



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict September 3 – 10, 2013



Weapons seized in Judea and Samaria. Left: IED found in Nablus. Right: Weapons found in Hebron (IDF Spokesman, September 4, 2013)

Overview

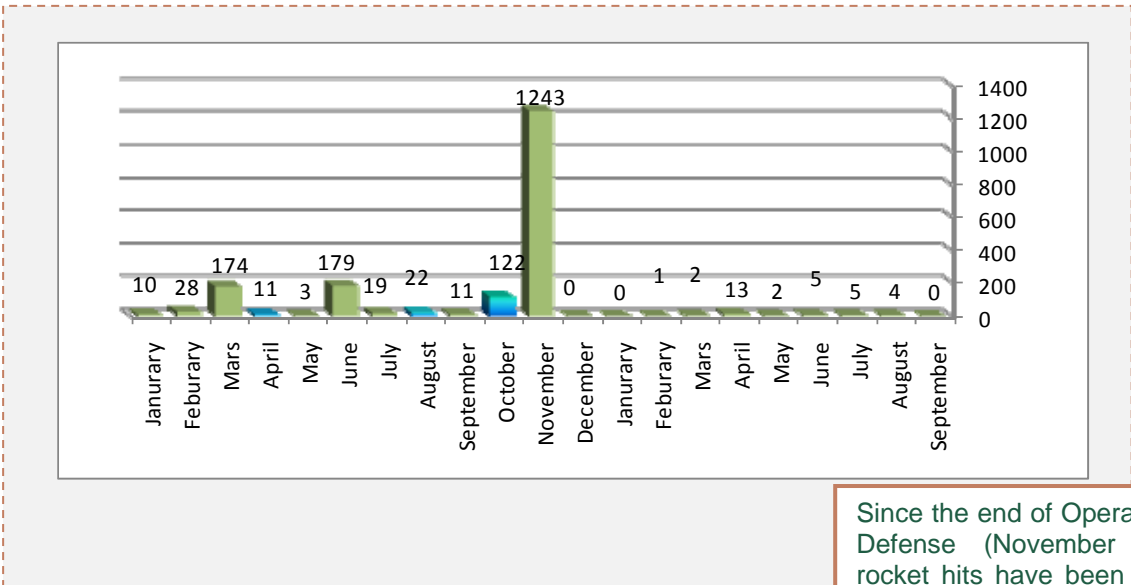
- The Egyptian security forces are conducting an extensive military operation against terrorist targets in the northern Sinai Peninsula. Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, a terrorist organization affiliated with the global jihad, claimed responsibility for an attempt on the life of Egypt's interior minister and threatened to continue attacks on other top Egyptian officials. This past week Israel's south was quiet.
- Stockpiles of weapons were exposed in Nablus and Hebron. Violent riots took place on the Temple Mount. They were dispersed by Israeli security forces. According to Israel Security Agency data, in August there was an increase in terrorist attacks carried out in Judea and Samaria (such as throwing Molotov cocktails, setting IEDs, and several incidents of small arms fire).
- Tensions in Hamas-Egypt relations continue. Top Hamas officials continue trying to fend off Egyptian accusations of joining forces with the Muslim Brotherhood and the ousted president. At the same time, Hamas held military shows of strength intended, in our assessment, to demonstrate its control over the Gaza Strip in view of potential challenges to the stability in the Gaza Strip.

The Situation in Israel's South

Rocket Fire

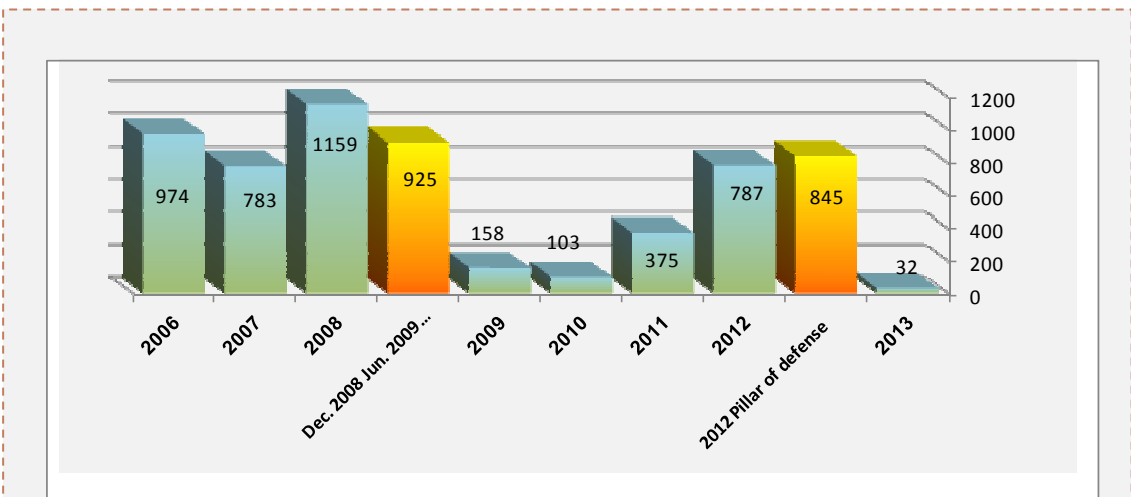
- This past week no rocket hits were identified in Israeli territory.

Rocket Hits in Israeli Territory since January 1, 2012¹



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

Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire²



Since January 1, 2013, 32 rocket hits have been identified.

¹ As at September 10, 2013. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.

² The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.

Judea and Samaria

Terrorist attacks in August 2013

- According to ISA data, **in August 2013 there was an increase in the number of terrorist attacks carried out in Judea and Samaria**. A total of 93 terrorist attacks took place during the month of August, of which 68 in Judea and Samaria (compared to 50 in July) and 25 in Jerusalem (compared to 26 in July).
- **Most of the terrorist attacks involved throwing Molotov cocktails (72 incidents)**. In addition, 18 IEDs were found (12 of them in Jerusalem) and three incidents of small arms fire took place. An Israeli civilian sustained minor injuries from a Molotov cocktail (the incident occurred near the Flowers Gate, Jerusalem's Old City, on August 20, 2013).³

IDF force neutralizes pipe charge

- In the morning of **September 10, 2013** an IDF force neutralized a pipe charge. It was placed in the vicinity of an agricultural gate near the town of Alfei Menashe, where Palestinians from Judea and Samaria cross to work their agricultural land. According to the commander of the force, the pipe charge was probably intended to be used against IDF soldiers (IDF Spokesman, September 10, 2013).

Weapons exposed during IDF operations

- Weapons were found in Judea and Samaria during two separate IDF operational activities:
 - **On September 2, 2013** weapons were seized in Nablus. They included an IED found in a storeroom in the old city (Qasba) and other weapons found hidden in closets and under beds in the house of a Fatah Tanzim operative. Among the weapons seized were hunting rifles, gas and stun grenades, gunpowder, and ammunition (IDF Spokesman, September 2, 2013).
 - **On the night of September 3 – 4** an IDF force exposed a stockpile of weapons on the outskirts of Hebron. They were found hidden in a storeroom in the house of a Palestinian who was suspected of weapons trade. Among the weapons were an M-16 rifle and two full containers of bullets (IDF Spokesman, September 4, 2013).

³ The statistics do not include throwing stones, estimated at several dozen incidents per month.

Violence in Judea and Samaria, riots on the Temple Mount

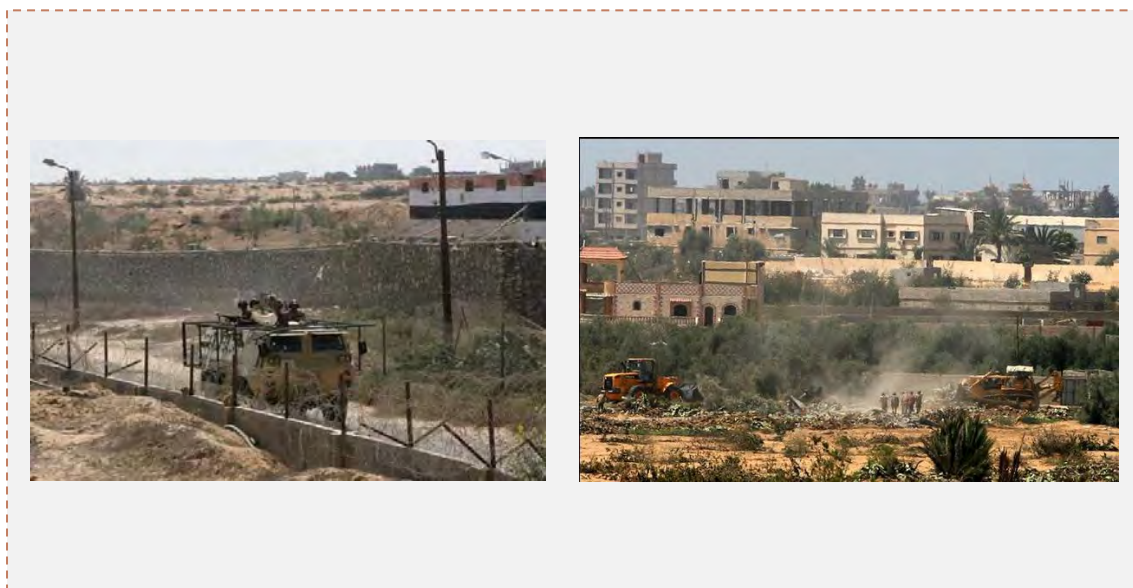
- So-called “popular resistance” activities continued in Judea and Samaria. Stones and Molotov cocktails were thrown at Israeli vehicles, security forces, and civilians. At the same time, confrontations and violent clashes continued between Palestinians and Israeli security forces as part of the weekly protests and demonstrations.
- **Tensions on the Temple Mount escalated recently**, sparked by calls from radical elements, including some Israeli Arabs, to protect the Temple Mount from Israeli visitors. As a result, Israeli security forces restricted Muslims’ entry to the Temple Mount. **During the week two violent confrontations took place on the Temple Mount, following which police forces entered the compound on several occasions.**
 - **On September 4, 2013** stones were thrown at visitors and police officers at the Western Wall plaza. Police forces broke into the Temple Mount and dispersed the stone-throwers, some of whom were masked (ynet, September 4, 2013).
 - In the afternoon of **September 6, 2013**, after a stone-throwing incident, police forces entered the Temple Mount compound and began dispersing the stone-throwers. The police forces used stun grenades and took control of the Temple Mount plaza. Fifteen Palestinians were detained. When the police forces left the compound, another riot began, prompting the police to reenter the compound. A number of worshippers were injured by the stones (ynet, September 6, 2013).
- The activity of the Israeli security forces at the Temple Mount compound drew condemnations:
 - **The PLO Department of Culture and Information** released a statement of condemnation, saying that the activity was intended “to drag the Palestinian people into the circle of violence” while exploiting international and regional events. According to the statement, such activity, as well as expanding the settlements and the Judaization of Jerusalem are a message to the world and to the U.S. administration that Israel is not a partner in the process of establishing peace, and that it has no interest in the peace talks (Wafa, September 6, 2013).
 - **Egypt’s Defense Minister Nabil Fahmi** condemned Israel’s breaking into the Al-Aqsa Mosque plaza as well as the decision to restrict Palestinians’ entrance to the mosque. He warned that Israel’s policy could lead to a religiously-motivated war in the region. He called on the Israeli authorities to reexamine their moves (Al-Youm al-Sabea, September 5, 2013). **The Turkish Foreign Ministry**

released a statement that mentioned Israel's "use of exaggerated force" against worshippers at the Al-Aqsa Mosque, calling on Israel to cease such actions immediately (World Bulletin, September 8, 2013).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

Egyptian military activity in the northern Sinai Peninsula

- In the morning of September 7, soldiers of Egypt's Second Army joined by police forces launched a **large-scale military operation against terrorist targets in the Sinai Peninsula**, which was described as "the biggest Egyptian operation in Sinai since the Yom Kippur War". The operation, which focused on the Sheikh Zuweid and Rafah areas in the northern Sinai Peninsula, included helicopters which shelled buildings where gunmen barricaded themselves.
- During the operation the Egyptian forces took over media, exposed stockpiles of weapons and ammunition, and pursued terrorist suspects (Egyptian forces' Facebook page, September 7, 2013). According to Egypt's Interior Minister **Muhammad Ibrahim**, the operation was intended to hit radical organizations and their weapons. He said that 200 terrorist operatives were detained so far. In addition, orders were given to step up security monitoring at all border crossings in Sinai (Middle East News Agency, September 9, 2013).



Egyptian army forces operate along the Egypt-Gaza Strip border to locate and demolish smuggling tunnels (Filastin Al-'Aan, September 4, 2013).

■ The Egyptian media reported that the goal of the operation was to eliminate terrorist hotspots in the Sinai Peninsula, **particularly networks affiliated with the global jihad**. It should be noted that on September 8, **Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis**, a terrorist organization affiliated with the global jihad, released a statement claiming responsibility for the attempt on the life of Egypt's interior minister, which took place on September 5, 2013 near his Cairo residence. The statement said that the organization members will continue hitting those “who took part in the murder of defenseless Muslims” (Al-Sabil, citing Islamic jihadist forums, September 8, 2013).



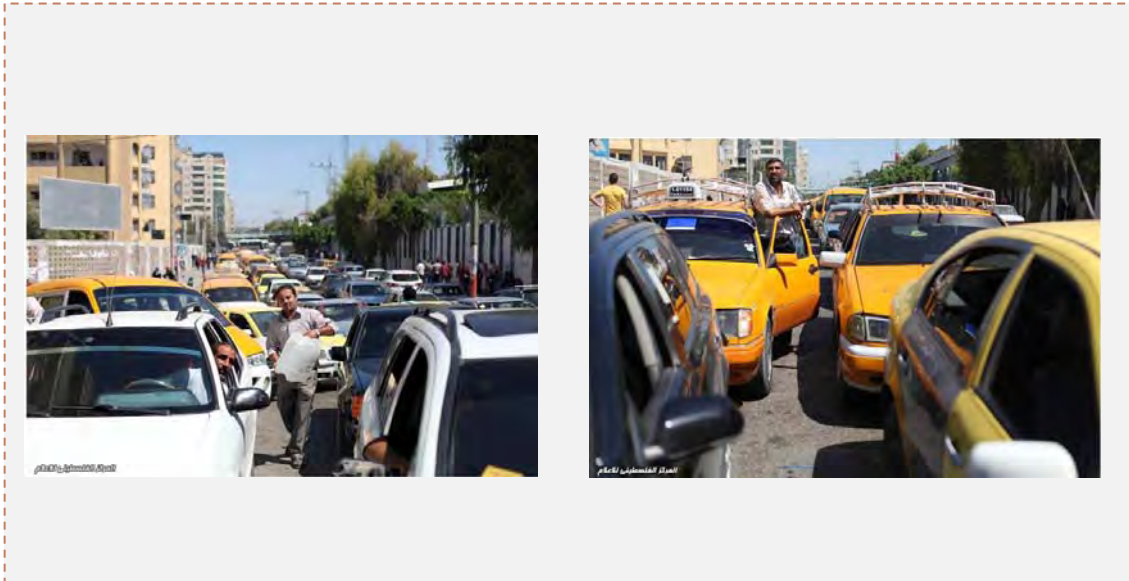
Egyptian army forces display weapons seized in Sinai. According to military sources, the weapons seized were meant for the military wing of the PIJ in the Gaza Strip (Ajnad Facebook page, September 9, 2013).

The Egypt-Gaza Strip border and the economic situation in the Gaza Strip

■ On September 7, 2013, in the wake of the security events in the Sinai Peninsula, the Rafah crossing was closed for the movement of travelers, after working in a limited capacity for several hours (Safa, September 7, 2013). On September 8, sources in the Gaza Strip announced that the crossing resumed working in a limited capacity (Al-Aqsa, September 8, 2013). At the same time, Palestinian sources reported that the activity of 90 percent of the tunnels leading from the Gaza Strip to the Sinai Peninsula was stopped in the wake of the operational activity launched by the Egyptians (Al-Youm al-Sabea, September 1, 2013).

■ Following the demolition of the tunnels and the closing of the Rafah crossing, sources in the Gaza Strip reported that the **fuel distress grew more severe**. It was

reported that the movement of vehicles on Gaza Strip roads diminished, that lines for public transportation were particularly long, and that many Gazans had to reach their places of work on foot (Al-Ayyam, September 8, 2013). **Fathi al-Sheikh Khalil**, chairman of the Gaza Strip Energy Authority, said that the only power station in the Gaza Strip was about to cease working as a result of the severe fuel shortage (Safa, Al-Ayyam, September 8, 2013). In addition, bakeries reported that they would stop working (Felesteen, September 7, 2013).



Long line of vehicles at a gas station in Gaza City (Filastin Info, September 8, 2013).

Egypt-Hamas relations

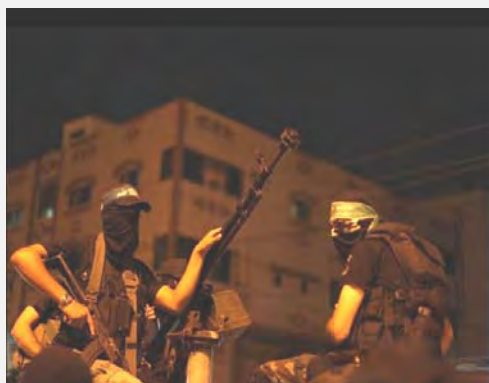
- Top Hamas officials continue fending off Egyptian accusations on Hamas' involvement in the events in the Sinai Peninsula and on its support for the Muslim Brotherhood and the ousted president. The concluding statement of the **de-facto Hamas administration's** weekly session called on Egypt to work swiftly towards cooperation to resolve the security situation and strengthen the historic brotherly bonds between the two nations (Al-Ra'i, September 3, 2013).
- In an interview given by **Musa Abu Marzouq**, the deputy head of the Hamas Political Bureau, he stressed that not a single Hamas operative was detained, injured, or killed in all the events in Egypt since the revolution. He noted that, for Hamas, hitting the Egyptian army is a "red line". Speaking about the expressions of support in the Gaza Strip for ousted President Morsi, he said that it was "an error and an isolated event" that did not reflect the Hamas policy (Dream TV, September 3, 2013). In another interview he condemned the ongoing Egyptian incitement against Hamas

and demanded that the Rafah crossing be opened to prevent “the noose from tightening around Gaza’s throat” (alresalah.net, September 5, 2013).

■ **Khalil al-Hayya**, member of the Hamas Political Bureau, said that Hamas was following with concern the Egyptian army’s activity and its intention to establish a buffer zone along Egypt’s border with the Gaza Strip. He said he was opposed to the security-related explanations used by Egypt to justify the establishment of the buffer zone. He also said he regretted the campaigns taking place in the Egyptian media, which “humiliate the Palestinian people and its resistance” (Felesteen, September 5, 2013).

Military displays in the Gaza Strip

■ **On September 4, 2013** the Hamas military wing held a parade and a military rally in the streets of Gaza City. At the parade it presented some of its weapons (Filastin al-‘Aan, September 4, 2013). It was reported that **Isma’il Haniyah**, the head of the de-facto Hamas administration, took part in the parade (Pal Press, September 4, 2013). The event was apparently **intended to demonstrate Hamas’ control over the Gaza Strip** and deter subversive elements affiliated with Fatah that are trying to undermine the stability of the de-facto Hamas administration, such as the Tamarrod campaign.



Parade and military rally held by the Hamas military wing (Paltoday, September 6, 2013)

■ **On September 6, 2013** operatives from the military wings of Palestinian organizations held a joint military display in northern Gaza Strip. The display, described by Palestinian media as one of the biggest to take place in the past several

years, was attended by representatives from Hamas, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine,⁴ the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the global jihad-affiliated Army of Islam, and more. According to top Hamas official **Mushir al-Masri**, the display is a clear message of unity among Palestinian organizations that choose arms as a “strategic option” (Al-Aqsa, September 6, 2013).



Parade and military rally held by the Hamas military wing (Filastin al-'Aan, September 4, 2013)

The Palestinian Authority

Israeli-PA negotiations

- Rounds of talks between Israel and the PA continue, with the parties attempting to keep the details of the negotiations under wraps. According to the deputy speaker of the U.S. State Department, Israeli and PA delegations have been meeting regularly since the first meeting that was held on July 19, 2013. She also added that the negotiations are serious, and that the U.S. special envoy for Israeli-Palestinian negotiations was briefed on the talks and even took part in some of them (Reuters, September 1, 2013).
- In a meeting held by **Abu Mazen** with a delegation of Arab athletes he said that **the main issue in the present negotiations is the demarcation of borders.** According to Abu Mazen, the next meeting, to be held on September 9, 2013, will

⁴ The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine announced it was withdrawing from the display since Hamas military wing operatives took advantage of the event to express their support for the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt (Maan, September 6, 2013).

discuss security arrangements between Israel and the Palestinians. He said that the Palestinians might go back on their agreement to the principle of territory exchange if Israel refuses to recognize agreements achieved with past governments (AFP, September 6, 2013). **Issa Qaraqe**, the minister of prisoner affairs, said that the second batch of prisoners will be released on October 29, 2013, the third on December 29, 2013, and the fourth on March 28, 2014. He stressed that the release of prisoners has nothing to do with the developments in the talks (Wafa, September 6, 2013).

Protests against the negotiations

■ Networks and organizations opposed to the negotiations continue protesting in Judea and Samaria.

- On September 7, 2013 **the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine** held a protest rally in Ramallah against the resumption of the negotiations with Israel and the United States' intent to attack Syria. The rally was attended by some one thousand people, including the organization's senior figures in Judea and Samaria. The demonstrators were dispersed by Palestinian security forces when they came too close to the Muqata'ah compound in Ramallah (Pal Press, Paltoday, September 7, 2013).



Right: demonstration held by the PFLP in Ramallah against the talks. Left: Palestinian security services prevent demonstrators from approaching the Muqata'ah compound (Paltoday, September 7, 2013).

- **Online social network activists launched a campaign** ahead of what is referred to as “Electronic Anti-Negotiations Day”. They call on Palestinians opposed to the resumption of the peace talks to make their voice heard on September 13, 2013. According to the organizers, such “popular activity” reflects the desires of broad swathes of Palestinian public (Paltoday, September 4, 2013).
- **The Ajnad Facebook page**, used by Hamas in Judea and Samaria, posted a cartoon mocking Abu Mazen’s willingness to resume the peace talks with Israel despite the difficulties and problems facing him (Ajnad Facebook page, September 7, 2013).

Abu Mazen’s meeting with John Kerry

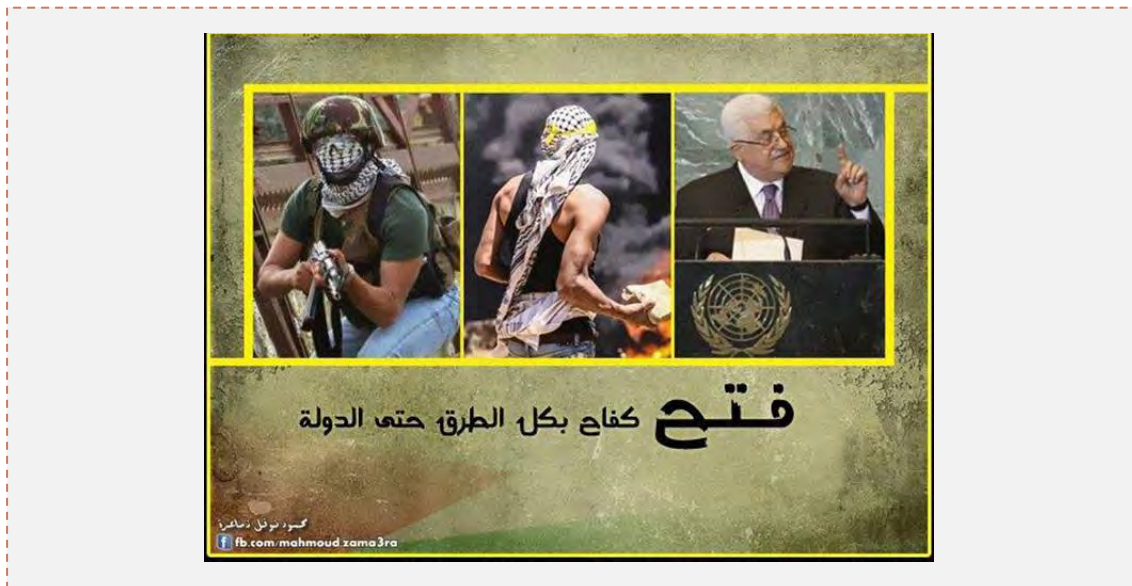
■ **Abu Mazen**, who is currently visiting London as part of his visits to Europe, held two meetings with U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry. One of the meetings was also attended by Saeb Erekat, member of the PLO executive committee and chief negotiator; Muhammad Shtayeh and Nabil Abu Rodeina, members of the Fatah central committee; and Majdi al-Khaleidi, Abu Mazen’s advisor. The meeting discussed the latest developments in the talks and the points of contention that arose throughout their course (Maan, September 9, 2013).



Abu Mazen meets with John Kerry in London (Wafa, September 8, 2013)

Posters inciting to violence on Fatah's official Facebook page

■ **The posting of inflammatory materials on Fatah's official Facebook page continues.** An illustration posted on the website on September 8, 2013 presents "popular resistance" and armed struggle against Israel alongside the political activity. The image shows Abu Mazen giving a speech at a U.N. assembly, alongside a Palestinian armed with a gun and another Palestinian holding a large stone. The text on the illustration reads, "Fatah. Struggle by all means until [the establishment of] the state" (Fatah's official Facebook page, September 8, 2013).



"Fatah. Struggle by all means until [the establishment of] the state" (Fatah's official Facebook page, September 8, 2013)

■ Another illustration posted on the Facebook page shows a crossed-out Israeli flag with the word "yuck" written underneath, and the shahada verse ("There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the prophet of Allah") with "like" written underneath (Fatah's official Facebook page, September 8, 2013).



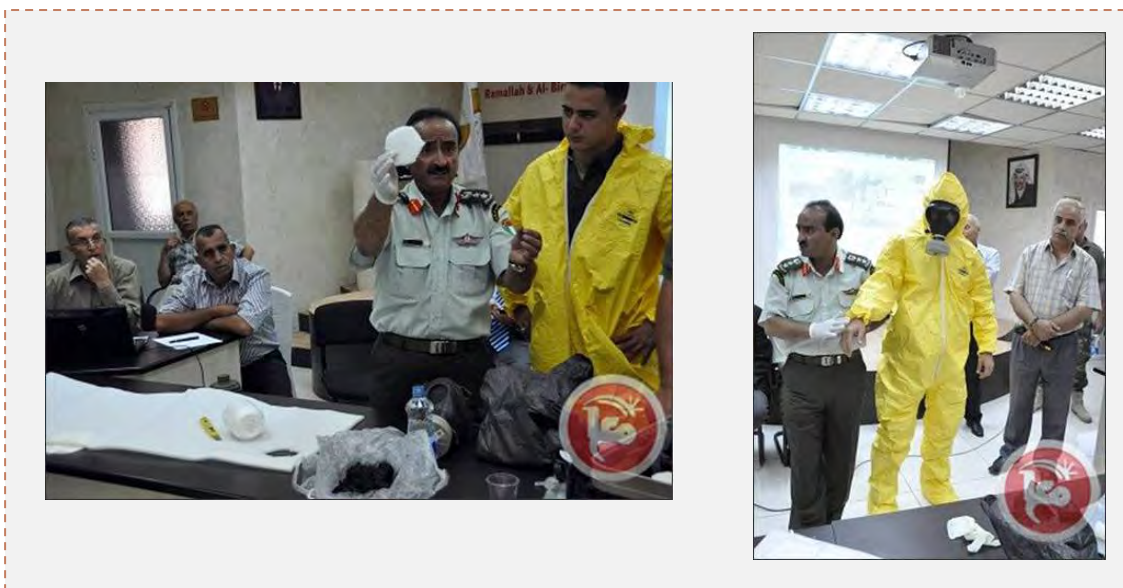
“Yuck” on the Israeli flag, “Like” on the shahada (Fatah’s official Facebook page, September 8, 2013)

The Northern Arena

Statements on possible U.S. attack on Syria

The Palestinian Authority

- At the end of its weekly meeting, the PA government released a statement **condemning the use of chemical weapons in Syria, while expressing its opposition to outside intervention in Syria’s internal affairs** (Wafa, September 3, 2013).
- **Adnan al-Damiri**, spokesman of the PA security services, said Israel was responsible for the safety of the Palestinians in case of a regional war, and called on Israel to provide the Palestinians with all necessary means (AFP, September 3, 2013).
- **Wasef Ariqat**, chairman of the National Authority for Minimizing Disaster Risks, said that the protection that the Palestinians have for the event of a regional war is meager and scant. He said that protection workshops are held and that an information video is being produced that will be shown on all Palestinian TV channels (Maan, September 8, 2013).



Workshop in Bethlehem on protection from a chemical attack in the region (Maan, September 8, 2013)

The Gaza Strip

- **Hamas** issued an announcement stressing its principal objection to any attack or outside involvement in what is happening in Syria or other Arab Islamic countries. However, it stressed that it condemns the massacres against the Syrian people, particularly the latest massacre, where chemical weapons were used (Filastin al-'Aan, September 3, 2013). **Isma'il Haniyah**, head of the de-facto Hamas administration, said that Hamas is opposed to a military intervention in Syria, since it could also have consequences in the Palestinian scene (alresalah.net, September 5, 2013).
- Unlike Hamas' cautious rhetoric, radical elements in the Gaza Strip threaten to hit Israel in case Syria is attacked. For instance:
 - **Abu Jamal**, spokesman for the Abu Mustafa Brigades, the military wing of the PFLP, said that the organization has no "red lines" when it comes to a confrontation with Israel. He called to take a stand alongside Syria, which stood by the resistance and gave protection to the Palestinian resistance" (Rusiya al-Yaum, September 5, 2013).
 - An unidentified **PIJ** source warned that, in case Syria is attacked by outside forces, the PIJ may react by firing rockets into Israel if asked to do so by Iran and Syria. According to that source, **no such decision has been made yet**, but it is possible if Israel joins the operation against Syria (almonitor, September 2, 2013).