



## News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

### April 2 – 8, 2014



The Israeli-Palestinian negotiations in crisis: Mahmoud Abbas signs a PA request to join international agencies and conventions (Wafa News Agency, April 1, 2014)

### Overview

- This past week one rocket hit was identified in Israeli territory. In addition, five mortar shells were fired into the western Negev. In response Israeli Air Force aircraft attacked a number of terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip.
- The crisis in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations continues. Mahmoud Abbas announced that as a result of Israel's decision not to implement the fourth phase of prisoner release by the appointed date, he would appeal to join 15 international agencies and conventions (apparently he only signed 14 requests). At the same time, he claimed he was committed to the negotiations and a peaceful solution to the conflict.
- The Israeli media reported that the Israeli and Palestinian negotiating teams held a number of meetings with the participation of Martin Indyk, the American envoy to the peace process. According to reports the meetings did not lead to a breakthrough.

## The Situation in Israel's South

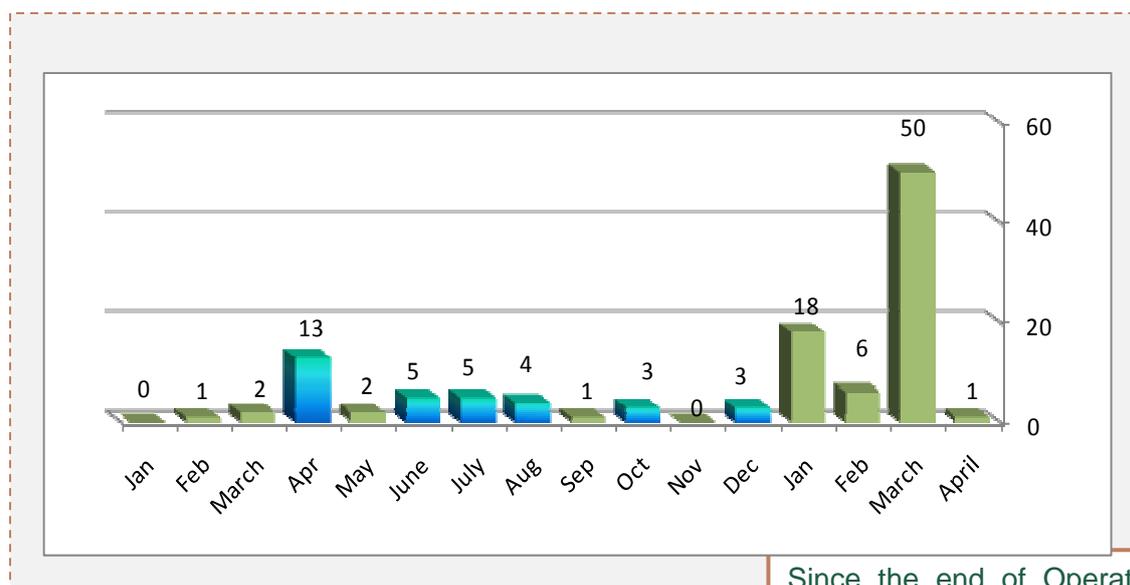
### Rocket Fire

■ This past week **five mortar shells were fired from the Gaza Strip into the western Negev** (four on April 4, 2014, and one on April 6, 2014). In addition, one rocket hit was identified on April 5, 2014. There were no casualties and no damage was reported.

■ **Ihab al-Ghussin**, spokesman for the de-facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip, claimed that the rocket launchers that had been used recently did not belong to any of the Palestinian organizations and that they were operating outside of the "agreement for managing the resistance and managing the lull in the fighting" with Israel. He claimed the Hamas administration was trying to uncover the identity of the launchers (Raya.ps, April 7, 2014).

### Rocket Hits in Israeli Territory since January 1, 2013<sup>1</sup>

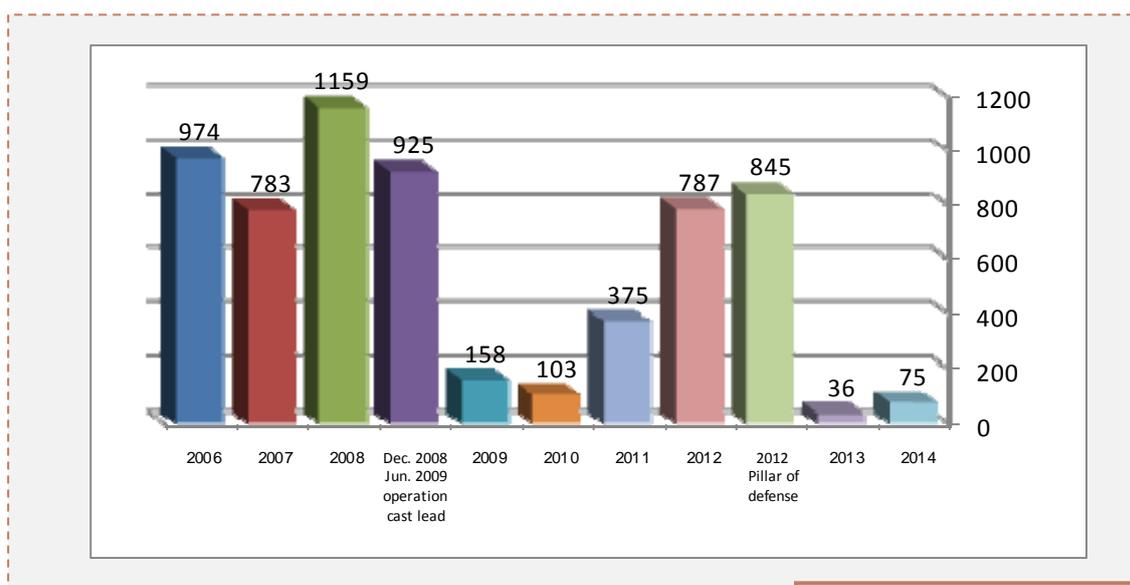
■ This past week no rocket hits were identified in Israeli territory.



Since the end of Operation Pillar of Defense (November 2012), 114 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory, including eight rockets fired at the southern Israeli city of Eilat.

<sup>1</sup> As April 8, 2014. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire and rocket hits inside the Gaza Strip.

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



Since January 1, 2013, 114 rocket hits have been identified.

## Israel's Response

- In response to the rocket fire from the Gaza Strip Israeli Air Force aircraft struck a number of terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip:
- On **April 4, 2014** the IAF struck four terrorist targets in the northern Gaza Strip and one in the central Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman, April 4, 2014). The Palestinian media reported that two posts of Hamas' military-terrorist wing in the central Gaza Strip and a workshop in the Jabaliya region (northern Gaza Strip) had been attacked. The Palestinian media also reported that two Palestinians had been injured (Al-Ra'i, Filastin Al-'Aan, Safa News Agency, April 4, 2014)
- On the night of **April 5, 2014** the IAF struck four terrorist targets in the northern Gaza Strip and one in the southern Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman, April 6, 2014). The Palestinian media reported that there had been no casualties in the attacks (Safa News Agency, Alray.ps, April 6, 2014)

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



Left: Lathe attacked in the Jabaliya refugee camp (Wafa News Agency, April 4, 2014). Right: Terrorist target in the Gaza Strip attacked on April 6, 2014 (Paltoday.ps, April 6, 2014).

## Judea and Samaria

### Detention of Lawyers Who Assisted Hamas

- On February 24, 2014, the Israeli security forces detained four residents of Nablus, some of them lawyers, and an Israeli Arab, also a lawyer, from the village of Bana'a. They are suspected of having assisted Hamas by exploiting the permits given them as lawyers.
- The investigation revealed that they had exploited their professional visiting privileges to **transmit messages from the Hamas leadership imprisoned in Israeli jails to prisoners in other jails as well as to Hamas operatives in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip**. It also revealed that **the Hamas leadership abroad had used them to direct Hamas activities inside the jails**. An organization called "International Solidarity for Human Rights" in Nablus camouflaged their activities. **They were financed by senior Hamas figures in the Gaza Strip and were found to be carrying large sums of money** (Israel Security Agency, April 7, 2014).



Some of the money found in the possession of the lawyers who were detained (Israel Security Agency, April 7, 2014). Note: The bills are 200 Israeli shekel notes, each worth about \$55 at the current rate of exchange.

### Hamas Operatives Receive Long Prison Terms

■ Heavy sentences were handed out to Hamas operatives who headed Hamas activity in east Jerusalem. The operatives were detained in 2011 by the Israeli security forces. Their investigation revealed that **they acted as a "clandestine headquarters" for Hamas in Jerusalem. They raised funds, including from abroad, and strengthened Hamas' influence over the east Jerusalem population.**

■ The "headquarters" was responsible for Hamas' budget for activities in east Jerusalem and oversaw a number of Hamas committees dealing with social, religious and educational activity. According to the court, they were engaged in outlawed activity whose objective was to strengthen Hamas influence in Jerusalem through the battle for hearts and minds. The court noted the interaction between Hamas' social activity and its military activity, as had become apparent during the investigation of the operatives (ISA, April 6, 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. The Friday riots held at the traditional friction points (Bil'in, Ni'lin, Nebi Saleh, Qadoum, Beit Umar, etc.) also emphasized the delay of the fourth phase of terrorist prisoner release. The main riot was held at the Bitunia crossing, near the Ofer jail (See below).

■ On the evening of **April 6, 2014**, two Molotov cocktails were thrown at a Border Police jeep near Hawara (south of Nablus). The passengers identified a Palestinian nearby holding another Molotov cocktail which he was planning to throw at them. They opened fire and shot and wounded the Palestinian (Israel Police Force, April 6, 2014). It had apparently been an ambush planned in advance, and was filmed and posted to the Hamas forum's Facebook page.



Molotov cocktails are thrown at an Israeli Border Police jeep in Hawara (Hamas forum video, April 6, 2014).

Click for the video

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=780591821952686&set=vb.114312025247339&type=3&theater>



Left: Palestinians in Bethlehem block the Rachel crossing to the passage of vehicles (Wafa News Agency, April 4, 2014). Right: Palestinians in Bil'in prepare stones for throwing at IDF forces during the weekly riot against the security fence (Bil'in Facebook page, April 4, 2014).

■ The Palestinian media reported that a number of Palestinians had been injured during the riot near the Ofer jail. They had had gathered to show solidarity with the prisoners and protest the fact that the fourth phase of prisoner release had not been implemented. Among the demonstrators was **Mahmoud al-Alul**, a member of Fatah's Central Committee (Al-Mayadeen, April 4, 2014).



Palestinians throw stones at IDF forces near the Ofer jail (Wafa News Agency, April 4, 2014).

### Terrorist Attacks in March 2014<sup>3</sup>

■ During March 2014 there were **slightly more terrorist attacks in Judea and Samaria** than during February. A total of 107 attacks were carried out in March (compared with 101 in February). In the area around Jerusalem there were 14 terrorist attacks (similar to the number in February). In the city proper there were fewer attacks, three carried out (compared with nine in February). **Most of the attacks involved Molotov cocktails** (95 attacks). Ten IEDs were laid, there were four shooting attacks, and one stabbing attack in Israeli territory (at the Geha junction near Tel Aviv). Two Israelis were wounded in the attacks, a civilian who was stabbed and seriously injured, and a Border Policeman who was critically injured by a rock thrown near the Tomb of Rachel (ISA, April 5, 2014).

### Jewish Settlers Attack IDF Soldiers

■ Jewish settlers attacked an IDF post after the Israeli security forces destroyed and banned illegal structures in the village of Izhar. During the security force action hundreds of settlers threw stones, burned tires, blocked roads and slashed the tires of military vehicles. Six members of the security forces incurred minor injuries. Two days

<sup>3</sup> According to data from the Israel Security Agency. The statistics do not include the dozens of incidents of stone-throwing.

beforehand the jeep of the commander of the IDF's Samaria Brigade, parked in Izhar, had been vandalized (IDF Spokesman, April 7, 2014).

■ **Moshe Yaalon**, Israeli minister of defense, called the attacks "**indiscriminate violence**" carried out in **Judea and Samaria against Palestinian property, the Israeli security forces, the Border Police and the civilian administration**. He said in light of the events **strong steps would be taken to enforce order and prevent the recurrence of such events** (Ynet, April 8, 2014).



The Israel military vehicle whose tires were slashed (Photo by Gedalia for the Tazpit News Agency, April 7, 2014).

## Developments in the Gaza Strip

### The Rafah Crossing

■ This past week the Rafah crossing was open for civilian use. In addition, several dozen trucks carrying building materials also entered the Gaza Strip through the crossing. **Maher Abu Sabha**, head of the crossing authority in the Hamas administration, said that in recent days the conduct on both the Palestinian and Egyptian sides of the crossing had been positive and characterized by the desire of the Egyptian workers to facilitate the Palestinians' exit. He also expressed satisfaction with the number of people who had passed through the crossing, which was significantly larger than in previous months (Al-Watan, March 31, 2014).

## Possible Iran Visit for Khaled Mashaal

■ **Mahmoud al-Zahar**, a senior Hamas figure in the Gaza Strip, said that contacts were in progress and preparations were being made for Khaled Mashaal, head of Hamas' political bureau, to visit Iran and meet with Ali Khamenei, Iran's Supreme Leader. **Hassan Badran**, a Hamas spokesman, said that so far no date had been set for the visit (Al-Akhbar, April 1, 2014). According to the Kuwaiti newspaper Al-Anbaa, Iran had made it clear to the Hamas leadership that the "return to the bosom of Iran" involved a number of conditions, one of which was a change in Hamas' position regarding the Syrian regime (Al-Anbaa, April 7, 2014).

## Officers' Course Graduation Exercise

■ On **April 2, 2014**, the ministry of the interior of the de-facto Hamas administration held graduation exercises for male and female officers. The theme of the ceremony was "The path of the shaheeds, firm stance and victory." It was attended by **Ismail Haniya**, head of the Hamas administration, and **Fathi Hamad**, the minister of the interior. Fathi Hamad gave a speech in which he said that his ministry had begun building dozens of military and security schools in the Gaza Strip to teach various military and paramilitary professions (Radio Al-Aqsa, April 2, 2014).



Left: Male and female graduates. Right: Ismail Haniya and Fathi Hamad attend the graduation exercises (Paltoday.ps, April 3, 2014).

## Learning Hebrew in the Gaza Strip

■ According to the Palestinian media, there has been increasing interest among students in the Gaza Strip to learn Hebrew. Their interest followed a decision by the Hamas administration's ministry of education to add the study of Hebrew as an elective

course in 14 Gazan schools. One of the students was quoted as saying that learning Hebrew was a duty of all Palestinians so that they could understand "the language of the enemy and understand the culture of the occupier of our lands and how he thinks." **Ziyad al-Thabet** deputy minister of education in the Hamas administration, said that including Hebrew studies in the curriculum came in response to requests from students. He said that the ministry even intended to expand the program and train additional teachers (Safa News Agency, April 2, 2014).

## The Palestinian Authority

### Crisis in the Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations Continues

■ The Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, which are supposed to end at the end of April 2014, are in a state of crisis. On April 1, 2014, **Mahmoud Abbas** said in a statement that as a result of the Israeli decision not to implement the fourth phase of prisoner release on the appointed date (March 29, 2014) **he would sign a request to join 15 international agencies and conventions**<sup>4</sup> (acceptance into which does not require a UN vote of approval). Speaking before the PA leadership he said that he was committed to negotiations and finding a solution to the conflict through negotiations alongside the "peaceful resistance" (*muqawama silmiya*) (Al-Ayam, April 2, 2014).



**The Palestinian leadership votes unanimously to join international agencies and conventions**  
(Wafa News Agency, April 1, 2014).

<sup>4</sup> In effect he apparently signed only 14 requests.

■ Following Mahmoud Abbas' announcement, **Riyadh al-Maliki**, the PA's minister of foreign affairs, formally presented documents of application from the "state of Palestine" to international agencies and conventions and to the relevant international personnel (Wafa News Agency, April 2, 2014). The deputy spokesman for the UN Secretary General said that official PA sources had presented letters of request for acceptance to international conventions and covenants. However, he said the Palestinian leadership, including the PA chairman, had noted it wanted to continue the negotiations with Israel, with American sponsorship (UN website, April 2, 2014).

■ In the meantime **the negotiating teams continue to meet in an attempt to find a way to prolong the talks**. They held a meeting with Martin Indyk, the American envoy to the peace talks, who had several suggestions for rapprochement. After a meeting which was described as "tense," the sides had not agreed on steps to restore trust (Al-Quds Al-Arabi, April 2, 2014). On April 6 and 7, 2014, more meetings were held in Jerusalem with Martin Indyk present. According to the Israeli media, no breakthrough was made (Haaretz, April 8, 2014).

■ Behind the contacts is **a tough Palestinian Authority position**. According to **Saeb Erekat** and Mahmoud al-Alul, a member of Fatah's Central Committee, the Palestinian conditions for continuing the negotiations are a written document from Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu recognizing the borders of the Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders, with east Jerusalem as its capital; the release of 1,200 prisoners, including Marwan Barghouti, Ahmed Saadat and Fuad al-Shubaki; carrying out the crossings agreement (in relation to the Gaza Strip) and the lifting of the siege of the Gaza Strip; the return of the Church of the Nativity deportees;<sup>5</sup> a cessation of building in the Jewish settlements, east Jerusalem and other locations; authorization to unite 15,000 Palestinian families including full citizenship; preventing Israelis from entering areas of the Palestinian Authority and PA control of Area C (Ma'an News Agency, April 3, 2014).

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<sup>5</sup> On April 2, 2002, at the height of the second intifada, during an IDF action in Bethlehem 39 armed Palestinian terrorists, most of them operatives of Fatah's Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, fled armed to the Church of the Nativity. They took over one of the buildings and took 200 civilian hostages. Barricaded inside the church, they traded gunfire with IDF forces. After a number of days during which the IDF barricaded the church an agreement was reached and 13 of the senior terrorists inside the building were deported to European countries. Twenty-six were deported to the Gaza Strip.



Palestinian cartoon: The way of peace is blocked (Al-Quds, April 2, 2014)

### Israel's Response

■ At the start of the weekly Cabinet meeting, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made the following remarks:

"...During [the] talks we carried out difficult steps and showed a willingness to continue implementing moves that were not easy, in the coming months as well, in order to create a framework that would allow for putting an end to the conflict between us. Just as we were about to enter into that framework for the continuation of the negotiations, Abu Mazen hastened to declare that he is not prepared even to discuss recognizing Israel as the national state of the Jewish People, which we have made clear to both the President of the United States and to other world leaders as well. To my regret as we reached the moment before agreeing on the continuation of the talks, the Palestinian leadership hastened to unilaterally request to accede to 14 international treaties. Thus the Palestinians substantially violated the understandings that were reached with American involvement. The Palestinians' threats to appeal to the UN will not affect us. The Palestinians have much to lose by this unilateral move. They will achieve a state only by direct negotiations, not by empty statements and not by unilateral moves. These will only push a peace agreement farther away and unilateral steps on their part will be met with unilateral steps on our part. We are ready to continue the talks but not at any price."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Spokesman/Pages/spokestart060414.aspx>

## Hamas' Response

■ **The de-facto Hamas administration praised and blessed Mahmoud Abbas's decision** to join UN agencies and conventions. The summary statement of a Hamas administration meeting condemned Israel, claiming it exploited the negotiations to "avoid releasing the prisoners in the fourth phase." According to the statement Israel's attempts at avoidance violate international law. The statement called to end the negotiations with Israel immediately (Al-Ra'i, April 1, 2014). **Ihab al-Ghussin**, spokesman for the Hamas administration, called for the formulation of a "national strategy" based on ending the negotiations and adopting "the resistance" [i.e., the path of terrorism and violence] as the only way to deal with Israel (Palestine-info.info, April 1, 2014).

## The Battle for Hearts and Minds

### Conference to Promote Palestinian Goods and Boycott Goods Made in the Settlements

■ On **March 30, 2014**, a conference was held in Ramallah whose objective was to promote Palestinian-made products and boycott those made in the Israeli settlements. The conference was sponsored by Mahmoud Abbas and senior members of the Palestinian attended, including Rami Hamdallah, the Palestinian prime minister. Rami Hamdallah gave a speech on behalf of Mahmoud Abbas, in which he stressed that a greater effort had to be made to struggle against the "Israeli occupation." He said the "popular struggle" had had successes. He called to promote the boycott of products manufactured in the Israeli settlements and increase awareness of the importance of supporting Palestinian-made goods (Wafa News Agency, March 30, 2014). On the other hand, **Sultan Abu al-Einin**, a member of Fatah's Central Committee and advisor to Mahmoud Abbas for NGOs, called for a boycott of Israeli-made goods as well (Facebook page of Sultan Abu al-Einin, March 30, 2014).



Rami Hamdallah speaks at the conference in Ramallah (Wafa News Agency, March 30, 2014).