



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

July 17 – 23, 2013



Mahmoud Abbas meets with American Secretary of State John Kerry in Jordan during talks to renew the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations (Wafa News Agency, July 17, 2013).

Overview

- This past week three rocket hits were identified in **Israel's south** after a month of quiet. In **Judea and Samaria** violent confrontations and friction continued between Palestinians and Israeli security forces, as part of the so-called popular resistance. A young ultra-Orthodox man was seriously wounded in a stabbing attack near the Nablus Gate in Jerusalem.
- Events focused on the announcement made by American Secretary of State John Kerry, according to which Israel and the Palestinians had reached an agreement establishing a basis for resuming direct final status negotiations. He said the final draft of the agreement was still being prepared and thus he could not discuss its contents. Israeli and Palestinian representatives are supposed to meet in Washington in the near future to formulate the agreements on which the negotiations will be based.
- The responses of Mahmoud Abbas and other senior Palestinian Authority (PA) figures to the agreement were to the point but cautious. Most of the Palestinian spokesmen stressed familiar Palestinian positions, noting that there were still many matters requiring solutions. Hamas objected to the agreement, claiming it deviated from the Palestinian "national position."

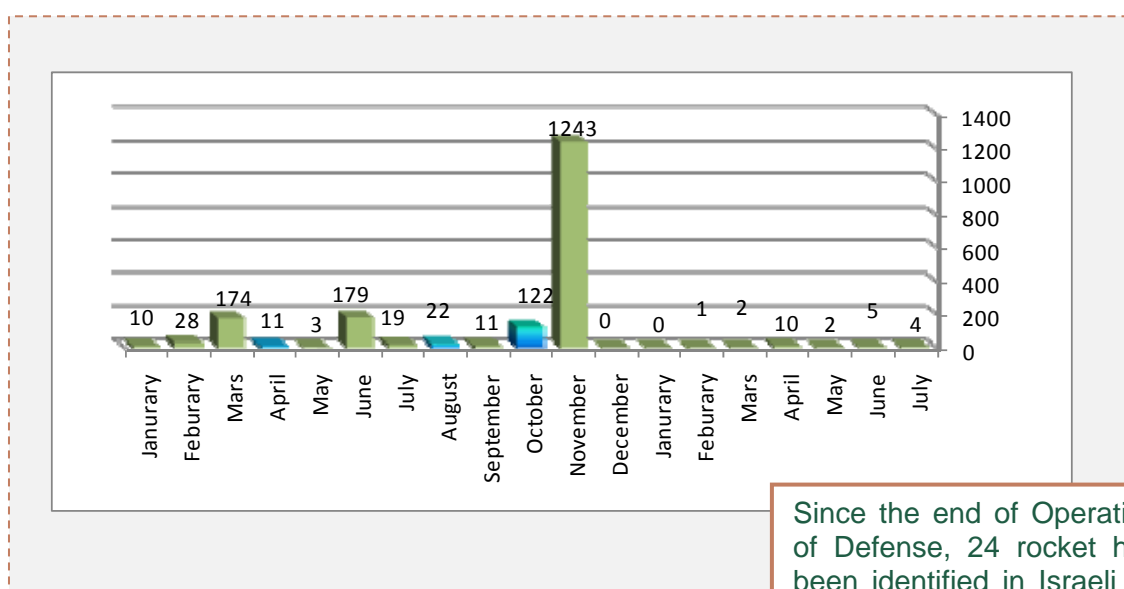
The Situation in Israel's South

Rocket Fire

■ This past week three rocket hits were identified in Israel's south. So far it is unknown who fired the rockets.

- On **July 18, 2013**, two rockets fell in open areas in the western Negev. There were no casualties and no damage was reported.
- On **July 21, 2013**, a rocket hit was identified in the western Negev. There were no casualties and no damage was reported.

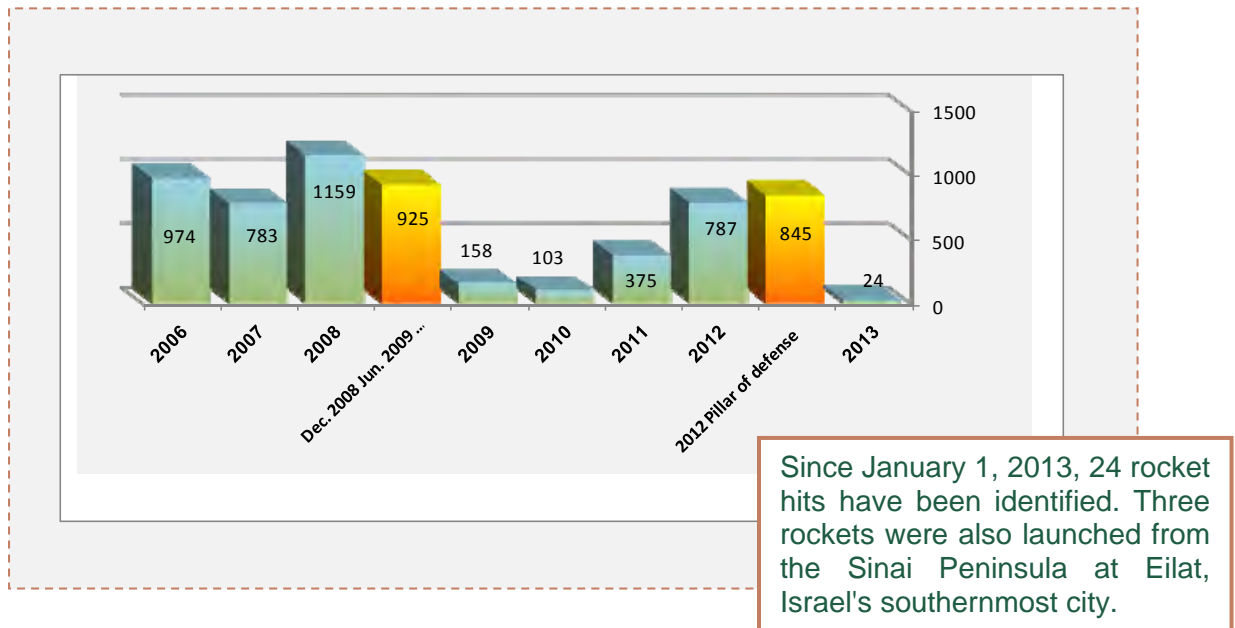
Rocket Hits in Israeli Territory since January 1, 2013¹



Since the end of Operation Pillar of Defense, 24 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory. Three additional hits were identified in the southern Israeli city of Eilat.

¹ As of July 23, 2013. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.

Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire²



Judea and Samaria

Israeli Civilian Attacked in Jerusalem

■ On **July 16, 2013** a young ultra-Orthodox man from Jerusalem was stabbed by two Palestinians near the Nablus Gate as he was on his way to pray at the Western Wall. He was seriously wounded and evacuated to a hospital. The two attackers fled the scene. The security forces chased two suspects but they have not yet been caught (Ynet, July 16, 2013).

Palestinian Molotov Cocktail-Thrower Detained

■ As part of their counterterrorism activities the Israeli security forces detained a number of Palestinians suspected of throwing stones and Molotov cocktails. Among them was a Palestinian **who confessed to throwing a Molotov cocktail in May 2013 that wounded four IDF soldiers**. During interrogation he confessed to having been involved in a number of popular resistance attacks, mainly involving Molotov cocktails (IDF spokesman, July 21, 2013).

² The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.

Violent Palestinian Activity Continues

■ Violent confrontations and friction between Palestinians and the Israeli security forces continue, part of the so-called popular resistance:

- On **July 17, 2013**, Palestinian media personnel held a protest demonstration at the Qalandia crossing in response to what they called "measures taken against them by Israel throughout Judea and Samaria." The demonstrators waved signs, shouted anti-Israeli slogans and confronted IDF and police forces (Paltoday website and Al-Watan TV, July 17, 2013).



Palestinian media personnel hold a demonstration at the Qalandia crossing (Qudsnet website, July 17, 2013).

- On **July 15, 2013**, popular committee and foreign activists blocked a main road (Route 60) to Israeli vehicular traffic near Bethlehem. They were protesting Israel's intention to implement the Praver Commission plan to resolve outstanding Bedouin land issues in the Negev. The demonstrators were dispersed by the Israeli security forces (PNN website, July 15, 2013).



Activists block Route 60 near Bethlehem (PNN website, July 15, 2013)

Support for Ousted President Mohamed Morsi after the Friday Prayer on the Temple Mount

■ After the Friday prayer on the Temple Mount on July 19, 2013, several dozen Palestinians waved green Muslim Brotherhood flags and carried signs and pictures in a show of support for ousted Egyptian president Mohamed Morsi (Qudsnet website, July 20, 2013). In our assessment, Hamas activists may have been behind the event.



Muslims on the Temple Mount hold signs with pictures of ousted President Mohamed Morsi (Shihab website, July 19, 2013)

Developments in the Gaza Strip

The Rafah Crossing

■ The Rafah crossing has not yet been restored to regular operations. On July 20, 2013, **Maher Abu Subha**, head of the crossings authority in the de-facto Hamas administration, announced a limited reopening of the crossing for humanitarian purposes (after the crossing was closed on July 19, 2013). The **minister of health** in the Hamas administration said that closing the crossing influenced all aspects of the health of the Gazans: the sick could not leave the Gaza Strip, and medical supplies and delegations could not enter. In addition, the fuel supply to hospitals had been disrupted by the destruction of the tunnels by the Egyptians (Safa News Agency, July 18, 2013).

Tunnels Destroyed

■ **Senior Hamas figures are worried by Egypt's continuing intensive activities to destroy the tunnels in the Rafah area.** **Ihab al Ghussin**, spokesman and head of the Hamas administration's information office, said that a suitable alternative had to be found to bring merchandise and basic goods into the Gaza Strip. He said that the destruction of the tunnels could have disastrous consequences for all vital aspects of life in the Gaza Strip. Hamas spokesman **Sami Abu Zuhri** said Hamas opposed the destruction of the tunnels, and that it would lead to the strangling of the Gaza Strip and reinforcing the blockade (Filastin al-Yawm, July 20, 2013).

■ **Ismail Haniya**, head of the de-facto Hamas administration, said that Hamas was aware of "Egypt's security constraints" but that the Gazans had "humanitarian constraints and needs," which had to be met. He said the Hamas administration was in contact with the Egyptian leadership regarding the issue. He called on the Egyptian authorities to open the Rafah crossing for commercial traffic as well (Filastin al-Yawm, July 17, 2013).



The Egyptian army destroys tunnels in Egyptian Rafah (PalPress website, July 17, 2013).

■ Following the Egyptian action, tunnel workers reported that smuggling had almost come to a standstill. According to sources in the Gaza Strip, the destruction of the tunnels creates financial distress in the Gaza Strip, and if it continues, within a few months Hamas may face severe financial distress (Al-Ayam, July 20, 2013). **Alaa al-Rafati**, Hamas minister of economy, said that since June 30, 2013, the closing of the tunnels had caused Hamas damage to the extent of \$230 million (Al-Ayam, July 22, 2013).



Tunnel workers rest after smuggling activities decrease (Filastin al-Yawm, July 20, 2013)

Hamas Continues Rejecting Egyptian Accusations

- **Hamas continues rejecting accusations from various Egyptian sources that it has been operating against the Egyptian regime.** Ghazi Hamad, deputy minister of foreign affairs in the de-facto Hamas administration, said that Ismail Haniya had discussed the issue with the heads of Egyptian general intelligence and strongly protested the anti-Hamas incitement in the Egyptian media (Safa News Agency, July 17, 2013).
- **Ismail Haniya** gave a speech at a ceremony honoring the organizers of the Hamas summer camps in which he attacked the incitement campaign which, he said, the Egyptian media was waging against Hamas. He called it "**the demonization of the Gaza Strip and Hamas and everyone who belongs to the resistance.**" He said that Hamas was investing all its military effort against Israel and it had no involvement in Egypt or the Sinai Peninsula (Safa News Agency, July 19, 2013).
- Hamas spokesman **Sami Abu Zuhri** called for the end of the Egyptian anti-Hamas incitement campaign and denied the statement made by a senior Egyptian army source that 19 Grad rockets, similar to those used by Hamas, had been uncovered, and were going to be used against Egyptian targets. He said Hamas had no connection to the rockets, that such rockets were used by many Palestinians organizations, and that they could be found throughout the Sinai Peninsula in quantities far larger than those currently in the Gaza Strip (Sama News Agency, July, 2013).

The Palestinian Authority

Agreement for Renewing the Negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians

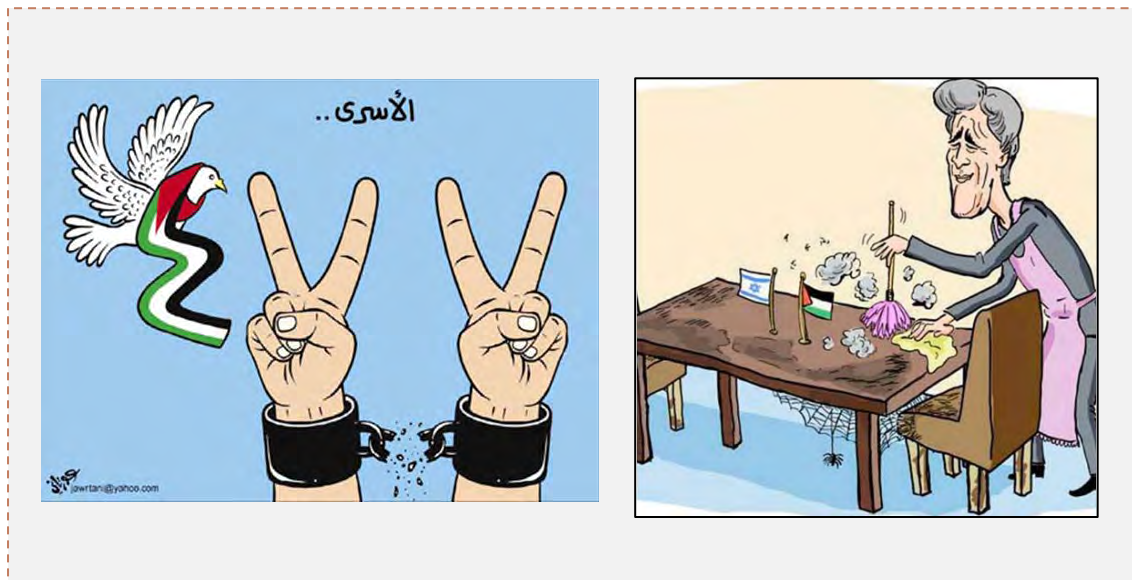
Overview

- After a number of meetings with Mahmoud Abbas in Amman and Ramallah, on July 19, 2013, **American Secretary of State John Kerry told a press conference in Amman that Israel and the Palestinians have reached an agreement that establishes a basis for resuming direct final status negotiations.** He said the final draft was being prepared and for that reason **he could not discuss its contents** (Agence France-Presse, July 19, 2013). It was also reported that as part of the agreement, in the near future Israeli and Palestinian representatives would meet in Washington, DC. The meetings will be attended by Israeli Minister of Justice Tsippi

Livni and the Palestinian chief negotiator Saeb Erekat. The first meeting will be devoted to formulating the agreements that will form the basis for resuming the negotiations.

- The Palestinians consented to resume the negotiations after a series of deliberations held by the Palestinian leadership in Fatah's Central Committee and the PLO's Executive Committee. The Palestinian media reported that the deliberations were stormy and tense, and that senior Fatah officials demanded clear international guarantees before the negotiations began (Ma'an News Agency, July 18, 2013). It was also reported that Mahmoud Abbas appointed Yasser Abd al-Rabbo and Nabil Abu Rudeina to relay the official declarations for the Palestinian Authority (Al-Quds Al-Arabi, July 22, 2013).

- Despite the fact that the details of the agreement were not officially publicized, the Israeli and Palestinian media reported that as part of the agreement **Israel promised to release 82 Palestinian terrorist operatives who had been sentenced to long prison terms before the Oslo Accords**, in four batches. **Issa Qaraqqa**, PA minister for prisoner affairs, appealed to the prisoners' families not to listen to rumors. The Palestinian Prisoners Club and the National Prisoners Movement threatened to hold a large popular protest if the prisoners were not released before the negotiations began (Ma'an News Agency, July 20, 2013).



Left: American Secretary of State John Kerry dusts the negotiating table after a hiatus of three years (Ajnad Facebook page, July 22, 2013). Right: The dove of peace necessitates the release of the Palestinian prisoners (Al-Istiqlal, July 21, 2013)

Israel's Response

■ Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu thanked John Kerry for his efforts to bring about the resumption of the negotiations. He said that he viewed the renewal of the peace process **as a vital Israeli strategic interest**: "It is important in and of itself to try and bring about the conclusion of the conflict between us and the Palestinians, and it is important in light the strategic challenges that are before us, mainly from Iran and Syria...we are faced with two main goals: preventing the creation of a bi-national state between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River...and preventing the establishment of an additional Iranian-sponsored terrorist state on Israel's borders."³

PA Responses

■ The initial responses from senior PA figures were to the point but cautious. Most of them noted that there were still many issues that needed solutions, and stressed the familiar Palestinian positions:

- Presidential spokesman **Nabil Abu Rudeina** said that the series of meetings between Mahmoud Abbas and John Kerry had led to progress that might make it possible to reach an agreement in principle for resuming the negotiations. He added that there were still details that had to be worked out (Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda, July 19, 2013).
- **Mahmoud al-Alul**, a member of Fatah's Central Committee, said that "the ball is in the Israeli government's court." He reiterated that negotiations could not be resumed without the release of all the prisoners incarcerated before the Oslo Accords and Israel's recognition of the 1967 borders (Voice of Palestine, July 21, 2013).
- **Taysir Khaled**, a member of the PLO's Central Committee, said that there would be no negotiations unless there were a clear and binding source of authority. He said that the Israel government had not yet formulated a clear position regarding the foundation of the negotiations and the source of its authority (Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda, July 19, 2013).
- **Nabil Shaath**, a member of Fatah's Central Committee, said that the resumption of direct negotiations with Israel was conditioned on fulfillment of the Palestinians' demands of the United States. He said that pre-negotiations would then take place in Washington to discuss the principles of the negotiations and the source of their authority (Ma'an News Agency, July 22, 2013).

³ <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Spokesman/Pages/spokemedini200713.aspx>

■ Later on, Mahmoud Abbas and his spokesman clarified their positions of the agreement:

- **Mahmoud Abbas** said that the United States was serious in its efforts to find a political solution for the Palestinian issue by establishing a Palestinian state with the 1967 borders with east Jerusalem as its capital. He added that the issue of the prisoners would be discussed in accordance with the Arab peace initiative, as would the agreement on security, borders and the prisoners (Ma'an News Agency, July 22, 2013).
- Interviewed by a Jordanian newspaper, Mahmoud Abbas said that the fate of the negotiations would be decided in the upcoming days and that **any agreement formulated by Israel would be put to a referendum of the Palestinian people**. He said that if an agreement for resuming the peace process could not be reached, all the Palestinians' options were open, because "we have the status of an observer state in the UN" (Al-Ra'i, July 22, 2013).
- **Nabil Abu Rudeina**, Mahmoud Abbas's spokesman, said that Mahmoud Abbas had agreed to John Kerry's request to send Saeb Erekat to Washington to finish discussing details which had not yet been agreed on and to overcome the obstacles on the road to negotiations. He said that agreeing on details necessitated accepting the demands the Palestinians deemed vital (Al-Ayam, July 22, 2013).

Hamas Responses

■ **Senior Hamas figures were extremely critical of Mahmoud Abbas and the PA, and objected to what they claimed was a cover-up of Israel's "Judaization [of Jerusalem] and the settlements:"**

- **Khaled Mashaal**, head of Hamas' political bureau, said that Israel was using the peace process to "mislead people so that it could gain time and improve its image in the world." He added that the United States did not want to exert pressure on Israel (Rotana Khalijia, July 20 2013).
- **Sami Abu Zuhri**, Hamas spokesman, said that entering into negotiations was a deviation from the "national position" and served only Israel, which was using the negotiations "to whitewash the crimes of the settlements and the Judaization [of Jerusalem]" (Filastin Al-'Aan, July 18, 2013).

- **Fawzi Barhoum**, Hamas spokesman, accused the United States of marketing illusions to the Palestinians and tricking Palestinian and world public opinion into thinking there were positive sides to the negotiations for the Palestinians (Ma'an News Agency, July 20, 2013).

Reactions from the Arab-Muslim world

- **The Arab League** issued a statement in support of the Palestinian position and said it believed the Americans were serious in their desire to revive the peace process. The League did, however, doubt Israel's intentions regarding the negotiations, and promised to act as a safety net for the Palestinians (Wafa News Agency, July 21, 2013).
- A spokesman for the Iranian foreign ministry, **Abbas Araqchi**, said that given Iran's acquaintance with Israel, it was not prepared to deal with the repercussions of peace because Israel's entire orientation was toward secretly inciting war (ISNA, Iran, July 21, 2013).

Palestinian Reactions

- Guidelines adopted by the EU's Executive Commission make clear that, from next year, Israeli "entities" operating in the territories will not be eligible for EU grants, prizes of loans.⁴ The specific provisions will not be implemented before January 1, 2014 (EU Council website, July 19, 2013).
- The Palestinians applauded the decision, and gave it sweeping interpretations:
 - The **PA government** praised the decision, calling it a "necessary introduction" to freezing the settlements and ending the so-called Israel occupation. The Palestinians called for additional measures to stop what it called the Israeli "violations and the obstacles presented by the Israeli government" to the efforts to revive the peace process (Wafa News Agency, July 16, 2013).
 - The **PLO's Executive Committee** said in an announcement that the EU decision was compatible with the opinion of the International Court of Justice in The Hague regarding the legality of the settlements, as well as with the UN General Assembly's November 2012 recognition of the Palestinian state as a non-member observer state (Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda, July 19, 2013).

⁴ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/07/16/us-israel-settlements-eu-idUSBRE96F00M20130716>

- **Riyadh al-Maliki**, PA foreign minister, sent a communiqué to Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy for the European Union, asking the EU to adopt a policy that would implement its new guiding principles and prevent all Israeli settlement activity (Wafa News Agency, July 13, 2013).

Reactions to the Praver-Begin Plan

- In **Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip** criticism was voiced for the Praver Plan for resolving the status of the unrecognized Bedouin settlements in the Negev.⁵ The de-facto Hamas administration warned that Israel would take steps to "appropriate land and expel thousands of Palestinians," and called on the Palestinian people to unite to oppose the plan (Al-Ra'i, July 16, 2013). **Ahmed al-Mudallal**, senior **Palestinian Islamic Jihad** figure, said that in view of Israel's activities against the lands of the Negev and the Bedouins, the weapon of the "resistance" [i.e., terrorism] had to be put to use (Filastin al-Yawm, July 17, 2013). A number of protest demonstrations were organized in the Gaza Strip, although participation was limited.
- On **July 15, 2013**, a march was held in Ramallah to protest the Praver Plan. It was headed by Omar al-Barghouti, chairman of the Palestinian National Initiative and leader of the BDS campaign in the PA. Violent confrontations developed between Palestinian police and Palestinian demonstrators (Al-Watan TV, July 15, 2013).

⁵ The Praver-Begin Plan is a measure for resolving the status of the unrecognized Bedouin settlements in the Negev with regard to land ownership, based on a specific law being promoted by the Israeli government. The Plan implements the recommendations of the Goldberg Commission, which examined the issue of the Bedouin settlements and suggested solutions. The Praver-Begin Plan recommends giving reparations to those claiming ownership of the land either in the form of money or other land, or, if possible, to recognize the unrecognized settlements but only within the territory designated for them in the regional master plan.



The march in Ramallah protesting the implementation of the Praver Plan (Al-Watan TV, July 15, 2013).

- Hezbollah said in an announcement that the Plan was part of an Israeli plot to completely Judaize the land of "Palestine" and send the Palestinians into exile. According to the announcement, it is another measure to Judaize all "Palestine" (Al-Ahed, July 17, 2013).

Fatah Glorifies the Popular Resistance and Incites Violence

- This past week the Fatah website posted an announcement and slogans inciting violence, **even after an agreement had been reached for resuming negotiations with Israel:**



Left: "How many Likes for the soul of a shaheed? The king of the explosive devices, Fadi Qapisha." The picture shows Fadi Qapisha preparing an explosive belt⁶ (Official Fatah Facebook page, July 22, 2013). Right: The caption reads, "My homeland taught me that the borders are marked with the blood of the shaheeds" (Official Fatah Facebook page, July 21, 2013).

Hezbollah

Hezbollah's Military Wing Recognized as a Terrorist Organization by the EU⁷

■ On July 22, 2013, the Foreign Affairs Council of the EU unanimously agreed to add Hezbollah's military wing to its list of terrorist organizations. According to the official announcement, it will not prevent the continuation of dialogue with all political parties in Lebanon. The EU also agreed that the delivery of legitimate financial transfers to Lebanon and delivery of assistance from the European Union and its member states would not be affected. The position will be reviewed on a 6 monthly basis, which is the normal timeframe for review in circumstances such as this (Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton, Document A 395/13, July 22, 2013).

■ **Israel applauded the decision:**

1) **Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu** welcomed the decision and thanked the leaders of the member states. He said that "[i]n recent years, the

⁶ Fadi Qapisha was a Fatah military-terrorist operative in Nablus. He was killed on August 31, 2006 in an IDF activity in Nablus. He was involved in preparing dozens of explosive belts and in terrorist attacks in Israel using car bombs.

⁷ For further information see the July 23 bulletin ["The EU Designates Hezbollah's Military Wing as a Terrorist Organization."](#)

State of Israel has invested great effort in explaining to all EU member states that Hezbollah is the terrorist arm of the Iranian regime and perpetrates attacks around the world."⁸

2) **Israeli President Shimon Peres** sent letters to the leaders of the EU, in which he wrote that he welcomed the EU's decision, calling it "a significant and necessary step towards putting an end to the spread of terror across the globe."⁹

3) **Minister of Defense Yaalon** said that the EU's decision would improve the struggle against Hezbollah, and that it would be possible to increase intelligence cooperation between countries regarding Hezbollah (Israel Reshet Bet Radio, July 22, 2013).

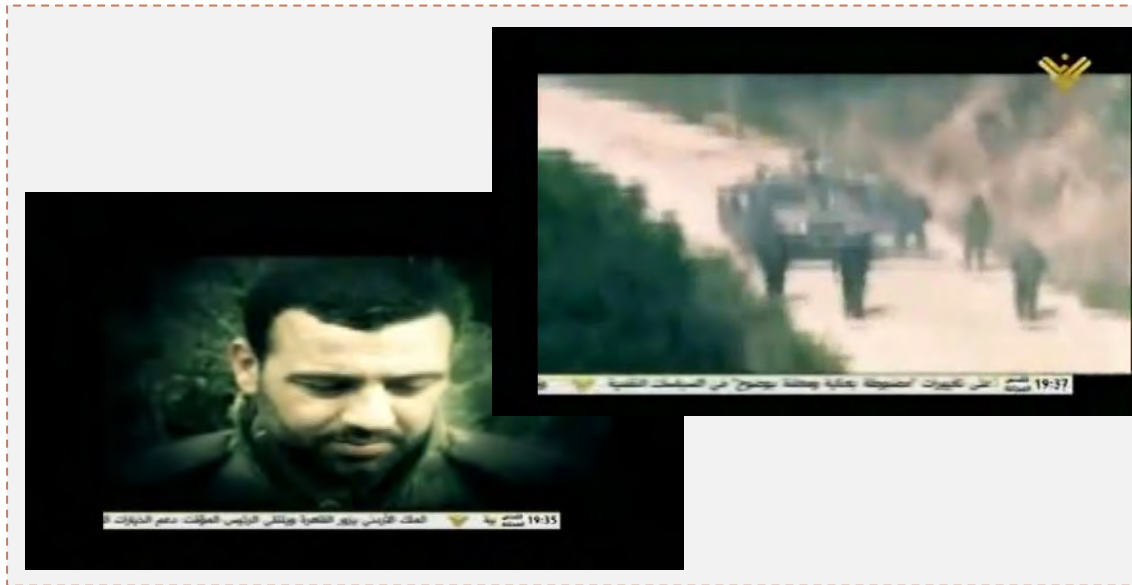
■ **Hezbollah said in an announcement** that the organization rejected the EU decision, claiming it was "hostile and deprived [Hezbollah], and not based on proof." Hezbollah claimed that the decision was the result of the EU's surrender to pressure from the United States and Israel, and that it was "written by an American hand in Zionist ink." In addition, according to the announcement, the decision did not reflect the interests of the people of Europe and their values, which were based on independence and liberty (Al-Manar, July 22, 2013).

Hezbollah Broadcasts a Video on Al-Manar TV Documenting the Abduction of IDF Soldiers Eldad Regev and Ehud Goldwasser

■ On July 12, 2013, the seventh anniversary of the outbreak of the Second Lebanon War, Hezbollah broadcast a video on its Al-Manar TV channel documenting the abduction of IDF soldiers Eldad Regev and Ehud Goldwasser (July 2006). In the video Hezbollah explains why it chose Border Point 105 along the security fence as a target for the attack. The video includes a simulation of the sector and the abduction. It exposes Khaled al-Baza (aka Al-Haj Qassem") for the first time, the commander of the operation, under the command of Imad Mughnieh. Al-Haj Qassem was killed during the Second Lebanon War (Al-Manar TV, July 21, 2013).

⁸ <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Spokesman/Pages/spokeuro220713.aspx>

⁹ http://www.president.gov.il/English/Presidential_Activities/Press_Releases/Pages/news_220713_04.aspx



Left: Khaled al-Baza, who commanded the operation. Right: Hezbollah terrorist operatives swarm the vehicle carrying Eldad Regev and Ehud Goldwasser (Al-Manar TV, July 21, 2013)