



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

July 24 – 30, 2013



The government of Israel votes to release 104 Palestinians prisoners and renew negotiations with the Palestinians (Facebook page of the Israeli prime minister, July 28, 2013)

Overview

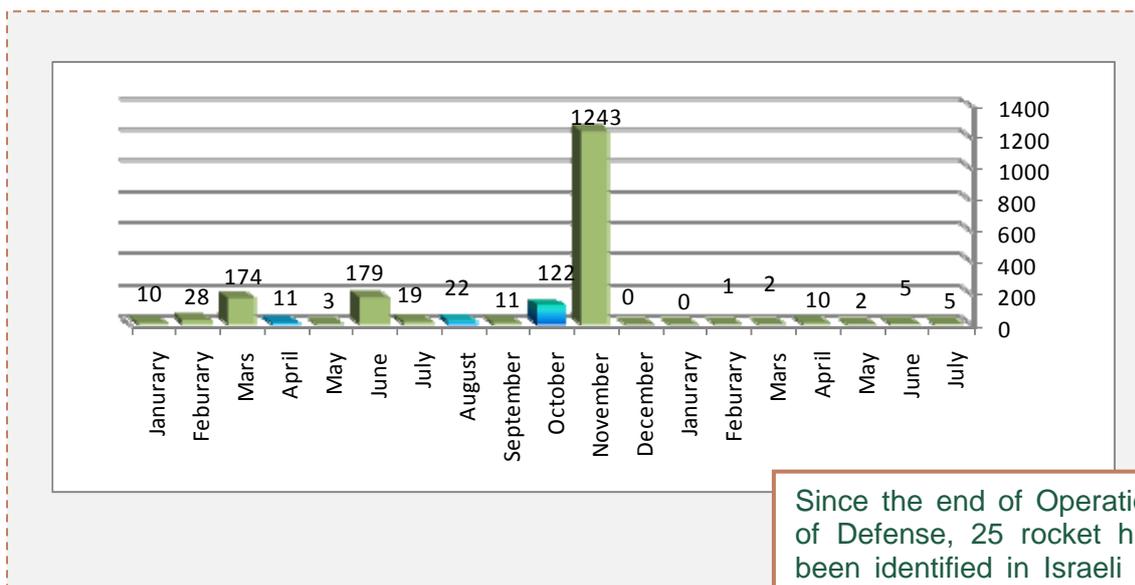
- This past week Israeli-Palestinian negotiations were resumed in Washington under American aegis after a hiatus of three years. The goal of the negotiations was determined as reaching the final status agreement within a period of nine months. Before the negotiations began the government of Israel voted to release 104 Palestinian prisoners (the "pre-Oslo prisoners") who were sentenced to long prison terms for the murders of Israelis and Palestinians. They will be released in four stages during the negotiations.
- The Palestinian Authority (PA) expressed satisfaction with the Israeli gesture, but its spokesmen reiterated their basic positions, especially the establishment of two countries based on the 1967 borders. Hamas, which opposed the negotiations, also opposed the release of the prisoners, claiming that its objective was to prepare the ground for concessions from the PA.
- A rocket was fired into Israeli territory from the Gaza Strip. Near Hawara (Nablus region) in Judea and Samaria a shooting attack on a bus was prevented. Violent confrontations continued as part of the so-called "popular resistance," including stones thrown at buses near the Nablus Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem.

The Situation in Israel's South

Rocket Fire

- A rocket was fired into Israeli territory on July 30, 2013, the day the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations began in Washington. It fell in an open area in the western Negev. There were no casualties and no damage was reported (Ynet, July 30, 2013).

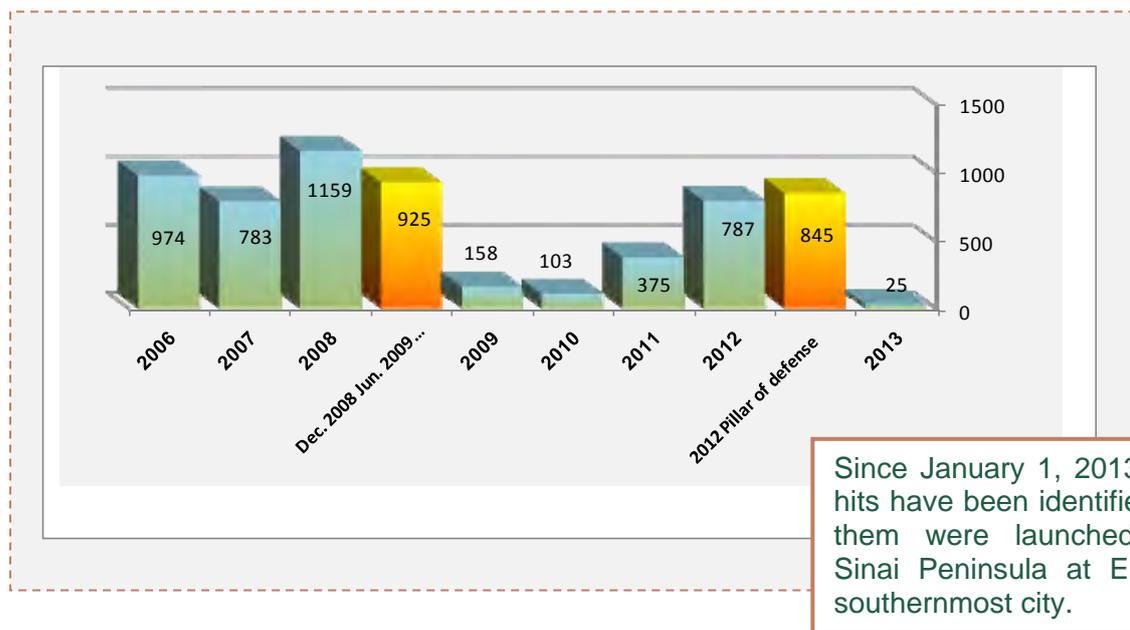
Rocket Hits in Israeli Territory since January 1, 2012¹



Since the end of Operation Pillar of Defense, 25 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory. Three additional hits were identified in the southern Israeli city of Eilat.

¹ As of July 30, 2013. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.

Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire²



Judea and Samaria

Terrorist Attack Prevented

- On July 25, 2013, a Palestinian terrorist operative was detained by IDF forces as he was about to shoot at a bus near Hawara (Nablus region). In IDF assessment he was also behind two previous shooting attacks targeting Israeli buses in May, neither of which resulted in casualties. The terrorist operative was apprehended in an olive grove near the bus route. A gun was found in his possession. According to the IDF, he was a lone operative and did not belong to any terrorist organization (IDF spokesman, July 25, 2013).

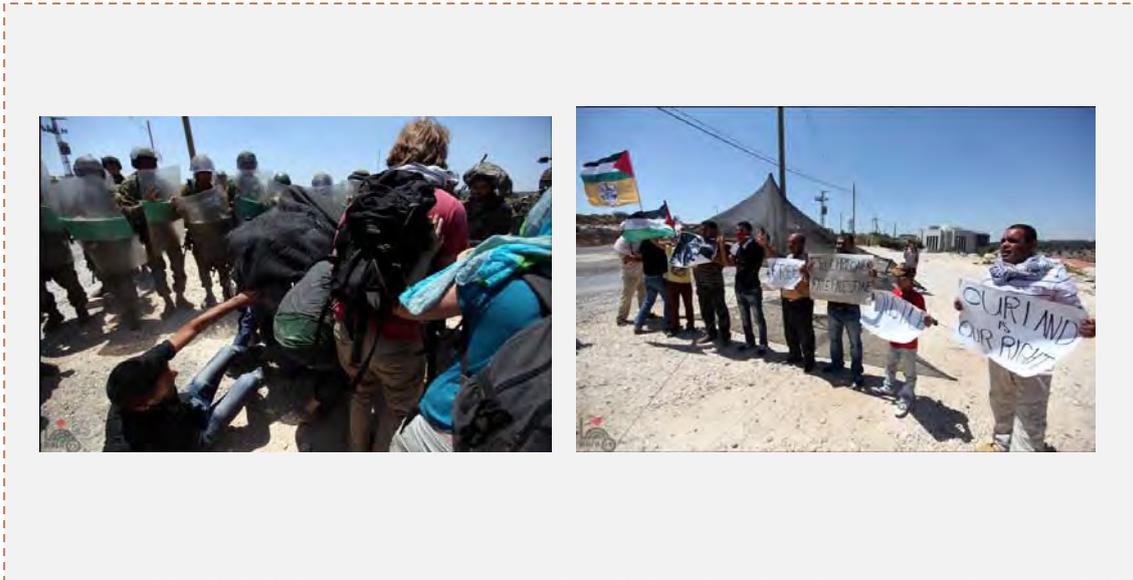
² The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.



The terrorist organization's gun (IDF spokesman, July 25, 2013)

Violent Palestinian Activity Continues

- On July 25, 2013, on two occasions Palestinians threw stones at Israeli buses near the Nablus Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem. Fifteen individuals, among them children and babies, were injured, four of whom were evacuated to a hospital
- Violent confrontations and friction between Palestinians and the Israeli security forces continue, part of the popular resistance. Notable this past week were activists from the popular committees who erected a tent near the Jewish settlement of Kfar Etzion, calling it "Cnaan 5." They waved signs and flags in protest against Israel and confronted the Israeli security forces who arrived to disperse the gathering. According to Hassan Breijja, the popular committee coordinator in Bethlehem, the demonstration sent a message to the government of Israel telling it that "sooner or later the [Jewish] settlements will disappear and that the Palestinian people are attached to their land" (Wafa News Agency, July 27; Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda, July 28, 2013).



The protest tent erected by the popular committee activists and the confrontations with the Israeli security forces (Wafa News Agency, July 27, 2013)

Developments in the Gaza Strip

The Rafah Crossing

- **The Rafah crossing has not yet returned to routine operations** and the number of people using it continues to be limited to no more than a few dozen every day, mostly patients. According to reports, large numbers of students and patients who want to leave the Gaza Strip and enter Egypt have been turned away by the Egyptians (Al-Ayam, July 29, 2013).

The Influence of Egyptian Activity on the Economy of the Gaza Strip

- The Egyptians' closing of the smuggling tunnels has harmed the Gazan economy. **Alaa al-Rafati**, Hamas administration minister of the economy, warned that the closing of the tunnels would influence the administration's budget and labor market. He said the economic situation in the Gaza Strip was difficult and that the Kerem Shalom crossing could provide only 30% of the Gaza Strip's needs. He also said that the Hamas administration was in contact with the Egyptian authorities regarding the entrance of goods through the Rafah crossing (Ma'an News Agency, July 23, 2013).

- However, the heads of the de-facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip have tried to minimize the significance of the Egyptian measures on the economy of the Gaza Strip. For example, **Hatem Uwaidah**, aide to minister of the economy in the

Hamas administration, said there were no food shortages and that his ministry was monitoring the entrance of merchandise into the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom crossing and supervising its distribution to prevent price gouging (Alresala.net website, July 23, 2013).

Deterioration of Hamas-Egyptian Relations

■ **The rift in the relations between Hamas and Egypt has widened since the coup that ousted former President Mohamed Morsi.** It hit a high point this past week when the Egyptian appeals court in Cairo ordered Morsi to be detained for questioning for 15 days on **criminal charges. They included conspiring with Hamas to attack symbols of Egyptian authority and rule**, such as police bases, Egyptian army officers and soldiers, and to break into prison facilities (Al-Youm Al-Sabea, July 26, 2013). According to a report in the New York Times, former Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi is being investigated on charges that he conspired with Hamas in a prison escape.³

■ **Hamas was severely critical of the Egyptian accusations:**

- **Ismail Haniya**, head of the de-facto Hamas administration, repeatedly stated that contacts had been made with the Egyptian authorities to end the anti-Hamas incitement campaign in the Egyptian media. He also denied any Hamas presence in the Sinai Peninsula (Filastin Al-'Aan, July 24, 2013).
- **Salah al-Bardawil**, senior Hamas figure, strongly condemned Egypt's treating Hamas as a hostile entity. He said somehow Hamas' name had become entangled in Egypt's internal affairs, but that Hamas was known throughout the world as a "resistance movement." He stressed that Hamas' struggle was directed exclusively against Israel (Quds Press, July 26; Al-Ayam, July 27, 2013).
- **Sami Abu Zuhri**, a Hamas spokesman, said that Egypt's treating Hamas as a hostile entity was a serious development, humiliating and "shameful" (Safa News Agency, July 26, 2013).

■ At the same time **Hamas accused the PA and Fatah of fomenting Egyptian incitement.** Hamas spokesman **Fawzi Barhoum** reported that Hamas had documents that proved Fatah and the PA were involved in blackening Hamas' name

³ http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/27/world/middleeast/egypt.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

with the Egyptian authorities (Sawt Al-Aqsa, July 29, 2013). **Salah al-Bardawil** also attacked Fatah and the PA, accusing them of forging official documents meant to complicate matters for Hamas in Egypt, make the Egyptian leadership hostile to Hamas and undermine the stability of the Gaza Strip. He said Hamas had many documents indicating the PA, led by Mahmoud Abbas, was waging an incitement campaign against Hamas (Al-Aqsa TV, July 29, 2013).

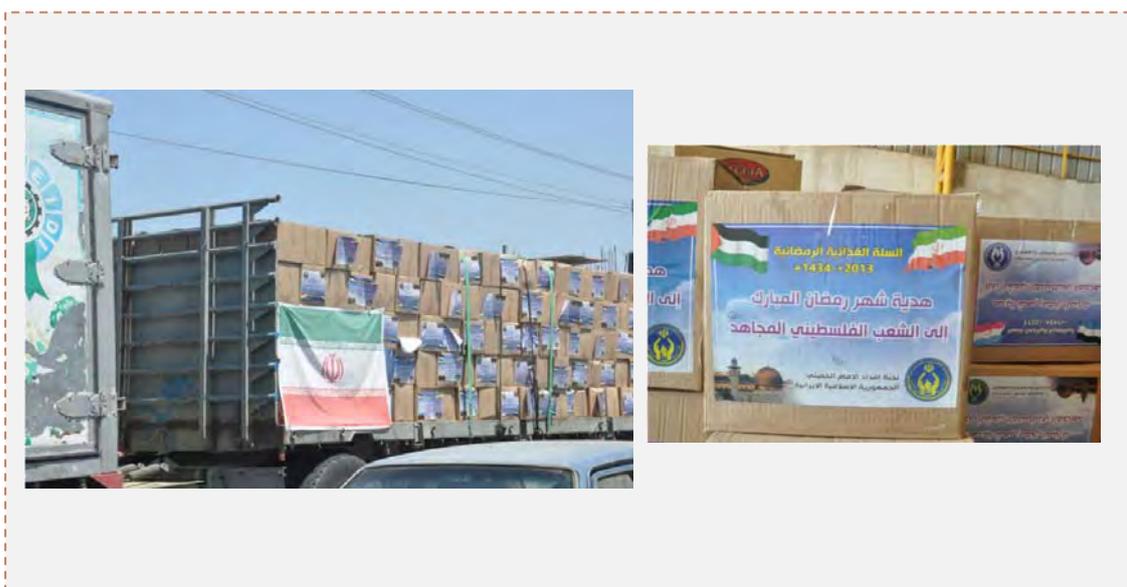


Documents issued by Hamas which, according to Hamas claims, indicate that the PA and Fatah have slandered Hamas to the Egyptian regime. According to the documents, in preparation for Mahmoud Abbas' visit to Cairo, Majid Faraj, head of Palestinian general intelligence, and the Palestinian security services were required to prepare relevant documents about Hamas involvement in the recent events in Egypt and the murders of the Egyptian soldiers in the Sinai Peninsula in August 2012 (Filastin Al-'Aan, July 28, 2013)

■ As a result of the rift between Hamas and Egypt and the mutual accusations, **the attorney general of the Hamas administration ordered the closing of the offices of the Arab TV channel Al-Arabiya and of the Palestinian news agency Ma'an**, both suspected by Hamas of being PA sympathizers. According to the statement issued by the attorney general, the offices were closed because they had "fabricated" news items, spread false rumors and published news items divorced from reality (Safa News Agency, July 25, 2013). The objection was mainly to the news Al-Arabiya TV and the Ma'an News Agency published about the flight of senior Muslim Brotherhood figures from Egypt to the Gaza Strip. Ma'an News Agency lodged an official complaint with de-facto Hamas administration head Ismail Haniya (Ma'an News Agency, July 25, 2013).

Hamas-Iran Relations

- According to media reports, Hamas is making attempts to repair its relations with Iran, which deteriorated because of Hamas' criticism of the events in Syria. **Ahmed Yussuf**, Ismail Haniya's political advisor, said that **Hamas had recently held two meetings with the Iranians**. He said they might agree to understand each other's positions. Ahmed Yussuf stressed that Hamas did not want to lose any of its allies but as long as the killing of civilians in Syria continued its attitude toward the Syrian regime would not change. He also said that Iranian aid to Hamas would soon return to the status quo ante, including financial aid (Al-Anbaa Asia, July 27; Al-Ayam, July 28, 2013).
- **Trucks carrying packages of food donated by Iran** entered the Gaza Strip. The packages **were delivered to the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)** to be distributed to the needy. **Khader Habib**, a senior PIJ figure, held a press conference in Gaza to thank Iran for contributing 40 thousand packages of food for the needy of the Gaza Strip. They were the gift of the **Iranian Imam Khomeini Support Committee** (*lajnat imdad al-khomeini*). The packages had a value of about \$50 each, for a total of about \$2 million, and were a gift for the Muslim religious month of Ramadan (Paltoday website and Al-Ayam TV in Iran, July 25, 2013).



The packages of food sent to the Gaza Strip by Iran (Paltoday website, July 25, 2013).

The Social Network Campaign against Hamas

■ Inspired by the demonstrations in Egypt, Palestinians in the Gaza Strip are trying to duplicate them. A group of Gazans started their own Facebook page called "Gaza will rebel." Its objective is to incite the Gazans to rebel and stage a coup against the de-facto Hamas administration on November 11, 2013. The call against the Hamas administration gives as examples its policy of oppression, failure to govern, the deterioration of the standard of living in the Gaza Strip, etc. Hamas spokesman **Sami Abu Zuhri** accused Fatah of waging a campaign against Hamas in the Gaza Strip and encouraging anarchy, inspired by the coup in Egypt but using different slogans (Filastin al-Yawm, July 23, 2013).



Facebook postings calling for an anti-Hamas rebellion on November 11, 2013 (Facebook page of the rebellion, July 30, 2013)

The Palestinian Authority

Renewing the Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations

Overview

■ On **July 29 and 30, 2013**, negotiations officially began in Washington, DC, between the Israelis and the Palestinians. The Israeli team is headed by Minister of Justice Tzippi Livni and the Palestinians by Saeb Erekat. The negotiations were resumed after a hiatus of three years. Their goal was determined as achieving a final status agreement within a period of nine months.

■ **Martin Indyk**, former American ambassador to Israel, was appointed as the American envoy to the talks. The negotiations will last for nine months. Before the negotiations began the Israeli government voted to release 104 Palestinian prisoners (the "pre-Oslo" prisoners) in four stages as a good-will gesture to the Palestinians. Everyone involved in the negotiations expressed hope that they would succeed.

Israel

■ On **July 28, 2013**, the Israeli government deliberated the issue of renewing negotiations with the Palestinians. At the start of the weekly Cabinet meeting Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made the following remarks (ITIC emphasis):

"...I believe that resuming the diplomatic process at this time **is important for the State of Israel** both in order to try to bring about an end to the conflict...**Any settlement...will be submitted to a referendum.**"⁴ The government authorized resuming the negotiations and voted (13 in favor, seven against, two abstentions) to release of 104 Palestinian prisoners as a good-will gesture to the Palestinians.

■ Netanyahu added that the government would "authorize a ministerial team to determine the identity of the prisoners that will be released after the opening of the diplomatic process...The team under my leadership will include [the] Defense..., Justice Minister..., Public Security Minister...and Science, Technology and Space Minister..."⁵

The United States

■ American Secretary of State **John Kerry** spoke with the Israeli prime minister and the chairman of the PA. He gave both sides a formal invitation to send negotiating teams to Washington to renew contacts and agree to resume the negotiations (Website of the State Department, July 28, 2013). He said he was aware the talks would be difficult but that he was also aware that the results of not talking would be far worse. Martin Indyk said he would promote President Obama's vision of the two-state for two peoples solution (BBC, July 29, 2013).

⁴ <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Spokesman/Pages/spokestart280713.aspx>

⁵ *ibid*

The Palestinian Authority

■ PA officials expressed satisfaction with the Israeli good-will gesture to release Palestinian prisoners and repeated their basic positions:

- **Mahmoud Abbas** held a press conference where he said that the negotiations would take place on the basis of two states with the 1967 borders and territorial exchanges according to the value and size of the territories involved. He added that the Jewish settlements were completely illegal and the issue of borders would determine the issue of the settlements. He also said that if the talks failed the PA had a number of alternative plans which would be implemented, depending on developments (Qudsnet website, July 26, 2013).
- **Saeb Erekat** said that the PA welcomed the decision to release prisoners. He said the PA regarded it as an important step and hoped to exploit the opportunity created by the efforts of the American administration to reach an agreement for a just and comprehensive peace (Agence France-Presse, July 28, 2013).
- **Issa Qaraqa**, minister of prisoner affairs in the PA, said that Israel's agreeing to release 104 prisoners was an important achievement which strengthened a just peace in the region and was a step on the way to the release of the other Palestinians imprisoned in Israeli jails. However, he said he was wary of "Israeli manipulation" regarding the prisoners. He said the release of the prisoners would begin a month after the negotiations began and would be carried out in a number of stages (Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda, July 29, 2013).

Hamas

■ Senior figures in Hamas, which opposes the renewing of the negotiations, and whose prisoners are not on the list, rejected the move. They warned that it was a ploy to prepare the way for PA concessions during the negotiations. As to the issue of the prisoners, Hamas spokesman **Sami Abu Zuhri** said that promises to release a group of Palestinian prisoners should not be used as an excuse to continue the negotiations which, he claimed, harmed the Palestinian cause (Qudsnet website, July 29, 2013).

■ **Salah al-Bardawil**, senior Hamas figure, said the release of the prisoners was intended to cover a series of concessions the Palestinians would make during the negotiations. He added that Hamas was happy for the release of every Palestinian prisoners, but not at any price. **Izzat al-Rishq**, a member of Hamas' political bureau,

said there was a difference between the release of the prisoners in the Gilad Shalit deal "which shattered Israel's arrogance" and the attempt to barter them for concessions that would serve Israel (Qudsnet website, July 29, 2013).

■ **Musa Abu Marzouq**, also a member of the Hamas political bureau, strongly attacked Mahmoud Abbas. He said it was an "ill-considered adventure and obedience to the Americans," carried out despite the objections of Hamas and the PIJ. He said the decision harmed the future of the Palestinian people and its "national rights." He added that the negotiations ignored the core issues, such as borders, the Jewish settlements and Jerusalem, in return for "marginal" issues would not be beneficial to the Palestinian cause (Al-Hayat, July 25, 2013).

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)

■ PFLP activists held a march in Ramallah to protest the renewal of the negotiations with Israel. As the marchers advanced towards the Muqata'a violent confrontations broke out between the demonstrators and the Palestinian police. Eight injured were reported by the media, among them four Palestinian policemen. After the event PFLP spokesmen strongly denounced the violence employed by the Palestinian police against the demonstrators (Ma'an News Agency, July 28, 2013). **Adnan al-Dmeiri**, spokesman for the PA's security forces, accused the demonstrators in Ramallah, especially PFLP Palestinian Legislative Council representative Ms. Khalida Jarrar, of attempting to foment anarchy and causing provocation to harm the PA (Voice of Palestine Radio, July 29, 2013).



Left: Demonstrators march to the Muqata'a building, Ramallah. Right: The Palestinian police disperse the demonstrators (Filastin Al-'Aan, July 28, 2013).

Mahmoud Abbas Visits Egypt

■ On **July 29, 2013**, Mahmoud Abbas arrived in Egypt for an official visit, heading a delegation of PA officials. It was his first visit to Egypt since the ouster of Mohamed Morsi. While there, the delegation met with the interim president, Adly Mansour (Wafa News Agency, July 29, 2013). The visit was noteworthy in view of the deterioration of Hamas' relations with Egypt following the collapse of the Muslim Brotherhood regime.



Mahmoud Abbas meets interim Egyptian President Adly Mansour (Wafa News Agency, July 29, 2013)

Hezbollah

Additional Responses to the EU Decision to Designate Hezbollah's Military Wing as a Terrorist Organization⁶

Hezbollah

■ Hezbollah leader **Hassan Nasrallah** gave a speech in which he said that without a doubt, Israel was behind the decision and that it served Israeli interests. He said Israel had hoped the EU designation of the military wing as a terrorist organization would cover the entire organization. He claimed that designating only the military wing as a terrorist organization was "the work of the British, "who usually find a way out" of that kind of problem. Nasrallah sneered at the EU which, he said, had given in

⁶ Update of the July 23 bulletin, "[The EU Designates Hezbollah's Military Wing as a Terrorist Organization.](#)"

after years of pressure from the United States and Israel (Radio Al-Nur, July 24, 2013).



Hassan Nasrallah's speech transmitted by video during one of the fast-breaking meals of the Authority for the Support of the Resistance (Website of the Islamic Resistance in Lebanon, July 24, 2013).

The Lebanese Government

- **Najib Mikati**, former Lebanese prime minister, said that Lebanon's only enemy was Israel and that Lebanon preserved its relations with the Arab countries and the international community. He said the **Lebanese government objected to the EU decision** and would make an effort to have the decision reconsidered (Lebanese News Agency, July 23, 2013).
- **Adnan Mansour**, Lebanese foreign minister, said that he was concerned that the various European countries would interpret the decision according to their own political views. He added that no criteria had been set to distinguish between the military and political wings (Al-Safir, July 24, 2013).

The Lebanese Media

- Op-ed pieces in the Lebanese newspapers stated that **it was difficult to distinguish between Hezbollah's military and political wings**. For example, according to an article in **Al-Anbaa**, the question was how the EU would distinguish between Hezbollah's military and political wing and arrive at the names of the commanders of the military wing who would be sanctioned. The article claimed

Hezbollah was one organization and its wings could not be separated (Al-Anbaa, July 25, year). According to an article in **Al-Akhbar**, the villagers in south Lebanon could not understand the distinction made by the EU, because in south Lebanon there was no difference between civilian and fighter, and everyone, including women and children, was fighting against Israel (Al-Akhbar, July 24, 2013).

Updated Information about the Investigation of the Terrorist Attack in Burgas, Bulgaria

- The Bulgarian media have exposed new information revealed by the investigation of the terrorist attack in Burgas in July 2012. According to the media, the Bulgarian authorities have the names of two suspects, both of them born in Lebanon, who were involved in the attack. They are **Milad Farah**, 32, who carried an Australian passport, and **Hassan al-Haj Hassan**, 25, who had Canadian citizenship.
- According to the Bulgarian authorities, the American driver's license they used was produced using a printer in the University of Beirut where the two were studying engineering. They underwent military training at the end of 2010 and the beginning of 2011. **Hezbollah's [so-called] military wing also gave them \$100,000**. The money was intended to help them carry out the terrorist attack [in Bulgaria] and prepare other attacks by collecting intelligence in other European countries (Agence France-Presse, July 26, 2013).