



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

August 28 – September 2, 2013



Iron pellets added to the IED to make it more lethal (ISA, September 1, 2013).



A Hamas plan to carry out a terrorist attack in Jerusalem's Mamilla Mall during the High Holidays using an improvised IED was thwarted.

Overview

- This week two incidents took place in which IEDs were used against IDF forces on patrol near the security fence between Israel and the Gaza Strip. In August 2013 an attempted terrorist attack in Jerusalem's Mamilla Mall was thwarted. The attack was planned by Hamas operatives using an improvised IED with iron pellets to make it more lethal, and was supposed to take place during the High Holidays. The terrorists who planned the attack were assisted by two Palestinians from East Jerusalem who worked as janitors in the mall.
- Hamas and the other terrorist organizations working in the Gaza Strip are preparing for the possibility of a U.S. attack in Syria. Publicly they have expressed their opposition to an attack and reportedly made a decision to avoid a military conflict with Israel (Al-Quds al-Arabi, August 31, 2013). On the ground, it was reported that Hamas forces have deployed due to concerns about Israel taking advantage of the opportunity and attacking the terrorists in the Gaza Strip (Al-Quds al-Arabi, August 31, 2013). As for the PA-administered territories, Abu Mazen announced that he is opposed to a military attack in Syria. There was a support rally for Syria and Hezbollah held in Ramallah, apparently led by left-wing activists.

The Situation in Israel's South

IEDs activated against an IDF force

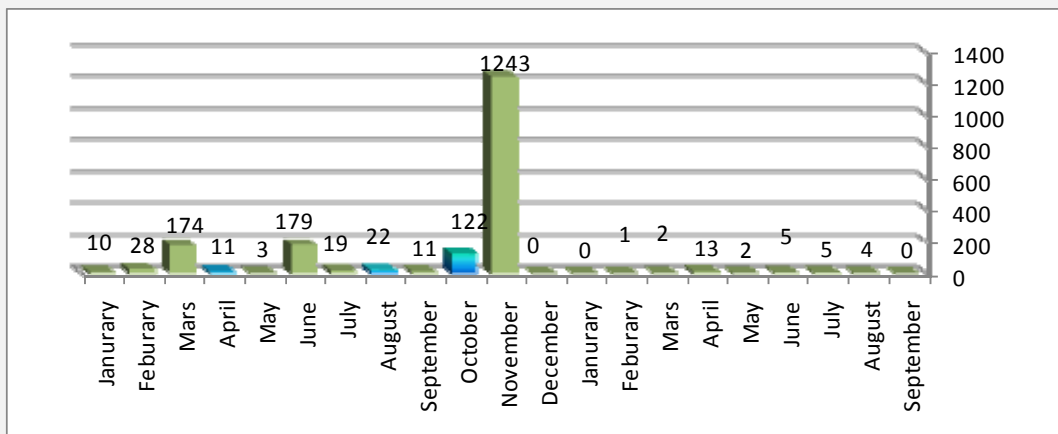
■ In the past week there were two incidents of IEDs being activated against IDF forces on patrol near the border fence between Israel and the Gaza Strip (ynet, September 2, 2013):

- **On August 30, 2013** an IED blew up near an IDF force in the Sufa region. There were no casualties and no damage was caused.
- **On September 2, 2013** two IEDs were activated near an IDF patrol in the Nachal Oz region. There were no casualties and no damage was caused.

Rocket Fire

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

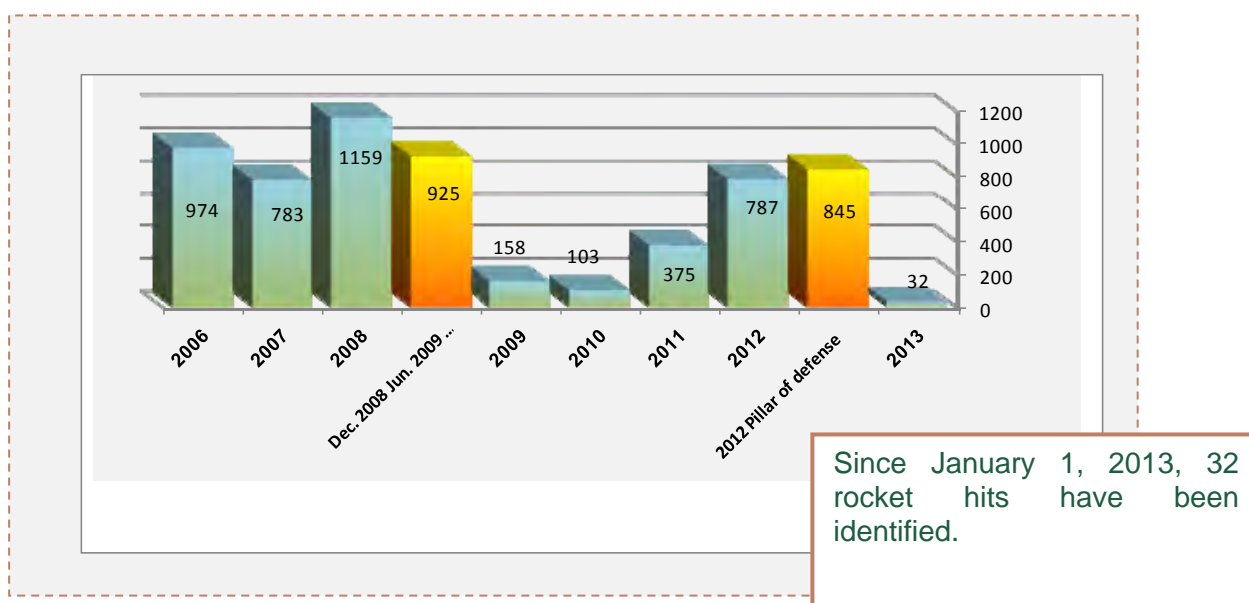
Rocket Hits in Israeli Territory since January 1, 2012¹



Since the end of Operation Pillar of Defense (November 2012), 32 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory, including five rockets fired at the southern Israeli city of Eilat.

¹ As at September 2, 2013. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.

Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire²



Judea and Samaria

Terrorist attack thwarted in Jerusalem³

- In August Israeli security forces detained **six operatives belonging to the Hamas operative infrastructure in Ramallah and Jerusalem**, who were well into preparations for carrying out a terrorist attack using an IED at a mall in Jerusalem during the High Holidays.
- The infrastructure was headed by **Hamdi Hasanein Hamdi Roumaneh**, from Al-Bireh, born in 1991. Roumaneh recruited two operatives from East Jerusalem who were supposed to transport an IED into Israel with the help of their Israeli I.D. cards. The two operatives, **who worked as janitors in the Mamilla Mall** in downtown Jerusalem, were supposed to bring the IED into the mall and conceal it in their workplace locker. During an Israeli holiday, when the mall would be crowded with people, they were supposed to place the IED at a restaurant or shop, camouflaged as a gift.
- During the investigation, **a laboratory was exposed in Roumaneh's home in which materials intended for manufacturing explosives were found**. Also found in the laboratory were written instructions for manufacturing explosives and IEDs. Roumaneh admitted that he had been in touch with a laboratory worker from Bitunia

² The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.

³ ISA website, September 1, 2013.

and two Ramallah residents who provided him with chemicals using which he was able to manufacture improvised explosives.

■ The squad members were planning additional terrorist attacks, **including an attack on IDF soldiers by booby-trapping a house in Ramallah, manufacturing rockets and firing them at Israeli villages near Ramallah, and shooting at IDF soldiers in the Hizma roadblock, north of Jerusalem.**



Equipment and materials found in the laboratory (ISA, September 1, 2013).

Violence Continues in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem

■ Violence continues in Judea and Samaria as part of the so-called “popular resistance.” Stones and Molotov cocktails were thrown at Israeli vehicles. Confrontations and friction also continued between Palestinians and the Israeli security forces at the weekly demonstrations and riots.



A Palestinian throws stones at Israeli security forces in the village of Qadum at the weekly demonstration (Wafa, August 30, 2013).



Palestinians throw stones at IDF forces in Bila'in (Paltoday, August 30, 2013).



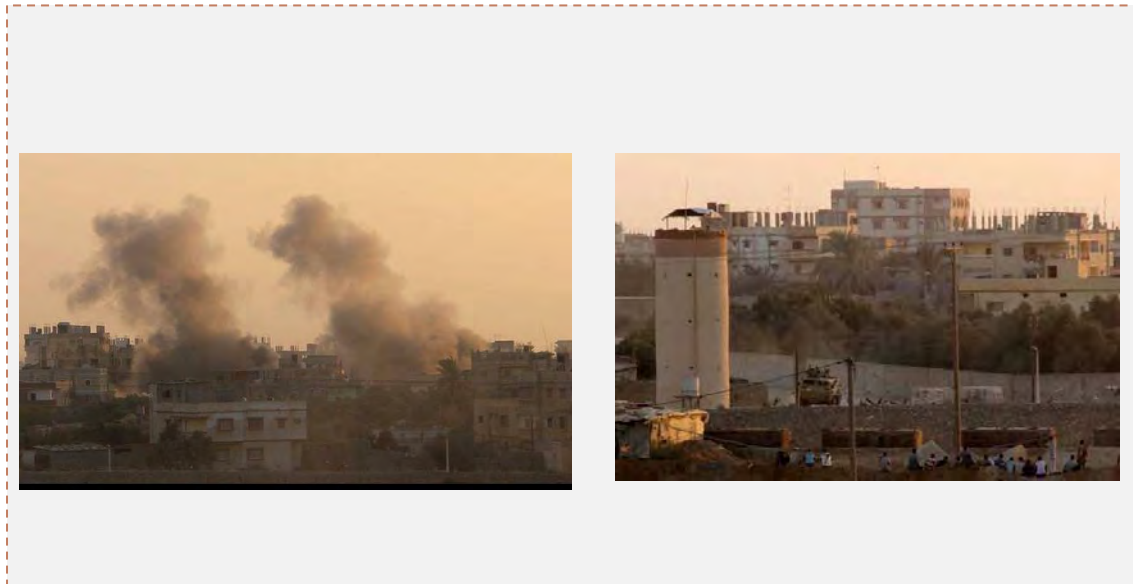
Stone hits an Israeli vehicle in Hebron (Fatah's Facebook page, August 26, 2013).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

The Egypt-Gaza Strip border

■ Egyptian sources have reported that the Egyptian army intends to **establish a buffer zone 500 meters from the Gaza Strip border**. Consequently, Egyptian residents living in the vicinity of the border have received evacuation orders. It was also reported that the Egyptian army demolished 13 houses near the border where entrances to smuggling tunnels were found and cleared the area of trees and

vegetation (Filastin al-'Aan, September 1, 2013). The residents of Egyptian Rafah held a rally to protest the decision to establish a buffer zone and evacuate them from their homes (Palestine Info, September 1, 2013).



The Egyptian army continues demolishing tunnels in Egyptian Rafah (Filastin Al-'Aan, September 1, 2013).

- As the Rafah crossing remains closed and Egypt continues demolishing tunnels, top Hamas sources claimed that the situation was getting worse. According to Maher Abu Subha, head of the Gaza border authority, the Rafah crossing operates about four hours a day and the number of people allowed through is **less than 250** a day, while the overall number of people who have registered to cross is currently 5,000 (Al-Aqsa, August 27, 2013).

- **Tareq Labad**, spokesman of the Economy Ministry of the de-facto Hamas administration, said that there is a shortage of fuel in the Gaza Strip **due to Egypt's activity against the tunnels** (Filastin al-Youm, August 27, 2013). **Mufid al-Mukhallalati**, minister of health of the de-facto Hamas administration, said that there is a shortage of 28 types of drugs. According to Al-Mukhallalati, the fuel shortage has forced hospitals and medical institutions to purchase fuel from the local market. He added that 300 patients are unable to seek medical treatment outside of the Gaza Strip due to the closing of the Rafah crossing (Filastin al-Youm, August 27, 2013).



Gazans wait in line to fill up vehicles and generators with fuel (Filastin al-'Aan, September 1, 2013).

Incidents between Hamas and Egypt

■ The deterioration in the de-facto Hamas administration's relationship with Egypt was also **manifested in two incidents that took place this week:**

- **On August 31, 2013** operatives belonging to the de-facto Hamas administration security services broke into the Egyptian community center in the Gaza Strip, vandalized it, and detained Egyptian activists who were inside at the time, including its director, Adel Abd al-Rahman. The Egyptian Foreign Ministry and the PA condemned Hamas. The de-facto Hamas administration denied the incident, stressing that it had only detained the head of the culture center (Wafa, al-Masry al-Youm, August 31, 2013). According to **Islam Shahwan**, spokesman of the Interior Ministry of the de-facto Hamas administration, the director of the center was summoned for a criminal investigation. He further added that the association did not have the approval of the Interior Ministry and that it did not represent the Egyptian community but was just the idea of the person heading it (Al-Ra'i, August 31, 2013).

- **On August 30, 2013 an Egyptian vessel attacked several Gazan fishing boats in the Rafah region.** Two fishermen were injured and five were detained in the attack (Safa, August 30, 2013). Hamas spokesman **Sami Abu Zuhri** condemned the shooting at the boats, saying that it was unjustified and calling for the release of the detainees. **Ihab al-Ghussein**, a spokesman for the de-facto Hamas administration, demanded that Egypt provide a clear explanation for the attack and said he was puzzled about the frequency of attacks carried out by the

Egyptian side against the Palestinians, particularly after the (second) revolution (Safa, August 30, 2013).

■ Speaking about the Hamas-Egypt relations, **Ghazi Hamad**, deputy foreign minister of the de-facto Hamas administration, said that **the relationship was on the decline, particularly in the political level**. He noted that things changed after Morsi's removal from power, and that unlike in the past, there are no longer official meetings between the two sides. He said that the worsening relationship is manifested in on-the-ground moves like closing the Rafah crossing, demolishing the tunnels, and an ongoing media campaign against Hamas and the Gaza Strip. He added that the visits of aid delegations to the Gaza Strip have ceased altogether. As a result, the Gaza Strip is facing a difficult situation that affects it economically and politically (Al-Nashra, August 28, 2013).

Arrest of PFLP operatives

■ The military wing of the PFLP, which is currently marking the 12th death anniversary of the organization's chairman Ali Mustafa, released a statement according to which the internal security forces of the de-facto Hamas administration raided operatives' houses in northern Gaza Strip and detained them on charges of firing rockets at Israel (website of the organization's military wing, August 28, 2013).

Call to abduct Israeli soldiers

■ On September 1 top PIJ figure **Khadr Habib** gave a speech at a tent built by the organization to show sympathy with the prisoners in front of the Red Cross headquarters in the Gaza Strip. He called to abduct Israeli soldiers with the purpose of trading them for Palestinian prisoners. According to Habib, since Israel does not recognize international law, there is no choice but to work together and make use of all means available to force Israel to release prisoners (Paltoday, September 1, 2013).

The Palestinian Authority

Israeli-PA negotiations

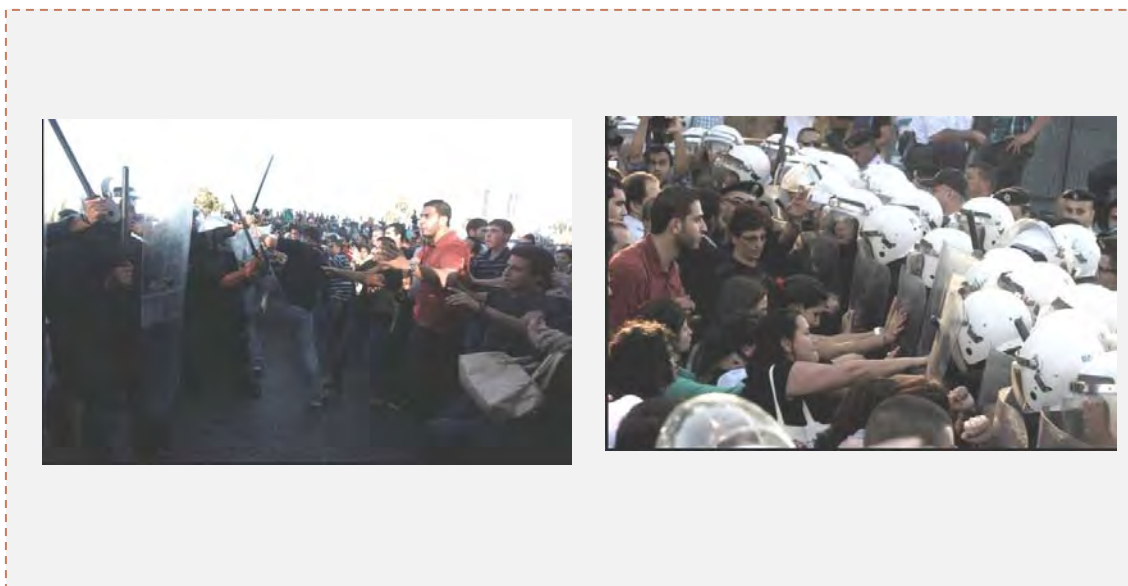
■ Top PA officials admitted that the negotiating teams had in fact met on August 26, 2013, but said that the meeting was a brief one since the Palestinians submitted a complaint against Israel for killing three Palestinians in Qalandia. A top Palestinian

official said that the meeting was only intended to emphasize the protest and that no actual negotiations took place (Al-Hayat, August 28, 2013).

- This week top PA and Fatah officials spoke about the negotiations with Israel:
 - At a conference of Fatah's Revolutionary Council, **Abu Mazen** reviewed the negotiations with Israel, saying that **no progress has been made so far** and that the only thing accomplished so far is the presentation of the positions held by each side. Speaking about the issue of the Palestinian prisoners, Abu Mazen stressed that the release of Marwan al-Barghouti and Ahmed Sa'dat, as well as other high-ranking prisoners, is on his political agenda, stressing that no Palestinian prisoners held in Israel will be forgotten (Wafa, September 1).
 - In a comprehensive interview given by **Riyadh al-Maleki**, foreign minister of the de-facto Hamas administration, he said that the Palestinian leadership has agreed to go back to the negotiating table thanks to a written guarantee provided by the U.S. according to which the Israeli settlements are illegal and a Palestinian state will be established within the borders of 1967. According to Al-Maleki, it is still too early to talk about the results of the negotiations so far, but he clarified that the ongoing construction of housing units in the settlements overshadows the meetings. He said that Israel has agreed to go back to the negotiating table due to pressures exerted on it by the U.S., and that now it is looking for excuses to undermine the negotiations. He further added that the objective of building in the settlements and the Israeli violence against the Palestinians is to derail the negotiations (Chinese News Agency, August 29, 2013).

Anti-negotiations demonstrations dispersed

- **Palestinian security forces used force to disperse a demonstration in Ramallah to protest the resumption of talks between Israel and the PA**, organized by a group of young people using social networks. The demonstrators headed out from downtown Ramallah to the Muqata'ah, where they were stopped by the Palestinian security forces. The demonstrators called to topple Abu Mazen and protested the continuation of the Israeli-Palestinian talks in spite of the incident that took place at the Qalandia refugee camp (on August 26, 2013). The demonstrators demanded that the PA take a resolute stance in the wake of the incident, to which they referred as "the massacre that took place at the Qalandia refugee camp" (Shihab News Agency, August 28, 2013).



PA security forces disperse a demonstration in Ramallah against the resumption of the talks (Filastin al-'Aan, August 28, 2013).

- The PA security services prevented a rally organized by Hamas operatives, which was supposed to depart on August 30, 2013 from the mosque in Al-Bireh to protest the continuation of the talks with Israel. PA security forces surrounded the mosque and prevented the protesters from leaving. Top Hamas officials condemned the actions taken by PA security services against the protesters (Al-Ra'i, August 30, 2013).

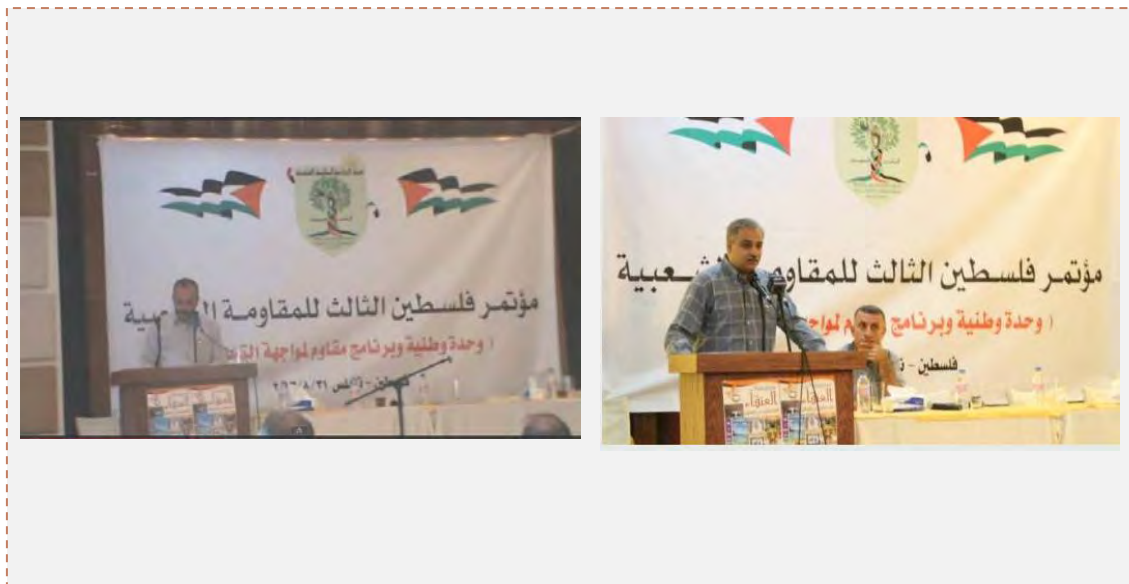
Third Palestine Convention for Popular Resistance⁴

- **The Third Palestine Convention for Popular Resistance** took place on August 31, 2013 in the village of Qablan, near Nablus. The convention, titled “National Unity and a Plan of Resistance for Facing Challenges”, was attended by activists of regional popular resistance committees in Judea and Samaria and representatives of Palestinian organizations. In addition, the convention was attended by PA representatives, including **Mahmoud al-Aloul**, member of the Fatah Central Committee, and **Sa’ed al-Kuni**, the local government minister, who represented the PA prime minister (Wafa, August 31, 2013).
- **Sa’ed al-Kuni**, who spoke on behalf of the prime minister, said that the popular committees play an important role in defending the Palestinian cause at all levels. According to Al-Kuni, the popular resistance has been able to neutralize the Israeli army and strengthened the Palestinian position, according to which the Palestinians are an “innocent people who oppose the occupation”. **He also stressed the stance of the future government on helping the popular committees that coordinate**

⁴ See our May 20, 2013 study: [“The Palestinian “Popular Resistance” and Its Built-In Violence”](#).

popular resistance activities. Mahmoud al-Aloul said that the issue of popular resistance should be popularized as the option chosen by the Palestinian people at the present time, **but it doesn't mean that the Palestinians have abandoned other options.** He had praise for the creativity shown by the popular resistance recently, manifested in building outposts and attempting to destroy the security fence (Maan, August 31, 2013).

■ According to the concluding statement of the convention, as delivered by Naim Murar, senior activist in the popular resistance, **it was decided to escalate and broaden the popular resistance activity in Judea and Samaria in response to the actions of Israel and the IDF.** It was also decided to establish a united national authority for popular resistance (YouTube video, August 31, 2013).



Naim Murar, senior activist in the popular resistance, reads the concluding statement of the convention (YouTube video, August 31, 2013).

Sa'ed al-Kuni, PA minister of local government, delivers a speech on behalf of the PA prime minister (Wafa, August 31, 2013).

Top Fatah officials take part in memorial for terrorist Abu Ali Mustafa

■ On August 27, 2013 the PFLP marked the 12th death anniversary of organization leader Abu Ali Mustafa, who died in a targeted killing by the IDF.⁵ An official memorial service held in his honor in Ramallah was attended by representatives of Palestinian organizations, including top Fatah officials such as Mahmoud al-Aloul and Jibril Rajoub.

⁵ Abu Ali Mustafa was the secretary general of the PFLP. He was killed on August 27, 2001 when an IDF Air Force helicopter hit his Ramallah office. The PFLP is responsible for many terrorist attacks, including the murder of Israeli minister Rehavam Zeevi.



Mahmoud al-Aloul lays a wreath on Abu Ali Mustafa's grave (Fatah's Facebook page, August 27, 2013).



Mahmoud al-Aloul and Jibril Rajoub at Abu Ali Mustafa's memorial service.

Vicious incitement on Fatah's official Facebook page

■ In the wake of the incident at the Qalandia refugee camp, Fatah's official Facebook page posted a picture showing Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu as Hitler. The picture was posted on the Facebook page by a user calling himself Yasser Palestine, who referred to the Israeli prime minister as a "murderer". The inflammatory picture remained on the Facebook page for three days (August 26-28, 2013) until it was taken down (Fatah's official Facebook page, August 26, 2013).



Inflammatory picture against Israel's Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu (Fatah's Facebook page, August 26, 2013).

- Another picture on Fatah's official Facebook page shows PM Binyamin Netanyahu and U.S. President Barack Obama as two Muslim clerics, with text that reads: "Breaking news: the honorable Sheikh Barack Obama and the honorable Sheikh Netanyahu: 'We will liberate Syria'".



"Breaking news: the honorable Sheikh Barack Obama and the honorable Sheikh Netanyahu: 'We will liberate Syria'" (Fatah's Facebook page, August 28, 2013).

The Northern Arena

Operatives detained who were involved in firing rockets into Israel

■ The Lebanese army headquarters reported that on August 30, 2013 the army detained two Lebanese, Yousef Muhammad al-Faliti and Umar Abd al-Mulla al-Atrash, on suspicions of firing rockets into Israel (Al-Nashra, August 31, 2013). In the afternoon of August 22, 2013 four rockets were fired from the western part of southern Lebanon at Israel's Western Galilee. According to Lebanese media reports, the rockets were fired from orchards between the village of Al-Hawsh and the Rashidiya refugee camp, in two separate volleys (Al-Jadid TV, August 22, 2013).

Reactions in the PA and the Gaza Strip to the possibility of a U.S. attack in Syria

The Palestinian Authority

■ Speaking about the possibility of a U.S. attack in Syria during a speech given at the convention of the Fatah Revolutionary Committee, Abu Mazen said that **he is opposed to a military attack in Syria**. According to Abu Mazen, the solution to the crisis in Syria needs to be political (Wafa, September 1, 2013).

■ A demonstration of support for Syria and Hezbollah was held in Ramallah, with demonstrators carrying pictures of Bashar Assad and flags of Syria and Hezbollah. Apparently, the demonstration was led by left-wing activists.



monstration in support of Syria in downtown Ramallah (Paltoday, Hebron Online Facebook page, August 31, 2013).

Hamas

- Top officials in Hamas and other Palestinian organizations in the Gaza Strip are preparing for a possible U.S. attack in Syria. The Palestinian organizations held a meeting on August 27, 2013 to discuss the coming attack. They agreed that such an attack is a “crime” **but made a decision to remain neutral and avoid entering into a military conflict with Israel** (Al-Quds al-Arabi, August 31, 2013). At another meeting held on September 1, they stressed their support for the Syrian people and added that they are opposed to any kind of foreign intervention in the Syrian issue (Maan, September 1, 2013).
- At the same time, the de-facto Hamas administration is preparing for a possible attack. According to **Islam Shahwan**, interior ministry spokesman for the de-facto Hamas administration, the Hamas security services have redeployed in several regions in the Gaza Strip. They also put the activity of training bases on hold and evacuated the operatives who stayed there owing to concerns about Israel taking advantage of the U.S. attack on Syria to attack the Gaza Strip. The purpose of the redeployment, he said, is to secure the internal front for any surprise event (Al-Quds al-Arabi, August 31, 2013).
- The following are several statements made by top officials on the subject:
 - Top Hamas official **Mushir al-Masry** said that Hamas, in spite of the crimes being committed against the Syrian people, is opposed to outside intervention in Arab affairs (Chinese News Agency, August 28, 2013).
 - Top Hamas official **Ayman Taha** wrote on his Facebook page that a U.S. intervention in Syria would set fire to the entire region and that everyone would pay a heavy price for it (Pal Press, August 30, 2013).
 - Top PIJ official **Nafed Azzam** said that his organization is opposed to any kind of foreign intervention in the internal affairs of any Arab state, and that he objects to the American and European threats against Syria. **According to Azzam, the PIJ will react only if Israel tries to take advantage of the U.S. attack on Syria, since the organization limits its activity to Palestine** (Maan, September 1, 2013).