Center, November 12, 2012).

Overview

- This past week terrorist events focused on a new round of rocket fire escalation, a little more than two weeks after the previous one. It began when an IDF jeep was attacked by an anti-tank missile, wounding four IDF soldiers. During the current round 121 rockets and in addition, mortar shells have been fired into Israeli territory. On the morning of November 13 a rocket landed near the southern Israeli city of Ashdod; since then quiet has prevailed.
- In a speech given at a meeting of the Arab League foreign ministers, Palestinian Authority chairman **Mahmoud Abbas** formally announced the date of the Palestinian request to upgrade the PA's status in the UN on the symbolic date of **November 29** (In November 29, 1947, the UN approved the Partition Plan for Palestine, creating the State of Israel.) In the meantime, the Palestinians have been conducting vigorous diplomatic activity to achieve as much support for the move as they can. In a phone call to Mahmoud Abbas, American President Obama expressed his objections to the Palestinian move (Wafa News Agency, November 12, 2012).

Important Events Israel's South¹

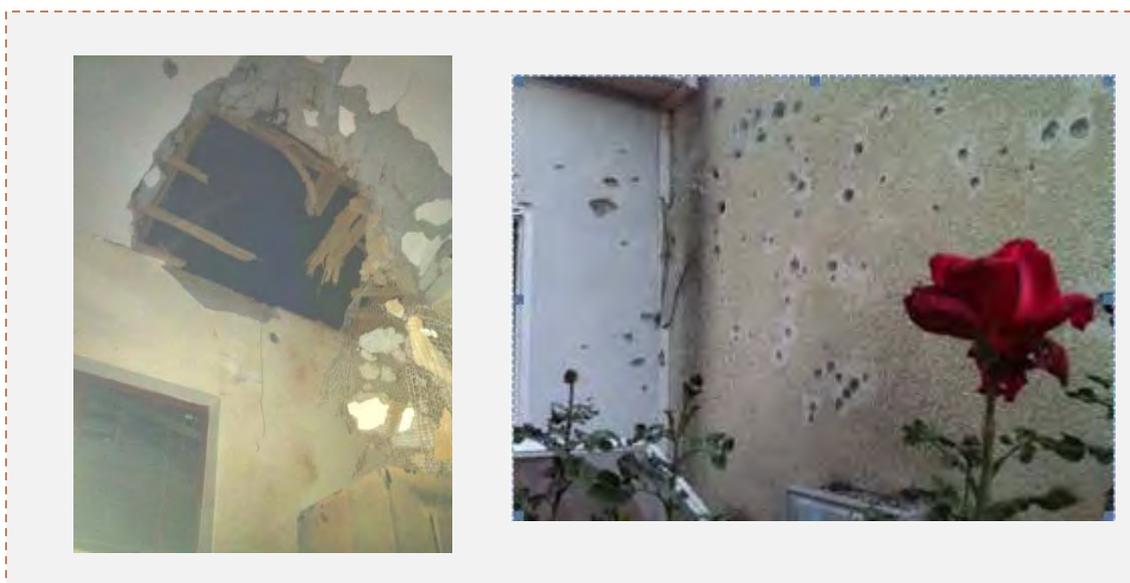
IDF Force near the Security Fence Attacked

- On **November 8, 2012**, a side charge was used to attack an IDF force operating near the southern Gaza Strip to locate IEDs. The activity was carried out following the increase in the number of terrorist attacks from the southern Gaza Strip in the two preceding weeks. The side charge was detonated from inside a tunnel. The IDF force found a number of IEDs. As the activity drew to a close there was a strong explosion from a tunnel running parallel to the security fence. The explosion exposed a tunnel four meters, or about 4.4 yards, long and four meters deep, and threw an IDF vehicle into the air (IDF Spokesman, November 10, 2012). **Hamas' military-terrorist wing claimed responsibility for the attack** (Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades website, November 8, 2012).
- On the evening of **November 10** a Kornet anti-tank missile was launched at an IDF jeep engaged in routine counterterrorism activity near the security fence in the central Gaza Strip. The missile set the jeep on fire and **wounded four IDF soldiers**, two seriously, while two were slightly wounded (IDF Spokesman, November 10, 2012). The military-terrorist wing of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) claimed responsibility for the attack (PFLP website, November 10, 2012).

Another Round of Rocket Fire

- The terrorist attack on **November 10** marked the beginning of **another round of escalation in the rocket attacks targeting Israel's south**, a little more than two weeks since the previous one. During the current round (November 10-13), so far **121 rockets have landed in Israeli territory**. A number of mortar shells have also been fired. Some of the rockets were **long-range rockets and landed in the southern cities of Netivot, Ashdod and Beersheba**. Some of them hit civilian homes and factories. A number of civilians incurred slight wounds and some were treated for shock. There was a large amount of property damage. Several rockets were intercepted by the Iron Dome aerial defense system (in Ashdod and Beersheba).
- On the morning of **November 13**, after a relatively quiet night, a rocket landed in an open area **near Ashdod**. There were no casualties and no damage was reported. The first half of the day was quiet.

¹ For further information see the bulletins about the escalation issued on November 11 and 12, 2012.



Damage done by the rocket fire (Photos by Daniel Hagbi for the Sderot Media Center, November 12, 2012).

Claims of Responsibility

■ Most of the claims of responsibility for the rocket and mortar shell fire were made by **the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), the PFLP and a number of networks affiliated with the global jihad**. Hamas claimed little responsibility **but gave media support to the attackers**: on November 11 Hamas' military-terrorist wing issued a collective statement accepting responsibility for the rocket fire carried out by other Palestinian terrorist organizations. According to another statement, the Palestinian factions were united against Israel and would continue to defend the Palestinian people and to carry out their "sacred duty in the resistance [i.e., terrorist campaign] against Israel." The Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades website also posted a video documenting an instance of rocket fire; the video bore the insignia of all the terrorist organizations (Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades website, November 11, 2012).

■ On November 12 the heads of the terrorist organizations operating in the Gaza Strip held an emergency meeting chaired by Hamas, where they reviewed the situation and discussed a response to Israel (Ma'an News Agency, November 12, 2012). Fatah, the PFLP and the DFLP did not attend. After the meeting Hamas spokesman **Sami Abu Zuhri** held a press conference where he said the participants had accused Israel of being fully responsible for events in the Gaza Strip, and stressed the alleged "right of the Palestinian people to resist Israel and deal with all types of aggression with every means at their disposal." He added that **the response would depend on how what he called "Israeli aggression" continued** (Al-Aqsa TV and Filastin al-'Aan,

November 12, 2012). The Egyptian media reported Egyptian mediation attempts to broker a lull.



Representatives of the Palestinian terrorist operatives meet in the Gaza Strip (Filastin al-'Aan, November 13, 2012).

Statements from Palestinians

■ Hamas' leaders and spokesmen continued to accuse Israel of responsibility for the current round of escalation and threatened another round:

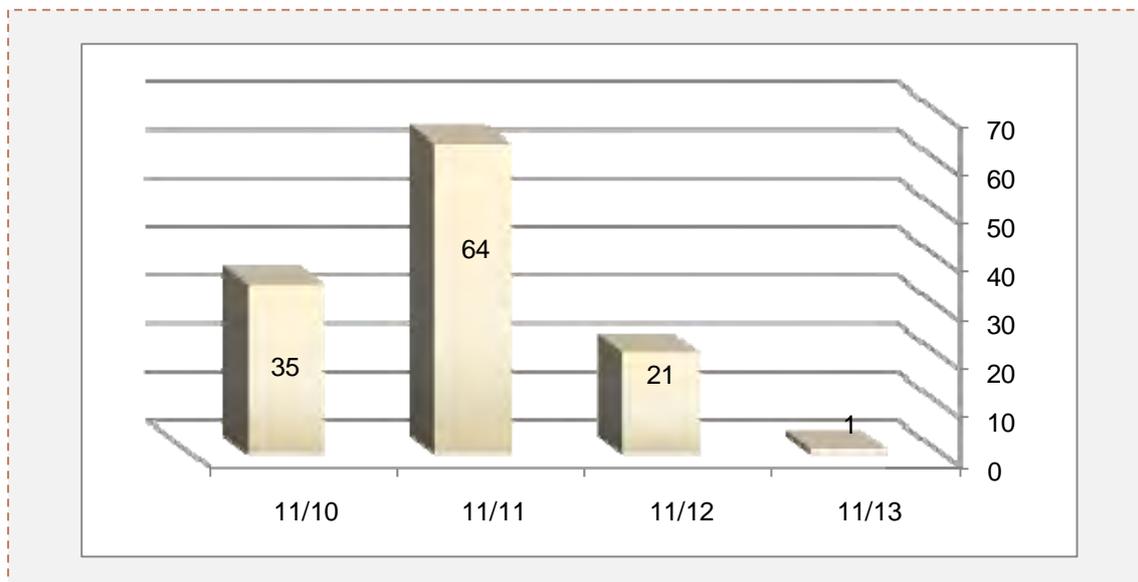
- **Musheir al-Masri**, spokesman for the Hamas faction in the Palestinian Legislative Council, claimed that the escalation in the Gaza Strip was part of the Israeli election campaign. He said that **the threat of another war in Gaza would not deter the Palestinian [terrorist] organizations**, because today they had the means to deter Israel's weapons (Sawt al-Arab Radio, November 12, 2012).
- **Taher al-Nunu**, spokesman for the de-facto Hamas administration, said that the administration's ministry of foreign affairs would lodge a formal complaint with the UN about Israel's activity in the Gaza Strip. He said it would refer to "the daily crimes carried out by the Israeli army" in the Gaza Strip. The objective of the complaint, he said, was to inform the world about the suffering of the Palestinian people and update it about Israel's actions. He again warned against aggression which would harm civilians (The PIJ's PalToday website, November 12, 2012).

IDF Responses

■ In response to the rocket and mortar shell fire, Israeli Air Force aircraft struck a number of terrorist targets and rocket-launching squads. During the past two days the following were attacked:

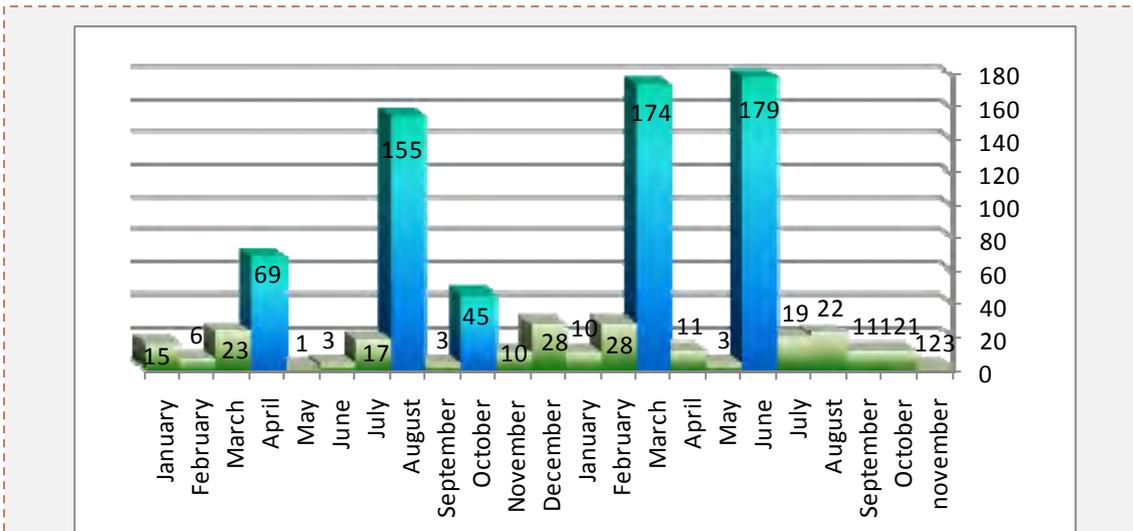
- On the night of **November 12**, IAF aircraft struck two rocket-launching sites in the northern Gaza Strip and a weapons storage site in the central Gaza Strip.
- On **November 12** a terrorist tunnel was attacked, as were a weapons storage site in the northern Gaza Strip and a rocket-launching site in the southern Gaza Strip.

Daily Distribution of Rocket Fire during the Current Round of Escalation



A total of 121 rocket hits identified in Israeli territory during the current escalation. Several mortar shells also fell in Israeli territory.

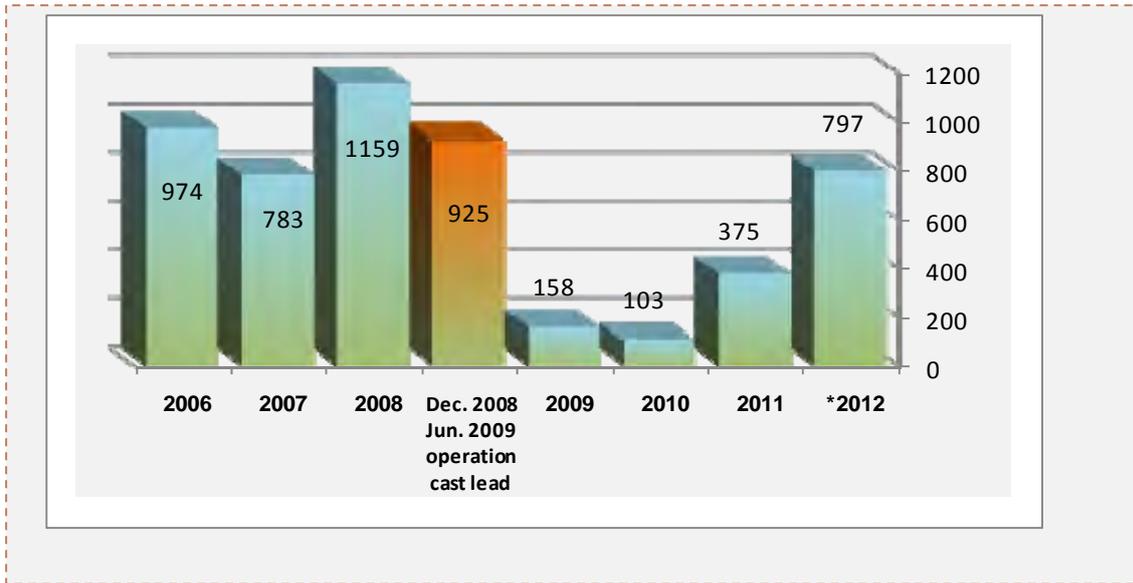
Rocket Hits in Israeli Territory since the Beginning of 2011²



Since the end of Operation Cast Lead, 1,345 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory.

Since the beginning of 2011, 1,100 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory; 797 since the beginning of 2012.

Annual Distribution of Rocket Hits in Israel's South



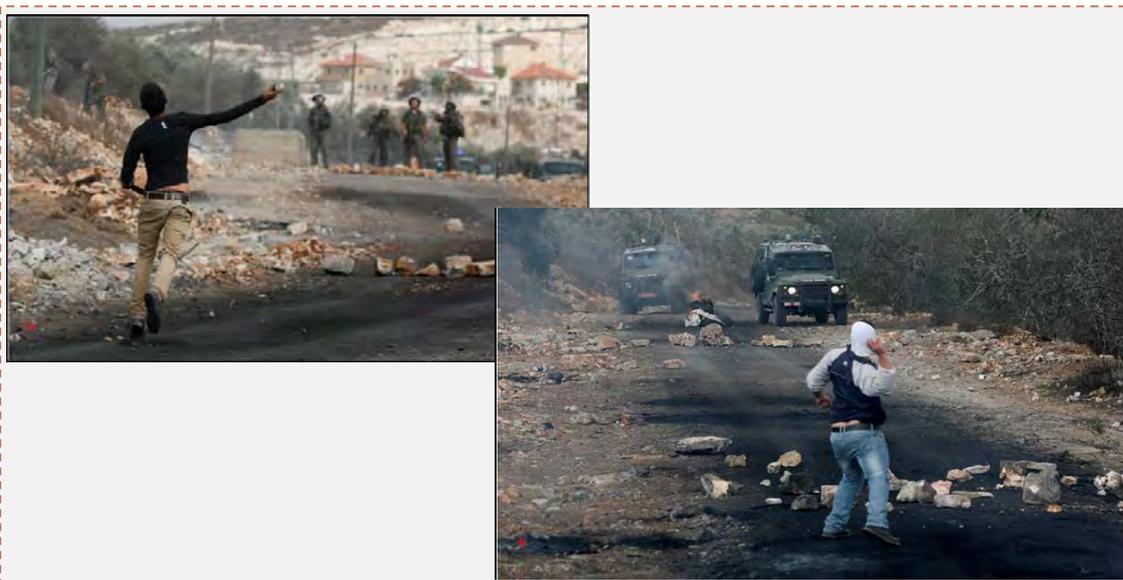
*As of November 13, 2012.

² As of November 13, 2012. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.

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 and Molotov cocktails 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.



Palestinians throwing stones at IDF forces during a riot in the village of Qadoum, near Nablus (Wafa News Agency, November 9, 2012).

The Situation in the Gaza Strip

The Crossings

■ With the increase in violent events near the security fence during the latest round of escalation, the threats and dangers to civilian life were assessed and a decision was made to close the Kerem Shalom crossing to the passage of goods (Coordinator for government activities in the territories website, November 12, 2012). The Erez crossing was closed to civilian traffic because of the massive amounts of rocket fire in the region.

■ After the situation was reassessed on the evening of November 12, the security establishment announced that **the Erez and Kerem Shalom crossings would be reopened**. The continued delivery of fuel donated by Qatar was coordinated with the

Egyptians, and will enter the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom crossing (Ynet, November 13, 2012).

Hamas Reaction to President Obama's Reelection

- The Hamas reaction to the reelection of Barack Obama as president of the United States was characterized by low expectations alongside hope for turning over a new leaf. Hamas does not expect America to change its foreign policy and expects it will continue to be what Hamas considers biased in favor of Israel (Safa News Agency, November 7, 2012). However, the ministry of the interior of the de-facto Hamas administration called on Obama to "admit his mistakes" in supporting Israel, and expressed its hope that the administration would initiate a new era with different policies, based on "honoring the people's rights to liberation and independence" (Ma'an News Agency, November 7, 2012).
- Senior Hamas figure Mahmoud al-Zahar said that expectations that Obama would realize the hopes of the Palestinians were low because American policy traditionally favored Israel. He said that Obama "had not moved a finger" while building in the settlements continued, and had worked against the internal Palestinian reconciliation (PalPress, November 7, 2012).

Chairman of the Tunisian Al-Asala Party Visits the Gaza Strip

- **Mawlidi Ali Mujahid**, leader of the Tunisian Salafist Islamic Al-Asala party arrived in the Gaza Strip for a visit on November 6. He met with Mahmoud al-Zahar at his home in Gaza City. Mujahid expressed his admiration for al-Zahar's efforts for "jihad and resistance" [i.e., terrorism and violence], saying that "the greatest goal of the nation has to be the liberation of the sacred land" (Ma'an News Agency, November 7, 2012). The visit was part of a Hamas campaign to strengthen ties with the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and with Islamic parties in the Arab-Muslim world, in view of the general upheaval in the Middle East.



Chairman of the Tunisian Al-Asala party (right) meets in Gaza City with Hamas' Mahmoud al-Zahar (Ma'an News Agency, November 7, 2012).

Hamas-Syria Relations

Syria Closes Hamas' Offices in Damascus

■ Hamas formally announced that Syrian security forces had broken into the movement's offices in Damascus, as well as into the house and office of Khaled Mashaal, head of Hamas' Executive Committee. According to the announcement, the Syrians seized the contents of the offices, changed the locks and confiscated cars (Aljazeera.net and Palestine-info websites, November 6, 2012).

■ Hamas spokesman **Salah al-Bardawil** said, without going into details, that the raid had been conducted to take "equipment" in one of the offices. He said that closing the offices made no difference because in any case they had been closed since Hamas' senior figures and activists left Syria. He said that the Hamas movement could not have stayed in Syria because of the "slaughter carried out by the regime against the people." However, he said Hamas and Syria had not broken off relations (Al-Quds Al-Arabi, November 7, 2012).

The Palestinian Authority

The Palestinian Move in the UN

■ In a speech given at a meeting of Arab League foreign ministers in Cairo, Mahmoud Abbas formally announced that the PA would request a vote in the UN General Assembly to upgrade its status to non-member state on **November 29** (the date the General Assembly passed the Partition Plan and created the State of Israel, a historic date in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict). He said that the PA would ask the vote be held

the same day. He added that **the Palestinians were prepared to return to negotiations with Israel the day after the request had been lodged** (Wafa News and Ma'an News Agencies, PalPress, November 12, 2012). The Arab League's foreign ministers decided to support the request and said they would provide the PA with a security net of \$100 million if sanctions were imposed on it following the lodging of the request (Wafa News Agency, November 12, 2012).

■ Palestinian Foreign Minister **Riyadh al-Maliki** said that the PA had composed a draft version of the request and that the Palestinians were now waiting for comments from various countries. He said the final version would be authorized close to the date of the request (Voice of Palestine Radio, November 7, 2012).

■ In addition to the Arab League meeting, Mahmoud Abbas is also conducting diplomatic meetings to prepare the ground:

- On **November 11** he held a telephone conversation with President Obama, who expressed objections to the Palestinians' UN move. Mahmoud Abbas rejected the president's objections, saying that he was determined to appeal to the UN (Wafa News Agency, PalPress and the Palestine News Network, November 12, 2012).
- On **November 12** he went to Saudi Arabia, where he met with the king and discussed the Palestinian move. From there he went to Cairo to meet with Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi (Wafa News Agency, November 12, 2012).



Mahmoud Abbas meets with Saudi Arabian King Abdallah Bin Abd al-Aziz (Wafa News Agency, November 12, 2012).

Propaganda Events

The Trial against Senior Israeli Figures Postponed³

- On November 6, 2012, a hearing began in Istanbul, part of a plan to bring try four senior Israeli officers for their alleged responsibility, for the deaths of nine activists aboard the *Mavi Marmara* in May 2010. The day was exploited by the IHH to institute an anti-Israel hate campaign which was **covered by the Turkish media**. The IHH held a mass demonstration in front of the court which was also attended by radical Islamist organizations affiliated with the organization.
- Three days into the hearing the court decided to postpone the trial until February 21, 2012, when it became apparent that **the trial had begun without formal summons' being sent to the accused**. The court instructed that the summons be translated immediately and sent to the Israeli government (Sabah.com.tr website, November 10, 2012). It was also reported that an English translation of the summons was being prepared (Yenisafak.com.tr website, November 9, 2012).



Pictures of the "wanted" Israelis and swastikas at the demonstration in front of the courthouse in Istanbul (The PIJ's PalToday website, November 6, 2012).

³ A bulletin about the trial in Istanbul is being translated into English and will shortly be available on our website.