



July 15, 2014

# Operation Protective Edge – Update No. 5 (As of 1200 hours, July 15, 2014)



Left: Formal Hamas notice rejecting the Egyptian initiative for a ceasefire (Qassam.ps, July 15, 2014). Right: Direct rocket hit in the western Negev after the ceasefire was declared and Israel unilaterally agreed to it (Tazpit.org.il, July 14, 2014).

## Overview

1. In the shadow of continuing rocket fire into Israel from the Gaza Strip, Egypt announced its initiative for a ceasefire. It was supposed to begin on July 15, 2014, at 0900 hours (0600 GMT). On the morning of July 15 Israel unilaterally decided to adopt the Egyptian initiative and halt IDF fire. However, **Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) rejected it, and continued and increased their rocket fire.** They began with the population centers surrounding the Gaza Strip and then launched rockets deep into Israel, targeting Ashqelon, Ashdod, Rishon Letzion, Zichron Yaakov and Yokneam (21 kilometers, or 13 miles, southeast of Haifa).

## Egyptian Call for a Ceasefire Rejected by Hamas

### The Egyptian Initiative

2. On the evening of July 14, 2014, the **Egyptian ministry of foreign affairs** announced that Egypt was proposing **an initiative for a ceasefire** that would begin on July 15, 2014, at 0900 hours (Youm7.com, July 14, 2014), with the following conditions:

- 1) Israel would halt all of its actions against the Gaza Strip from the air, sea and land.
- 2) All the Palestinian organizations in the Gaza Strip would stop their actions against Israel from the air, sea and under ground (i.e., the tunnels), with **an emphasis on halting the rocket fire and the attacks on civilians**.
- 3) The Gaza Strip crossings would be opened and the passage of people and merchandise would be facilitated.
- 4) **Within 48 hours, high-level Israeli and Palestinian delegations would go to Cairo** to discuss ways of establish the ceasefire. Discussions with the sides would be held separately, **based on the understandings reached at the end of Operation Pillar of Defense**.
- 5) Both sides would pledge not to take any action that might have a negative influence on implementing the understandings reached.
- 6) Egypt would monitor the implementation of the understandings.

## Israel's Response

3. On the morning of July 15, 2014, **after a meeting of the Political-Security Cabinet, Israel announced it would adopt and comply with the Egyptian initiative and halt its fire at 0900 hours (0600 GMT)**. It also announced that it pledged not to attack the Gaza Strip after the stated time. Cabinet ministers Naftali Bennett and Avigdor Lieberman opposed the decision. As a result, the IDF halted its attacks on terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip.

## Hamas and PIJ Response

4. **Hamas rejected the Egyptian initiative**. The Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military-terrorist wing, issued a statement saying that no official representative had approached it regarding the terms of a lull. However, should such an initiative be presented to Hamas, **it would be rejected without further consideration**. It was, claimed the statement, an initiative of "enforced surrender," and as far as Hamas was concerned, "it wasn't worth the paper it was written on." The campaign with Israel, said the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, **would continue and become more aggressive and intense** (Qassam.ps, July 15, 2014).

5. In the wake of the Egyptian initiative and the Israeli cabinet's decision, Hamas and PIJ spokesmen said the following:

1) **Osama Hamdan**, in charge of public relations for Hamas, said that the Israeli decision [i.e., the acceptance of the ceasefire] was empty and of no interest to Hamas. He said that no initiative had been presented to Hamas and that Hamas objected to all forms of "extortion and surrender to conditions that contradict the rights and demands of the resistance [i.e., the terrorist organizations]" (Alresala.net, July 15, 2014).

2) Hamas spokesman **Sami Abu Zuhri** said that Hamas had no knowledge at all about the Egyptian initiative. He said he had learned of it through the media and that Hamas had no commitment to implement it. He said Israel's unilateral ceasefire did not bind Hamas and in any case it was meaningless (Al-Jazeera, July 15, 2014).

3) **Abu Ahmed**, spokesman for the PIJ's Jerusalem Brigades, said that Israel was lying when it said it would adopt the Egyptian initiative. He also said that the orders on the ground remained the same, that is, **to continue the [military] campaign** (Qudsradio.ps, July 15, 2014).

## **Continuing Rocket Fire and the Israeli Prime Minister's Announcement**

6. **In effect, the rocket fire continued and increased.** Approximately two hours after the ceasefire was supposed to begin, **at around 1100 hours**, the population centers around the Gaza Strip were attacked. Later **the rocket fire was extended to Ashqelon, Ashdod, Rishon Letzion, Yavne, Zichron Yaakov and Yokneam (southeast of Haifa).** The rockets caused damage to property in Ashdod and the western Negev. **Several people were treated for shock.**

7. In the wake of the continuing rocket and mortar shell attacks, and Hamas and the PIJ's rejection of the ceasefire, **Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told a press conference that if Hamas did not adopt the ceasefire initiative Israel would have international legitimacy to extend its activities to restore quiet.** He said the IDF would intensify its attacks (Ynetnews.co.il, July 15, 2014).

## IDF Activities

### Attacks on Terrorist Targets in the Gaza Strip

8. During the past 24 hours the IDF continued attacking terrorist targets throughout the Gaza Strip. **More than 1,500 terrorist targets have been attacked** since the beginning of Operation Protective Edge, among them more than 700 rocket launchers, 130 military-terrorist camps and posts, about 100 senior terrorist operatives and approximately 220 terrorist tunnels (IDF Spokesman, July 15, 2014).

9. On **July 14, 2014**, the day before the announcement of the Egyptian initiative for a ceasefire, the attacks on terrorist targets continued. During the day more than 100 were attacked, among them:

- 1) **Six rocket launchers** from which rockets were fired targeting Sderot in the western Negev. An area from which a rocket was fired at Kissufim (northwestern Negev) was also attacked.
- 2) **33 concealed rocket launchers.**
- 3) **Eight weapons caches.**
- 4) **The houses of four commanders** which served as command and control centers.
- 5) **Seven terrorist tunnels.**
- 6) **Nine terrorist operatives** responsible for rocket and mortar shell fire attacks on Israeli territory.
- 7) **Sites for launching medium-range rockets**, attacked by the Israeli navy.



Left: A detention facility under construction in Rafah, attacked by the Israeli Air Force (Facebook page of the ministry of the interior, Gaza, July 15, 2014). Right: Attack on the Jawazat compound in Gaza City, used by Hamas' security services (Paltimes.net, July 15, 2014).

## The Gazan Population

10. The Palestinian media and ministry of health **reported that 193 Gazans had been killed** since the beginning of the operation, and 1,385 had been wounded. UNRWA reported that 17,000 residents of the northern Gaza Strip had left their houses and were currently housed in UNRWA schools in Gaza City and the northern Gaza Strip (UNRWA.org, July 14, 2014).

1. According to (initial) ITIC information, the distribution of those killed is as follows:

1) **72 terrorist operatives:**

A. **35 Hamas operatives** (most of them from its military-terrorist wing)

B. **27 PIJ operatives**

C. **Ten operatives** from other terrorist organizations

2) **80 non-involved Palestinians**

3) **41 Palestinians** whose identity still cannot be ascertained.

11. A UN report on the humanitarian situation noted thousands of Palestinians who had been forced from their houses, power outages and lack of medicines (Unocha.org, July 14, 2014). Correspondents reporting on the situation in the Gaza Strip have

reported a lack of basic food commodities and drinking water, and a steep increase in prices (Middleeasteye.net, July 11, 2014).

## The Israeli and Palestinian Authority (PA) Populations

12. During Operation Protective Edge **28 Israeli civilians and 17 soldiers have been wounded**. Serious property damage has been reported. The Israeli tax authority reported that so far 662 claims for damages resulting directly from rocket hits have been filed with the property tax department. They include damages done to structures, vehicles and agricultural fields. So far, the number of claims is significantly smaller than those lodged during Operation Pillar of Defense, when 4,000 claims were lodged during the eight days of the operation.

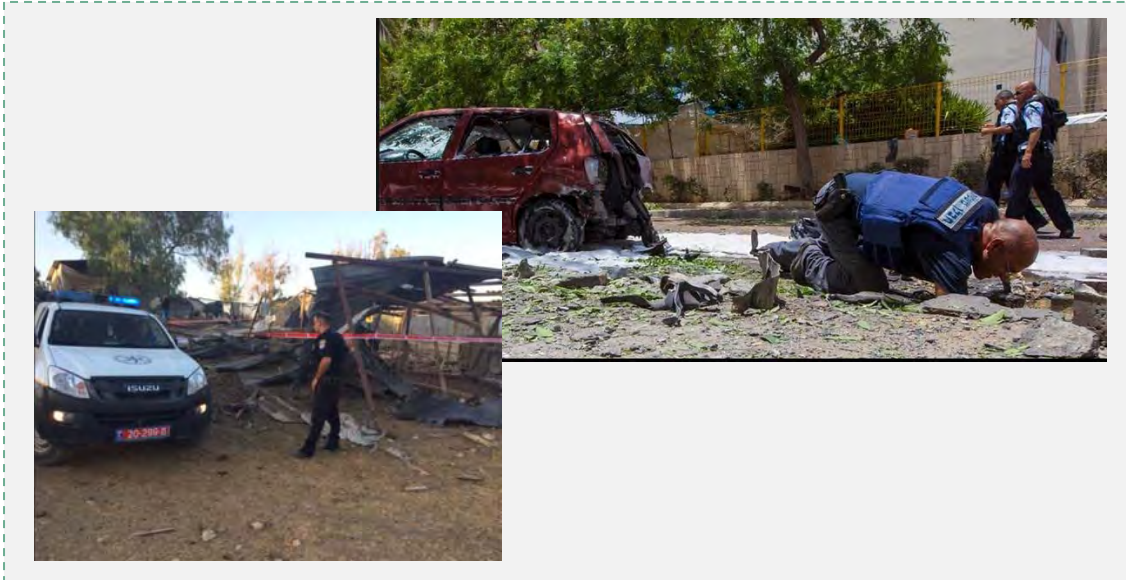


Damage done to a car in Sderot by rocket fire (Photo by Noga Binodiz for Tazpit.org.il, July 14, 2014).

13. Since the rocket fire from the Gaza Strip also threatens the residents of Judea and Samaria, the heads of the Israeli administration for coordination and liaison with the civilian authority met with the PA figures to provide them with guidelines in the event of rocket fire in their direction from the Gaza Strip. They were also given the phone numbers of the Israeli Home Front command, which operates a number in Arabic with information about civil defense (IDF Spokesman, July 14, 2014).

## Rocket Fire

14. During the past 24 hours massive barrages of rocket and mortar shell fire from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory have continued. During Operation Protective Edge approximately **940 rocket hits have been identified**. The Iron Dome aerial defense system intercepted **more than 145** of those targeting population centers throughout the country.

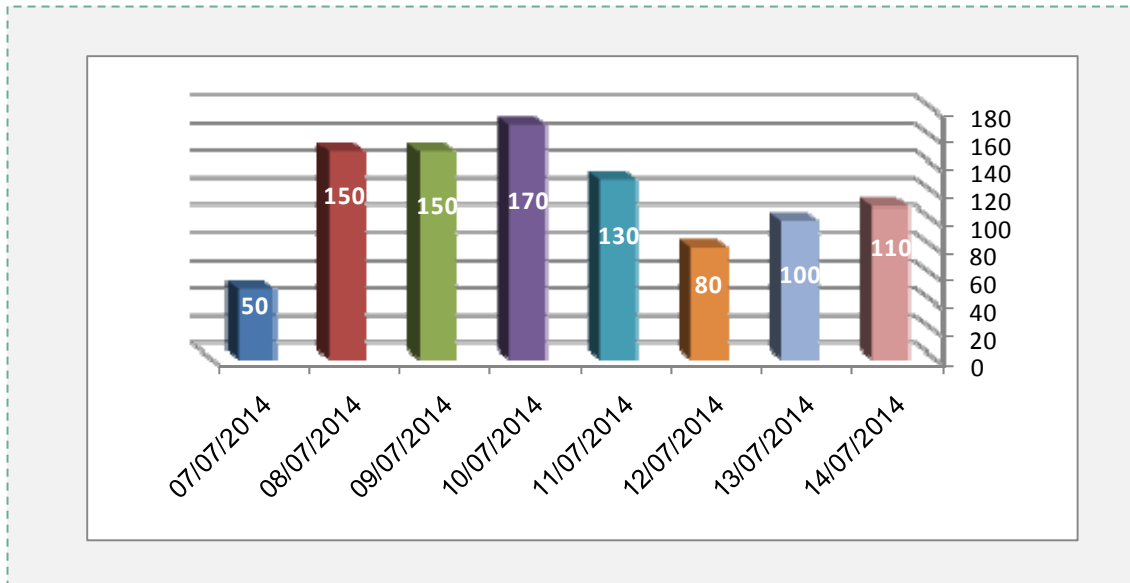


Left: A rocket that hit a Bedouin village in the Negev. Two young girls were wounded, one of them critically (Facebook page of the Israel Police Force, July 15, 2014). Right: A rocket hit in Ashdod (Israel Police Force, July 14, 2014).

15. During the past 24 hours approximately **110 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory**. About 15 of them were intercepted by the Iron Dome. The main attacks were the following:

- 1) **At about 1800 hours on July 14, 2014**, a rocket was launched at Beersheba. Two sisters, aged 11 and 13, from a Bedouin village near Beersheba were injured, one of them critically.
- 2) **At noon on July 13, 2014**, there was a direct rocket hit on a house in Ashdod. An eight year-old boy sustained minor injuries. The house was heavily damaged.
- 3) **On July 14, 2014**, a rocket that hit the western Negev caused minor injuries to an IDF soldier.

## Daily Distribution of Rocket Fire from the Gaza Strip during Operation Protective Edge<sup>1</sup>



### Claims of Responsibility for Rocket Fire

16. Hamas' military-terrorist wing claimed responsibility for many rocket launchings during the day, especially for medium-range rockets (Qassam.ps, July 13, 2014). The PIJ's military-terrorist wing also claimed responsibility for rocket launchings, as did the military-terrorist wings of the PFLP, the DFLP and the Popular Resistance Committees. Local networks claimed responsibility for firing at populated areas around the Gaza Strip.

### Anti-Tank Missiles Fired at IDF Soldiers

17. On **the afternoon of July 14** an anti-tank missile was fired at an IDF force in the northern Gaza Strip. The tank's Trophy (literally, in Hebrew, "windbreaker") active protection system successfully intercepted the missile. There were no casualties and no damage was reported (IDF Spokesman, July 14, 2014). Hamas' military-terrorist wing formally claimed responsibility for attacking the tank (Qassam.ps, July 14, 2014).

<sup>1</sup> The graph indicates rocket hits in Israeli territory and does to include mortar shell fire or rocket launches that failed.



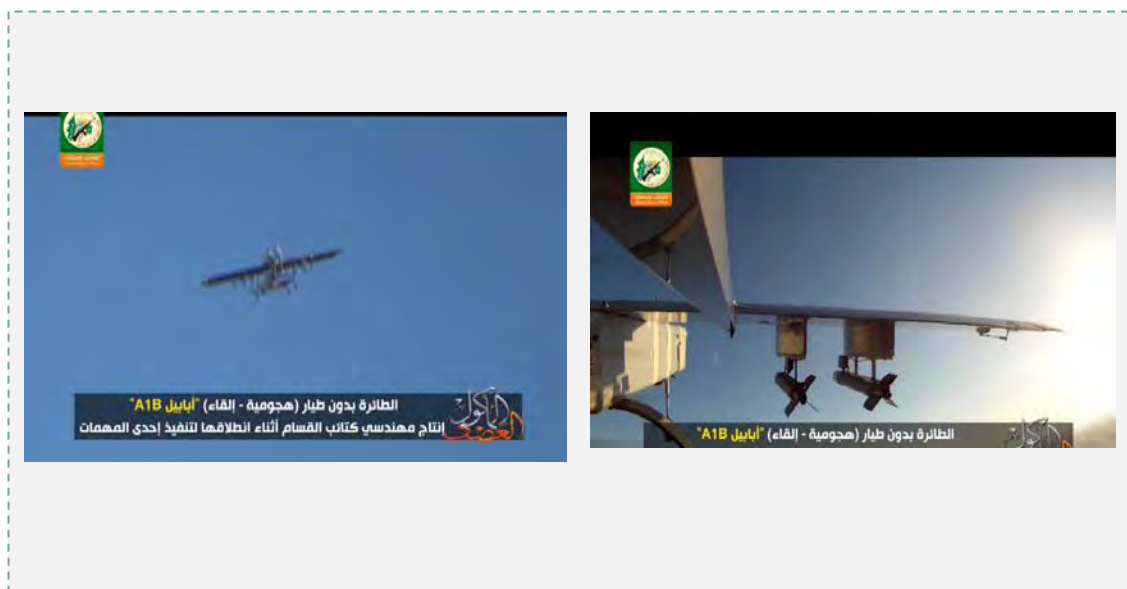
## Interception of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)

18. On **the morning of July 14, 2014**, a UAV was identified as having penetrated Israeli air space from the Gaza Strip. It was intercepted by a Patriot surface-to-air missile near Ashdod (IDF Spokesman, July 14, 2014).

19. Despite the interception of the UAV, Hamas represents its launch as an achievement, issuing false statements to boast about its aerial capabilities:

1) Hamas spokesman **Musheir al-Masri** said that launching UAVs into Israeli territory was an "addition of excellency" and "a strategic turning point," a new deterrent factor that Hamas had promised Israel [it would use] (Paltoday.ps, July 14, 2014).

2) **Hamas' military-terrorist wing** said in a formal statement that there had been three sorties of UAVs into Israeli territory and that one of them had flown near buildings in Tel Aviv's Kirya, which houses the ministry of defense and military command. According to the statement, the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades have three types of UAVs: one for gathering intelligence, one for attacks dropping projectiles and one for Kamikaze-type "crash and burn" attacks (Qassam.ps, July 14, 2014).



A video documenting UAVs produced and dispatched by Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades terrorist operatives (Qassam.ps, July 14, 2014).

## Activity on Other Fronts

### Rocket Fire from Lebanon, Syria and the Sinai Peninsula

20. Along with the fighting in the Gaza Strip, **sporadic rocket fire into Israel continues along its northern and southern fronts.**

#### Lebanon

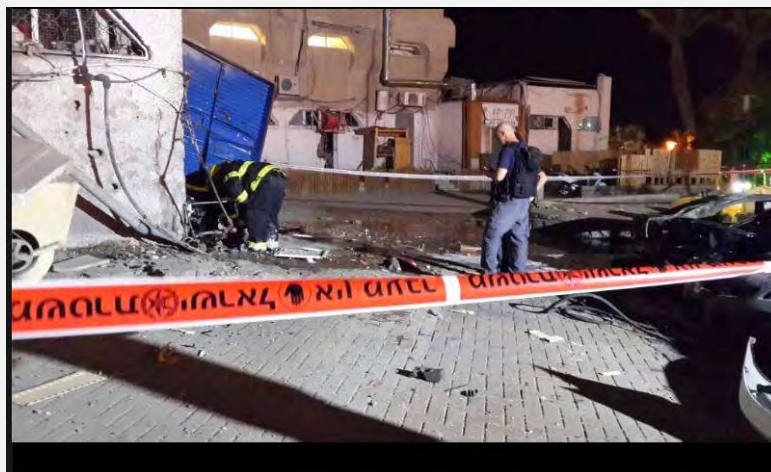
21. **Late in the evening on July 14 a rocket hit was identified in the western Galilee.** There were no casualties and no damage was reported. The IDF responded by shelling the source of the rocket fire. Israel sent stern communiqués to Lebanon through UNIFIL (IDF Spokesman, July 15, 2014). The Lebanese media reported that unknown operatives had fired two rockets at Israel from the region south of Tyre. They also reported that one of them had exploded in Lebanese territory. Lebanese army forces searched the area of the rocket launch and along with UNIFIL forces, they are trying to locate the shooters (Nna-leb.gov.lb and Al-Manar, July 14, 2014).

#### The Syrian Border

22. On **July 14, 2014**, at 1800 hours, a rocket was fired from Syria into Israeli territory. It fell in an open area. There were no casualties and no damage was reported.

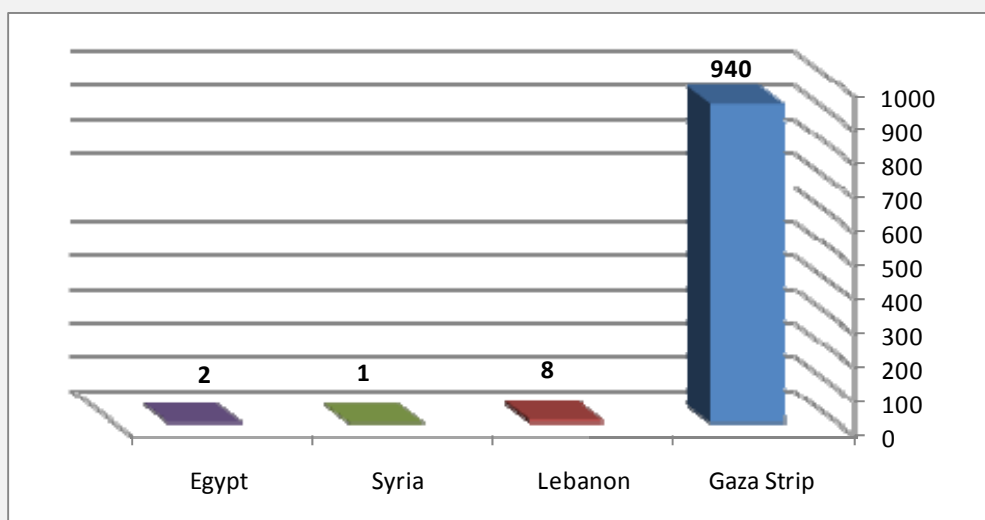
#### The Sinai Peninsula

23. **On July 15, 2014, at 0130 hours rockets were fired from the Sinai Peninsula at Eilat, Israel's southernmost city.** Two rockets hit the city, one in the parking lot of a hotel. Another hit elsewhere in the city. **The PIJ's military-terrorist wing** publicly claimed responsibility for the rocket fire (Paltoday.ps, July 15, 2014). It is unclear whether their operatives actually fired the rockets or not.



One of the rocket hits in Eilat (Facebook page of the Israel Police Force, July 15, 2014).

### Regional Distribution of Rocket Fire into Israel



## The Crossings

### The Kerem Shalom Crossing

24. Despite the unabated rocket fire and the IAF's attacks, the Kerem Shalom crossing continues functioning as an important lifeline for supplies entering the Gaza Strip. Every day food, medical equipment and fuel are delivered through it (Cogat.idf.il, July 14, 2014).

### The Rafah Crossing

25. Egypt announced that the Rafah crossing would be open to wounded Palestinians seeking medical care in Egypt and Egyptian nationals who wanted to leave the Gaza Strip. It was also reported that on July 13, 2014, another consignment of humanitarian aid from the Egyptian security forces for the Palestinian people was delivered through the crossing. The aid included medical equipment and food (Almasryalyoum.com, July 14, 2014).



Delivering emergency aid from Egypt to the Gaza Strip through the Rafah crossing (Paltimes.net, July 15, 2014).

## Statements

### Hamas

26. In a recorded speech, **Ismail Haniya**, deputy head of Hamas' political bureau, directed remarks to Hamas' military-terrorist wing. He said that in the recent fighting they had proved that they had not wasted their time during the lull in the fighting after Operation Pillar of Defense. He said they were currently writing one of stories of the glory of the Palestinian people. He said it was Israel, not they, that had started a war whose objective was to kill children and entire families (Al-Aqsa TV, July 14, 2014).

27. Senior Hamas figure **Musheir al-Masri** said that despite the fact that Israel had started the war, it would not decide how it would end. He said that Hamas did not deny Egypt's efforts, but Egypt had to help the Palestinian people and not act as a broker. He said that no broker should bother to contact Hamas before Israel agreed to its conditions (Paltoday.ps, July 14, 2014).

### The PA

28. **Mahmoud Abbas** sent a formal communiqué from the PA leadership to the UN Secretary General Ban-ki Moon asking for international protection for the Palestinian people. Giving the communiqué to UN envoy Robert Serry, Mahmoud Abbas said that Israel's aggression against the Gaza Strip continued (Al-ayyam.com, July 14, 2014). Fatah's Central Committee held a meeting headed by Mahmoud Abbas, who presented the international and regional efforts being made to stop what he referred to as "the slaughter" of the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip (Al-ayyam.com, July 14, 2014).