



## News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

May 28 – June 2, 2014



Some of the members of the Palestinian unity government at the swearing in ceremony in Mahmoud Abbas' office in Ramallah. Five ministers from the Gaza Strip did not attend (Paltoday.ps, June 2, 2014)

### Overview

- This past week a suicide bombing attack was prevented when a Palestinian terrorist operative wearing an explosive belt was detained at the Tapuah Junction in Samaria. A rocket was fired from the Gaza Strip into the western Negev. IDF forces responded by attacking two terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip.
- In France an armed terrorist was apprehended who apparently carried out the shooting attack that killed four people at the Jewish Museum in Brussels. He had been a foreign fighter in Syria, where he joined the ranks of the jihadist Islamic State in Iraq and Greater Syria (ISIS). His detention illustrated the potential dangers of terrorism and subversion presented by veterans of the Syrian civil war when they return to their countries of origin.
- After seven years and two Palestinian governments, following the Fatah-Hamas reconciliation this past week an interim unity government was established. The government is composed of 18 ministers, five of them from the Gaza Strip. It will remain in power until elections are held.

## Suicide Bombing Attack Prevented

■ **On May 30, 2014, the Israeli security forces prevented a suicide bombing attack at the Tapuah Junction in Samaria.** At approximately 1030 hours Border Police soldiers at the junction noticed a Palestinian who aroused their suspicions when he got out of a taxi and walked toward the roadblock wearing a coat. They detained him and found he was wearing **an explosive belt made up of 12 connected pipe bombs.** He was 20 years old and came from a refugee camp near Nablus (IDF Spokesman, May 30, 2014). According to the Israeli media, it is assumed he belonged to a local network which was not part of any established terrorist organization.



The pipe bombs in the explosive belt found on the Palestinian at the Tapuah Junction (Website of the Israeli Border Police, June 1, 2014).

### Detention of Senior Hamas Operative from Abroad

■ In the middle of April **Hassan Toameh, a senior Hamas operative from abroad,** was detained at the Allenby Bridge. He is from Tulkarm and lives with his family in Saudi Arabia. He was originally a member of the Muslim Brotherhood and joined Hamas in 1987 with its founding. Since 2008 **he has been a member of the Hamas political bureau.**

■ Interrogation revealed that **Hamas exploits the Israeli Islamic Movement as a conduit for money for various projects in Jerusalem.** For example, it finances a permanent presence of young Palestinian men on the Temple Mount to prevent Jews from reaching it, paying them a salary of 4,000 to 5,000 Israeli shekels a month (between about \$1,150 and \$1,400 at the current rate of exchange). All the funds are

transferred clandestinely to keep the Islamic Movement under the radar of the Israeli authorities (Israel Security Agency website, May 29, 2014).

### Detention of Bedouin Who Helped Israeli Arabs Go to Syria

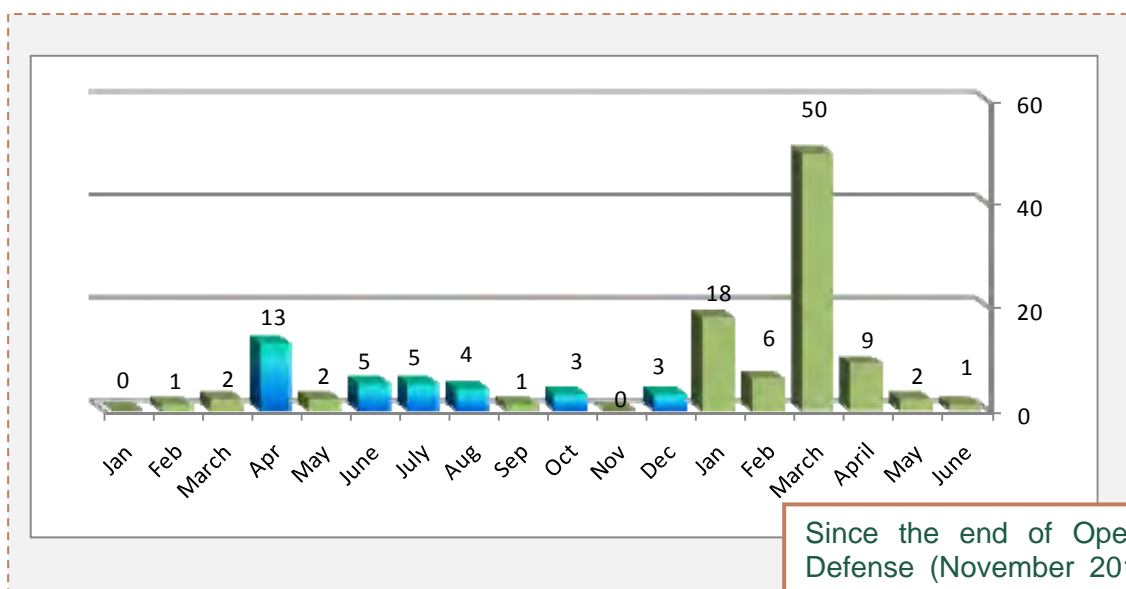
■ The Israeli security forces detained a **Bedouin from the Negev who helped two Israeli Arabs leave the country to go to Syria to fight in the ranks of the global jihad-affiliated ISIS**. The detainee is a Salafist-jihadi named **Idris Taleb Ahmed Abu al-Qia'an**, 23 years old from the Bedouin village of Hura. Interrogation revealed that he had helped coordinate the Arabs' journey via Turkey, provided them with money for travel expenses and gave them information about middlemen who could help them reach Syria. Some of the information was transferred via Internet social networks (Israel Security Agency website, May 30, 2014).<sup>1</sup>

## The Security Situation in Israel's South

### Rocket Fire into Israel

■ On the evening of June 1, 2014, a rocket was fired from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory, exploding in an open area in the western Negev. There were no casualties and no damage was reported.

### Rocket Hits in Israeli Territory since January 1, 2013<sup>2</sup>

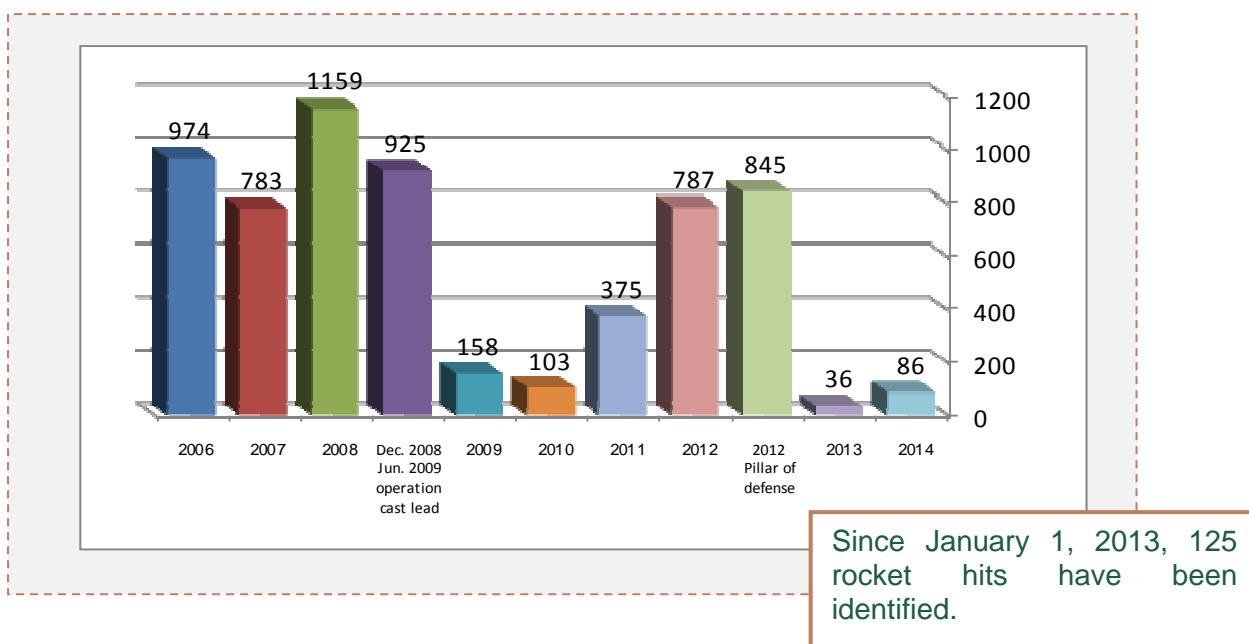


Since the end of Operation Pillar of Defense (November 2012), 125 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory, including eight rockets fired at the southern Israeli city of Eilat.

<sup>1</sup> For further information about Israeli Arabs and Palestinians from the Gaza Strip who went to fight 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.](#)"

<sup>2</sup> As of June 2, 2014. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire and rocket hits inside the Gaza Strip.

### Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire in Israel's South<sup>3</sup>



### Israeli Air Force Activity

- In response to the rocket fire, on June 1 Israeli Air Force aircraft struck two terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip, one in the north and one in the center (IDF Spokesman, June 2, 2014).

## Judea and Samaria

### Palestinian "Popular Resistance" 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, etc.).
- Again this week, the Friday demonstrations and riots in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip **centered on the hunger-striking administrative detainees in Israeli jails**. Hamas organized protests in a number of locations in Judea and Samaria, including **Nablus, Hebron and Bethlehem**. The Palestinian media reported that Palestinians participating in a solidarity march held in the area of Tulkarm confronted Israeli security forces after trying to vandalize the security fence (Quds.net, May 31,

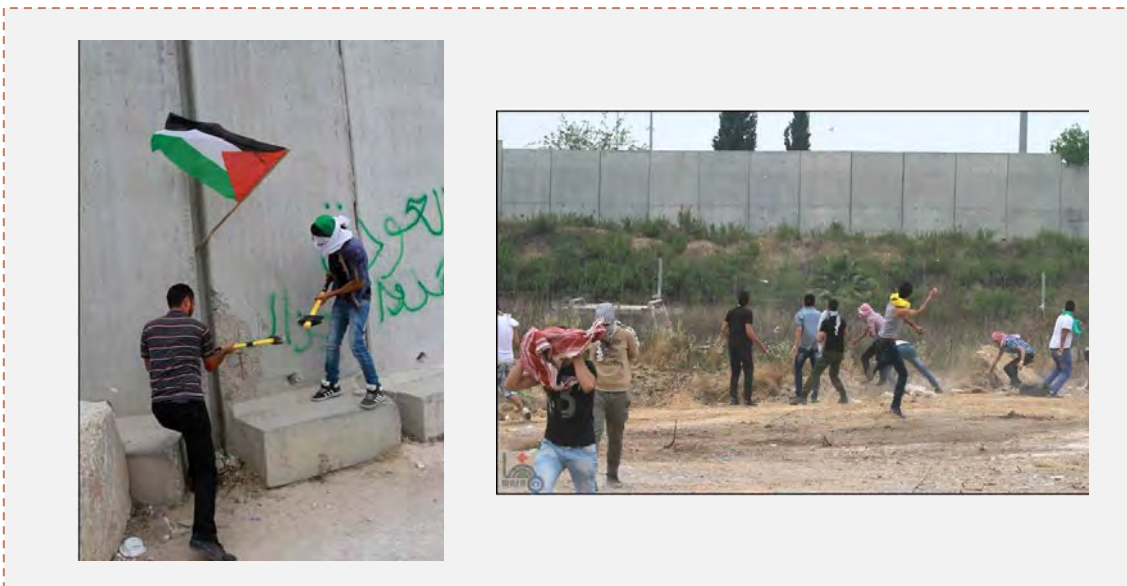
<sup>3</sup> The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.



2014). Gazans rioting near the Nitzanei Oz crossing vandalized the security fence and clashed with IDF forces stationed at the site.



**Palestinians confront Israeli security forces and torch fields near the Hawara roadblock (Nablus region) during a rally in support of the hunger-striking administrative detainees (Facebook page of the Islamic Block of the Al-Najah Al-Watani University, May 30, 2014).**



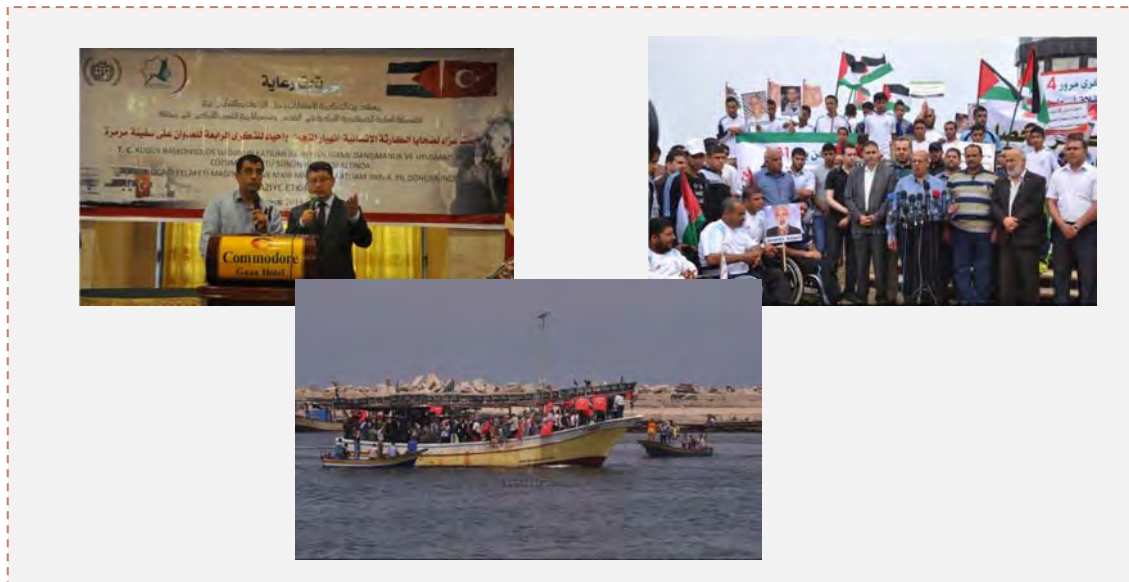
**Left: Palestinians use axes to vandalize the security fence. Right: Rioting Palestinians confront IDF forces at the security fence near Tulkarm (Wafa.ps, May 31, 2014).**

## Developments in the Gaza Strip

### Fourth Anniversary of the Mavi Marmara

■ The fourth anniversary of the *Mavi Marmara* flotilla was marked in the Gaza Strip with various events<sup>4</sup> (Wafa.ps, May 31, 2014):

- **The IHH branch office in the Gaza Strip** held a ceremony in the port of Gaza on May 31, 2014 near the monument erected to commemorate the Turks killed in the confrontation with the IDF. **Muhammed Kaya**, IHH representative in the Gaza Strip, gave a speech.
- The "popular committee against the siege," headed by **Jamal al-Khudari**, held a march in the port of Gaza. Participants laid wreaths at the monument. Al-Khudari held a press conference at the site where he called on the Palestinian interim government to lift the [so-called Israeli] "siege" of the Gaza Strip and arrange for sea lanes.
- On May 29, 2014, **boats sailed along the shore of the Gaza Strip** to commemorate the Turks killed aboard the *Mavi Marmara*. Representatives of the Palestinian terrorist organizations attended. Afterwards an event was held at the Commodore Hotel in Gaza under the auspices of the IHH and the Turkish consul in Jerusalem (Paltoday.ps, May 31, 2014).



Events commemorating the fourth anniversary of the Mavi Marmara. Left: The Turkish consul in Jerusalem gives a speech at the Commodore Hotel in Gaza. Right: The rally in Gaza. Bottom: Boats sail along the shore of the Gaza Strip (Paltoday.ps, May 29 and 31, 2014)

<sup>4</sup> The IHH held a rally in Istanbul where **Bülent Yıldırım**, head of the organization, praised the judges who had ruled against the IDF officers, and said that Israel had to find a compromise with Turkey (Aa.com.tr, June 1, 2014).

### Gazan Terrorist Organization Prepares for Clash with Israel

■ On May 31, 2014, a correspondent for the Qudsnet website visited a training facility belonging to the military-terrorist wing of the **Popular Resistance Committees** in the Gaza Strip. He interviewed **Abu al-Sa'ad**, military-terrorist wing spokesman, who said that PRC continued to prepare for a clash with Israel despite the lull in the fighting, and that they were waiting for the right opportunity to surprise Israel (Quds.net, May 31, 2014).



Popular Resistance Committees training facility (Quds.net, May 31, 2014).

### Hamas Interior Minister Promotes the Path of "Resistance"

■ On June 1, 2014, **Fathi Hamad**, minister of the interior in the de-facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip, visited the headquarters of the national security apparatus in Gaza, and met with commanders and officers. He told them that "Palestine needs men like you, and we are proud of how you proved yourselves on the battlefield against the occupation [i.e., Israel], and you are an exemplary defense for your people" (Website of the Hamas administration, June 1, 2014). On May 29, 2014, he presided over in a degree-presenting ceremony held in his office, during which he called **the "resistance" [i.e. terrorism and violence] the only way to "liberate Palestine"** (Website of the Hamas ministry of the interior, May 29, 2014).



Fathi Hamad (center) visits the headquarters of the national security apparatus in the Gaza Strip (Website of the Hamas ministry of the interior, June 1, 2014)

### Egyptian Government Outlaws Digging Tunnels

■ After having destroyed the tunnels along Egypt's border with the Gaza Strip, the Egyptian government proposed a new law that would outlaw digging tunnels in the future. The government proposed the law to the legislative branch of the national council, which added it to the criminal code. Digging tunnels or using them to transfer merchandise or individuals will be punished by imprisonment (Maannews.net, June 1, 2014).

## The Fatah-Hamas Reconciliation Agreement

### Contacts to Form an Interim Reconciliation Government Continue

■ **On the afternoon of June 2, 2014, a Palestinian unity government was sworn in, headed by Rami Hamdallah.** It is composed of technocrats and will serve as an **interim government** until elections are held. The new government has **18 ministers, five of them from the Gaza Strip.** It will not deal with security coordination with Israel or with the negotiations, for which Mahmoud Abbas will be responsible.

■ Swearing in the government was made possible after deliberations held during the past week resolved various outstanding Fatah-Hamas disagreements, including:

- **The ministry of prisoner affairs** – Mahmoud Abbas decided to abolish the ministry in the interim government and replace it with an independent authority for whose budget the PLO and not the Palestinian Authority (PA) would be responsible (Alhayat.com, May 30, 2014). Hamas strongly opposed the decision,



and a protest rally was held in the Gaza Strip (Maannews.net, June 1, 2014). **A temporary compromise was reached, according to which no minister will be appointed and the ministry will be directly subordinate to the prime minister.**

- **The ministry of foreign affairs** – Hamas objected to appointing **Riyadh al-Maliki** as the interim government's foreign minister (Al-Aqsa, May 31, 2014). According to Hamas spokesman **Sami Abu Zuhri**, Riyadh al-Maliki is "persona non grata" because of his negative attitude towards the Gaza Strip (Palpress.ps, May 31, 2014). **In the end Hamas backed down and Riyadh al-Maliki was appointed foreign minister.**

- **The ministry of the interior** – So far the interim government has not appointed an interior minister; **until now the interior minister has been responsible for the various national security apparatuses. Rami Hamdallah is supposed to visit the United States in the near future to reassure the American administration about everything pertaining to the interim government** (Palpress.ps, June 1, 2014).



Cartoon from the Palestinian daily newspaper Al-Quds about the Fatah-Hamas disagreement over ministers in the national unity government. One chair reads "[Ministry of] foreign affairs," and the other "Reconciliation" (Alquds.com, May 31, 2014).

## The Palestinian Authority

### The Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations

- Speaking to 300 Israeli peace activists on a visit to Ramallah, PA chairman **Mahmoud Abbas** called on the Israeli government to return to the negotiating table. His conditions were that Israel carry out the fourth phase of prisoner release and freeze construction in the settlements for three months. He also said he objected to a one-state solution as an alternative to the two-state solution. He claimed that security coordination with Israel would continue (Maannews.net, May 28, 2014).
- In response to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's declaration that Jerusalem would remain united, Palestinian spokesman **Nabil Abu Rudeina** said that the Palestinian, Arab and international position was that east Jerusalem was the capital of the Palestinian state and that was a condition for any agreement (Wafa.ps, May 28, 2014).

### Hunger Strike of Administrative Detainees in Israeli Prisons Continues

- **Administrative detainees in Israeli prisoners have been on a hunger strike for five weeks.** Several dozen had to be taken to hospitals in Israel. Security prisoners are also striking in solidarity. According to the Israel Prison Authority, 290 prisoners are on a hunger strike; all of them are under medical supervision (Haaretz.co.il, June 2, 2014).
- Palestinians, headed by **Issa Qaraqa**, the PA minister of prisoner affairs, appealed to the international community to intervene. Qaraqa said that the Palestinians had asked UN and EU agencies, as well as the Egyptian leadership, to make contacts with Israel that would lead to the end of the hunger strike (Voice of Palestine, May 29, 2014). He also appealed to the UN Security Council to hold an urgent meeting to discuss the issue of the hunger-striking prisoners. He said that international agencies and the UN were responsible for what he called "negligence in exerting pressure on the government of Israel" (Maannews.net, May 27, 2014).
- On May 28, 2014, the Palestinian prisoners' club and the PA ministry of released prisoners' affairs held rally in front of Red Cross headquarters in Hebron to show solidarity with the hunger-striking prisoners. It was attended by **Issa Qaraqa** and other senior Palestinian. Qaraqa said that the coming days were critical because the strike had become dangerous in view of the Israeli decision "to let the strikers die of hunger" (Maannews.net, May 28, 2014).



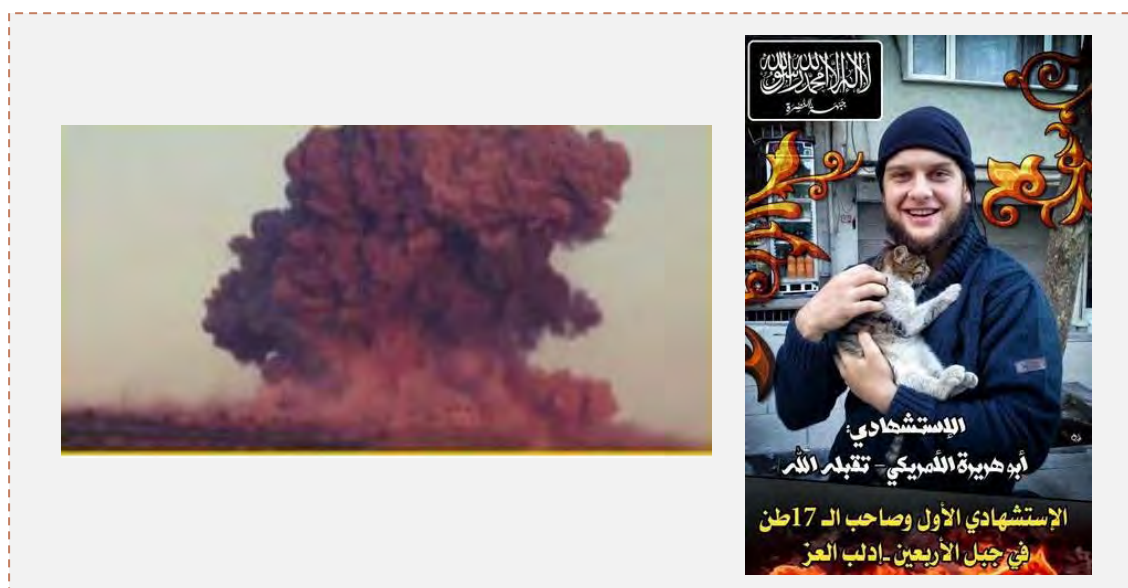
Hamas march held in Ramallah to support the hunger-striking prisoners (Paltimes.net, May 30, 2014).

## The Global Jihad

### American Carries Out Suicide Bombing Attack in Syria for the Al-Nusra Front

- The American State Department confirmed that American security agencies had identified an American who had reportedly participated in an anti-Assad regime joint suicide bombing attack in Syria on May 25, 2014. His picture was posted on the social networks of the jihadist organizations in Syria, who called him **Abu Hurayra the American** (Miamiherald.com, May 31, 2014).
- The suicide bomber was identified as **Moner Mohammad Abu-Salha**, a young man in his twenties, from Florida, who went to Syria last year. According to the agencies **he underwent a two-month training course at an Al-Nusra Front camp in Aleppo**. The State Department, American law-enforcement agencies and American intelligence identified him conclusively five days after his death was reported (Nytimes.com, May 30, 2014).
- According to an updated report from senior American intelligence and security sources, **approximately 100 Americans have either gone to Syria or tried to go since the beginning of the Syrian civil war**. Most of them joined organizations affiliated the global jihad (CNN.com, June 1, 2014). That estimate is significantly higher than those issued in 2013 (according to which there were 12-15 American foreign fighters). In our assessment, the updated estimate reflects the overall increase in the

number of foreign fighter in Syria in the past year (or possibly the increase in American intelligence and security attention paid to the issue).



Left: The explosion caused by the suicide bombing. Right: Abu Hurayra, the American suicide bomber (Twitter).

### Brussels Jewish Museum Shooter Identified as Veteran of Syrian Civil War

■ The French authorities detained **Mahdi Namoush**, 29 years old, as suspected of carrying out the shooting attack at the Jewish Museum in Brussels which killed four people, including an Israeli couple. At a press conference held on June 1, 2014 by the French security authorities, the attorney general said that the suspect was exercising his right to remain silent. He said the suspect had been detained during a routine customs examination on a bus arriving in Marseilles. He was found to be armed and carrying two cameras, one containing pictures of weapons and the clothing worn by the terrorist operative in the attack. **In the background he was heard claiming responsibility for the attack.**

■ According to the attorney general, the detainee is a criminal previously convicted of seven different crimes for which he spent a number of years in prison. His last prison term was for five years. In prison he joined extremist Islamist groups. Upon release he went to Syria where **he joined the ISIS**. After a number of months in Syria he returned to France.

■ **Note:** France and Belgium are the two countries in Europe from which the greatest number of foreign fighter have gone to Syria. According to Libération (July 22, 2013), the fighters who returned to France are under close surveillance by the authorities. In June 2013 the French minister of the interior reported that the police had detained

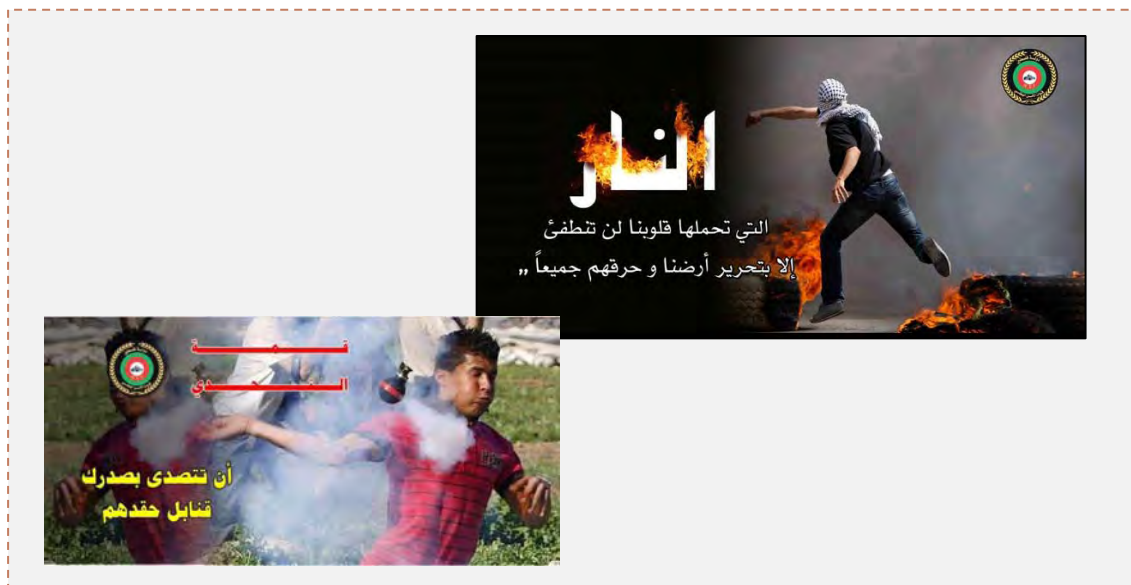


three suspects. They were part of a French group which had gone to Syria and returned to France (Reuters.com, June 25, 2014). In July 2013 it was reported that the French intelligence and security services had exposed a cell of operatives planning to leave for Syria. Except for one they had converted to Islam, and all had criminal records (Libération, July 22, 2013).<sup>5</sup>

## The Battle for Hearts and Minds

### Anti-Israeli Incitement Continues of PA National Security Facebook Page

■ This past week incitement to anti-Israeli violence and verbal violence against Israel continued to appear on the **official Facebook page of the PA's national security service**. The following examples are from May 29, 30 and 31, 2014:



Left: "The height of confrontation. Use your chest to oppose their [the IDF/Israel] hate grenades (May 31, 2014). Right: "The fire that ignited us will only be extinguished by the liberation of our lands and by burning them all [all Israelis]" (May 30, 2014).

<sup>5</sup> For further information about American and French foreign fighters in Syria, see the February 3, 2014 bulletin "[Foreign fighters from Western countries in the ranks of the rebel organizations affiliated with Al-Qaeda and the global jihad in Syria.](#)"



Left: The "right of return:" "I will return to Haifa and Jaffa. I will smell the oranges of my grandfather and the coffeehouse of my father" (May 29, 2014). Right: Israel drains the Palestinian cow (May 29, 2014)