



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict November 20– 26, 2013



On November 19, 2013, following mortar shell fire targeting an IDF force, Israeli Air Force aircraft struck terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip. Above: Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorist operatives examine a training facility in Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip after the Israeli strike (Hamas forum website, November 20, 2013).

Overview

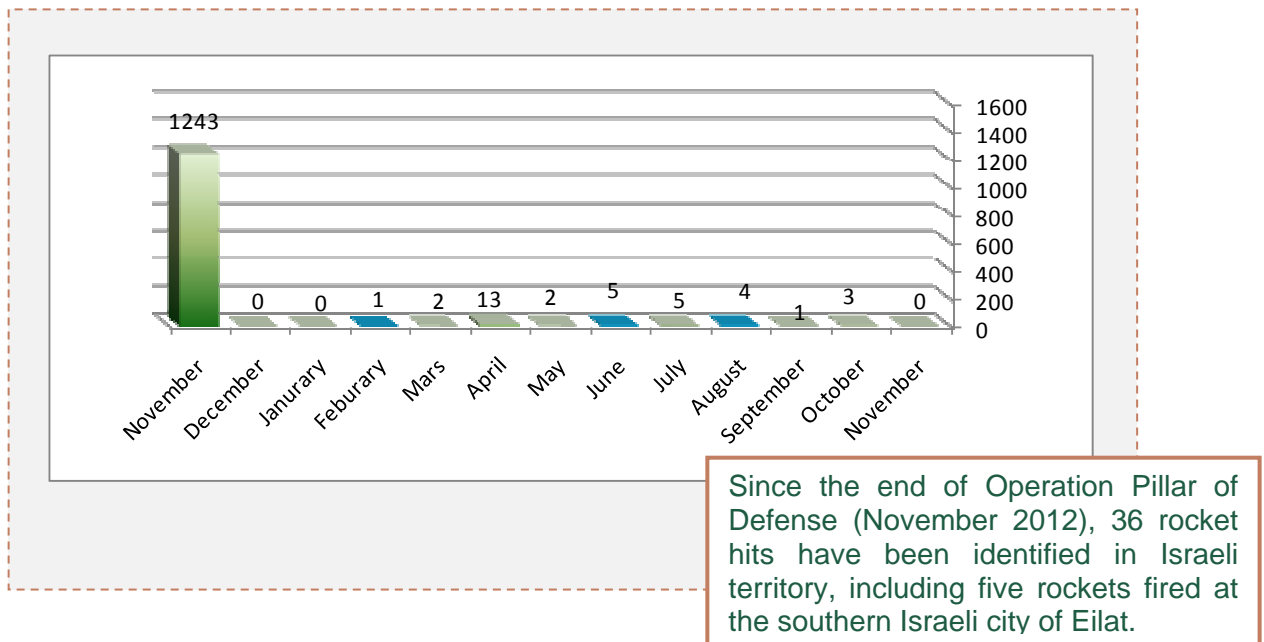
- This past week three mortar shells were fired at an IDF force engaged in routine activities near the security fence between Israel and the Gaza Strip. In response, on November 19, 2013, the Israeli Air Force struck several terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip. A spokesman for the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) warned that "Israeli violations" were liable to lead to the collapse of the lull in the fighting.
- The energy crisis in the Gaza Strip continues, causing a significant worsening in the quality of the Gazans' daily lives. One of the reasons for the crisis is a dispute between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority (PA) over tax payments for Israeli diesel fuel. In addition, Hamas is under Egyptian pressure because of the smuggling tunnels and the Rafah crossing. Hamas spokesmen blame Israel and are critical of the PA, but are careful to tread lightly when it comes to Hamas' relations with Egypt.

The Situation in Israel's South

Mortar Shell Fire and Israeli Air Force Response

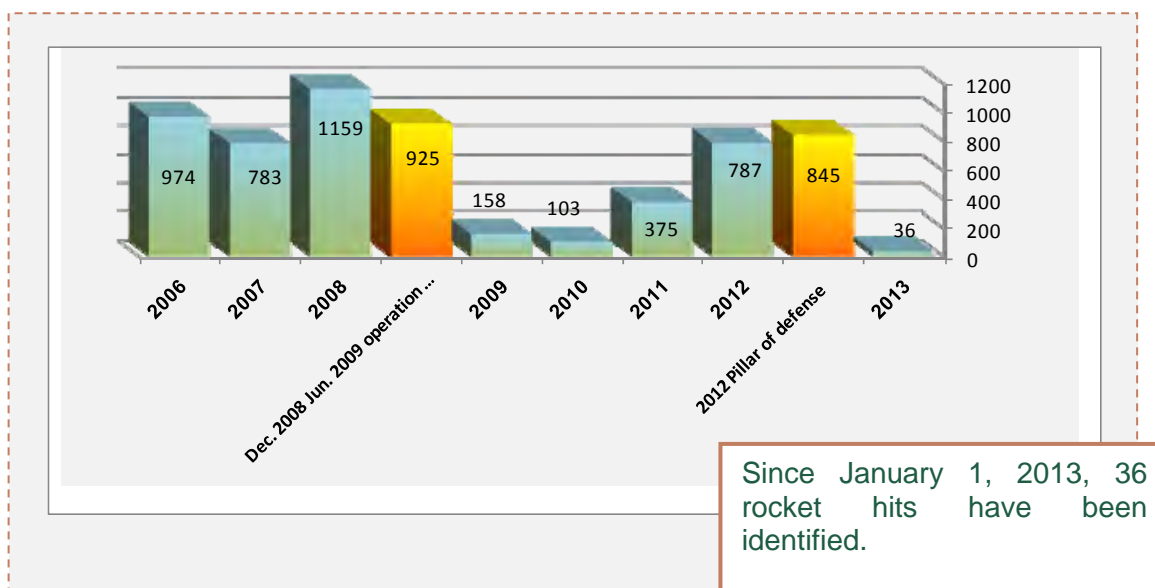
- On **November 19, 2013**, three mortar shells were fired from the Gaza Strip, targeting an IDF force engaged in routine activities along the security fence between Israel and the Gaza Strip. There were no casualties and no damage was reported.

Rocket Hits in Israeli Territory since January 1, 2012¹



¹ As of November 26, 2013. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.

Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire²



Israeli Air Force Response

- In response to the mortar shell attack on an IDF force, on November 19, 2013, the Israeli Air Force (IAF) aircraft struck a number of terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip. They included a site for the manufacture of weapons, two tunnels in the southern Gaza Strip and a focal point for terrorist activity in the northern Gaza Strip (IDF spokesman, November 19, 2013).



Pit created in a PIJ training facility in Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip by the IAF strike (Hamas forum website, November 20, 2013).

² The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.

■ Following the IAF strikes, **Abu Ahmed**, a spokesman for the Jerusalem Brigades, the PIJ's military-terrorist wing, said that "Israel's continuing violations of the lull agreement," as manifested by repeated IDF incursions into Palestinian territory and IAF strikes, might lead to the collapse of the agreement at any time (Filastin al-Yawm, November 21, 2013). In addition, **Ahmed al-Mudallal**, PIJ terrorist operative, said that the strikes expressed Israel's security and military frustration, and that Israel was trying to exploit the situation in the Arab-Muslim world to restore its deterrent capabilities (Filastin al-Yawm, November 20, 2013).

Judea and Samaria

Violence and Attempted Attacks Continue in Judea and Samaria

- Dozens of youths between the ages of 15 and 17 from Issawiya in east Jerusalem were recently detained on suspicion of throwing stones and Molotov cocktails at an IDF base, Hebrew University buildings and vehicles on Mt. Scopus. An investigation revealed that **the youths belonged to two cells affiliated with the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP)** (Israel Police Force, November 24, 2013).
- Violence continues in Judea and Samaria, part of the so-called popular resistance. Stones were thrown at Israeli civilians and Israeli security forces, as were Molotov cocktails. In addition, a number of attacks were attempted on the main roads.



Left: Abdallah Abu Rahma (left), coordinator for the Bil'in resistance committees to protest the fence, and with local and foreign activists confront IDF forces during one of the weekly demonstrations protesting the security fence in Bil'in (Bil'in Facebook page, November 22, 2013). Right: Palestinians throw stones at IDF forces in Ni'lin (YouTube, November 22, 2013).

Palestinian Activists Block Road near Maaleh Adumim

- On November 25, 2013, Fatah and Popular Resistance Committees activists blocked the road to Maaleh Adumim to protest the new traffic arrangements which they claim discriminate against the local Palestinian population. A confrontation broke out between the activists and the Israeli security forces, and a number of activists were detained (Al-Ayam, Ma'an News Agency, November 25 and 26, 2013).



Palestinian activists block the road near Maaleh Adumim (Wafa News Agency, November 25, 2013).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

The Energy Crisis

■ During recent weeks the energy crisis in the Gaza Strip has significantly worsened daily life for the residents of the Gaza Strip. One of the causes of the crisis is the dispute between the de-facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip and the PA over tax payments for the diesel fuel delivered from Israel. Sources within the de facto Hamas administration blamed Israel for the crisis, but also criticized the PA. The Rafah crossing was open intermittently for limited periods of time this past week.



DFLP activists demonstrate in front of the offices of the electric company in Gaza City, demanding the PA and the Hamas administration immediately resolve the problem of the lack of electrical power in the Gaza Strip (Facebook page of the PFLP's central information unit, November 21, 2013).

■ **Bassem Naim**, Ismail Haniya's advisor for foreign affairs, said that the Hamas administration was conducting negotiations with Arab and international agencies to bring to their attention the consequences of the closure of the Gaza Strip, especially the energy crisis and the closing of the Rafah crossing. He said that as far as international and humanitarian law were concerned, Israel was chiefly responsible for the closure.

■ Following the Egyptian army's closing of the tunnels along the border between Egypt and the Gaza Strip, **Musa al-Khaldi**, commander of the naval police in Rafah, reported a rise in attempts to smuggle goods into the Gaza Strip by sea. He said most of the items being smuggled were vehicles and spare parts (Al-Ayam, November 24, 2013).

■ Despite the great pressure exerted on the Hamas administration caused by the disruption in the operation of the Rafah crossing and the Egyptian campaign against the smuggling tunnels, senior Hamas figures tread lightly when publicly referring to Egypt and Hamas' relations with it:

- **Ismail Haniya**, head of the de-facto Hamas administration, met with a Miles of Smiles delegation where he said that Hamas' relations with Egypt were "strategic" and that Hamas was in almost daily contact with Egyptian general intelligence. However, he admitted, there were what he called "mutual reproaches" between Hamas and Egypt, but they would not lead to a breaking off of relations (Safa News Agency, November 22, 2013).
- **Salah al-Bardawil**, a senior Hamas figure, said that Hamas had never been responsible for exporting violence to Egypt and that Hamas was a resistance movement against Zionist Israel, its only enemy. He said there was a direct line of communications open between Hamas and Egyptian general intelligence and that any accusation against Hamas served only Israel (Al-Mayadeen TV, November 20, 2013).

Another Military Display to Mark the First Anniversary of Operation Pillar of Defense

■ The organizations in the Gaza Strip continue holding military displays to mark the first anniversary of Operation Pillar of Defense. On November 20, 2013, a military display was held in Rafah by the educational administration of the Hamas administration in collaboration with the Islamic Block. Students participating in the Al-Futuwwa Project – Hamas' "educational program" in which Gazan youths receive military training – took part in the display.³ It began with a military parade through the streets of Rafah, after which a ceremony was held at the Beersheba school in which armed students marched on Israeli flags and simulated the abduction of an IDF soldier (Filastin Al-'Aan and the website of the Hamas administration's ministry of the interior, November 20, 2013).

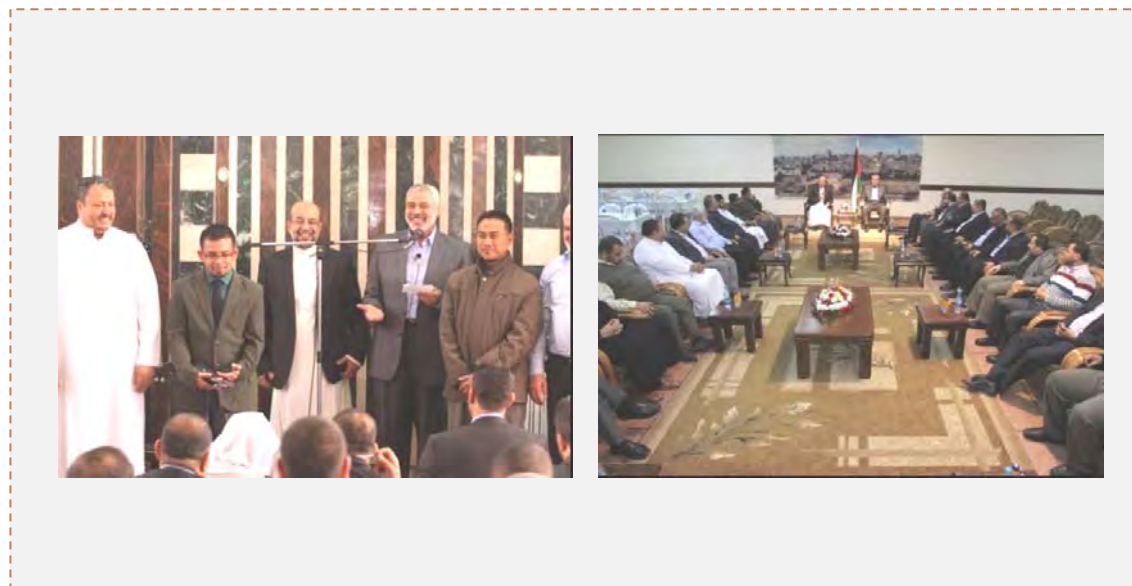
³ For further information about the Al-Futuwwa Project, see the May 8, 2013 bulletin "Hamas has introduced a program in Gaza Strip schools called Al-Futuwwa, which provides military training for tens of thousands of adolescent boys."



Left: Gazan youths participating in the Al-Futuwwa Project march on Israeli flags (Filastin Al-'Aan, November 20, 2013). Right: Al-Futuwwa participants simulate the abduction of an IDF soldier (Website of the Hamas administration's ministry of the interior, November 20, 2013)

Aid to the Gaza Strip: Another Miles of Smiles Convoy

■ On **November 22, 2013**, another Miles of Smiles convoy entered the Gaza Strip. It consisted of eight pro-Palestinian activists from various countries who brought first aid vehicles and medical aid. It was the first aid convoy to enter the Gaza Strip since the takeover in Egypt in July 2013. The delegation was received by **Ghazi Hamad**, deputy foreign minister of the Hamas administration, and visited the home of Ismail Haniya, head of the de-facto Hamas administration.



The Miles of Smiles delegation meets with Ismail Haniya (Filastin Al-'Aan, November 22, 2013).

The Palestinian Authority

PA Responses to Mahmoud Abbas' Invitation to Speak in the Israeli Knesset

- **Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu**, speaking at an Israeli Parliament (Knesset) meeting held in honor of French President François Hollande, invited PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas to come to the Knesset and recognize the historical truth that for 4,000 years the Jews have had ties to the land of Israel and that they have the right to self determination (Website of the prime minister, November 18, 2013).
- In response to the invitation, **Mahmoud Abbas said that he was willing to speak before the Knesset but without preconditions from Israel and only to say what he wanted to and not what the prime minister of Israel wanted him to say** (Voice of Russia Radio, November 22, 2013). **Riyadh al-Maliki**, PA minister of foreign affairs, said that the invitation was propaganda disseminated by Netanyahu to impose additional conditions on the Palestinians. He said if Mahmoud Abbas came to the Knesset he would speak about the rights of the Palestinian people and not say what Netanyahu wanted to hear (Al-Watan, November 24, 2013).

The Negotiations with Israel

- Senior figures in the PA, especially Mahmoud Abbas, continue making statements about the negotiations with Israel:
 - **Mahmoud Abbas**, speaking at the Arab-African summit meeting held in Kuwait, said that the **PA would not accept a Palestinian state with temporary borders** or any interim arrangement because its objective was a peace agreement between Palestine and Israel. He said the greatest danger to regional peace was Israel's so-called continuing violations in Jerusalem (Al-Ayam, November 20, 2013).
 - Meeting in Ramallah with Børge Brende, the Norwegian foreign minister **Mahmoud Abbas said that the PA was committed to a political process of nine months to establish a Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders**. He said that Israeli construction in the settlements, and especially in Jerusalem, was destroying the chances for peace (Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda, November 25, 2013).



Mahmoud Abbas meets in Ramallah with the Norwegian foreign minister (Wafa News Agency, November 24, 2013).

- On another occasion **Mahmoud Abbas** accused Israel of not wanting negotiations. He said he was worried Israel would exploit the chilled relations with the United States, caused by the agreement with Iran, to exit the negotiations. He also reiterated that if the negotiations failed the PA would appeal to international organizations (Al-Ekhbariya, November 23, 2013).

Propaganda Events

Naval Activity in the Gaza Strip

■ Activists from the so-called Intifada Youth, a network operating mainly through the Internet, announced their intention to hold a naval protest against the so-called Israeli "naval closure" of the Gaza Strip. The protest will be held on November 29, the anniversary of the UN Partition Plan. During the protest boats will attempt to leave the six-mile zone permitted to Gazan fishermen. **According to the organizers an estimated 200 activists, including activists from abroad, will participate, as will correspondents who will document the activity. An estimated 17 vessels will be involved.** Before the boats set sail the organizers plan to hold a press conference in the port of Gaza (Facebook page of the network, November 23, 2013).

Israeli Flag Burned at Fatah Rally in Bethlehem

■ Fatah's Shabiba movement at Birzeit University held a rally on November 21, 2013, in memory of Yasser Arafat. It was attended by the commander of the PA's national security force in Bethlehem. During the rally plaques were given to

Palestinian terrorist operatives from the Bethlehem district who were freed from Israeli jails during the second phase of terrorist prisoner releases. Students burned Israeli flags throughout the university campus (Facebook page of Bethlehem TV, November 24, 2013).



Palestinian students burn an Israeli flag during a Shabiba rally at Birzeit University (Facebook page of Bethlehem TV, November 24, 2013).