



August 25, 2013

**The global jihad-affiliated Abdullah Azzam Brigades claimed responsibility for firing rockets from south Lebanon into the western Galilee on August 22. The attack was meant to challenge Hezbollah, part of the leaking of the confrontation leaking between the Sunni jihadists and Shi'ite Hezbollah from Syria into Lebanon.**



**The Twitter account of the Salafist Lebanese sheikh Siraj al-Din Zariqat, a senior figure in the Abdullah Azzam Brigades in Lebanon. He reported that the Ziyad al-Jarrah Companies of the Abdullah Azzam Brigades were behind the rocket fire attacking the western Galilee (Twitter account of sheikh Zariqat, August 22, 2013)**

## Overview

1. On **August 22, 2013**, two barrages of two rockets each were fired into the western Galilee. Two landed in Israeli population centers, one in an open area and one was intercepted by the Iron Dome aerial defense system. There were no casualties but property damage was reported. It was the first incidence of rocket fire from south Lebanon in **two years**.

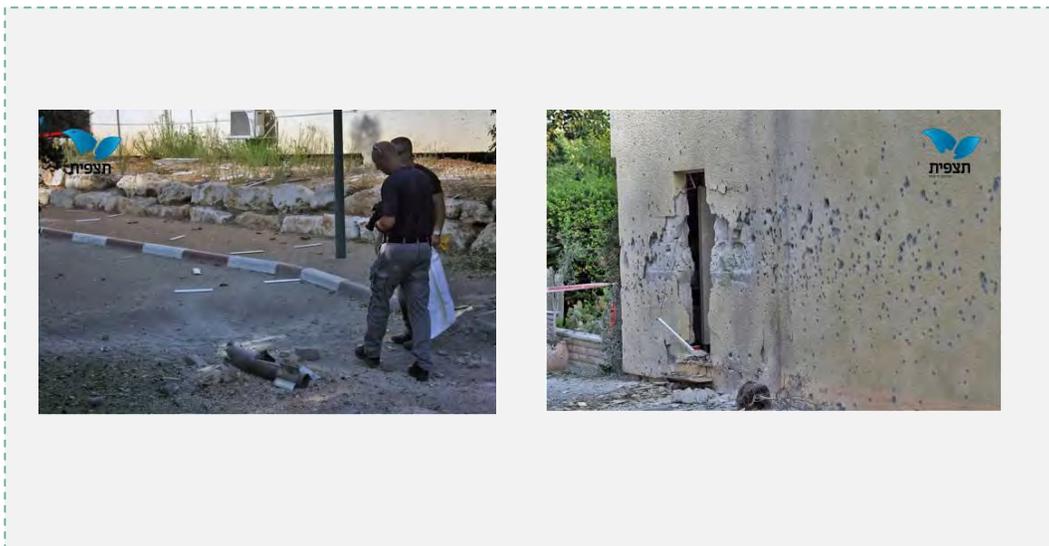
2. Responsibility for the attacks was attributed by sheikh Zariqat to the Abdullah Azzam Brigades, a global jihad organization with ties to Al-Qaeda, which has a branch in Lebanon (See Appendix A for information about the organization and its Lebanese branch). However, the Lebanese government condemned the rocket fire and the Lebanese foreign minister claimed that those who carried out were trying to drag Lebanon into a confrontation with Israel. Hezbollah did not issue a formal comment.

3. Since the Second Lebanon War there **have been eight instances of rocket fire targeting Israel**, most of them directed against communities in the western and eastern Galilee. In our assessment at least some of the rockets were fired by Lebanese networks affiliated with global jihad, including the Abdullah Azzam Brigades, an organization established in 2009. In our assessment **the recent rocket fire was motivated by the Abdullah Azzam Brigades' desire to challenge Hezbollah (which has shown restraint along the Israeli-Lebanese border) by provoking Israel**. It can be assumed that their motivation increased recently following Hezbollah's military involvement in the Syrian civil war on the side of the Syrian regime, its victory in the campaign for Al-Qusayr and the leaking of the confrontation between the Sunni jihadists in Syria and Shi'ite Hezbollah into the Lebanese arena.

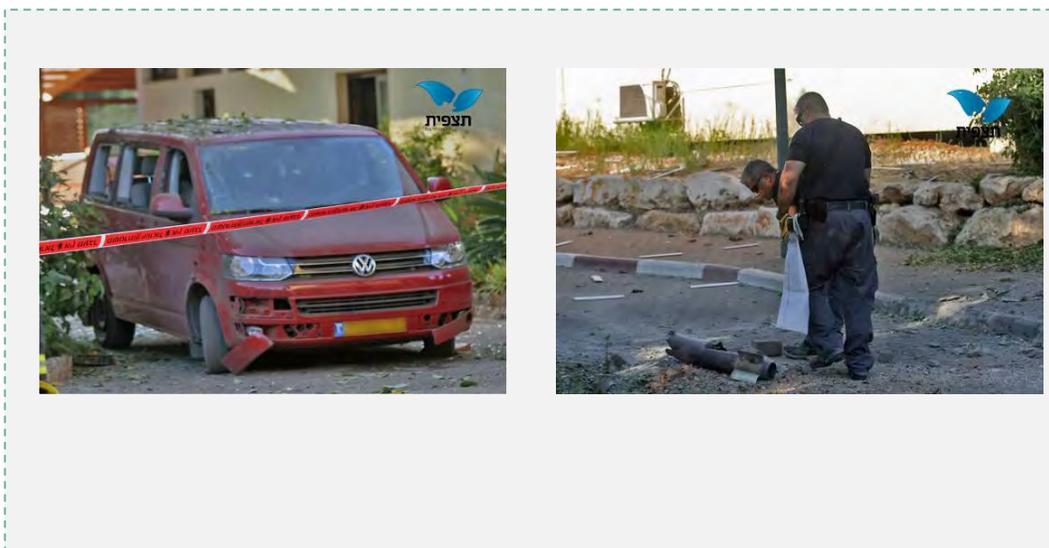
### **Rocket Fire – The Situation on the Ground (as of August 25, 2013)**

4. At 16:30 and 16:45 hours on the afternoon of August 22, 2013, four rockets were fired from the western sector of south Lebanon attacking Israeli population centers in the western Galilee. According to the claim of responsibility issued, they were medium-range rockets (40 kilometers, or about 25 miles). The Lebanese media reported that the rockets had been launched in two separate barrages from orange groves between the village of Al-Hush and the Rashidiya refugee camp in south Lebanon (Al-Jadeed TV, August 22, 2013).

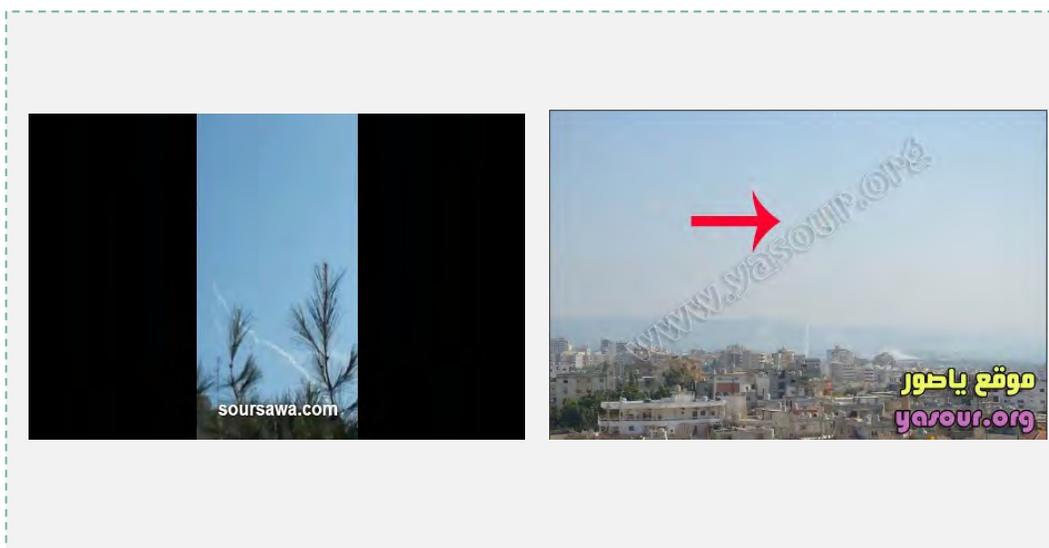
5. Two rockets fell in Israeli communities in the western Negev (see pictures), a third fell in an open area and the fourth was intercepted by the Iron Dome aerial defense system deployed in northern Israel. There were no casualties, with the exception of four civilians who were treated for shock, but seven buildings and three cars were damaged (Haaretz, August 23, 2013). One of the rockets hit Kibbutz Gesher Haziv and damaged several buildings and cars. Another hit a guest home for Holocaust survivors in the communal settlement of Shavei Zion (Ynet, August 23, 2013)



The rocket hits in the western Negev (Photos by Shai Vaknin, Tazpit News Agency, August 22, 2013)



The rocket hits in the western Negev (Photos by Shai Vaknin, Tazpit News Agency, August 22, 2013)



The rockets fired south of Tyre in the attack on the western Galilee (Soursawa.com and Yasour.org websites, August 22, 2013)

### Claim of Responsibility

6. The Twitter account of the Salafist-jihadi Lebanese sheikh Siraj al-Din Zariqat reported that the **Ziyad al-Jarrah Battalions of the Abdullah Azzam Brigades** were responsible for the rocket fire (See Appendix A). According to the announcement, the rockets had a range of more than 40 kilometers, or 25 miles, meaning that the responsibility of the "Iranian party" [i.e., Hezbollah] for "guarding the Jews" would become difficult. That is because **with such rockets the jihad fighters would be able to reach Haifa and the other "strategic areas" of the Jewish enemy** (Twitter account of sheikh Siraj al-Din name, August 22, 2013).

7. **According to the Lebanese media, sheikh Siraj al-Din Zariqat** is a senior figure in the Abdullah Azzam Brigades in Lebanon (Al-Akhbar, August 14, 2013). He is one of the preachers who deliver the Friday prayers in the mosques in Beirut, belongs to the **Dar al-Fatwa** Institution (a Sunni religious institution under the control of the Mufti of Lebanon) and supports the revolt against the Syrian regime. In the past he was detained and is closely monitored by Lebanese intelligence (YouTube, August 8 2013).

### IDF Response

8. In response to the rocket fire on August 23, 2013, the Israeli Air Force (IAF) struck a terrorist target south of Beirut. A direct hit was reported (IDF spokesman, August 23, 2013). The target, located in the region of Al-Naameh south of Beirut, is a base belonging to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command (PFLP-GC), a Syrian-oriented Palestinian terrorist organization headed by Ahmed Jibril. However, according to the Lebanese media, there were no casualties and no damage was reported (Al-Nashra New Agency, Lebanon, August 23, 2013).

9. Hezbollah condemned the IAF attack, claiming it "showed the enemy's evil intentions toward Lebanon" (Website of the Lebanese Resistance [Hezbollah], August 24, 2013).

### Reactions in Lebanon

10. So far Hezbollah had not formally issued a reaction to the rocket fire. Hassan Fadlallah, a Hezbollah member of the Lebanese parliament, claimed **that Hezbollah had no connection or information about the rocket fire from south Lebanon into northern Israel**. However, he added that Hezbollah did not condemn any action directed at the Israeli enemy (Al-Ahed, August 22, 2013).

11. The **Lebanese government** strongly condemned the rocket fire, claiming that its objective was to drag Lebanon into a confrontation with Israel:

1) **Michel Suleiman**, Lebanese president, condemned the rocket fire and demanded the exposure of those responsible. He said it was a violation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701 and violated Lebanon's sovereignty (Al-Nashra News Agency, Lebanon, August 22, 2013).

2) **Adnan Mansour**, the Lebanese foreign minister, accused the terrorist operatives who launched the rockets of trying to drag Lebanon into a confrontation with Israel (Al-Nashra News Agency, Lebanon, August 22, 2013).

3) **Tammam Salam**, nominated as Lebanon's next prime minister, condemned the rocket fire, describing it as "questionable." He said it was liable to harm Lebanon and set it on a path that would lead to Israeli aggression (Al-Nashra News Agency, Lebanon, August 22, 2013).

12. The **UNIFIL force** in Lebanon issued a condemnation following the attack. **Major-General Paolo Serra**, commander of the force, said it endangered the local civilian population. He said it only proved that there were people who wanted to violate the regional calm and endanger the success of the Lebanese army and UNIFIL in recent

years in preserving the tranquility. He added that UNIFIL strongly condemned the attack (Mivzaklive website, August 23, 2013).

## Appendix A

### The Abdullah Azzam Brigades



The Abdullah Azzam Brigades logo

#### Overview

1. The **Abdullah Azzam Brigades**, which claimed responsibility for the rocket fire attacking the western Galilee on August 22, 2013, is **a terrorist organization ideologically affiliated with the global jihad**. The organization has ties to Al-Qaeda and other global jihad organizations and operates in several arenas in the Middle East. The commander (*emir*) in Greater Syria (*bilad al-sham*) is **sheikh Majid bin Mohammed al-Majid**, who commands the branches of the organization in both Syria and Lebanon. On May 24, 2010, the United States put the organization on its list of designated terrorist organizations.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/05/190810.htm>. For further information see the September 2, 2010 bulletin "The Abdullah Azzam Brigades, an organization affiliated with Al-Qaeda and the global jihad, is likely responsible for the terrorist attack on a Japanese oil tanker in the Strait of Hormuz."



Recorded message from the commander of the Abdullah Azzam Brigades in Greater Syria. Sheikh Majid bin Mohammed al-Majid criticizes Hezbollah's involvement in the fighting in Syria (YouTube, August 18, 2013).

2. The Abdullah Azzam Brigades was founded in 2009 on the orders of a Saudi Arabian Al-Qaeda operative named **Saleh bin Abdallah al-Qaraawi**, who fought side by side with **Abu Mussab al-Zarqawi** in Iraq. The name was given despite the fact that previous jihadist networks in the Middle East which had claimed responsibility for terrorist activities<sup>2</sup> had already called themselves the Abdullah Azzam Brigades<sup>3</sup>. Saleh al-Qaraawi was badly wounded by a missile fired at his house in Afghanistan by the United States (Ana Muslim forum, April 17, 2013). He apparently no longer actively heads the organization.

<sup>2</sup> For example, the Al-Qaeda in Syria and Egypt Abdullah Azzam Brigades claimed responsibility for a series of attacks on hotels in Oman on November 9, 2005, and for firing three Katyusha rockets at the Gulf of Aqaba and Israel's southernmost city, Eilat, on August 19, 2005

<sup>3</sup> **Dr. Abdullah Yussuf Azzam** was a Palestinian from the village of Silat al-Harhiya in the Jenin district. During his studies in Egypt he joined the Muslim Brotherhood and developed a radical Islamic ideology which was later adopted by Osama bin Laden and Al-Qaeda. Abdullah Azzam was assassinated in Peshwar, Pakistan, on November 24, 1989. His ideology was based on the perception of jihad as the personal and concrete duty of every Muslim. He is admired and a role model for both the jihadists fighting the Assad regime in Syria and because of his Palestinian origins, admired by Hamas (which has named mosques, streets and even its military academy in the Gaza Strip for him).



Saleh al-Qaraawi, founder of the Abdullah Azzam Brigades (Arab Times website, April 6, 2010)



Saleh al-Qaraawi after being wounded in Afghanistan (Al-Manbar al-Alami al-Jihad, June 23, 2013).

3. The Abdullah Azzam Brigades carried out a terrorist attack on the Japanese oil tanker *M. Star* when it was anchored in the Straits of Hormuz. On the night of July 27, 2010, there was an explosion apparently caused by suicide bomber who detonated a bomb in a small boat brought close to the hull of the tanker. The tanker, which was en route to Japan, was carrying three million barrels of oil. One man sustained minor injuries and only slight damage was done to the tanker's hull.



The damage done to the hull of the oil tanker (Photo by Musab Omar for Reuters, July 29, 2010).

4. According to an Abdullah Azzam Brigades announcement issued on August 4, 2010, the attack on the Japanese tanker was carried out by **its branch in the Arabian Peninsula, which calls itself the Yussuf al-Ayiri Companies**.<sup>4</sup> The announcement was accompanied by a picture of the suicide bomber, who was wearing a traditional white robe and keffiyeh, and pointing to a computer monitor (See below). According to the announcement, the attack was carried out for the sake of blind Egyptian sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, currently imprisoned in the United States for his involvement in the first attack on the Twin Towers, 1993. The objective of the attack on the tanker was **"to weaken the infidel world order which thrusts itself into Muslim lands and plunders its resources."** The announcement also noted that the claim of responsibility was delayed until "our heroes returned safely to their bases."



Yussuf al-Ayiri (Al-Riyadh, June 7, 2010)

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<sup>4</sup> Yussuf al-Ayiri (aka Al-Saif al-Batar – "the sharp sword") is a Saudi Arabian born in 1973, one of the ideologues and senior field commanders of Al-Qaeda. He was killed in Saudi Arabia in 2003 after having fought in Afghanistan, Chechnya and the Philippines.



Ayoub al-Taishan, the suicide bomber who attacked the oil tanker M. Star, points to a picture of the ship. To the right is the Abdullah Azzam Brigades logo (Photo from Intelcenter)

### The Abdullah Azzam Brigades Branch in Lebanon

5. The Abdullah Azzam Brigades has a branch network in Lebanon that operates in the Palestinian refugee camps, especially in Ein al-Hilweh on the outskirts of Sidon. According to Saleh al-Qaraawi, who established the organization, **the Lebanese branch is called the Ziyad al-Jarrah Companies** and its objective is to take action against Israel from Lebanese territory. He also said that the network's activities in Lebanon would not be limited to rocket fire at Israel and that they had a variety of tactics "to surprise the enemy" (Al-Fallujah forum, April 4, 2010). **According to the Lebanese media the organization also announced a jihad against the UNIFIL forces in south Lebanon** (Al-Mayadeen TV, Lebanon, August 23, 2013).

6. Ziyad Jarrah, for whom the branch in Lebanon was named, was of Lebanese origin, one of the 19 terrorists who carried out the attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. He lived in Germany for a number of years where he

apparently married a woman of Turkish extraction. From Germany he went to Afghanistan and from there to the United States to participate in the attack (Wikipedia).



**Ziyad Jarrah learns to fly in the skies over Florida (Wikipedia)**

7. In July 2009 a branch of the Abdullah Azzam Brigades in Lebanon issued a video of rockets being transported and deployed for firing. It is voiced over by Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri, **who appeal to the jihadists in Lebanon to unite "against the Jews" and UN Security Council Resolution 1710 "in word and deed"** (Al-Fallujah forum, July 24, 2009). So far the organization has launched a number of rockets into Israel, none of which caused casualties, and did not seriously challenge either Hezbollah or the Lebanese administration (For further information see Appendix B).

8. The Lebanese branch of the Abdullah Azzam Brigades **has been involved in violent clashes with Hezbollah, which have spilled over from Syria into Lebanon.** During July 2013 the organization claimed responsibility for attacking the vehicle of a senior Hezbollah figure, who was killed during the attack in the region of Majdal Anjar, on the Lebanon-Syria border (Al-Nashra News Agency, Lebanon, July 18, 2013). On

June 17, 2013, the organization issued a statement severely critical of Hezbollah because of its involvement in the civil war in Syria against the Sunnis (Al-Manbar al-Alami al-Jihad, June 17, 2013). That would explain the Abdullah Azzam Brigades' motivation to challenge Hezbollah by attacking Israel with rocket fire from Lebanese territory.

## Appendix B

### Rocket Fire into Israel from Lebanon since the End of the Second Lebanon War<sup>5</sup>

	Date	Event	Casualties and Damages
1	Aug. 29, 2011	Three rockets were launched at the western Galilee from the region of Ita al-Shaab in the western sector of south Lebanon. The Abdullah Azzam Brigades claimed responsibility for the attack. A number of days later it issued a denial claiming it had not been responsible for the rocket fire, which it said had been carried out by a group linked to Hezbollah.	There were no casualties. A chicken run and gas tanks were damaged by shrapnel.
2	Sept. 11, 2009	Two or three 122mm rockets were fired at the western Negev in the afternoon from the environs of the village of Qulayla in the western sector of south Lebanon. An Internet forum affiliated Al-Qaeda posted an announcement that the Ziyad al-Jarrah Companies of the Abdullah Azzam Brigades claimed responsibility for the attack.	There were no casualties and no damage was reported.
3	Oct. 24, 2009	A rocket, apparently 107mm, was fired at the eastern Galilee from the environs of the Shi'ite	There were no casualties. The

<sup>5</sup> The rocket fire of August 22, 2013, does not appear in the table.

		village of Hula in the central sector of south Lebanon. UNIFIL and Lebanese Army forces arrived on the scene and found four more rockets ready for firing. The IDF responded by firing a number of mortar shells at the region from which the rockets were launched	rocket hit set the local vegetation on fire .
4	Feb. 21, 2009	In the morning two rockets landed near a home in the community of Mayilia in the western Galilee.	Three civilians sustained minor injuries.
5	Jan. 8, 2009	In the morning, during Operation Cast Lead, two or three rockets were fired from the western sector of south Lebanon into the western Negev. Another one landed in a community in the western Negev.	One rocket hit an old age home in the northern coastal city of Nahariya. A number of residents sustained slight injuries. The building was damaged.
6	Jan. 8, 2008	In the morning local residents of the town of Shelomi in the western Negev found a rocket that had not exploded and shrapnel from two other rockets. Examination indicated that they were 107mm rockets fired during the night from Lebanon. One hit the yard of a residential dwelling and rocket parts were found on the porch. The remains of the other rocket were found nearby.	There were no casualties but there was slight property damage.
7	June 17, 2007	Three 107mm rockets were fired in the afternoon from the region between the towns of Taybeh and Adayseh. Two rockets landed in Kiryat Shemonah and one in Lebanese territory between the town of Adayseh and Kafr Kila. A fourth rocket, ready for firing, was	There were no casualties but property damage was reported.

		found and dismantled by the engineering forces of the Lebanese army who arrived on the scene.	
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