



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict May 8 – 13, 2013



"Sheikh al-Qaradawi in Gaza" (Hamas' Felesteen, May 9, 2013)

Overview

- This past week Israel's south was quiet after weeks of sporadic rocket and mortar shell fire from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory. The Palestinian media reported that Hamas recently deployed a new military force to prevent rockets from being fired from the Gaza Strip. The Mujahideen Shura Council in the Environs of Jerusalem, a terrorist organization affiliated with Al-Qaeda and responsible for rocket fire into Israeli territory, claimed that the new Hamas force had prevented its operatives from firing rockets and had even detained one of them.
- Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who is based in Qatar and is considered the most prominent religious authority in the Sunni Muslim world, spent three days in the Gaza Strip as a guest of Hamas. He made statements rejecting any possible compromise or negotiation with Israel. He said that Muslims were currently fighting a battle with Zionism, which aspired "to swallow" Palestine, and demanded that the Arab-Muslim world make plans to defend Al-Aqsa mosque.

The Situation in Israel's South The Situation in the Gaza Strip

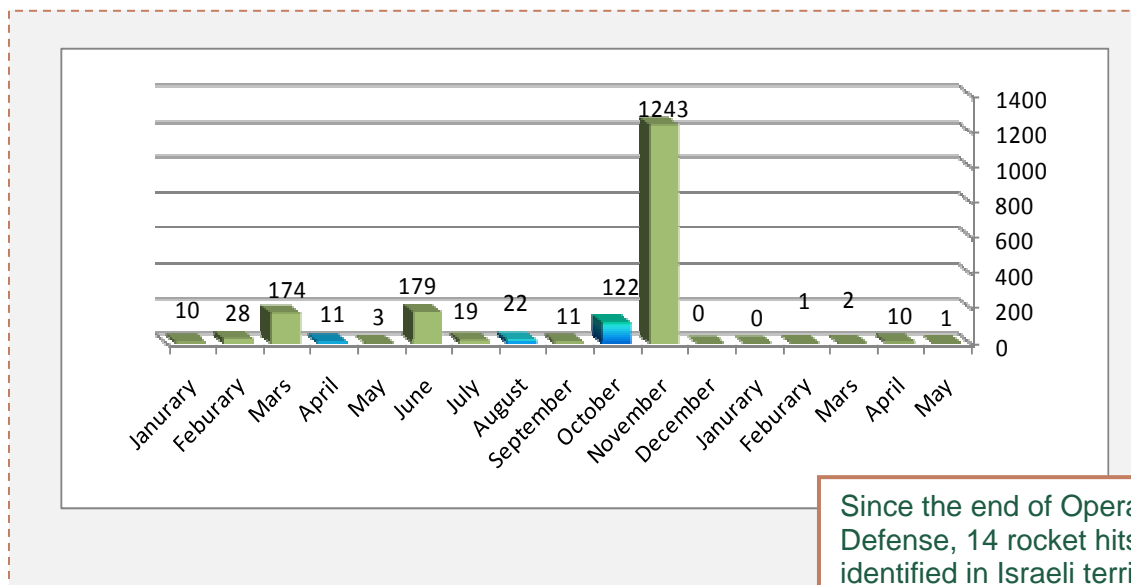
Quiet Along the Southern Border

- This past week Israel's southern border was quiet after weeks of sporadic rocket and mortar shell fire from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory.

Hamas Prevents Rocket Fire

- Sources in the Gaza Strip told the newspaper Al-Ayam that the de-facto Hamas administration had recently deployed a new military force of several hundred operatives to prevent rocket fire from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory. The force is called "Restraint on the ground" and replaces the Hamas police forces that failed to prevent Salafist networks from launching rockets (Al-Ayam, May 9, 2013).
- The Ibn Taymiyyah Media Center, which serves the Mujahideen Shura Council in the Environs of Jerusalem (a jihadi Salafist organization responsible for rocket fire into Israeli territory), claimed that on May 6 the Hamas restraint force prevented Salafists in the northern Gaza Strip from firing rockets into Israel. According to the Center, one Mujahideen Shura Council operative was detained after the restraint force shot and wounded him (Ansar al-Mujahideen forum and Al-Ayam, May 7 and 9, 2013).

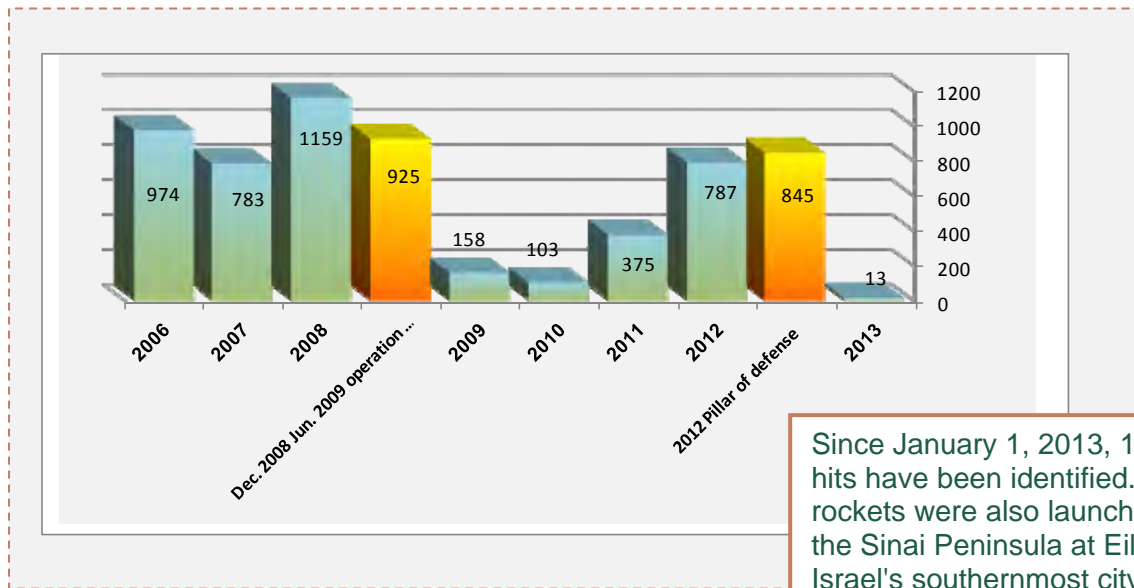
Rocket Hits in Israeli Territory¹



Since the end of Operation Pillar of Defense, 14 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory. Two additional hits were identified in the southern Israeli city of Eilat.

¹ As of May 13, 2013. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.

Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire²



Since January 1, 2013, 14 rocket hits have been identified. Two rockets were also launched from the Sinai Peninsula at Eilat, Israel's southernmost city.

Judea and Samaria

Violence Continues

■ This past week violence and riots continued between Palestinians and the Israel security forces at the traditional friction points, part of the so-called "popular resistance."



Left: Palestinian youths attack IDF forces in the village of Silwad, northeast of Ramallah (Paltoday website, May 10, 2013). Right: A Palestinian youth hurls stones at IDF forces and Israeli policemen during the weekly riot protesting the security force in the village of Qadoum, in the Qalqiliya district (Wafa News Agency, May 10, 2013).

² The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.

Attempted Stabbing Prevented at Joseph's Tomb in Nablus

■ On **May 7, 2013** IDF forces prevented a stabbing in the region of Joseph's Tomb in Nablus. The attempt was made during the monthly visit to the site, secured by the IDF. It occurred about half a kilometer, or about a third of a mile, from the Tomb, as Palestinians rioted and confronted IDF forces. Following intelligence information, a wanted Palestinian, armed with a knife was detained. He had been planning to stab an IDF soldier (IDF spokesman's website, May 7, 2013).

Jerusalem Day (May 8)

■ Jerusalem Day in Judea and Samaria passed without exceptional incident. Most of the friction occurred in east Jerusalem, where demonstrations were held at the main intersections. Ten Palestinians were detained for rioting and seven Israelis for causing disturbances on the Temple Mount (Wafa News Agency and Ynet, May 8, 2013).

■ Senior Palestinian figures (both in the Palestinian Authority and Fatah) and the various Palestinian media exploited the Jerusalem Day events for propaganda attacks against Israel, especially mentioning visits by Israelis to the Temple Mount and claiming Israel was continuing its policies of "Judaizing" Jerusalem. **Mahmoud al-Batash**, PA minister of endowments, condemned the entrance of Israeli security forces and visitors to the Temple Mount and called on Arabs and Muslims to rescue Al-Aqsa mosque from "attempts to Judaize [Jerusalem] and harassment from [Israeli] settlers" (Ma'an News Agency, May 7, 2013).

■ On **May 8, 2013** the Israel Police Force detained sheikh **Muhammad Hussein**, the mufti of Jerusalem and the PA, for **inciting riots on the Temple Mount**. His detention led to denouncements of Israel from the entire Palestinian political spectrum. **Mahmoud Abbas** said that Hussein's detention violated freedom of religion and worship. In addition, the PA called for Arab and international intervention against Israel. **Adnan al-Husseini**, PA minister of Jerusalem affairs, called on the Arab states having diplomatic relations with Israel (Egypt and Jordan) to expel the Israeli ambassadors (Al-Ayam, May 9, 2013).



Sheikh Muhammad Hussein, the mufti of Jerusalem and PA, detained by the Israeli police for inciting to riot (PNN, May 8, 2013).

Hamas Military-Terrorist Network Exposed in Judea³

■ In January-February 2013 the Israel Security Agency, with the support of the IDF, **exposed a Hamas military-terrorist network in villages in region of Ramallah.** The network operatives were **handled by Hamas operatives in the Gaza Strip** and were preparing terrorist attacks that included **the laying of IEDs, abducting and IDF soldier or Israeli settler, and manufacturing and firing rockets.** Among the important operatives caught were:

- **Ahmed Muhammad Ahmed Abu Fahida**, a lawyer, born in 1987, a resident of the village of Ras Karkar, northwest of Jerusalem. He had previously been detained for Hamas-related military-terrorist activities.
- **Ahmed Yassin Abd al-Fatah Shabrawi**, born in 1986, a resident of the village of Silwad, northeast of Ramallah. A Hamas operative, he was previously jailed in Israeli for involvement in planning a Hamas terrorist attack.

■ Interrogation of the operatives revealed that **Abu Fahida had been recruited to Hamas' military-terrorist wing by Ahmed Muhammad Khalil Awda, a Hamas operative in the Gaza Strip.** He had been instructed to abduct an IDF soldier, take his ID and cell phone for purposes of negotiation, and **to kill him and hide his body.** In January 2013 Abu Fahida began preparing for the abduction and purchased equipment for manufacturing rockets. Operatives and their Hamas handlers in the Gaza Strip **maintained contact through the Internet and phones.** Abu Fahida

³ IDF spokesman's website, May 8, 2013

informed the Gaza Strip that the network operatives would be ready to attack within a few days, however, they were detained before they could carry out their plans.

Weapons Found among Tools of Palestinian near the Village of Duma

■ On **May 9, 2013** IDF forces detained a suspicious Palestinian near the village of Duma (north of Ramallah). A search of his possessions revealed a hunting rifle, bullets and a knife. He was taken for questioning by the Israeli security forces (IDF spokesman's website, May 9, 2013).



The rifle found in the possession of the Palestinian near the village of Duma (IDF spokesman's website, May 9, 2013)

Developments in the Gaza Strip

Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi Visits the Gaza Strip

■ On **May 8, 2013**, sheikh **Yusuf al-Qaradawi**, head of the International Union of Muslim Scholars, paid his first visit to the Gaza Strip, staying for three days. He entered through the Rafah crossing with an entourage of 50 Muslim clerics. He was also accompanied by the former president of Sudan, Abdel Rahman Suwar al-Dahab. Al-Qaradawi was received by senior figures of the de-facto Hamas administration, among them Ismail Haniya, head of the administration, Ismail Radwan, minister of communications, and Fathi Hamad, minister of the interior (Ma'an News Agency, Filastin Al-'Aan, May 8, 2013).

■ On **May 9, 2013** al-Qaradawi was a guest at the Hamas administration building in Gaza City, where he met with administration ministers. Ismail Haniya **granted him**

Palestinian citizenship and presented him with a Palestinian diplomatic passport. From there al-Qaradawi proceeded to a rally in support of Jerusalem and the Palestinian prisoners held at the Islamic University in Gaza City (a Hamas stronghold). He later participated in the rally organized in his honor at Al-Katiba Square in the center of Gaza City (Filastin Al-'Aan, May 9, 2013).

■ **Sheikh Dr. Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who was deported from Egypt,⁴ found a haven in Qatar.** He is considered one of the most important Sunni Muslim clerics of his generation and a religious authority for millions of Muslims around the globe, as well as Hamas. While he is in favor of reforms in Islam and opposes Al-Qaeda, **al-Qaradawi is an enthusiastic supporter of Palestinian terrorism.** His religious edicts (fatwas) call for jihad against Israel, and give permission for suicide bombing attacks, even if the victims are women and children. He regards all "Palestine" as Muslim land and opposes the existence of the State of Israel. He has made anti-Semitic remarks of an Islamic nature. He rejects the peace agreements with Israel and opposes the PA.

■ During his visit to the Gaza Strip **al-Qaradawi made extreme remarks:** he totally rejected any possibility of recognizing Israeli, rejected any possibility of negotiating with the so-called Israeli "occupation" under American aegis, called for an internal Palestinian reconciliation and demanded that Arabs and Muslims "**plan to defend Al-Aqsa mosque.**" He claimed Zionism wanted to swallow Palestine because it was not Jewish and that Palestine was never Jewish. He said the Zionists had no right to Palestine and had entered it by fraud (Filastin Al-'Aan, May 9 and 10, 2013).

■ **However, senior figures in the PA expressed strong criticism of al-Qaradawi's visit to the Gaza Strip.** **Mahmoud al-Batash**, PA minister of endowments, said his visit was purely political, recognized the legitimacy of the Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip, deepened the internal Palestinian rift and disrupted the efforts both sides were making toward reconciliation (Ma'an News Agency, May 8, 2013). **Mahmoud al-A'alul**, a member of Fatah's Central Committee, said al-Qaradawi's religious edicts had made him a "suspicious" person (Ma'an News Agency, May 8, 2013). **Ahmed Asef**, a Fatah spokesman in Judea and Samaria, **attacked the de-facto Hamas administration for granting al-Qaradawi Palestinian citizenship and presenting him with a diplomatic Palestinian passport.** They said the only person authorized to take such actions was Mahmoud

⁴ After the fall of Egyptian President Mubarak he returned to Egypt and delivered a sermon in Tahrir Square in Cairo.

Abbas and therefore the passport was phony and not legal (PalPress website, May 9, 2013).

Pictures from al-Qaradawi's Visit to the Gaza Strip



Left: Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi (left) speaks at the rally organized by Hamas in his honor in the Al-Katiba Square in Gaza City (Filastin Al-'Aan, May 10, 2013). Right: The rally organized by Hamas for Yusuf al-Qaradawi (Hamas forum website, May 9, 2013)



Ismail Haniya, head of the de-facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip, hosts sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi at the Hamas administration building in Gaza City (Filastin Al-'Aan, May 9, 2013)



"Today I pray in Gaza and tomorrow, with the help of Allah, in Al-Aqsa mosque." A cartoon by Hamas-affiliated Omayya Joha for al-Qaradawi's visit to the Gaza Strip (Filastin Al-'Aan, May 8, 2013)

The Gaza Strip Crossings⁵

- Summary of the activity of the Gaza Strip crossings for April 2013:
 - **The Erez crossing:** 4,565 Palestinians entered Israel through the crossing.
 - **The Kerem Shalom crossing:** 3,893 trucks carrying merchandise entered the Gaza Strip through the crossing. There were 1,244 trucks carrying food, 269 carrying medical equipment, 145 carrying electrical appliances, 1,135 carrying building materials, 1,218 carrying other merchandise. Eighty trucks exited the Gaza Strip carrying exports.
- According to information from the Coordinator for Government Activities in the Territories, since the beginning of 2013 17,711 trucks entered the Gaza Strip from Israel through the Kerem Shalom crossing carrying 515 tons of merchandise.

Preparations for Nakba Day

- On May 15 various events are expected to be held in the Palestinian Authority territories and Arab countries to mark **Nakba Day**.⁶ Preparations include the following:

⁵ Data based on Website of the Coordinator for Government Activities in the Territories, May 12 2013

⁶ **Nakba Day** (that is, "the day of the catastrophe"), May 15, close to the day the State of Israel announced its independence, is marked every year by the Palestinians. It commemorates the so-called "catastrophe" visited upon them by the establishment of the State of Israel and the headlong flight of the local Arab residents to the neighboring countries. Nakba Day events center on the so-called "right of return" of the Palestinian refugees to their former homes in the State of Israel.

- **In Judea and Samaria** the main event is supposed to be held in Ramallah. **Muhammad Alian**, the general coordinator of the supreme national Nakba Day committee said that at 11:30 hours on May 15 a march would begin at the grave of Yasser Arafat and from there proceed to Yasser Arafat Square, where the main rally would be held. Besides the rally in Ramallah, others are expected to be held in various cities in Judea and Samaria. The Palestinian media reported that **Fatah in the Jerusalem district would hold an "activity of return" to the Bab al-Shams outpost in Area E1 on May 15** (Quds News, May 12, 2013).⁷



Layla Ghanem, the governor of the Ramallah district, meets with the supreme national committee for Nakba Day to plan the events of the day (Wafa News Agency, May 9, 2013).

- On May 13 **in the Gaza Strip** Hamas held a planning meeting for Nakba Day in a hotel in Gaza City. The de-facto Hamas administration has not yet issued its program for Nakba Day. Reportedly, on May 15 all the Palestinian organizations will march from the Square of the Unknown Soldier in Gaza City to UN headquarters (Radio Sawt al-Quds, May 12, 2013).
- **In Jordan** the Return March Jordan committee announced that it would organize a march on May 17 after the Friday prayer **from the Al-Karameh region in the Jordan Valley** (GMJ Facebook page, May 7, 2013).
- **In Lebanon** a march of Palestinian refugees is being planned from Tyre **to the village of Naqoura**. The social media in Lebanon reported other events planned throughout Lebanon for May 13-15 (Al-Markazia, May 9, 2013).

⁷ **Bab al-Shams** was an illegal Palestinian outpost established by the Palestinians in January 2013 in Area E1 to protest Israel's intention of constructing housing in the area. The outpost was dismantled by the IDF.

- **In Egypt** various organizations announced they were organizing marches and demonstrations in support of the Palestinian people for Nakba Day, May 15. They said demonstrators would march to the **Egyptian-Palestinian border** (Al-Masri Al-Youm, Egypt, May 11, 2013).

The Northern Arena

Hezbollah Leader Announces Intention to Receive Syrian "Game-Changing Weapons" and Support for Terrorist Attacks from the Golan Heights

- On **May 9, 2013**, Hezbollah leader **Hassan Nasrallah** gave a speech on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of Radio Al-Nur. It included remarks about the attacks on Syria allegedly carried out by Israel (Radio Al-Nur, May 9, 2013):

- One of the objectives of the [alleged] Israeli attack was to prevent Hezbollah's military buildup, especially to prevent the receipt of "game-changing weapons." Nasrallah said that after the [alleged] Israeli attack Syria had made the important strategic decision to give Hezbollah [the "resistance"] **high-quality weapons it had so far not received**. He added that **Hezbollah was prepared to accept all high-quality weapons, including "game-changing weapons,"** and that the organization would keep them and use them to repel Israeli "aggression."
- Nasrallah said that another objective of the [alleged] Israeli attack was "to take Syria out of the equation of the conflict with Israel." He said Syria's strategic response was the [Syrian] declaration about "**opening a gate of popular resistance in the Golan Heights**."⁸ He said that "[j]ust as Syria stood by the Lebanese people and supported the popular resistance both materially and morally so it could liberate south Lebanon; **we, the Lebanese resistance [i.e. Hezbollah] declare that we stand by the popular Syrian resistance and that we will give it material and moral support, collaboration and coordination, to liberate the Syrian Golan.**"

⁸ For further information about **statements made by terrorist organizations operating under Syrian aegis about their intention to renew terrorist attacks in the Golan Heights** see the May 1-7 bulletin "News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict." In addition, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command (Ahmed Jibril's organization) called on the Palestinian terrorist organizations to establish a united war room in the Golan Heights for coordinating "resistance activities" [i.e., terrorist attacks] against Israel (Al-Watan, Syria, and Russia Today, May 12, 2013)