



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict December 25 – 31, 2013



Release of Palestinian terrorist prisoners, third phase. Left: Bereaved parents demonstrate in front of the home of a released prisoner in east Jerusalem (Photo by Yishai Aberjil for Tazpit News Agency, December 31, 2013). Right: Mahmoud Abbas greets the prisoners in Ramallah (Wafa News Agency, December 21, 2013).

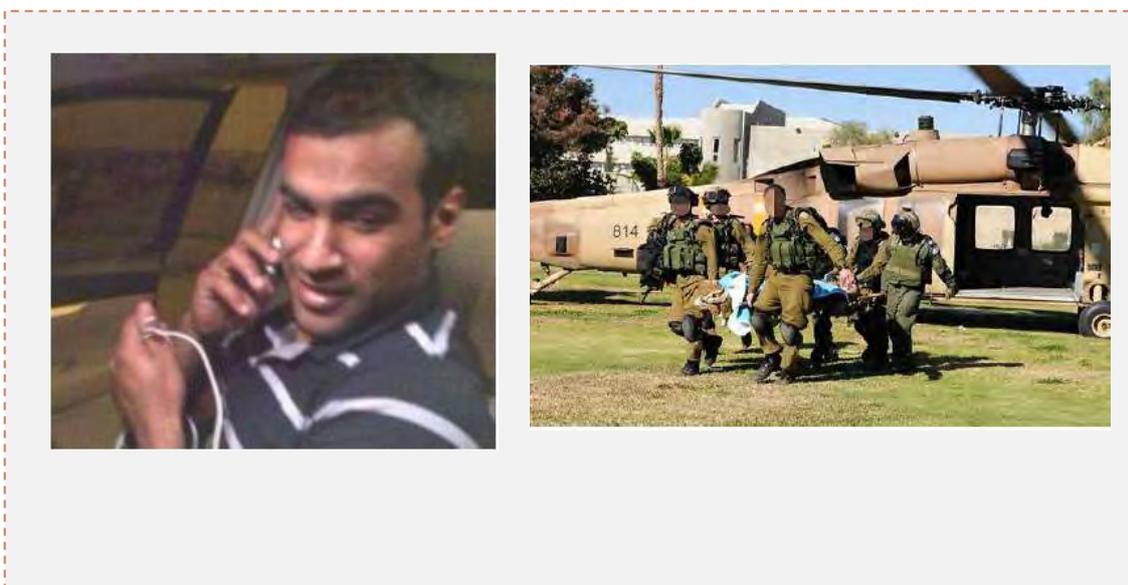
Overview

- Terrorist attacks from the Gaza Strip continued this past week. An Israeli civilian was killed by sniper fire while repairing the security fence along the border between Israel and the Gaza Strip. Two rocket hits were identified in the region of Ashqelon. The IDF responded by striking terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip and closing the Kerem Shalom crossing (which has since reopened).
- Twenty-six Palestinian terrorists were released from Israeli jails in the third phase (of four) to which Israel is committed. Of them, 18 were released to Judea and Samaria, three to the Gaza Strip and five to east Jerusalem. The families of the victims of terrorism held public protests against their release. A festive reception was held for the terrorists in Ramallah, attended by senior Palestinian Authority (PA) figures. Mahmoud Abbas gave a speech in which he said that there would be no permanent agreement until all the prisoners in Israeli jails had been released.

The Situation in Israel's South

Israeli Civilian Shot and Killed at the Security Fence

■ On the afternoon of **December 24, 2013**, an Israeli civilian was shot and killed by Palestinian sniper fire. The Israeli, **Salah Abu Latif**, was repairing the security fence near the Israeli village of Nahal Oz. The military-terrorist wing of the Popular Resistance Committees (PRC) claimed responsibility for the attack (Filastin Al-'Aan, December 25, 2013). Beforehand, military-terrorist operatives in the Gaza Strip reported they were monitoring the activities of IDF forces near the east Gazan border, including their repairing the damage to the fence caused by the recent heavy storm (Filastin al-Yawm, December 23, 2013).



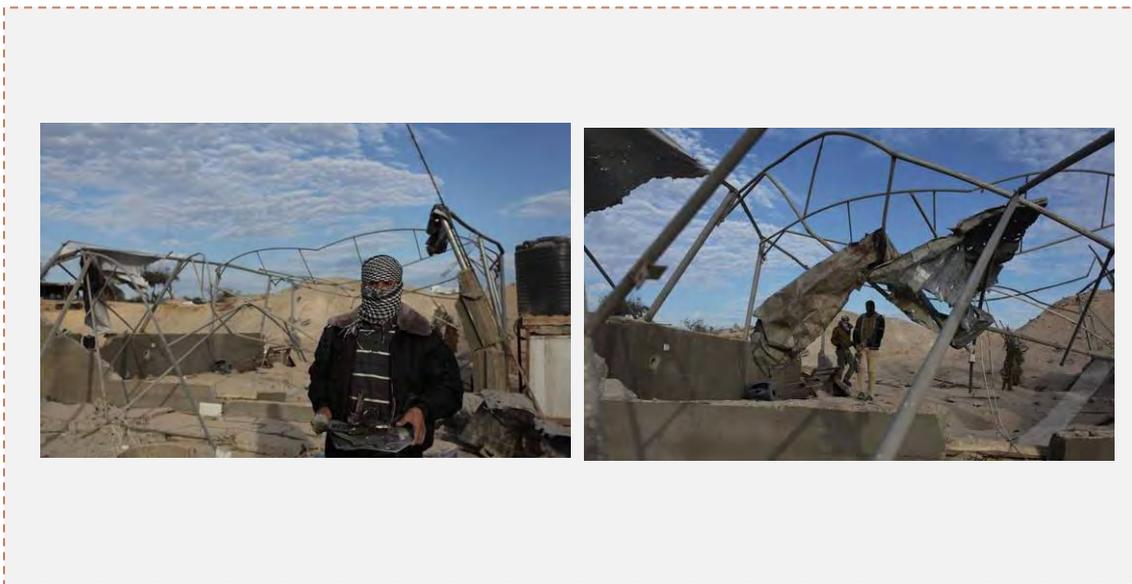
Left: Salah Abu Latif, killed by Palestinian sniper fire. Right: Salah Abu Latif evacuated to a hospital in Israel (IDF Spokesman, December 23, 2013).

Israel's Response

■ In response to the killing Abu Latif, Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu said that it was a severe incident and would not go unanswered (Website of the office of the Israeli prime minister, December 24, 2013). Defense Minister Moshe Yaalon ordered the closing of the Kerem Shalom crossing (which was reopened on December 29, 2013, see below).¹

¹ Following the closing of the crossing, **Jamal al-Khudari**, head of the Popular Committee against the Siege, accused Israel of using collective punishment against the Gazans, whose humanitarian conditions were dire in any case (Filastin Al-'Aan, December 24, 2013).

- The Israeli Air Force struck a number of terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip, among them a site for the manufacture of weapons and other sites used for terrorist activities. The Palestinian media reported an attack on posts belonging to the military-terrorist wing of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) in Khan Yunis, Deir al-Balah, Rafah and Beit Lahia. According to the Palestinian media, a girl was killed and 13 people were wounded (Al-Ra'i and the Wafa News Agency, December 24, 2013).
- PIJ terrorist operatives visit the "Fajr" training camp near Khan Yunis, used the by organization's military-terrorist wing, after the Israeli Air Force strike (Paltoday website, December 26, 2013).



PIJ terrorist operatives visit the "Fajr" training camp near Khan Yunis, used the by organization's military-terrorist wing, after the Israeli Air Force strike (Paltoday website, December 26, 2013).

Terrorist Organization Responses

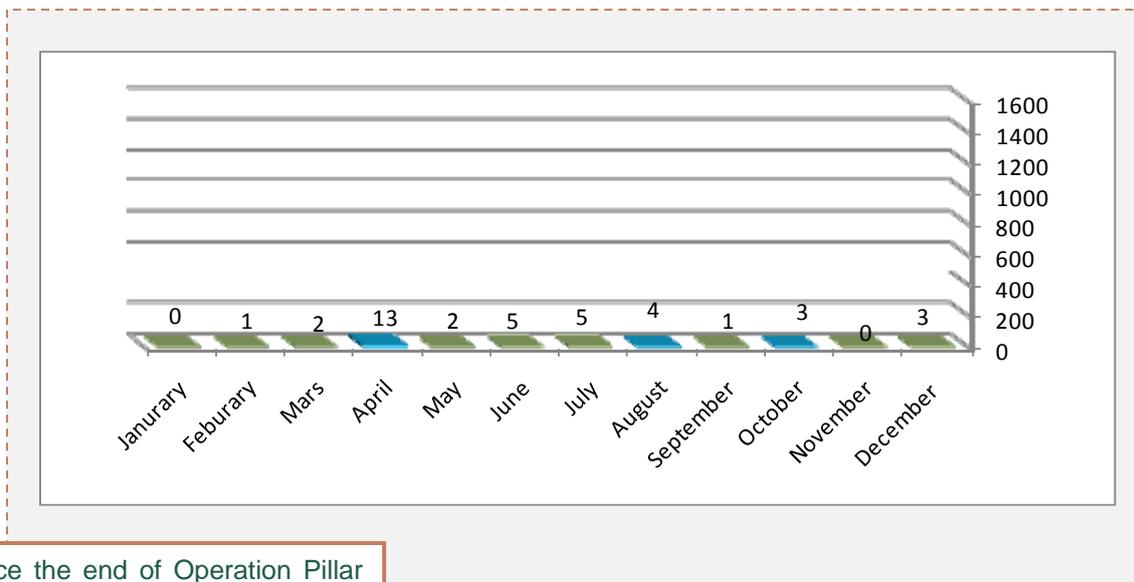
- Hamas and the PIJ reacted strongly to the Israeli attacks, but **did not escalate the hostilities on the ground**:
 - **Ihab al-Ghussin**, spokesman for the de-facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip, demanded that the international community restrain Israel. **Sami Abu Zuhri**, spokesman for Hamas, said that Israel's activities were cowardly and would not break the will of the Palestinian people or the Palestinian resistance.
 - **Ahmed al-Mudallal**, senior PIJ figure, said that the resistance had the right to react to Israeli escalation and that the Gaza Strip was in an ongoing state of war against Israel (The Safa News Agency and Alresala.net website, December 24,

2013). **Abu Ahmed**, spokesman for the Jerusalem Brigades, the PIJ's military-terrorist wing, said that Israel had violated the lull agreement more than 1,400 times since the end of Operation Pillar of Defense. However, he added that the lull had to be mutual and that his organization did not want it to end, and would preserve it (Ma'an News Agency, December 25, 2013).

Rocket Fire

- This past week two rocket hits were identified in Israel's south. On December 26, 2013, **two rockets fell in open areas near Ashqelon**. There were no casualties and no damage was reported.

Rocket Hits in Israeli Territory since January 1, 2013²



Since the end of Operation Pillar of Defense (November 2012), 39 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory, including five rockets fired at the southern Israeli city of Eilat.

² As December 31, 2013. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.

Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire³



Since January 1, 2013, 39 rocket hits have been identified.

Israeli Air Force Response

■ In response to the rocket fire, the IAF struck a number of terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman, December 26, 2013). Among the targets were a site for the manufacture of weapons in the central Gaza Strip and a weapons storage depot in the northern Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman, December 26, 2013). The Palestinian media reported strikes on a number of locations in the Gaza Strip, and also reported that one Gazan was seriously wounded (Aza Al-'Aan, December 26, 2013).

Judea and Samaria

Violence Continues

■ This past week violent events continued in Judea and Samaria, part of the so-called popular resistance. Stones 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 29, 2013, a Molotov cocktail was thrown at a Border Police post in Hebron. It did not explode, there were no casualties and no damage was reported (Tazpit News Agency, December 29, 2013).

³ The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.



The Border Police post in Hebron attacked with a Molotov cocktail (Photo by Yerah Rap, Tazpit News Agency, December 29, 2013).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

Fatah Operative Detained, Entered Israel for Medical Care in Ramallah

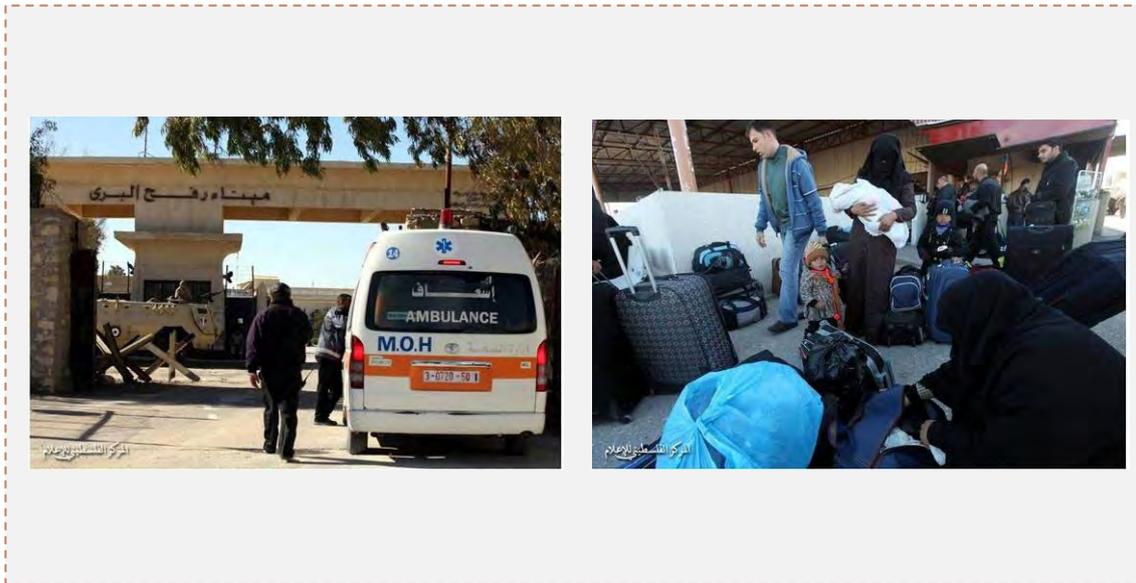
- At the beginning of December 2013 the Israeli security forces detained **Muhammad Saber Muhammad Abu Amsha**, a Fatah terrorist operative who in recent years was responsible for planning and carrying out terrorist attacks against civilians and IDF forces. Abu Amsha, 32, from Beit Hanoun in the northern Gaza Strip, tried to enter Israel on a humanitarian entrance permit **to obtain medical treatment in Ramallah** (IDF Spokesman, December 25, 2013).

- During interrogation Abu Amsha said he had planned an attack on an IDF border patrol and was supposed to be the sniper. He collected information about the movements of IDF forces in the various sectors, practiced shooting and determined the best range. Because he was wounded, the attack was postponed until after he received medical care in Ramallah (IDF Spokesman, December 25, 2013).

The Crossings

- On December 24, 2013, after having been closed for two weeks, the Rafah crossing was reopened for limited traffic, primarily for urgent cases. On December 25, 2013, an ambulance and hospital furniture, gifts from Norway, entered the Gaza Strip through

the crossing (Filastin al-Yawm, December 26, 2013). However, it was reported that the Egyptian authorities refused to allow the entry of activists from a Miles of Smiles convoy and an aid delegation from Italy (PalPress website, December 26, 2013).



Traffic at the Rafah crossing (Palinfo website, December 24, 2013).

■ On December 29, 2013, the Kerem Shalom crossing reopened, after having been closed by orders of the Israeli defense minister on account of terrorist attacks originating in the Gaza Strip. After the crossing opened **Fathi Sheikh Khalil**, head of the energy authority in the de facto Hamas administration, said **the Gaza power station would begin operating again and the supply of electricity, which had been limited by the closing of the crossing, would return to its previous level, that is, eight hours a day** (Qudsnet website, December 28, 2013).

Egypt Outlaws the Muslim Brotherhood: Hamas' Reactions

■ On December 25, 2013, the Egyptian authorities formally outlawed the Muslim Brotherhood, including its political wing, the Justice and Liberty party, as a **terrorist organization**. The step, which is not yet legally valid, may mean that the Hamas movement, whose roots are in the Muslim Brotherhood, will also be designated a terrorist organization. Senior Hamas figures in the Gaza Strip stressed that the Egyptian government's announcement would not deter Hamas or force it to modify its positions or activities.

■ Reactions were the following:

- **Musa Abu Marzouq**, a member of Hamas' political bureau, denied Hamas' involvement in events in Egypt. However, he said that Hamas had no intention of renouncing the Muslim Brotherhood as an act of good will towards the Egyptian government (PalPress website, December 26, 2013).
- **Musheir al-Masri**, a Hamas member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, said that the calls in Egypt to put Hamas on the list of terrorist organizations were an unprecedented and serious sign, and consistent with American and European positions (Filastin al-Yawm, December 27, 2013). He said the Hamas movement would not be influenced, because its legitimacy came from the [Palestinian] people and the resistance, and not from any external factor. He added that it would be better for Egypt to support the Gaza Strip rather than harm it (Aljazeera.net, December 27, 2013).
- **Mahmoud al-Zahar**, a member of Hamas' political bureau, said that Hamas was not a member of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and that no one in the Arab world believed Hamas was a terrorist organization. He said the decision had been taken by the government, which had overturned the results of the elections in Egypt, and that it was not a legal decree (Al-Akhbar, December 28 2013).

■ In response to statements made by Hamas activists, **Hani Salah**, spokesman for the Egyptian government, said that the government's decision served Egypt's interests, that it was an internal matter and that no one had the right to interfere (Al-Youm Al-Sabea, December 28, 2013).

The Palestinian Authority

The Third Phase of Prisoner Release

■ On **December 30, 2013**, the third phase (of four planned) of prisoner releases was carried out, and 26 Palestinian terrorists imprisoned in Israeli jails were set free. They were released after the Israeli Supreme Court rejected the appeals of the Israelis families of the terrorists' victims. Among them were five residents of east Jerusalem who hold Israeli ID cards. Three were released to the Gaza Strip and 18 to Judea and Samaria.

■ A festive reception was held for the terrorists in the Muqata'a in Ramallah, attended by **Mahmoud Abbas**, chairman of the PA, **Rami Hamdallah**, the Palestinian prime minister, and other important figures. Mahmoud Abbas gave a speech in which he said that there would be no final agreement until all the prisoners had been released. However, interviewed before their reception, he said that the PA was still committed to what had been agreed on with the American secretary of state, that is, nine months of negotiations (Ma'an News Agency, December 30, 2013).

The Released Terrorists

No.	Name	Organization	Remarks
1.	Ahmed Farid Shahadeh	Fatah	Resident of east Jerusalem. Detained in 1985. Sentenced to 45 years in prison for the murder of Yosef Farhan.
2.	Yassin Abu Khadair	PFLP	Resident of east Jerusalem. Detained in 1988. Sentenced to 28 years in prison for the murder of Yigal Shahaf in Jerusalem.
3.	Bilal Abu Hussein	Fatah	Resident of east Jerusalem. Detained in 1988. Sentenced to 36 years in prison for the murder of Farouq Abu al-Hamid Hader.
4.	Ibrahim Taktuk	Fatah	Resident of Nablus. Detained in 1989. Sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of IDF reserve soldier Benjamin Meisner in the Kasbah in Nablus.
5.	Bilal Ibrahim Dhamra	Fatah	Resident of Salfit. Detained in 1989. Sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of Frederick Rosenfeld.

6.	Muhlis Sidqi Sowafra	Fatah	Resident of Tubas. Detained in 1991. Sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of IDF soldier Yosef Ben Yaakov Malchin.
7.	Feisal Mustafa Abu al-Rob	Fatah	Resident of Qabatiya. Detained in 1989. Sentenced to two terms of life imprisonment for the murder of IDF soldier Yoram Cohen and four collaborators.
8.	Mahmoud Atta Muamar	Fatah	Resident of Bethlehem. Detained in 1992. Sentenced to two terms of life imprisonment for the murder of Israel Prize winner Professor Menachem Shtern in the Valley of the Cross in Jerusalem.
9.	Naaman Yusuf Shalabi	Fatah	Resident of Jenin. Detained in 1992. Sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of two Druze on suspicion of collaboration with Israel.
10.	Adnan Mahmoud al-Afandi	PIJ	Resident of the Dheisheh refugee camp, south of Bethlehem. Detained in 1992. Sentenced to 30 years in prison for the attempted murder of two boys in Jerusalem.
11.	Jamal Khaled Abu Muhsen	Fatah	Resident of Tubas. Detained in 1991. Sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of Shlomo Yihye, 76, from the village of Kadima

12.	Ibrahim Khalil Salah	Fatah	Resident of Bethlehem. Detained in 1992. Sentenced to three terms of life imprisonment for the murder of Israel Prize winner Professor Menachem Shtern in the Valley of the Cross in Jerusalem, Eli Amsalem and Hussein Zayid.
13.	Ahmed Jumaa Khaiaf	Fatah	Resident of east Jerusalem. Detained in 1992. Sentenced to 21 years in prison for terrorist activity with grave intent.
14.	Osama al-Silawi	Fatah	Resident of Jenin. Detained in 1992. Sentenced to four terms of life imprisonment for the murder of Yossi Biton and four Palestinian collaborators.
15.	Mahmoud Daajana	Fatah	Resident of east Jerusalem. Detained in 1993. Sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of Sarah Sharon in Holon.
16.	Muhammad Afanah	Fatah	Resident of Ramallah. Detained in 1993. Sentenced to 40 years in prison for the murder of Sarah Sharon in Holon.
17.	Ramadan Yaqoub	Fatah	Resident of Qalandia, east Jerusalem. Detained in 1993. Sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of Sarah Sharon in Holon.
18.	Ayman Jaradat	Fatah	Resident of Jenin. Detained in 1993. Sentenced to four

			terms of life imprisonment for the murder of collaborators with Israel and two Druze in northern Israel.
19.	Ahmed Kamil	Fatah	Resident of Jenin. Detained in 1993. Sentenced to 26 years in prison for the murder of Yoram Cohen and 15 Palestinian collaborators.
20.	Sayid Muhammad al-Tamimi	Fatah	Resident of Nebi Saleh. Detained in 1993. Sentenced to life imprisonment for murder of IDF officer Haim Mizrahi.
21.	Nasser Barham	Hamas (possibly former Fatah)	Resident of Tulkarm. Detained in 1993. Sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of Moshe Edri in his store in Netanya
22.	Mahmoud Salman	PFLP	Resident of Beit Lahia, northern Gaza Strip. Detained in 1994. Sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of Shai Shuker.
23.	Jamal Abu Jamel	PFLP	Resident of east Jerusalem. Detained in 1994. Sentenced to 22 years in prison for stabbing an IDF soldier in east Jerusalem.
24.	Ibrahim Abu Ali	Fatah	Resident of Bani Suheila in the southern Gaza Strip. Detained in 1994. Sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of Israeli taxi driver Roni Levi in Tel Aviv.

25.	Naim al-Shawamra	Fatah	Resident of Dura, near Hebron. Detained in 1995. Sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of Yossi Hayon.
26.	Rami Barbah	Fatah	Resident of Khan Yunis, southern Gaza Strip. Detained in 1994. Sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of Yosef Zandani in Bnei Aiyish.

Released Prisoner Calls for Abduction of Israelis

■ **Samer al-Issawi**, a Palestinian prisoner released from an Israeli jail on December 23, 2013, after having been on a hunger strike, said in an interview that **the release of the prisoners would only be accomplished by abducting Israelis**. He promised to continue his struggle for the sake of the Palestinian people (Paltoday website, December 23, 2013). Al-Issawi, a Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) operative, was sentenced to 26 years in prison for terrorist activities and released in the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal in 2011. After he violated the terms of his release he was detained again.⁴

⁴ On December 23, 2013, Israeli released Samer al-Issawi after he had been on a hunger strike for 210 days. He is a DFLP terrorist operative sentenced to 26 years in prison for terrorist activities and released in the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal in 2011. After violating the terms of his release he was detained again. He comes from the village of Al-Issawiya in east Jerusalem, where a mass reception was held for him on his release, attended by senior figures in the PA and armed operatives of the DFLP. It was reported that Mahmoud Abbas called to congratulate him on his release (Qudsnet website, December 23, 2013).



Saeb Erekat, a member of Fatah's Central Committee and chief Palestinian negotiator, visiting released terrorist operative Samer al-Issawi (Facebook page of Saeb Erekat, December 28, 2013).

The Negotiations with Israel

- Senior PA figures **continue to express pessimism** regarding the results of the upcoming visit of American Secretary of State John Kerry, which is supposed to lead to **the signing of a framework for a Palestinian-Israeli agreement**. **Saeb Erekat**, a member of the PLO's Executive Committee and head of the Palestinian negotiating team, said that the negotiations had failed and that there was no reason to continue them until the time allotted for them had elapsed. He blamed Israel for the failure of the negotiations, claiming that Israel had killed 33 Palestinians since the negotiations began and issued tenders for the construction of more than 5,000 dwelling units. He called on the Palestinian leadership to appeal to international organizations and institutions to recognize a Palestinian state with the 1967 borders and Jerusalem as its capital (Voice of Palestine Radio, December 30, 2013).
- Regarding Israel's intention to announce the construction of new dwelling units in the Jewish settlements after the third phase of the release of Palestinian terrorists, **Saeb Erekat** said that if Israel did so he would advise Mahmoud Abbas to announce [the PA's] candidacy for membership in 63 international organizations, including the International Criminal Court in The Hague (Ma'an News Agency, December 26, 2013).



A belligerent poster on Saeb Erekat's Facebook page marking the 49th anniversary of the founding of Fatah (Facebook page of Saeb Erekat, December 29, 2013).

PA Response to Proposed Law Annexing the Jordan Valley

- On December 29, 2013, the Israeli Ministerial Committee on Legislation voted to support a proposed law that would impose the legal and administrative systems of the Jordan Valley and roads leading to it. The law was proposed by Knesset Member Miri Regev, and is opposed by Minister of Justice Tzipi Livni and ministers Yair Lapid and Yaakov Peri. In the assessment of the Israeli political system and media, the law will probably not be passed.
- Responses in the PA to the proposed law were severe and in response the PA will hold its weekly meeting in the Jordan Valley (Wafa News Agency, December 30, 2013). The PA will allot \$15 million for development projects in the Jordan Valley region (Ma'an News Agency, December 31, 2013). **Saeb Erekat**, a member of the PLO's Executive Committee, said that the decision to support the law would destroy the efforts of the peace process and of American Secretary of State John Kerry, and was additional proof that Israel had no respect for international law (Ma'an News Agency, December 29, 2013).
- **Qais Abd al-Karim (Abu Leila)**, deputy DFLP secretary general, condemned the proposed Israeli law and called for the immediate end of the "distorted" Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. He said Israel was trying to create a new situation on the ground and that it was necessary to appeal to international courts (Ma'an News Agency, December 30, 2013).

The Northern Front

Rocket Fire

■ On the morning of December 29, 2013, a volley of rockets was fired from south Lebanon targeting Israeli territory. One rocket fell in Israel in an open area west of Kiryat Shemonah; there were no casualties and no damage was reported. **So far no organization has claimed responsibility for the rocket fire.** The IDF responded by attacking the source of the rocket fire with massive artillery fire. In addition, a stern communiqué was forwarded to Lebanon through the UNIFIL force (IDF Spokesman, December 29, 2013). The Lebanese army searched the area of Talat al-Khreibe, near Al-Khiyam in the eastern sector of south Lebanon. They found **four Grad 122mm rocket launchers.** According to the findings, the rockets were joined in a battery and activated by operatives at a distance of about 25 meters, or about 27 yards (MTV, Lebanon, December 29, 2013).

■ At the beginning of the weekly government meeting, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that **Israel regarded the government of Lebanon as responsible for everything occurring in Lebanese territory,** and that the IDF had responded strongly and rapidly to the rocket fire from Lebanon (Website of the Israeli prime minister, December 29, 2013).

■ **Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati** condemned both what he called an attempt to bring tension to the Israeli-Lebanese border and the Israeli response. He said that Lebanon was committed to implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1701 and to the Lebanese army's cooperation with the UNIFIL forces (Lebanese News Agency, December 29, 2013).

■ **The commander of the UNIFIL** forces said that it was a serious event that violated UN Security Council Resolution 1701 and asked all sides to show restraint to prevent escalation. He said the UNIFIL forces, in collaboration with the Lebanese army, were working to reinforce the area and prevent additional events. **The spokesman for the UN** said the Secretary General strongly condemned the rocket fire at Israel from south Lebanon and expressed his esteem for the cooperation between the Israeli and Lebanese authorities, and UNIFIL's efforts to prevent escalation (UN website, December 29, 2013).



Lebanese army forces examine the area where the rockets were fired (MTV, Lebanon, December 30, 2013).

The Battle for Hearts and Minds

Fatah Continues to Glorify Palestinians Involved in Murdering Israelis

- **Fatah continues to glorify Palestinian terrorist operatives who were involved in carrying out terrorist attacks and murdering Israelis:** on December 29, 2013, the official Facebook page of Fatah's bureau of recruitment and organization posted a notice marking the birthday of **Dalal al-Mughrabi** (which fell on December 29), who participated in the Coastal Road slaughter in 1978. It read "the birthday of Dalal al-Mughrabi...the birth of a legend...the birth of a revolution" (Official Facebook page of Fatah's bureau of recruitment and organization, December 29, 2013).
- **Dalal al-Mughrabi** was a member of the squad of Fatah operatives that carried out the slaughter on a bus on Israel's Coastal Road between Haifa and Tel Aviv on March 11, 1978. Thirty-seven people died in the attack and 71 were wounded. Dalal al-Mughrabi was turned into a Palestinian national heroine in the days of Yasser Arafat, and is commemorated in various ways by Fatah and the PA to this day. Streets and public squares are named after her, as are schools and summer camps, part of a broader policy of turning terrorist operatives into role models by Hamas, Fatah and the PA.

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The notice that appeared in Facebook marking Dalal al-Mughrabi's birthday (Official Facebook page of Fatah's bureau of recruitment and organization, December 29, 2013).