



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

June 19 – 25, 2013



Five rockets hit Israel, two intercepted by the Iron Dome aerial defense system (Photo by Edi Israel for NRG, June 24, 2013).

Overview

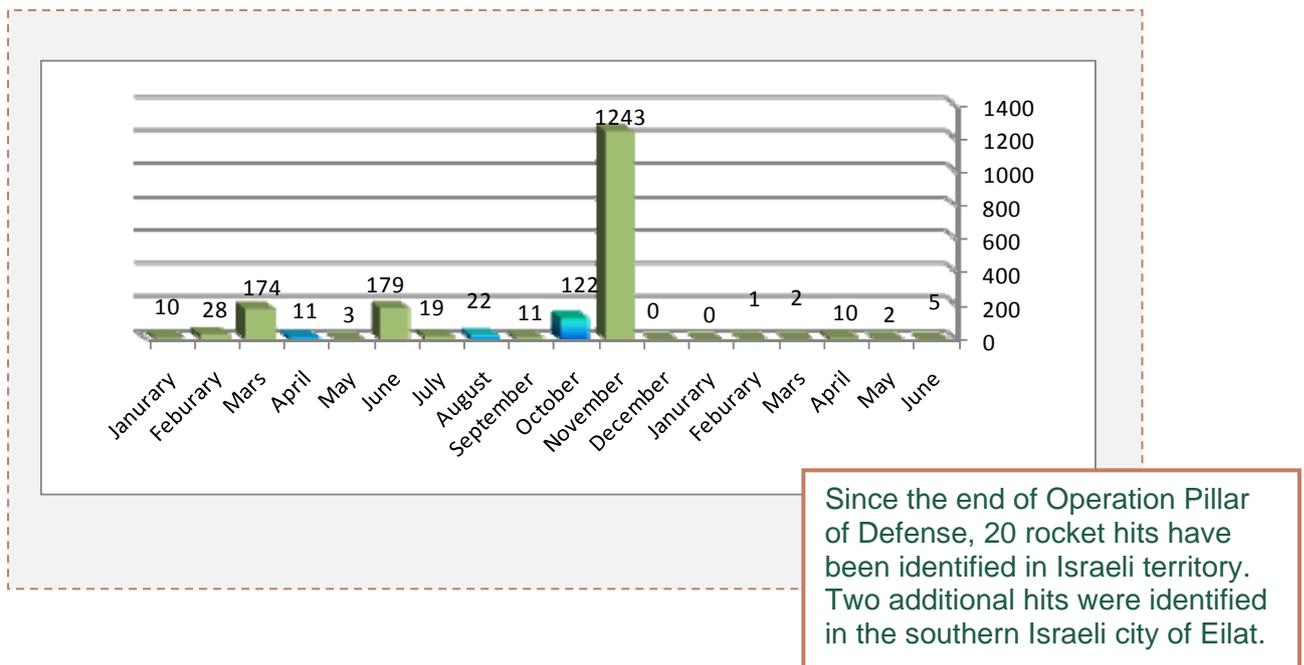
- This past week five rocket hits were identified in southern Israel, after six weeks of quiet. The rockets were fired by the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) in the wake of its severe dispute with Hamas. The dispute broke out after a senior PIJ operative was shot by Hamas security forces trying to detain him. In response to the rocket fire the Israeli Air Force attacked terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip. In addition, the Israeli defense minister ordered the closing of the Erez and Kerem Shalom crossings.
- On **June 20, 2013**, Rami Hamdallah, the new Palestinian prime minister tendered his resignation, two weeks after he had been sworn in. He resigned because his authority was being undermined by two deputy prime ministers appointed by Mahmoud Abbas. Mahmoud Abbas accepted his resignation and appointed Hamdallah to serve as the prime minister of a caretaker government until a new government could be formed.

The Situation in Israel's South

Rocket Fire on the Southern Border

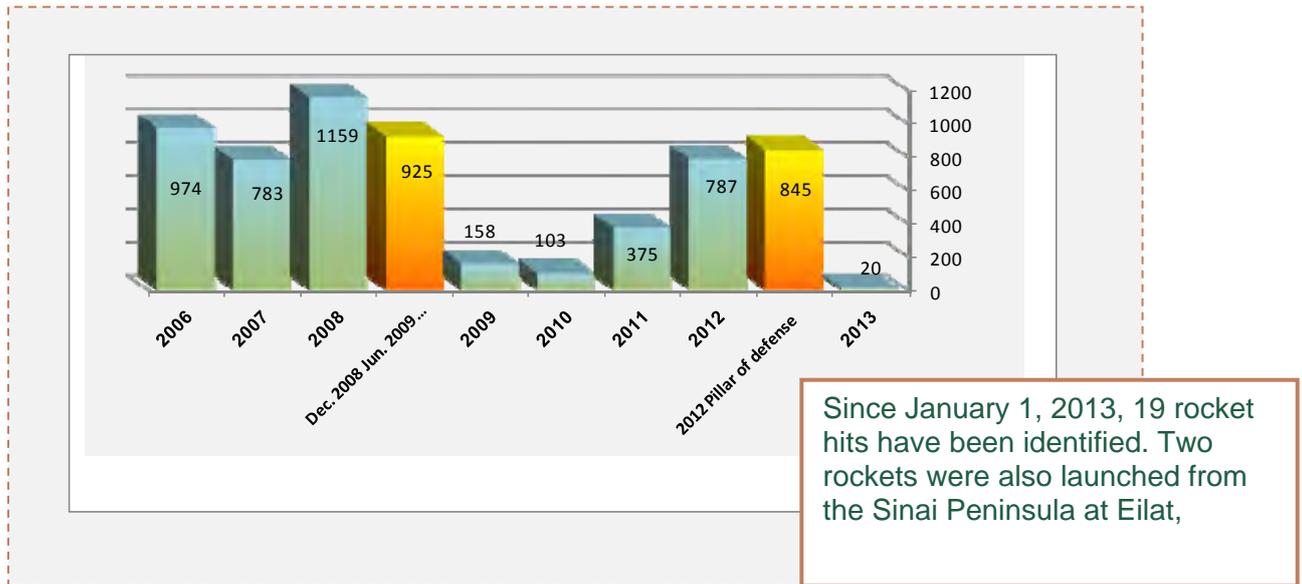
- **On the night of June 23, after almost six weeks of quiet, five rocket hits were identified in the south of Israel.** Two of them were intercepted by the Iron Dome aerial defense system. There were no casualties and no damage was reported. It was the largest rocket barrage fired at Israel since the end of Operation Pillar of Defense (November 2009).
- **The rockets were fired by PIJ operatives** (IDF spokesman, June 24, 2013). **They came in the wake of the severe dispute between the PIJ and Hamas, ignited when Hamas killed a senior PIJ operative. In our assessment the rockets were fired to show defiance of Hamas and its policy of restraint** (See below.).

Rocket Hits in Israeli Territory¹



¹ As of June 25, 2013. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.

Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire²



The Israeli Response

- In response to the rocket fire the Israeli Air Force struck **two sites in the central Gaza Strip where weapons were stored**. It also struck a rocket launching pit and a focal point of terrorist activity in the southern Gaza Strip (IDF spokesman, June 24, 2013). In addition, the Israeli defense minister ordered **the closing of the Erez and Kerem Shalom crossings** to pedestrian traffic and the passage of goods.
- The Palestinian media reported that one of the targets struck was a post belonging to the PIJ's military-terrorist wing and that there were no casualties (Safa and Ma'an News Agencies, Paltoday website, June 24, 2013).

² The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.



One of the terrorist targets struck by the Israeli Air Force in the town of Al-Zuweida in the central Gaza Strip (Wafa News Agency, June 24, 2013)

Judea and Samaria

Violence Continues

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



Palestinian youths throw stones and IDF forces during the weekly demonstration in the village of Qadoum (near Qalqiliya) (Wafa News Agency, June 21, 2013).

Detention of Security Operatives Involved in the 2011 Terrorist Attack at the Tomb of Joseph

■ In **May 2013** the Israeli security forces detained three Palestinian Authority (PA) security forces operatives who had been involved in a shooting attack near the Tomb of Joseph in April 2011. Ben-Yosef Livnat, an Israeli civilian, was killed and five others were wounded. Until recently the three Palestinian operatives had been in a PA prison and were detained by the Israeli security forces after their release.

■ Immediately after the shooting attack in 2011 the three were detained by the PA. They were tried on charges of "shooting into the air" and sentenced to two years in prison. During interrogation in Israel **the three confessed** that not all the shots had been fired into the air and that **some of them had been aimed at Israeli vehicles**. The interrogation revealed that after firing the shots they strewed stones on the road to make it seem as though stones had been thrown at them, enabling them to claim they had fired in self-defense. It also revealed that prior to their interrogation by the PA they had coordinated a single version of the events. In addition, on the initiative of the officer responsible for security in the PA prison where they were being held, the leg of one of the operatives was injured to give credence to the fabrication of he alleged stone-throwing (IDF spokesman, June 19, 2013).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

Dispute between Hamas and the PIJ

■ The dispute between Hamas and the PIJ caused the rocket fire into Israel this past week. The trigger was the death, on June 23, of **Ra'ed Bassem Jundia**, a senior operative in the PIJ's military-terrorist wing, who **was shot and killed in the Sajaiya neighborhood by Hamas security forces who were trying to detain him**.

■ According to the Hamas police and the ministry of the interior of the de-facto Hamas administration, the police came for him because he was wanted for questioning following a complaint that he had abducted a resident of the Shati refugee camp. He refused to go with them and opened fire, and was critically wounded. According to family members, he was wounded by police gunfire. His family also claimed that the police tried to detain him because of his participation in a "security mission" for the military wing of the PIJ (Al-Ayam, June 22, 2013).



PIJ terrorist operative Ra'ed Bassem Jundia (Jerusalem Brigades website, June 23, 2013)

- The Jerusalem Brigades, the PIJ's military-terrorist wing, issued a statement saying that the Hamas police were responsible for his death. The statement accused the police of violating previous agreements relating to coordination between the various security and political levels of the two organizations (Al-Ayam, June 22, 2013).
- Thousands of Gazans participated in Ra'ed Jundia's funeral, during which violent confrontations broke out between PIJ and Hamas operatives. Following the events the PIJ announced it was breaking off relations with Hamas (Paltoday website, June 23, 2013).
- Ismail Haniya, head of the de-facto Hamas administration, expressed sorrow for Jundia's death. He said that the close relations between Hamas and the PIJ were based on "activity for the sake of Palestine in the spirit of jihad and resistance." Hinting at the unauthorized rocket fire, he said that the internal conflict should not become "irresponsible" activity within the conflict with Israel (Al-Aqsa TV, June 24, 2013).
- Following the events the Hamas ministry of the interior announced that a committee would be appointed to investigate. Its members would also include representatives from the PIJ and Jundia's family (Website of the Hamas ministry of the interior, June 24, 2013).

The Gaza Strip Crossings

- Egypt has increased deployment in the northern Sinai Peninsula and around the tunnels in Rafah in preparation for planned anti-police demonstrations. As a result, tunnel workers claim, the use of many tunnels has been frozen and that the activities

of those which are still functioning are limited. They claim the situation has led to a lack of goods, especially fuel and building materials, and that prices have risen significantly (Al-Ayam, June 22, 2013).

Hamas Delegation Visits Turkey

- A Hamas delegation headed by Khaled Mashaal, head of the Hamas political bureau, arrived in Turkey for a visit. On June 18, 2013, the delegation met with Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan in Ankara (Anadolu News Agency, Turkey, June 19, 2013). Erdogan expressed a desire to visit the Gaza Strip (Filastin Al-'Aan, June 19, 2013). Khaled Mashaal and Ismail Haniya exploited the visit to Turkey to meet with terrorist operatives released in the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal who were deported, as part of the deal, to Turkey (Filastin Al-'Aan, June 22, 2013).
- **Ahmed Yousef**, former political advisor to Ismail Haniya, said that Hamas had recently raised the level of its coordination with Egypt and Turkey regarding the crisis in Syria, and that the delegations of senior Hamas figures to Egypt and Turkey were part of that coordination (PalPress website, June 19, 2013).



Left: The Hamas delegation meets with the Turkish prime minister and foreign minister (Palinfo website, June 19, 2013). Right: Khaled Mashaal and Ismail Haniya meet with terrorist operatives released in the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal and deported to Turkey (Filastin Al-'Aan, June 22, 2013)

Remarks from Ghazi Hamad, Deputy Foreign Minister in the Hamas Administration

- Meeting with the press in Gaza, **Ghazi Hamad**, deputy foreign minister of the Hamas administration spoke about the following issues (Filastin Al-'Aan, Reuters, the Ma'an News Agency, June 19, 2013):

- **Attempts to strike Hamas from the list of terrorist organizations:** He said that for some time senior Hamas figures had been meeting with European ambassadors and consuls and American diplomats to strike the name of Hamas from their lists of terrorist organizations. He said the meetings had been held in a number of Arab capitals.
- **Aid from Syria and Iran:** He admitted that the crisis in Syria **had harmed Hamas' relations with Iran and Syria**. He said Hamas had received significant political and financial support from Iran and Syria, but lost the support following its stance on the Syrian uprising.

The Palestinian Authority

Resignation of the New Prime Minister

- **Rami Hamdallah**, the newly sworn-in PA prime minister, tendered his resignation to the office of Mahmoud Abbas on **June 20, 2013, after only two weeks in office**. According to reports, he resigned because two deputies appointed to him by Mahmoud Abbas were undermining his authority (Ma'an News Agency, June 20, 2013). Despite mediation by a number of senior PA figures, Mahmoud Abbas did not manage to convince Hamdallah to remain in office (Al-Quds Al-Arabi, June 22, 2013).
- On **June 23, 2013**, presidential spokesman **Nabil Abu Rudeina** said that Mahmoud Abbas had accepted Rami Hamdallah's resignation and appointed him head of a caretaker government until a new government could be formed (Wafa News Agency, June 23, 2013). The interim government will serve for a number of weeks and have full authority until the new government is formed (Voice of Palestine Radio, June 23, 2013). So far the name of Hamdallah's replacement has not been made public.
- Senior Hamas figures exploited Rami Hamdallah's resignation to cast aspersions against Mahmoud Abbas and the PA's government:
 - Hamas spokesman **Fawzi Barhoum** said that the resignation was proof of the severe crises plaguing the PA's institutions, the result of power struggles. He said that was also the reason for the delay in the internal Palestinian reconciliation (Alresala.net website, June 23, 2013).
 - Hamas spokesman **Sami Abu Zuhri** said that the resignation reflected the PA's predicament, and that its only solution was a reconciliation agreement with Hamas (Shihab website, June 23, 2013).

- Senior Hamas figure **Salah al-Bardawil** said that the resignation emphasized the PA leadership's internal disagreements and that it supported the Hamas position that the Hamdallah government was not legal because it had not received a vote of confidence from the Palestinian Legislative Council's (Quds Press, June 23, 2013).

The Issue of a PA Appeal to International Organizations

■ Since the UN voted to upgrade the PA's status to non-member observer, various senior sources within the PA have voiced their desire to join international organizations and conventions to strengthen the PA's political and legal battles against Israel in the international arena:

- PLO Executive Committee member **Saeb Erekat** said that the PA's government was planning to appeal to international institutions in the near future because Israel entered Area A on a daily basis. He said that the PA's leadership had to change its strategy and respond to Israel's actions by appealing to international institutions to "defend Jerusalem" from "Judaization" (Voice of Palestine Radio, June 19, 2013).
- PA Foreign Minister **Riyadh al-Maliki** said in an interview that the PA would not hesitate to appeal to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the future but the time had to be right because such an appeal could only be effectively exploited once (Al-Mayadeen TV, Lebanon, June 20, 2013).