



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict July 31 – August 6, 2013



Jerusalem Day demonstration in the Gaza Strip (Palinfo website, August 2, 2013)

Overview

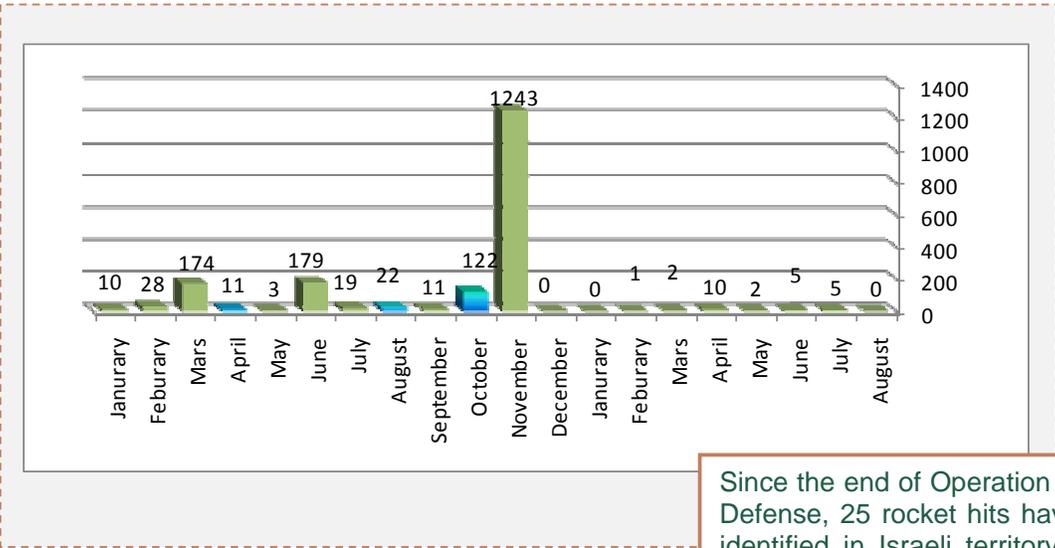
- Israel's south was quiet this past week. In Judea and Samaria violent events continued, part of the so-called "popular resistance." According to information from the Israel Security Agency (ISA), in July 2013 there was a slight decrease in the scope of terrorist attacks in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem. Most of the attacks involved throwing stones and Molotov cocktails.
- After the renewal of negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians in Washington, the two sides are expected to meet locally to continue the talks. On the agenda is the first stage of releasing 104 Palestinian terrorist operatives, agreed on by Israel, who were imprisoned before the Oslo Accords. According to Saeb Erekat, head of the Palestinian negotiating team, 26 prisoners will be released.

The Situation in Israel's South

Rocket Fire

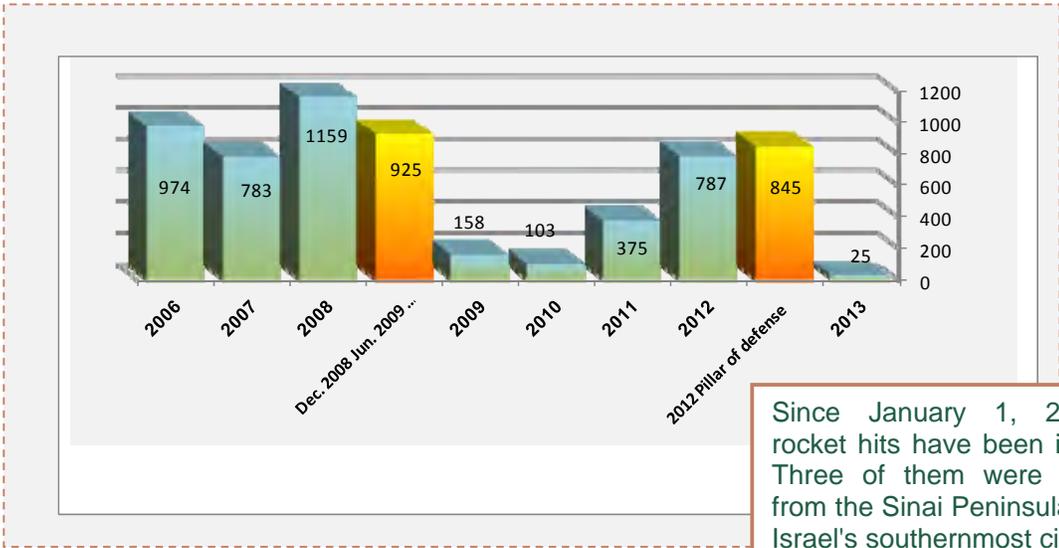
- This past week no rocket hits were identified in Israeli territory.

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.

Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire²



Since January 1, 2013, 25 rocket hits have been identified. Three of them were launched from the Sinai Peninsula at Eilat, Israel's southernmost city.

¹ As of August 6, 2013. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.

² The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.

Judea and Samaria

Palestinian Violence Continues

- Violent confrontations and friction between Palestinians and the Israeli security forces continue, part of the so-called "popular resistance," including the weekly demonstrations and protests. On the morning of August 5, 2013, several stones were thrown at an Israeli bus near El-Aroub near Hebron, damaging it (Tazpit News Agency, August 5, 2013).
- On July 28, 2013, a dummy IED was found on the Alon road, between the Megadlim Junction and Kokhav Hashahar in the Benyamin mountains. Local residents called police demolitions experts. It was the third time a dummy IED had been found in the region (Tazpit News Agency, July 28, 2013).



Left: The bus damaged by stones (Picture by Shnior Nahum Shohat, Tazpit News Agency, August 5, 2013). Right: The dummy IED found on the Alon road (Photo by Elhanan Shalom, Tazpit News Agency, July 28 2013).



Confrontations between Palestinians and the Israeli security forces at Qalqiliya (Wafa News Agency, August 2, 2013)

Decrease in the Number of Terrorist Attacks in July

■ During July 2013 there was a slight decrease in the number of terrorist attacks in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem. There were 76 attacks³ in July (as compared with 99 in June). Of them 50 were carried out in Judea and Samaria and 26 in Jerusalem. **Most of the attacks (about 60) involved Molotov cocktails.** Eleven involved IEDs, four involved shots fired from light arms and there was one stabbing attack (at the Nablus Gate in Jerusalem, July 16, 2013), which resulted in injury to an Israeli civilian (Israel Security Agency website, August 6, 2013).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

The Rafah Crossing

■ The de-facto Hamas administration is worried by the worsening humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip caused by the closing of the Rafah crossing. The administration appealed to Egypt to open the crossing fully to the passage of people and goods (Filastin al-Yawm, July 31, 2013). The foreign ministry of the Hamas administration warned of a "humanitarian catastrophe" caused by the closing of the Rafah crossing, and appealed to the Egyptians to open it. The ministry claimed the crossing was open only four hours a day and the number of people allowed through was limited to 150 (about 20% of the activity at the crossing before the coup in Egypt).

³ Not including the dozens of incidents of stone throwing.

As a result, thousands of Palestinians are stranded in various Arab countries and cannot return to the Gaza Strip (Al-Jazeera, August 2, 2013).

■ In the meantime, **Egypt continues destroying the smuggling tunnels along the Egypt-Gaza border**. The Egyptian army reportedly discovered and destroyed a fuel reservoir with a capacity of 2.5 million liters, or a little over 660,000 gallons, containing about 100,000 liters, or about 26,500 gallons. It also destroyed two pumps attached to the reservoir (Safa News Agency, July 31, 2013).

Visit of Turkish Prime Minister to the Gaza Strip Cancelled

■ **Egypt cancelled the visit of Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan to the Gaza Strip**. The reason given was his support for the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and ousted President Mohamed Morsi. Erdogan had been planning the visit for some time and was supposed to enter via Egypt (UPI.com website, August 5, 2013)

Deterioration of Hamas-Palestinian Authority Relations

■ The de-facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip continues accusing the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Fatah of helping foment Egyptian incitement against Hamas and trying to turn the population in the Gaza Strip against Hamas. An anti-Fatah demonstration was held in the northern Gaza Strip, during which **Musheir al-Masri**, a Hamas faction member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, called for legal action against the heads of the PA involved in incitement (Palinfo website, July 31, 2013).

■ Senior Hamas figures made the following remarks:

- **Sami Abu Zuhri**, Hamas spokesman, repeatedly accused Fatah of being behind the "Rebellion" campaign in the social media. He said it did not have a public base and was an organized political move led by Fatah as part of its campaign against Hamas (Filastin al-Yawm, August 4, 2013).
- **Islam Shahwan**, spokesman for the ministry of the interior of the Hamas administration, claimed that his office had tapes proving that the PA was carrying out the anti-Hamas incitement campaign. As to the incriminating documents made public by Hamas, he said that they had been taken from the personal computer of a Fatah activist detained by Hamas' security services (Palinfo website, July 31, 2013).

- **Musheir al-Masri**, a Hamas faction member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, said that in view of Fatah's involvement in the anti-Hamas incitement campaign, Hamas would take media, legal and security steps against it. He also threatened to escalate Hamas' activity against Fatah if it did not stop its incitement (PalPress website, August 1, 2013).

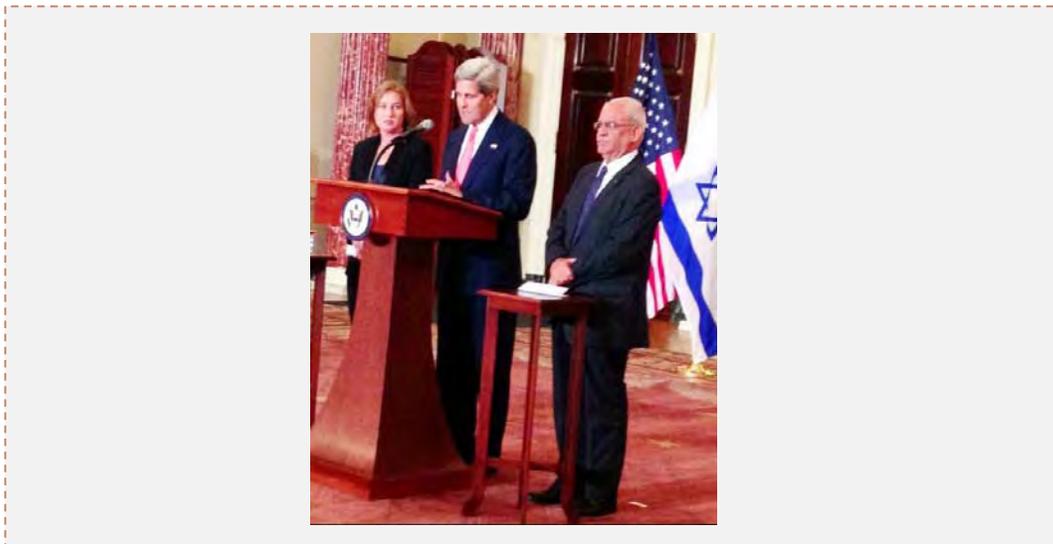
Hamas-Iran Relations

■ **Hamas continues sending positive signals to Iran.** Senior Hamas figure **Mahmoud al-Zahar** said in an interview that Hamas had not lost its allies, Iran and Syria. He said Iran had not cut off relations with Hamas but that they had become loose (ASIA, August 2, 2013). **Osama Hamdan**, in charge of foreign relations for Hamas' political bureau, said Hamas was rehabilitating its relations with Iran. He said they were in agreement on every issue regarding the Palestinian cause but had differences of opinion over the issue of Syria (Alresala.net website, July 29, 2013). On the other hand, the Lebanese daily newspaper **Al-Akhbar**, which is affiliated with Hezbollah, reported that Iran and Hezbollah would renew relations with Hamas but on a new basis, although the decision rested with Hamas.

The Palestinian Authority

Renewing the Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations

■ After the initial talks in Washington ended and after President Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry met with Tzipi Livni and Saeb Erekat, a spokesman for the White House reported that the negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians with American mediation had begun. The spokesman would not provide additional information (White House website, July 31, 2013)



Summing up the meeting in Washington (Facebook page of Tzipi Livni, July 31, 2013)

■ **Mahmoud Abbas** said during a visit to Egypt that as part of the final status solution there would be no Israeli civilian or military presence at the borders of the Palestinian state (Wafa News Agency, July 30, 2013). **Saeb Erekat**, head of the Palestinian negotiating team, confirmed that veteran prisoners would be released in four stages. **He said Israel had agreed to release 26 of the 104 prisoners on August 13.** He also said that the Palestinian leadership had informed America and Israel that it would not accept any temporary solution and would put all the issues of the final status agreement on the negotiating table, headed by **borders, Jerusalem, the refugees, water and the settlements.** He stressed that the PA wanted to return to the agreement allegedly arranged in the past by Mahmoud Abbas and Ehud Olmert, according to which international forces would be stationed in the future Palestinian state (Ma'an News Agency, August 3, 2013).

■ Hamas continues to strongly oppose the renewal of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. At its weekly meeting the Hamas administration condemned the PA's return to the negotiating table, saying it was nothing more than "another link in the chain of [PA] failures," which have a negative effect on the Palestinian cause. It warned that Israel and the United States would exploit the negotiations as a cover for their "occupation plans" and to force concessions from the PA (Filastin Al-'Aan, July 31, 2013).

■ **Mahmoud al-Zahar**, senior Hamas figure, said Hamas did not consider the negotiations legitimate in any sense and that Mahmoud Abbas did not represent the

Palestinian street (ASIA, August 2, 2013). **Yousef al-Rizqa**, political advisor to Ismail Haniya, said that renewing the negotiations was the most dangerous step in the history of the Palestinian problem. He added that the atmosphere of the talks in Washington reminded him of the atmosphere during the talks in Oslo, which led to "a setback of fifty years for the Palestinian problem" (Alresala.net website, July 30, 2013).

Hezbollah

Trial Begins in Nigeria of Three Lebanese Citizens Suspected of Working for Hezbollah

- In Nigeria the trial of three Lebanese citizens apprehended with a cache of weapons in their possession has begun. The Nigerian prosecution has added other charges to the original one. The three are now accused of suspicion of having contacts with Hezbollah, planning terrorist attacks on Western and Israeli targets in Nigeria, laundering money and illegally importing goods. The prosecution also decided, for reasons of security, to limit access to the hearings and not to reveal the identity of the witnesses. The three accused admitted their membership in Hezbollah but denied the other charges (Agence France-Presse, July 30, 2013). The three Lebanese were detained on May 28, 2013, in the city of Kano in northern Nigeria, after a weapons cache had been discovered in one of their apartments.⁴

Israeli Arabs Detained on Suspicion of Collaborating with Hezbollah

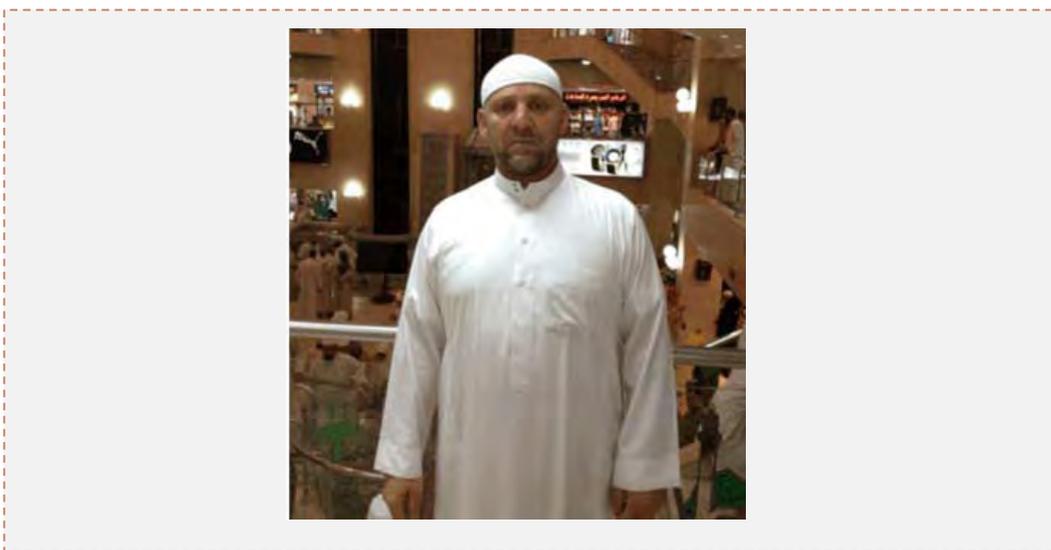
- It was revealed to the media that in May 2012 a number of Israeli Arabs from the northern town of Shefaram were detained on suspicion of having been recruited by Hezbollah and of having collected information in Israel for the organization. One of the detainees was **Zaher Yusifoun**, 46, from Shefaram. During interrogation he admitted that in 2007, **while on a pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia, he was recruited to Hezbollah** (ISA website, July 2013).

- The investigation revealed that he had been recruited by two Hezbollah activists, **Muhammad Mashaal** (aka Abu Ismail), a Lebanese living in Denmark, and **Khaled al-Nablousi**, who represented himself as an operative of the "Lebanese resistance" (i.e., Hezbollah). After his recruitment and until he was detained he used various methods to contact Muhammad Mashaal (telephone, emissaries and a meeting in Saudi Arabia).

⁴ For further information see the June 19, 2013 [bulletin "A cache of Hezbollah weapons was recently discovered in Nigeria and a Hezbollah network was exposed."](#)

He gave his handlers information, primarily about the mood of the Israeli Arab sector, security arrangements at the border crossings and the names of Israeli Arabs who he thought might be suitable for recruitment into Hezbollah.

■ Muhammad Mashaal, Yusifoun's recruiter, has been known for years as an organizer of pilgrimages to Mecca and as having tried in the past to recruit Israeli Arabs for Hezbollah. In 2008 he recruited Aadel Warda, an Israeli citizen living in Denmark, and charged him with gathering information in Israel. Warda was detained as he entered Israel before he carried out his mission.



Muhammad Mashaal: recruited an Israeli Arab from Shefaram into Hezbollah (ISA website, July 2013).

■ **Hezbollah also recruits Israeli Arabs as part of its effort to obtain information about Israel.** A number of attempts have been discovered. For example, in September 2012 **Milad Muhammad Mahmoud Khatib**, from the village of Majd al-Kurum in the Galilee, was detained. Interrogated by the ISA, he confessed to having been recruited by a Lebanese living in Denmark, who gave him a series of security missions in Israel. On October 24, 2012, **Issam Hashem Ali Mushahrna**, an Israeli Arab living in east Jerusalem (Jabal Mukaber) was detained. During interrogation he confessed he had been recruited to Hezbollah during a visit to Lebanon in June 2012. His recruiter instructed him to return to Israel and maintain contact with Hezbollah through the Internet.⁵

⁵ For further information about Hezbollah's efforts to recruit Israeli Arabs, see the November 29, 2012 bulletin "[Hezbollah: Portrait of a Terrorist Organization,](#)" Appendix I, [The Israeli Arena](#).

Propaganda Events

Iran and the Shi'ite Muslims World Mark Jerusalem Day

■ On **August 2, 2013**, the last Friday of the Muslim religious month of Ramadan, Iranian-sponsored International Jerusalem Day was marked with marches, demonstrations and rallies throughout the Arab-Muslim world and by Muslim communities in the West. The main events, as usual, were held in Iran and attended by the leaders of the Iranian regime.

■ The events were generally characterized by the following:⁶

- **Themes** – As in previous years, the events were exploited for hate propaganda and incitement against Israel and the United States, and calls were heard for the destruction of Israel. Slogans condemning the renewal of the Israel-Palestinian negotiations were also heard, as were slogans in support of Syria and the regime of Bashar Assad.

- **Scant participation outside Iran** – The demonstrations and events were mainly held in Iran. In other countries, as in years past, there were few participants at the events. Apparently the recent dramatic events in the Middle East (the second coup in Egypt, the ongoing fighting in Syria) have overshadowed the issue of the Palestinians in general and Jerusalem in particular. The relatively small number of participants might also be a result of the anti-Iranian criticism in the Sunni Arab-Muslim world, caused by Iran's support for the Assad regime.

- **The prominent Iranian-Shi'ite nature of the events** – Despite the desire to make Jerusalem Day a pan-Muslim event, it is still identified as Iranian-Shi'ite. Most of the events were organized by the Shi'ite communities in the various countries and attended by Shi'ites or pro-Iranian activists. Conspicuous this year was the absence of Sunni activists, possibly in protest of the killing of Sunnis in Syria by the Assad regime, which is supported by Iran and Hezbollah.

- **Media coverage** – The events were not well covered by the media. Most of the] reports of international events appeared in the Iranian media.

⁶ For further information see the August 5, 2013 bulletin in Hebrew. The English translation will soon be available on our website.

■ **All the media paid particular attention to the remarks made by the new Iranian president, Hassan Rouhani.** At the Jerusalem Day march in Tehran he said "In our region, a sore has been on the body of the Islamic world for many years in the shadow of the occupation of Palestine and holy Al-Quds." He was careful not to explicitly say "Israel," allowing the Iranians to issue a "clarification" claiming his statement had been distorted. However, during the Jerusalem Day events in Iran, Lebanon and elsewhere, there were specific calls for the destruction of Israel (for example, a poster at the march in Tehran quoting Ali Khamenei as saying that "the Zionist regime must be toppled," and a speech given by Hassan Nasrallah quoting the Ayatollah Khomeini as calling Israel "a cancerous growth that has to be excised").



Jerusalem Day events in Iran (Press TV website, August 2, 2013)

Palestinian Delegation Visits the Mavi Marmara

■ The Turkish organization IHH held a fast-breaking meal aboard the *Mavi Marmara*, anchored in Istanbul. The meal was attended by a Palestinian delegation whose members included Issa Qaraq, the PA minister for prisoner affairs, Qadoura Fares, chairman of the Palestinian prisoners' club, the Mufti of Jerusalem and Muhammad Barake, chairman of the Israeli Communist party. Relatives of the Turkish operatives killed aboard the *Mavi Marmara* were also present. Bülent Yıldırım, IHH chairman, who was responsible for dispatching the *Mavi Marmara*, said that Turkey would continue supporting the Palestinian people. During the Palestinians' visit to Turkey he also announced the establishment a Turkish endowment fund for solidarity with Palestine to raise contributions for the Palestinian prisoners (Wafa News Agency, August 2, 2013).