



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

March 5 –11, 2014



Weapons found aboard the *Klos-C* bound for the Gaza Strip. Left: 122mm mortar shells manufactured in Iran. Right: M-302 rockets manufactured in Syria (IDF Spokesman, March 10, 2014).

Overview

- This past week events centered on the Israeli interception of the commercial vessel *Klos-C*, **dispatched by Iran**. It was supposed to dock at Port Sudan where its cargo, weapons hidden under sacks of cement, would have been unloaded. Among the weapons found on board were **40 M-302 rockets manufactured in Syria**. The weapons were supposed to have been smuggled overland through the Sinai Peninsula into the Gaza Strip. The Iranians, Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad completely denied the news reports, calling them "media fraud."
- **No rocket hits were identified** in Israeli's south this past week. In Judea and Samaria "popular resistance" violence continued. Prominent were events of stone-throwing at Israeli vehicles and at the Jewish village of Beit El. A Palestinian stone-thrower was killed by the IDF; the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine issued a formal death notice for him.

The Israeli Navy Thwarts an Iranian Attempt to Smuggle Weapons to the Gaza Strip

■ In the early morning hours of **March 5, 2014**, Israeli naval commandos stopped a cargo ship in the Red Sea near the Eritrea-Sudan naval border, about **1,500 kilometers**, or about 810 nautical miles, **from the Israeli coast**. The ship was carrying weapons and ammunition, including long-range rockets. The *Kios-C*, which was sailing under the flag of Panama, was found to be carrying weapons hidden under sacks of cement. The weapons were supposed to be **delivered to the Palestinian terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip**. The ship was en route to **Port Sudan**, where the weapons would have been unloaded. **Iran was behind the attempt to smuggle the weapons to the Gaza Strip**, directing, coordinating and orchestrating the entire operation (IDF Spokesman, March 5, 2014).¹

■ On **March 8, 2014**, the ship docked in the port of Eilat, Israel's southernmost city, and its cargo was unloaded and examined. On board the ship were **40 M-302 rockets** manufactured in Syria, with ranges of between **90 and 160 kilometers** (56 and 62 miles); 181 122mm mortar shells manufactured in Iran; and about 400,000 7.62mm assault rifle bullets.



The crates of weapons hidden underneath sacks of cement (IDF Spokesman, March 8, 2014).

■ Sources in Iran and spokesmen for the Palestinian terrorist organizations **vehemently denied** that Israel had intercepted a shipment of Iranian weapons en route to the Gaza Strip. According to **Hossein Amir-Abdollahian**, head of the

¹ For further information see the March 5, 2014 bulletin "[Israeli Navy Foils Iranian Attempt to Smuggle Advanced Weapons, Especially Long-Range Rockets, to the Gaza Strip \(Initial report based on information from the IDF Spokesman\).](#)"

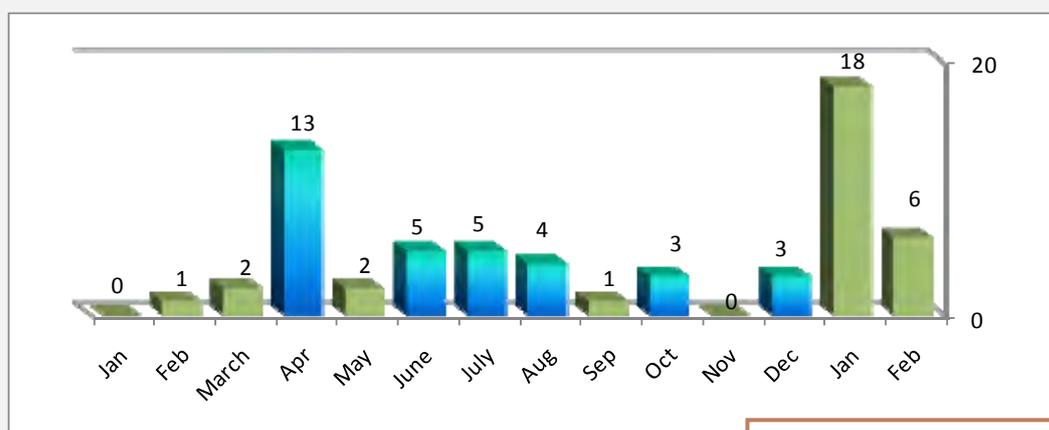
Department of Arab and African Affairs in the Iranian foreign ministry, the news reports were based on lies spread by the Israeli media (ISNA, Iran, March 5, 2014). **Hamas spokesmen** claimed that the whole affair was a "media fraud" meant to justify the Israeli "siege" of the Gaza Strip and to prevent ships from reaching Gaza (Filastin al-Yawm, March 6, 2014).

The Situation in Israel's South

Rocket Fire

- This past week there was no rocket fire from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory.

Rocket Hits in Israeli Territory since January 1, 2013²



Since the end of Operation Pillar of Defense (November 2012), 63 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory, including eight rockets fired at the southern Israeli city of Eilat.

² As March 11, 2014. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire and rocket hits inside the Gaza Strip.

Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire³



Israeli Air Force Counterterrorism Attack

■ On the morning of **March 11, 2014**, IAF aircraft struck a Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) terrorist squad. The squad had shot at an IDF force engaged in routine security activities near the border fence between Israel and the Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman, March 11, 2014). The Palestinian media reported that three PIJ operatives had been killed near the Sufa crossing (east of Rafah) (Paltoday.ps, and the Ma'an News Agency, March 11, 2014).

Judea and Samaria

Jordanian Palestinian Killed while Attempting to Grab Weapon

■ On **March 10, 2014**, a Jordanian Palestinian attempted to grab the weapon of an IDF soldier at the Allenby crossing. The Jordanian, originally from Nablus, was shot and killed. He arrived at the crossing by bus in the morning. While waiting for the bus to undergo a security check, he attacked one of the soldiers and tried to grab his weapon. The soldier shot at the Palestinian's legs but the Palestinian continued trying to choke him. The soldier then shot at the man and killed him (IDF Spokesman, March 10, 2014).

³ The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.

■ The man killed was **Ra'ed Za'itar**, a Jordanian judge in the **Magistrate Court in Amman**. The Jordanian foreign minister summoned the temporary chargé d'affaires of the Israeli embassy in Amman and condemned the killing. He emphasized the protest of the Jordanian government and asked the Israeli government to investigate the incident immediately and send a detailed report to the Jordanian authorities. Hamas and the Palestinian Authority (PA) also strongly condemned the killing (Wafa News Agency, March 10, 2014).

■ That afternoon a demonstration was held in front of the Israeli embassy in Amman to protest the killing of Ra'ed Za'itar. The demonstrators called for the closing of the embassy and the cancellation of Jordan's peace agreement with Israel. Jordanian security forces dispersed the demonstrators (Jordanian News Agency, March 10, 2014).



Jordanian demonstrators near the Israeli embassy in Amman
(Akhbar al-Nahar Da, March 10, 2014).

Israeli Security Forces Detain Hamas Head in Judea and Samaria

■ On **March 4, 2014**, Israeli security forces detained **Ayoub al-Qawasmeh**, a senior figure in Hamas' military-terrorist wing in Jerusalem. Al-Qawasmeh, who had been on Israel's wanted list since 1998, was suspected of involvement in terrorist attacks against Israelis during the second intifada. After Operation Pillar of Defense (May 2002) he went underground. In 2010 he was detained by the PA's security services and released two weeks later because of health issues. He was detained on March 4, 2014, following information that he planned further involvement in terrorist activities (IDF Spokesman, March 4, 2014).

Palestinian Violence Continues

- This past week violent incidents continued in Judea and Samaria, part of the so-called "popular resistance." Stones were thrown at Israeli civilians and Israeli security forces and Molotov cocktails were thrown at vehicles on main roads. Friday riots were held at the traditional friction points (Bil'in, Ni'llin, Nebi Saleh, Qadoum, Beit Umar, etc.).
- The most prominent events were the following:
 - **March 4, 2014** – Palestinians threw stones at the Jewish village of Beit El (north of Ramallah). One of the stones hit a porch where a young girl was playing, injuring her (Tazpit News Agency, March 4, 2014).
 - **March 10, 2014** – Palestinians threw stones at Israeli vehicles on the road near the Jewish town of Ofra. There were no casualties. The vehicles were damaged (Tazpit News Agency, March 10, 2014).



**An Israeli civilian vehicle damaged by stones thrown near Ofra
(Tazpit News Agency, March 10, 2014).**

- **March 10, 2014** – During an IDF action to capture stone-throwers IDF soldiers shot at and killed a Palestinian throwing stones at Israeli vehicles near the village of Beitin (north of Al-Bireh). The circumstances of the event are under investigation (Tazpit News Agency, March 10, 2014). The Palestinian media reported the death of **Saji Sa'il Darwish**, 18, from the village of Beitin in the Ramallah district (Quds.net, March 10, 2014). The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) issued a formal death notice claiming that Saji Darwish had been killed "while ambushing IDF forces in Ramallah" (PFLP Facebook page, March 11, 2014).



The PFLP's formal death notice of Saji Sa'il Darwish. The picture in the lower right hand corner is Muataz Washha, recently killed in an exchange of fire with IDF forces in Beir Zeit (PFLP Facebook page, March 11, 2014).

- March 10, 2014** – At approximately 2200 hours shots were heard in Beit El (north of Ramallah) coming from the direction of the Jelazoun refugee camp. A search revealed that a bullet had hit a house in the village and caused minor damage. The Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades, the military-terrorist wing of the PFLP, posted a video claiming responsibility for the attack. They claimed the shots had been fired in retaliation for the deaths of Saji Sa'il Darwish and Muataz Washha (PFLP Facebook page, March 11, 2014).

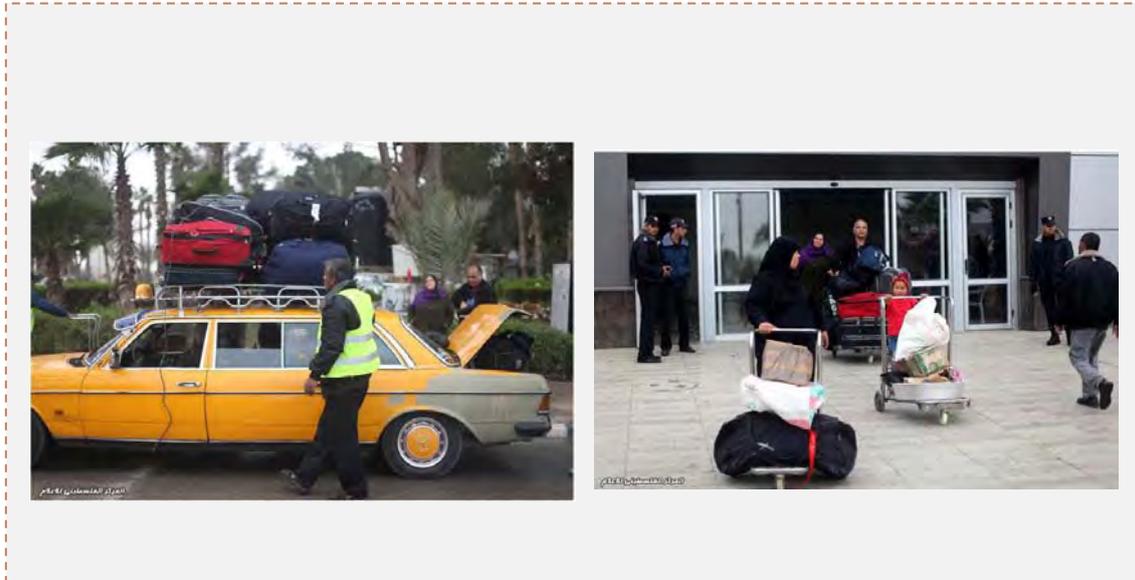


Left: Video claiming responsibility for the shooting at Beit El (PFLP Facebook page, March 11, 2014). Right: The damage caused by the shot (Photo by Inbal Gross for the Tazpita News Agency, March 10, 2014).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

The Rafah Crossing

- On March 9, 2014, the Rafah crossing opened for civilian traffic for three days (Palestine-info.info, March 9, 2014).



The Rafah crossing opens (Palestine-info.info, March 9, 2014).

Gaza Strip Energy Crisis

- **Fathi al-Sheikh Khalil**, deputy chairman of the Gaza Strip's energy authority, announced that the grant given by Qatar to the PA's ministry of the treasury to purchase fuel had been spent. He said that the Gaza Strip's current fuel supplies would last for no more than five days. That would mean the Gazans would again be provided with electricity for only six hours a day (Al-Ra'i, March 9, 2014).

Demonstration against Egypt

- On Friday, March 8, 2014, after the prayers in the mosques, Hamas held a demonstration in front of the Egyptian mission in Gaza City. It was held to protest the verdict handed down by an Egyptian court on March 4, 2014, designating Hamas as a terrorist organization. **Khalil al-Haya**, a senior Hamas figure, called it a political decision that "paved the way for [new] Israeli aggression" against the Gaza Strip. He said Hamas was a "national resistance" movement that focused its activities only on Palestine (Dunia Al-Watan, March 7, 2014).



Hamas holds a mass "march of rage" in Gaza City. The march ended with a rally in front of the Egyptian embassy to protest the Egyptian court's decision to designate Hamas as a terrorist organization (Filastin Al-'Aan, March 7, 2014).

Marking the Anniversary of the Death of Ibrahim al-Muqadma

■ The anniversary of the death of **Ibrahim al-Muqadma**, one of the heads of Hamas' military-terrorist wing in the Gaza Strip,⁴ was marked with a series of events:

- The **Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades**, Hamas' military-terrorist wing, dedicated a new square named for al-Muqadma in the Sheikh Radwan neighborhood of Gaza City. The memorial to al-Muqadma in the center of the square features an M75 rocket, the type used by Hamas to attack Tel Aviv and Jerusalem in Operation Pillar of Defense (November 2012). The locally-manufactured rocket is named for al-Muqadma (M) and its range (75 kilometers) (Paltoday.ps, March 10, 2014).

⁴ **Ibrahim al-Muqadma**, one of the heads of Hamas' military-terrorist wing in the Gaza Strip, was one of Hamas' most prominent and extremist ideologues. He belonged to the militant faction uncompromising in its attitude towards Israel. He was killed by Israel on March 8, 2003.



Hamas' military-terrorist wing dedicates a new square in Gaza City
(Paltoday.ps and Filastin Al-'Aan, March 10, 2014)

- On March 8, 2014, Hamas held a **military display** in the Al-Bureij refugee camp (central Gaza Strip) in memory of Ibrahim al-Muqadma. It featured armed, masked Hamas operatives and terrorist operatives wearing white and labeled "suicide bombers" (Palestine-info.info, March 8, 2014).



Left: Hamas operatives wearing white and labeled "suicide bombers." Right: The military display organized by Hamas in the al-Bureij refugee camp (Palestine-info.info, March 8, 2014).

The PIJ's Military-Terrorist Wing Shows Preparedness to Fire Rockets into Israel

- A combat correspondent for the Jerusalem Brigades, the PIJ's military-terrorist wing, met with operatives of the organization's artillery unit in the Gaza Strip, who claimed to have participated in Operation Pillar of Defense. The correspondent photographed them as they prepared mortar shells for launching and operated from camouflaged

launching pits. The operatives said that they were in a state of "constant preparedness" and ready to fire rockets into Israel at any moment (Jerusalem Brigades website, March 10, 2014).



Operatives of the Jerusalem Brigades' artillery unit (Jerusalem Brigades website, March 10, 2014).

Chairman of the Iranian Majlis Announces Renewal of Relations with Hamas

■ Interviewed on March 9, 2014, **Ali Larijani**, chairman of the Iranian Majlis (parliament), announced that Iran supported Hamas because it belonged to "the camp of resistance." He said Iran-Hamas relations were "good" and had returned to the status quo ante (Al-Mayadeen TV, Lebanon, March 9, 2014). In response **Mahmoud al-Zahar**, a member of Hamas' political bureau, said that Larijani's position had been expected and did not surprise Hamas. He said Hamas and Iran had each taken steps and that in the near future there would be progress in the relations between them (Fars News Agency, Iran, March 10, 2014).



Ali Larijani, chairman of the Iranian Majlis, interviewed by Al-Mayadeen TV
(Al-Mayadeen TV, Lebanon, March 9, 2014)

Salafist-Jihadi Activities in the Gaza Strip

- Interviewed by AP, a senior Salafist-jihadi terrorist operative of the **Mujahideen Shura Council in the Environs of Jerusalem** calling himself **Abu Bakr al-Ansari** claimed that there were **six Salafist-jihadi groups operating in the Gaza Strip**. He added it had a **total membership of 4,000 operatives**. He claimed his organization was the largest, much larger than what was generally believed. He also said that **several score of his organization's operatives were currently fighting in Syria**.⁵
- Abu Bakr al-Ansari also said that **there was an agreement between the Salafist-jihadi groups and Hamas to preserve the lull in the fighting against Israel**. However, he added, the moment Israel violated the lull they would fire rockets to attack Israel without consulting with Hamas (AP, March 10, 2014).

Attempted Attack on the Latin Church in the Gaza Strip

- It was recently made public that at the end of February 2014 **an attempt was made to set fire to the Latin Church in the al-Zeitoun neighborhood in the eastern part of Gaza City** by detonating an IED in the church courtyard. Graffiti were painted on the church walls claiming that the attack was in retaliation for the slaughter of Muslims by Christians in the Central African Republic. The church was only slightly damaged. According to the initial police investigation, the perpetrators were amateurs, apparently

⁵ For further information on Mujahideen Shura Council in the Environs of Jerusalem fighters in Syria see the January 19, 2014 bulletin ["Israeli Arabs and Palestinians Join the Ranks of the Rebels in Syria, Mainly Organizations Affiliated with Al-Qaeda and the Global Jihad."](#)

only intended the attack as a warning and did not mean to cause actual damage (Website of the Latin Patriarch in Jerusalem, March 6, 2014).

The Palestinian Authority

The Palestinian-Israeli Negotiations

■ At a meeting held in Ramallah, **Mahmoud Abbas** updated senior businessmen from the Scandinavian countries about the negotiations with Israel, and reiterated the familiar Palestinian positions (Wafa News Agency, March 8, 2014):

- The Palestinian state will be established with the 1967 borders with east Jerusalem as its capital. Jerusalem will be open to people of all religious faiths including residents of west Jerusalem, with the existence of a coordinating body.
- The Palestinians have agreed to the presence of a third party in the PA territories to preserve security and reassure the Israelis in everything related to their security.
- The future Palestinian state will be demilitarized with the exception of a strong police force.
- Mahmoud Abbas expressed strong objections to recognizing Israel as a Jewish state, saying that the demand had been raised only two years ago and its objective was to raise obstacles to the negotiations.

■ Palestinians responded to the speech given by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to the members of AIPAC in which he said that he asked Mahmoud Abbas to recognize Israel as a Jewish state and abandon the illusion that they could drown Israel with refugees. **Nabil Abu Rudeina**, spokesman for the office of the PA chairman, said that Netanyahu had nothing new to say. He added that Netanyahu's clinging to the "recognition of the Jewish nature of Israel" was an attempt to waste time and evade a just, comprehensive peace agreement. He said that recognizing Israel as Jewish was unacceptable to the Palestinians and Arabs and that Netanyahu's objective was to sabotage the American efforts and stop the negotiations (Voice of Palestine, March 5, 2014).

■ **Nabil Shaath**, a member of Fatah's Central Committee, said that Fatah also objected to the statements made by Netanyahu. He said that in effect it was a unilateral Israeli announcement that the negotiations were over. He said that Netanyahu was challenging the American administration, blocking the road to a

legitimate international solution based on the two-state concept, and infringing on the rights of the Palestinian people (Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda, March 5, 2014).

The Northern Arena

Attempted Terrorist Attack on the Israeli-Syrian Border

- On the night of **March 5, 2014**, an IDF force identified two armed men near the border fence in the northern Golan Heights. **The men were planting an IED** at the side of the road on the Syrian side of the border. The IDF force opened fire. According to the initial investigation, before dawn the two crossed the Israeli-Syrian border and approached the fence to plant an IED. The Israeli reconnaissance force that identified them called for backup from an IDF force. It is assumed that they planned to detonate the IED to attack a routine IDF patrol (Ynet, March 5, 2014).
- Al-Arabiya TV reported that Hezbollah operatives had tried to plant an IED on the Israeli border in the Golan Heights (Al-Arabiya TV, March 5, 2014). Sources in Syria denied the allegation that Hezbollah was linked to the incident (Al-Mayadeen, Lebanon, March 5, 2014).

Propaganda Activities

Hamas' Al-Aqsa TV Broadcasts Anti-Israel Incitement

- Hamas' Al-Aqsa TV recently broadcast a new video called "Palm [of the hand] " calling for operatives in the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria, along with Israeli Arabs, to join forces to carry out attacks against Israel. The video shows pictures of a blown-up bus, shooting attacks and confrontations with IDF soldiers. After a number of days the video was no longer broadcast.



Pictures from the video: **Gazan, West Bank and Israeli Arab collaboration** (Al-Aqsa TV, February 13, 2014).

Boycott of Israeli Goods in the Al-Najah University Cafeteria Continues

- The Islamic Bloc in Al-Najah University in Nablus continues its campaign to boycott Israeli-made goods, not only those manufactured in the territories. The campaign, named "Free taste," calls for the boycott of drinks manufactured in Israel and encourages the purchase of soft drinks called Cappy, manufactured by a Palestinian company (Facebook page of the Islamic Bloc, March 4, 2014).



The Islamic Bloc's "Free taste" campaign to encourage the purchase of Palestinian-made products and boycott those made in Israel (Facebook page of the Islamic Bloc, March 4, 2014).