



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

April 18 – 23, 2013



Hamas propaganda display for Palestinian Prisoner Day: "Palestinian prisoners" in a cell watched over by "Israeli prison guards" (Palinfo website, April 17, 2013).

Overview

- This past week sporadic rocket fire from the Gaza Strip into Israel's western Negev continued. A Salafist jihad terrorist in the Gaza Strip declared "the jihad will not stop" despite pressure exerted by Hamas and Egypt. The rocket fire and the defiant statements made by a Salafist jihadist challenge the security and ideology of Hamas, which wants, in our assessment, to preserve the lull in the fighting achieved at the end of Operation Pillar of Defense in November 2012.
- Palestinian Prisoner Day was marked in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip without exceptional incident. During March 2013 terrorist squads were exposed in Judea and Samaria; they planned to attack Israeli civilian and military targets. The exposure again illustrated the efforts made by the terrorist organizations, especially Hamas, to promote terrorist attacks in Judea and Samaria, with the increasing involvement of operatives released in the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal.

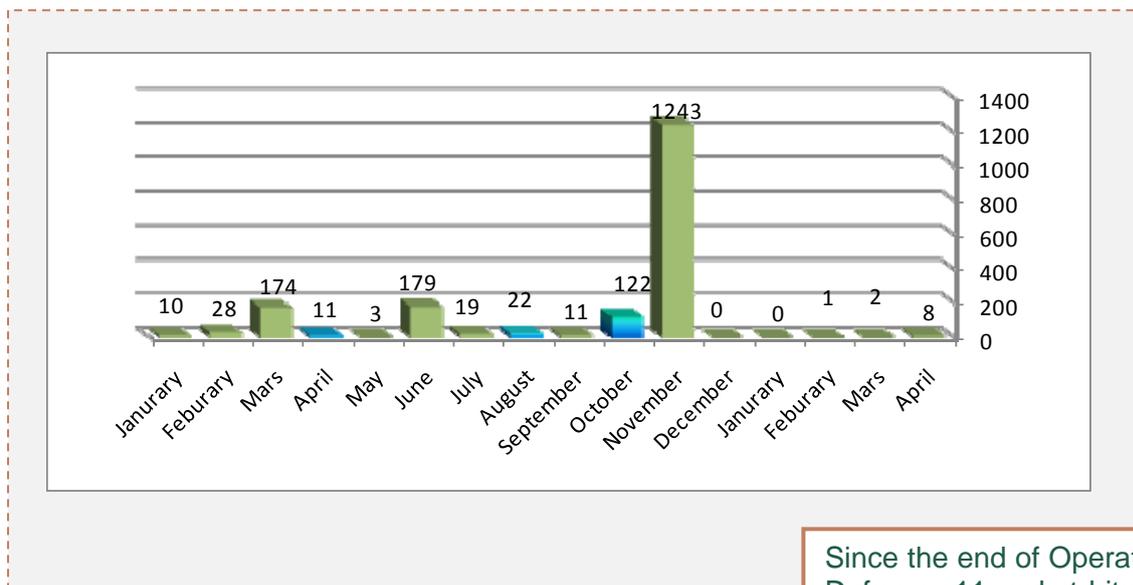
Israel's South

■ Sporadic rocket fire from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory continues:

- At 23:30 hours on the night of **April 18** two rocket hits were identified. The rockets exploded in an open area. There were no casualties and no damage was reported.
- During the night of **April 20** a rocket hit was identified in the western Negev. There were no casualties and no damage was reported.

■ **We have no information regarding the identity of those launching the rockets this past week.** In our assessment, most of the rockets were recently fired by rogue networks, mainly those affiliated with the global jihad. Their attacks present a security and ideological challenge to Hamas, which considers itself bound by the lull in the fighting achieved at the end of Operation Pillar of Defense.¹

Rocket Hits in Israeli Territory²



Since the end of Operation Pillar of Defense, 11 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory. Two additional hits were identified in the southern Israeli city of Eilat.

¹ For further information see the April 18, 2013 bulletin "The Mujahideen Shura Council, a global jihad-affiliated organization based in the Gaza Strip, has recently become prominent for firing rockets and mortar shells into Israeli territory..."

² As of April 3, 2013. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.

Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire³



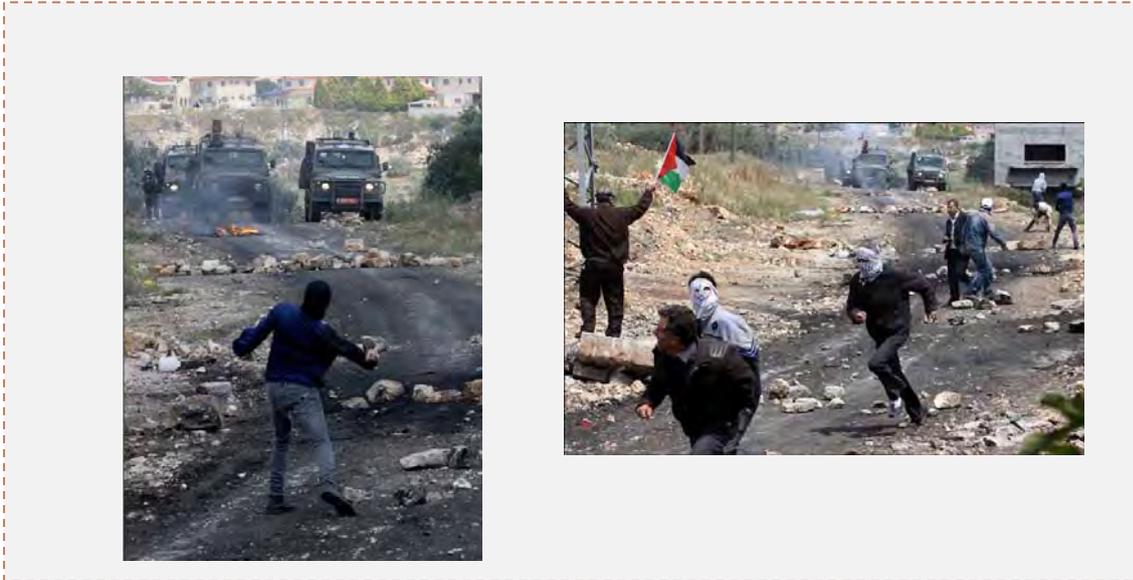
Since January 1, 2013, 11 rocket hits have been identified. Two rockets were also launched from the Sinai Peninsula at Eilat, Israel's southernmost city.

Judea and Samaria

"Popular Resistance" Violence

- This past week as well there were violent "popular resistance" activities at the traditional friction points in Judea and Samaria, as well as a riot near the security fence. As part of the violence, stones were thrown at Israeli vehicles and an improvised grenade was thrown at the Tomb of Rachel.

³ The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.



Palestinians, some of them masked, confront Israeli Border Guards at the weekly riot in the village of Qadoum [west of Nablus] held as part of the violent protests in the vicinity of the security fence (Wafa News Agency, April 19, 2013)

Terrorist Squads Exposed in Judea and Samaria

Overview

■ The Israel Security Agency recently revealed that in March 2013 terrorist squads operating in Tulkarm and east Jerusalem were exposed. The squads planned to attack Israeli security personnel and civilians. Their exposure again illustrated the efforts made by the terrorist organizations, especially Hamas, to promote and encourage terrorist attacks in Judea and Samaria. **There has been increasing involvement of operatives released from Israeli jails in the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal** who were transferred to the Gaza Strip. From there they handle terrorist squads in Judea and Samaria in gross and blatant violation of the terms of the Egyptian-brokered agreement for their release. They use Saudi Arabia and Jordan as venues for meetings between residents of Judea and Samaria and their handlers in the Gaza Strip (Israel Security Agency website, April 23, 2013):

Detention of Nablus Resident Handled from the Gaza Strip

■ In March 2013 **Amir Barakat**, born in 1988 and a resident of Nablus, was detained after he returned from a pilgrimage to Mecca in February 2013. During interrogation by the Israel Security Agency he admitted that when he was in Saudi Arabia he met with **Amir Dukan**, a terrorist operative from Nablus who was released in the Gilad Shalit

prisoner exchange deal and expelled to the Gaza Strip. Amir Dukan proposed that Amir Barakat carry out a shooting attack along the **Nablus bypass road or attack the Hawara roadblock (southeast of Nablus) with a hand grenade. He told him he would be paid \$60,000 for an attack.** Returning from Saudi Arabia, Amir Barakat contacted Amir Dukan and said he was prepared to carry out an attack and was acquiring a gun.

Detention of Nablus Residents Handled from the Gaza Strip

■ In January and February 2013 the Israeli security forces detained a Hamas messenger and his handler who were attempting to smuggle **money from Hamas into Judea and Samaria to finance terrorist attacks.** The two were brothers, residents of the Far'a refugee camp near Nablus. Detained at the Allenby crossing, the messenger was found to have **€10,000 and \$900 hidden in cigarette packs.**

■ Interrogated by the Israel Security Agency, one of the brothers admitted his brother had sent him from Jordan **to smuggle in money from Hamas in order to finance terrorist networks. He received the funds in Jordan from a messenger sent by Amir Dukan,** a Fatah/Tanzim operative. Amir Dukan was **released in the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal** and transferred to the Gaza Strip, where he contacted many terrorist organizations, including Hamas. On March 13 the two were indicted by the Israeli military court in Samaria.

■ The messenger also admitted **he was supposed to receive more money from a senior Hamas operative Saleh al-Aruri,** who is based outside Judea and Samaria. **Al-Aruri was one of the founders of Hamas' military-terrorist wing in Judea and Samaria.** He was born in the village of Arura (northwest of Ramallah) in 1969 and was imprisoned in Israel for 15 years, released in 2007 after having served his sentence. **Al-Aruri is a member of the Hamas political bureau and responsible for the Hamas "prisoner portfolio,"** and was reportedly involved in the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal. In the recent Hamas elections he won another term as a member of its political bureau.



Saleh al-Aruri (Arabic Wikipedia Muslim Brotherhood site, April 23, 2013)

Exposure of East Jerusalem Squad Planning to Abduct and Murder a Jew

■ In March 2013 the Israel Security Agency and the Israel Police Force detained a seven-man terrorist squad of east Jerusalem residents (from Ras al-Amoud, the Old City and A-Tur). **They planned to abduct and kill a Jew to steal his weapon. They also planned to grab the weapons of Israeli policemen in the A-Tur area.** The squad operatives went to A-Tur several times on reconnaissance missions to find targets. On one occasion they gave a ride to a Jew but released him when they saw that he was unarmed.

■ The leader of the squad, **Nur Shahadeh Ahmed Hamdan**, a resident of Ras al-Amoud, **admitted during interrogation that he had also planned to carry out a military action on the Temple Mount** "to defend the Al-Aqsa mosque." He said he had been inspired by videos he saw on YouTube about terrorist attacks carried out in Jerusalem, especially the one at the Mercaz HaRav yeshiva (in which eight students were massacred on March 6, 2008). To that end he turned to Fatah Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades networks in the Gaza Strip and Nablus and **asked them for help in shooting Israeli security forces on the Temple Mount.** He recruited a number of comrades living in A-Tur and held pistol practice with them several times. He also planned to go to Nablus to acquire weapons and money from a local Fatah/Tanzim operative.



Operatives of the squad in east Jerusalem that planned to abduct and murder Israelis (Shihab website, April 18, 2013).

The Palestinian Prisoners

Palestinian Prisoner Day Events

■ This past week the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria marked Palestinian Prisoner Day, beginning on April 17. They have held conferences and various other activities throughout Judea and Samaria, which were **carried out without exceptional event at the traditional friction points where they confront IDF forces**. In the Gaza Strip Hamas and the other terrorist organizations held conferences and various additional events to mark the day. On April 18 Hamas security services used violent methods to disperse a demonstration in support of the prisoners organized by Fatah in the Gaza Strip. The Palestinian media issued prominent reports of the Palestinian Prisoner Day events.



Left: A rally in Qalqiliya marking Palestinian Prisoner Day (Wafa News Agency, April 17, 2013).
 Right: Torches are lit in Bethlehem to show solidarity with Palestinian terrorists imprisoned in Israel (Wafa News Agency, April 22, 2013).



Palestinian activists in the village of Rafat vandalize the security fence near the Ofer prison as part of Palestinian Prisoner Day activities (Watan TV, April 17, 2013)



Event organized by the Palestinian Islamic Jihad held in front to Red Cross headquarters in the Gaza Strip to demonstrate solidarity with the Palestinian prisoners, (Paltoday website, April 18, 2013).

Internationalizing the Issue of the Prisoners

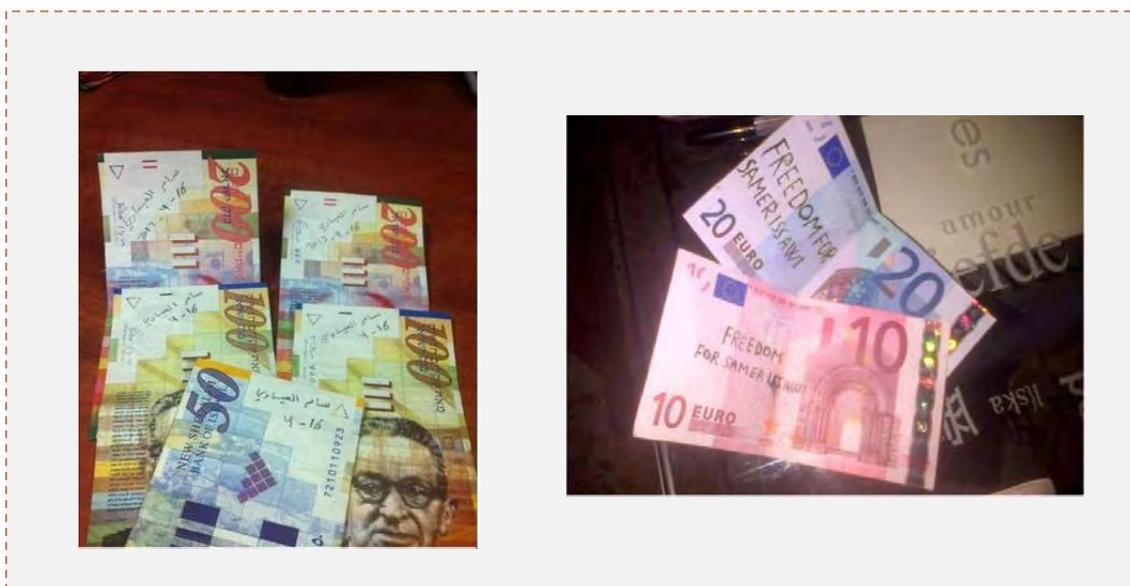
■ On **April 23-24 an international meeting** is supposed to be held in The Hague to deal with the legal status of the Palestinian prisoners. **Issa Qaraqa**, the Palestinian Authority minister for prisoner affairs, said the meeting would be attended by representatives of Palestinian human rights organizations. He said a legal concept regarding the prisoners would be formulated, which would then be used to work for the prisoners' case in the international arena and human rights institutions.

Arrangement for the Release of Hunger-Striking Palestinian Terrorist

■ The Israeli and Palestinian media reported that an arrangement had been reached for the release of **Samer Issawi**, a Palestinian terrorist prisoner who has been on a hunger strike for the past eight months. It was reported that on April 22 an arrangement was reached between the military prosecution and **Jawad Bulous**, Issawi's lawyer, who is also head of the legal department of the Palestinian Prisoners' Club, and that **it would be presented to the military court for approval**. According to the arrangement, Issawi will stop his hunger strike and will be released in eight months (Haaretz, the Shihab website and the Ma'an News Agency, April 23, 2013).

■ Terrorist operative **Samer Issawi** was released in the **Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal** and detained again in July 2012 after he violated the terms of his release, having returned to terrorist activities and reentered Judea and Samaria.

Issawi is Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine terrorist operative from east Jerusalem and in 2002 was sentenced to 26 years for his terrorist activities (Haaretz, April 23, 2013). **The Palestinian media recently waged a campaign for his release.** Israeli Arabs also held a campaign supporting him, writing his name of Israeli currency and on euros in order, they claimed, to increase awareness of his situation (PalPress website, April 21, 2013).



Samer Issawi's name written on Israeli currency and euros (Filastin Al-'Aan, April 22, 2013).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

Defiant Statements from Salafist Operative in the Gaza Strip

■ **Abu al-Inaa' al-Ansari**, a senior Salafist activist in the Gaza Strip, told a journalist that **"the jihad will not stop," despite the pressure and threats exerted on the Salafists.** He said that the Salafists [in the Gaza Strip] **would continue their jihad, ignoring the position of Hamas and Egypt.** He emphasized that **the Salafist jihad groups were not bound by the lull agreement reached at the end of Operation Pillar of Defense.** He accused Egypt and Hamas of coordinating a fight against the Salafists. He said that **30 Salafist operatives were currently detained in the Gaza Strip by Hamas,** and that most of the detentions had been carried out on orders from Egypt. He also claimed that some of the Salafist operatives had been interrogated in the Gaza Strip by Egyptian security officers (Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, London, April 18, 2013).

■ The remarks made by al-Ansari are another example of the tension existing between Hamas and the Salafist jihad groups in the Gaza Strip. The tension has been caused by the rocket fire attacking Israel carried out by the Mujahideen Shura Council in the Environs of Jerusalem, which was accompanied by several public announcements challenging Hamas.

Ismail Haniya Visits Qatar

■ **Ismail Haniya**, head of the de-facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip, paid a visit to Qatar. On April 21 he met with the heir to the Qatari throne, **Sheikh Tamim bin Hamed**; among the subjects they discussed was the rebuilding of the Gaza Strip. The sheikh reportedly donated \$11 million to the construction of a courthouse in Gaza City in addition to other Qatari aid to the Gaza Strip (Filastin Al-'Aan, April 21, 2013).

The Palestinian Authority

■ On **April 20, 2013**, **Mahmoud Abbas** paid a two-day visit to Turkey, during which he met with the Turkish president, prime minister and foreign minister (Al-Ayam, April 20, 2013). He also met with American Secretary of State John Kerry and Egyptian foreign minister Mohamed Amr (Wafa News Agency, April 21, 2013).

■ **Mahmoud Abbas'** visit to Turkey and the proposed visit of the Turkish prime minister to the Gaza Strip **exposed Hamas-PA tensions**. According to **Ziyad al-Zaza**, deputy Hamas prime minister, Mahmoud Abbas does not represent the Palestinian people or the PA because his term of office ended in 2009. Al-Zaza added that Erdogan, the Turkish prime minister, had given a great amount of support and aid to the Palestinian people and that Hamas was ready to host him in the Gaza Strip in an appropriate manner (Filastin Al-'Aan, April 20, 2013). On the other hand, **Yahya Rabah**, a senior Fatah figure in the Gaza Strip, claimed that the objective of visits to the Gaza Strip by important figures in the past were only for propaganda and did nothing to help the general Palestinian population, did not lift the "siege" of the Gaza Strip and did not advance the internal Palestinian reconciliation (Paltoday website, April 20, 2013).

■ "Official Turkish sources" told the London daily Al-Sharq Al-Awsat that Erdogan did not intend to postpone his visit to the Gaza Strip, which is supposed to take place at the end of May 2013, because the date is close to the anniversary of the *Mavi*

Marmara events. The same sources said that Mahmoud Abbas' claims were being taken into consideration and that Erdogan might also visit Ramallah (Filastin Al-'Aan, April 22, 2013).



**Mahmoud Abbas meets Erdogan, Turkish prime minister, April 22, 2013
(Wafa News Agency, April 23, 2013).**