



## News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict December 11 – 17, 2013



Left: Palestinian Islamic Jihad operatives distribute aid to flood victims in the Gaza Strip (Paltoday website, December 14, 2013). Right: A tanker with fuel from Qatar en route from the Kerem Shalom crossing to the Gaza power plant (Filastin Al-'Aan, December 15, 2013).

### Overview

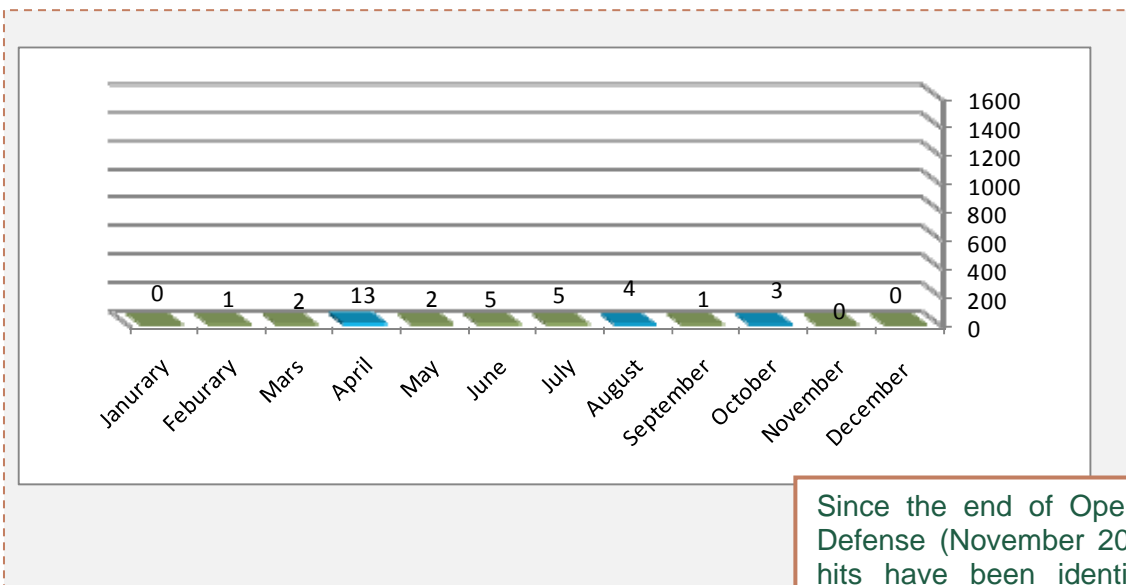
- This past week no rocket hits were identified in Israel's south. In Judea and Samaria violence continued, most of it associated with the so-called popular resistance. In the north, an IDF soldier was killed by a Lebanese army soldier on the Israeli-Lebanese border in the region of Rosh Haniqra.
- The extreme weather conditions in the Middle East caused serious damage in the Gaza Strip (flooding, buildings destroyed, and damage to agriculture) and made it necessary to evacuate thousands of Gazans from their homes. **Hamas provided aid** and asked for help from Arab and international agencies in an attempt to relieve the distress in the Gaza Strip.
- The **emir of Qatar** responded to Hamas' request and rushed fuel and other assistance to the Gaza Strip. The aid from Qatar entered through the **Kerem Shalom crossing** and was praised by the Gazans and a spokesman for the de-facto Hamas administration. **Israel** opened the Kerem Shalom crossing on Friday (when it is normally closed) to allow the delivery of fuel, gas, water pumps and humanitarian equipment.

## The Situation in Israel's South

### Rocket Fire

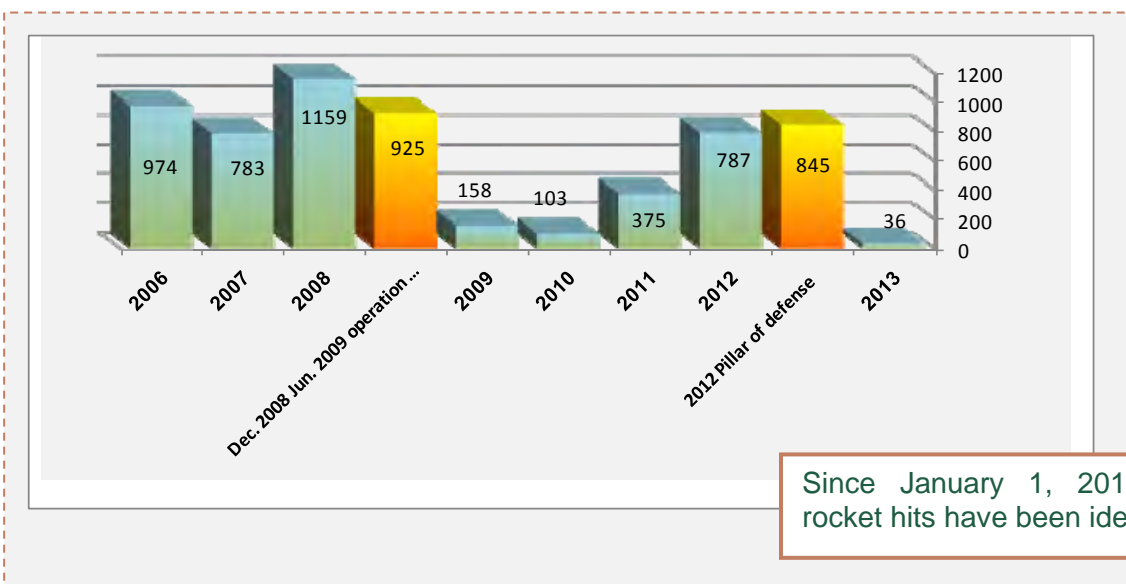
■ This past week Israel's no rocket or mortar shell hits were identified in Israeli territory.

### Rocket Hits in Israeli Territory since January 1, 2012<sup>1</sup>



Since the end of Operation Pillar of Defense (November 2012), 36 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory, including five rockets fired at the southern Israeli city of Eilat.

### Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire<sup>2</sup>



Since January 1, 2013, 36 rocket hits have been identified

<sup>1</sup> As December 17, 2013. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.

<sup>2</sup> The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.

## Judea and Samaria

### Violence and Attempted Attacks Continue

- Violence continues in Judea and Samaria, part of the so-called popular resistance. Stones (and snowballs...) and Molotov cocktails were thrown at Israeli civilians and Israeli security forces. In addition, a number of attacks were carried out on the main roads. On December 10, 2013, stones and rocks were thrown at a civilian Israeli bus near the village of Al-Aroub (in the Etzion bloc). The driver suffered minor injuries but the bus, which was armored, was extensively damaged (Tazpit News Agency, December 10, 2013).
- On December 11, 2013, dozens of Palestinian youths destroyed a large section of the security fence separating the village of Al-Azariya from Jerusalem. According to reports they broke a four-meter hole in the fence (Ma'an News Agency, December 11, 2013).



**Palestinians throw stow balls at IDF vehicles (Fatah bureau of enlistment and organization Facebook page, December 11, 2013).**

## Developments in the Gaza Strip

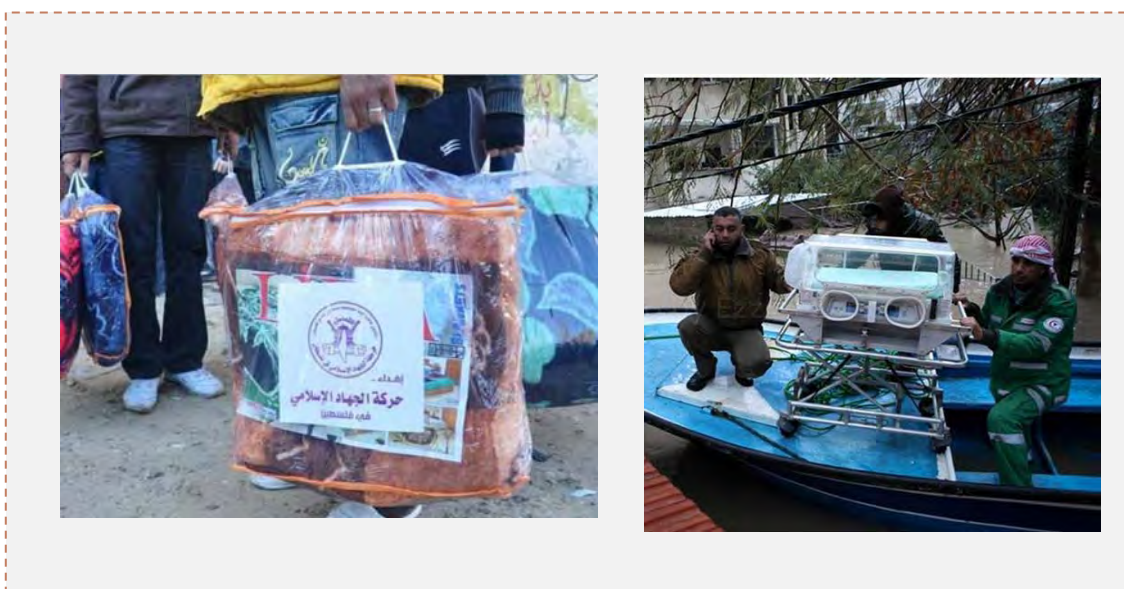
### The Rafah Crossing

- This past week the Rafah crossing's operating schedule continued to be irregular, closing on Friday, December 13, 2013. During the few days it was open only a limited number of vehicles passed through (Safa News Agency, December 11, 2013).

■ **Maher Abu Sabha**, head of the crossings administration in the de-facto Hamas administration, said that contacts were being held with Egypt to reopen the crossing. He said the storm in the Gaza Strip illustrated the need for opening it for humanitarian purposes, and appealed to Egypt to allow humanitarian aid to be delivered to the Gaza Strip in the wake of the storm (Alresala.net website, December 16, 2013).

### The Gaza Strip after the Storm

■ The severe storm in the Middle East at the end of last week caused damage in the Gaza Strip and worsened an already difficult situation. In addition to long power outages the storm caused flooding, destroyed buildings and caused damage to agriculture, and thousands of Gazans were evacuated from their homes. **The de-facto Hamas administration quickly and intensively enlisted many activists to bring aid to Gazans suffering from the effects of the storm** and to deal with the damage. At the same time the heads of Hamas asked for help from Arab and international agencies in an attempt to ease the distress in the Gaza Strip.

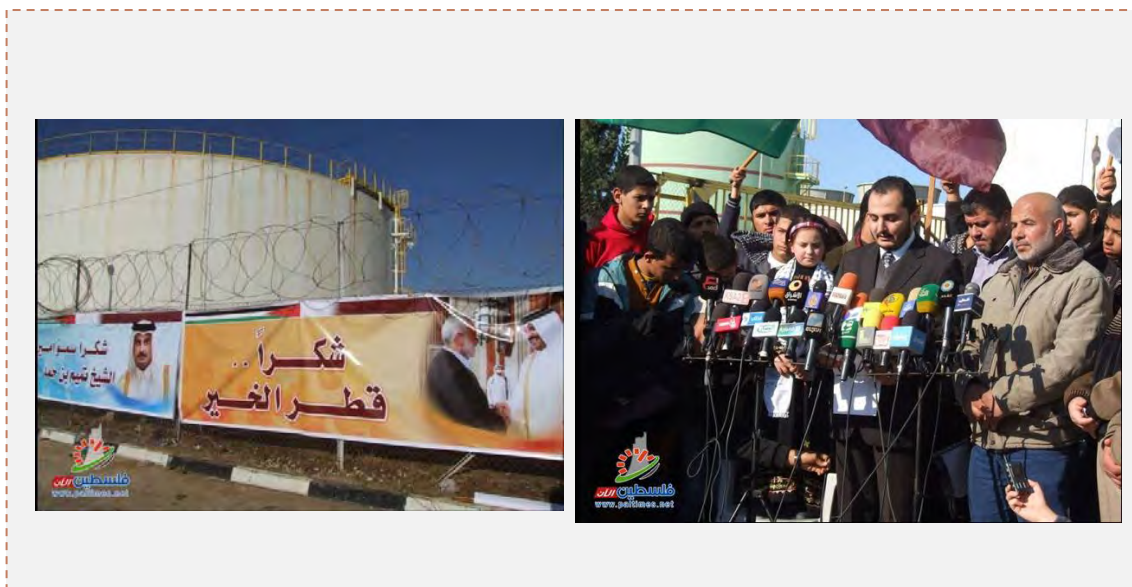


Left: Equipment distributed to the needy by Palestinian Islamic Jihad activists (Paltoday website, December 16, 2013). Right: Hamas security force operatives deliver an incubator to a baby born at home in one of the flooded neighborhoods (Hamas interior ministry Facebook page, December 15, 2013).

### Qatar

■ On December 13, 2013, Ismail Haniya spoke with Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, the emir of Qatar, about the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip. **The emir ordered the authorities in his country to rush \$32 million worth of fuel and other assistance worth \$28 million** to the Gaza Strip to help the residents deal with the extreme weather conditions (Qatar News Agency, December 13, 2013).

■ The delivery of 473,000 liters of fuel donated by Qatar for the Gaza Strip power plant through the Kerem Shalom crossing was met by a reception and thanks to Qatar from the residents of the Gaza Strip and a spokesman for the de-facto Hamas administration (Filastin Al-'Aan, December 15, 2013). **Fathi al-Sheikh Khalil**, deputy director of the Hamas energy authority, and **Ihab al-Ghussin**, spokesman for the de-facto Hamas administration, held a press conference. They said that thanks to the fuel donated by Qatar, the Gaza Strip power plant would gradually be able to supply the same amount of electricity as before the crisis, that is, eight hours a day (Paltoday website, December 15, 2013). On December 15, 2013, the power plant renewed its activity.



Left: Ihab al-Ghussin, spokesman for the de-facto Hamas administration, holds a press conference at the Gaza Strip power plant. Right: Gaza Strip sign thanking Qatar (Filastin Al-'Aan, December 16, 2013).

## The Palestinian Authority

■ **Ismail Haniya** spoke to **Mahmoud Abbas** about the situation in the Gaza Strip, especially the energy crisis. **Ehab Bessaïso**, spokesman for the Palestinian Authority (PA) government, later announced that the PA was making an effort to resolve the crisis. He said there was a proposal to reduce the taxes (levied by the PA) and that they were waiting for guarantees from the Hamas administration to transfer the tax funds (Dunia Al-Watan, December 11, 2013). **Rami Hamdallah**, Palestinian prime minister, said that his government was still willing to transfer fuel to the Gazan power station without the tax usually imposed on commercial fuel (Wafa News Agency, December 11, 2013).

## Israel

- UNRWA appealed to Israel to help the Gaza Strip. The Coordinator for government activities in the territories authorized the Israeli water company Mekorot to send water pumps to the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom crossing. The Coordinator said that Israel would do everything necessary to help the civilian population in the Gaza Strip, as well as the civilians in Judea and Samaria (Ynet, December 14, 2013).
- Israel was also enlisted to help the residents of the Gaza Strip. In addition to the 1.2 million liters of fuel from Qatar, other assistance was delivered through the Kerem Shalom crossing. Beginning on Friday, December 13, 2013, trucks also delivered cooking gas and emergency and humanitarian equipment (Coordinator for Government Activities in the Territories' website, December 16, 2013).

## International Agencies

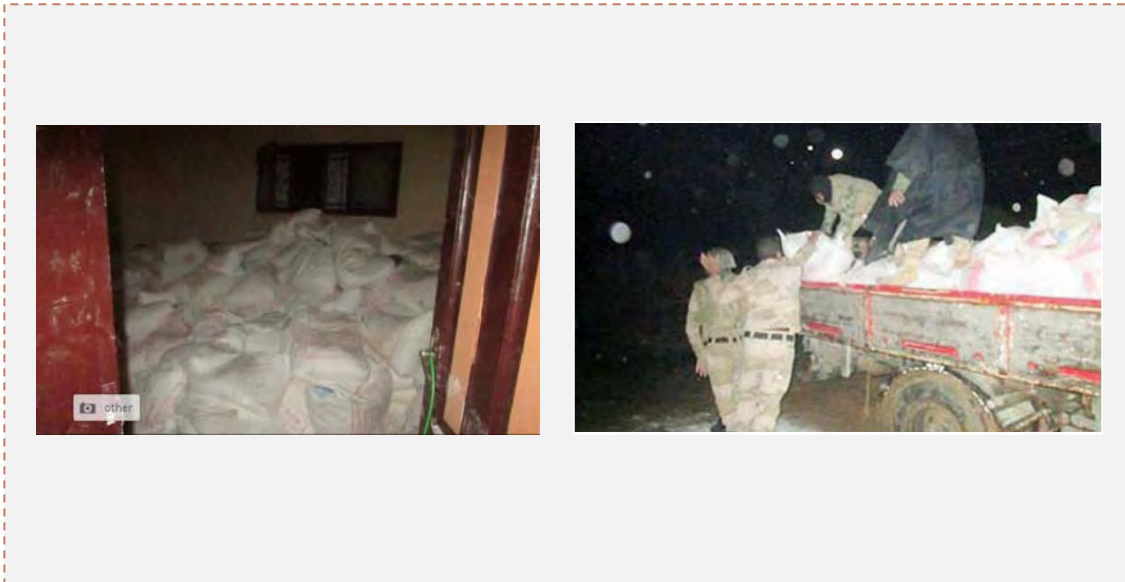
- Several international agencies answered the call to help the Gaza Strip, among them the Turkish IHH. A campaign to help the Gaza Strip was announced by IHH head Bülent Yıldırım at a meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Reportedly, the organization collected \$6.5 in donations from 57 Muslim countries, members of the Organization. Bülent Yıldırım said the funds would be transferred to the Gaza Strip via Jordan and Egypt (IHH website, December 15, 2013).



Left: Bülent Yıldırım speaks at the meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (IHH website, December 16, 2013). Right: IHH poster asking for donations for the Gaza Strip.

## Egyptian Army Activity in the Sinai Peninsula

■ Egyptian security forces raided a fertilizer warehouse in Egyptian Rafah and confiscated an estimated ten tons of APC-type explosives, used in the manufacture of rockets. It is often smuggled into the Gaza Strip (Al-Wafd and Al-Masri Al-Youm, Egypt, December 14, 2013).



Sacks of APC explosives confiscated by the Egyptian security forces during a raid on a warehouse in Egyptian Rafah (Al-Masri Al-Youm, Egypt, December 14, 2013).

## Hamas Anniversary Announcement

■ Following the situation in the Gaza Strip caused by the storm, Hamas announced it was canceling the march planned to mark the movement's 26th anniversary (Al-Aqsa TV, December 12, 2013), which falls on December 14. Instead, the movement issued an official announcement of its guiding principles, among them the following (Website of the Hamas administration information bureau, December 13, 2013):

- **The "resistance" [i.e., violence and terrorism] is the "strategic option" for restoring the rights and land of the Palestinian people, and for defending the holy places. The Palestinian people will not give up one inch of its land.**
- **Jerusalem will remain the symbol of Palestine and the main focus of the Palestinian cause.**
- **Hamas totally refuses to accept any agreement or interim arrangement that will force the Palestinians to give up their land, or any of the holy places, or even one of their rights.**

- **The release of the Palestinians prisoners from Israeli jails will remain a top priority.**
- **Hamas considers the continued siege of the Gaza Strip and the closing of the Rafah crossing a crime against the Palestinian people.**

## The Palestinian Authority

### The Negotiations with Israel

- **John Kerry**, the American Secretary of State, visited the Middle East again on December 12-13, 2013, to promote the peace process. He spoke separately with Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu and with Mahmoud Abbas, the PA chairman.
- After his visit John Kerry said that the United States' objective remained reaching a permanent Israeli-Palestinian agreement without an interim arrangement, and that both sides would meet their commitments and continue negotiations throughout the nine months allotted for them (i.e., until April 2014). He also said that the next phase of prisoner release would be carried out as planned on December 29<sup>3</sup> (State Department website, December 13, 2013). Interviewed after his visit, Kerry said that progress had been made and that the negotiations would continue behind closed doors (ABC, December 15, 2013).
- Mahmoud Abbas gave John Kerry an official communiqué rejecting the American proposal for Palestinian-Israeli security arrangements that would entail a presence of Israeli security forces along the eastern border with Jordan (Agence France-Presse, December 13, 2013). Mahmoud Abbas also rejected Kerry's proposal to hold a trilateral meeting because, he said, no real progress had been made in the negotiations (Ma'an News Agency, December 14, 2013).

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<sup>3</sup> After Kerry's previous visit the Palestinian rejected outright any possibility that would postpone the third phase of the release of the Palestinian terrorist prisoners (Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda, December 10, 2013).



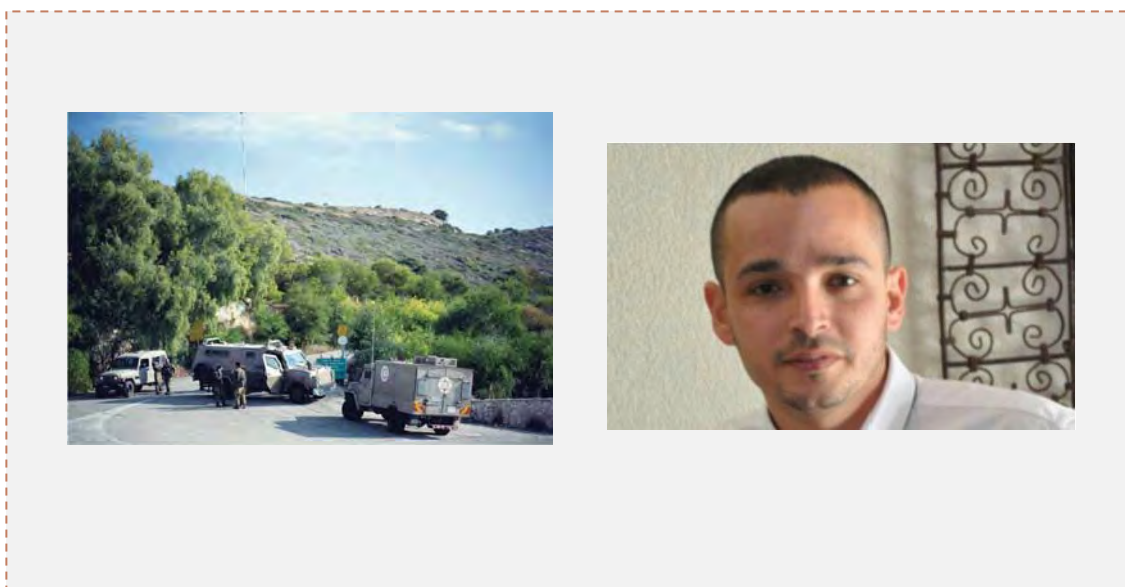
John Kerry meets Mahmoud Abbas in his office in Ramallah (Wafa News Agency, December 12, 2013).

## The Northern Front

### Israeli Soldier Killed in Shooting on Lebanese Border

- On the evening of December 15 an IDF soldier was shot to death on the Lebanese border in the region of Rosh Haniqra. At approximately 2030 hours the soldier, **Master Sergeant Shlomi Cohen**, was driving to the Rosh Haniqra base when he was shot from the Lebanese side of the border. Israel lodged a serious complaint with the UN (IDF spokesman, December 16, 2013).
- The Lebanese media reported that the shooter was a soldier named **Hassan Ibrahim** from the village of Akar in north Lebanon (Al-Hadath News, December 16, 2013). Ibrahim disappeared from his base immediately after the shooting, but turned himself in the following morning. The Lebanese army said in a statement that the shooting incident at Rosh Haniqra had been the action of an individual and that the Lebanese army was committed to carrying out UN Resolution 1701 (Website of the Lebanese army, December 16, 2013). It was also announced that the shooting was the result of "the personal behavior of one of the soldiers," and that the incident was being investigated (NTV, December 16, 2013).
- Moshe Yaalon, Israel's minister of defense, said that the Lebanese government and army were responsible for the attack. If it were in fact the work of a "rogue soldier" then Israel demanded to know how he would be punished and how the Lebanese army

would prevent other such attacks. On December 16, 2013, IDF liaison officers met with Lebanese army and UNIFIL officers to learn of the circumstances of the fatal attack.



**Left: Shlomi Cohen (IDF spokesman, December 16, 2013). Right: IDF forces in the region of the attack (Al-Watan Al-Arabi, December 17, 2013).**