



July 20, 2014

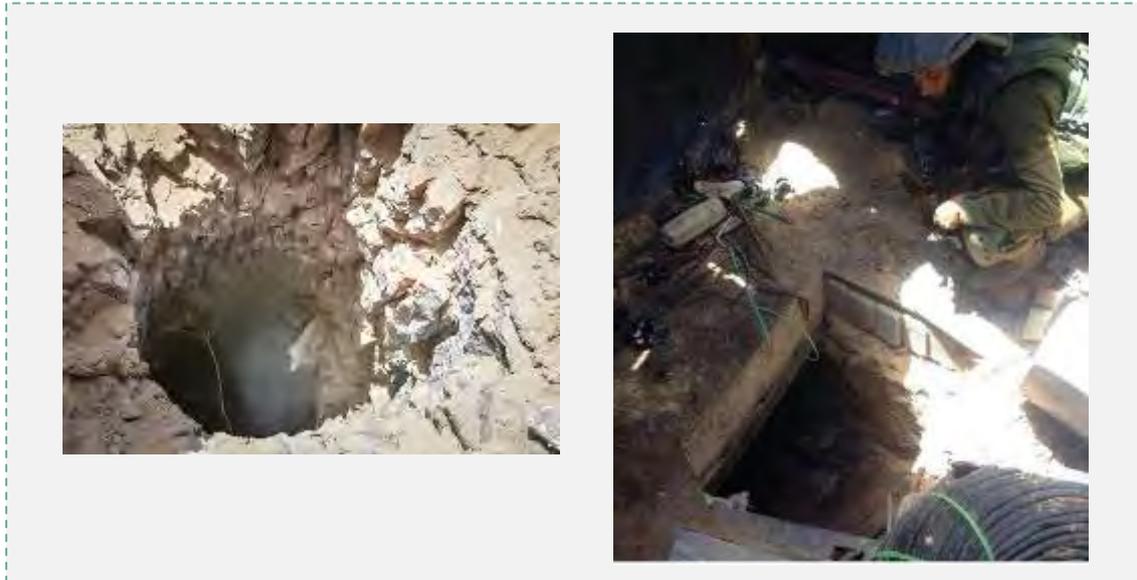
## Operation Protective Edge – Update No. 8 (As of 1200 hours, July 20, 2014)



Left: Preparing for the ground operation (IDF Spokesman, July 18, 2014). Right: The prime minister and defense minister in military headquarters (Hakiryia) in Tel Aviv (Photo by Ariel Harmoni for the ministry of defense, July 18, 2014).

### Overview

1. On the night of July 17, 2014, at the end of the tenth day of Operation Protective Edge, and after the Egyptian initiative for a ceasefire agreement accepted by Israel had been rejected by Hamas, **the IDF began a new stage of Operation Protective Edge**. The ground incursion has focused on finding and destroying the extensive network of terrorist tunnels leading from the Gaza Strip into Israel. So far, 34 tunnel shafts and five tunnels have been found which extended from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory (IDF spokesman's website, 1300 hours, July 20, 2014). The tunnels, which were constructed over a period of years, **were built for the purpose of infiltrating terrorist operatives into Israel to kill and abduct IDF soldiers and Israeli civilians in Israeli territory (especially in civilian population centers and military installations near the Gaza Strip)**.



Tunnel shafts exposed (IDF Spokesman, July 19, 2014).

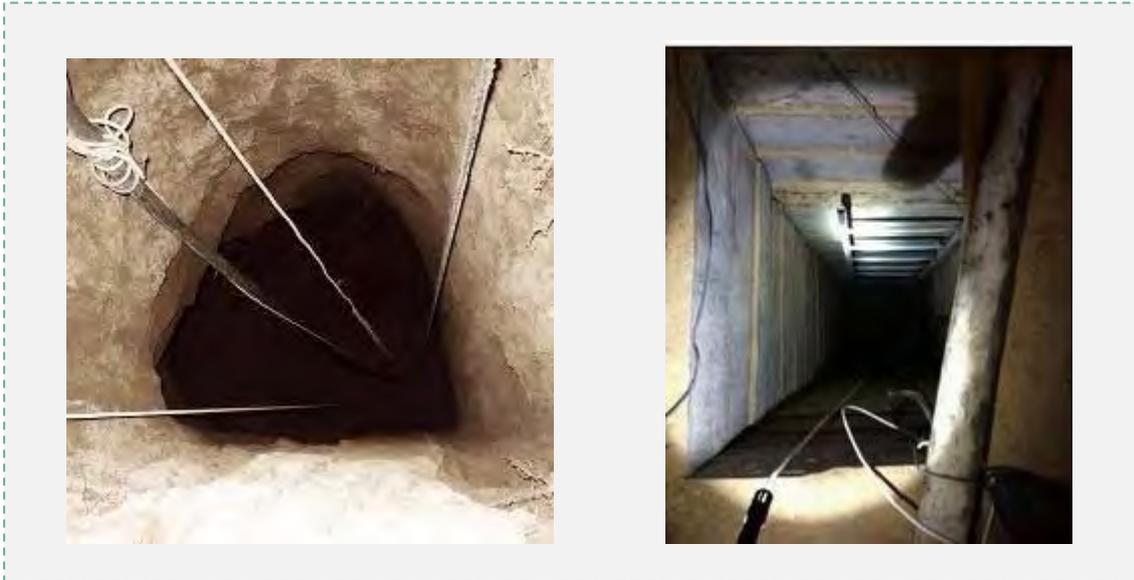
2. Even after Hamas rejected the Egyptian initiative, contacts, **in which Egypt plays a central role**, continue in an effort to reach a ceasefire. Holding a press conference with his French counterpart, the Egyptian minister of defense said **the Egyptian initiative was the only one there was and that it had the support of the Arab League, the international community and UN Security Council**. Even **Musa Abu Marzouq**, deputy chairman of Hamas' political bureau, publicly stated that Egypt was most capable of playing the role of mediator. However **Musa Abu Marzouq** and the other Hamas **spokesmen still reject the Egyptian initiative and adhere to Hamas' original demands** (primarily the opening of the Rafah and other crossings and the release of the Hamas terrorist operatives detained by Israel during Operation Brothers' Keeper).

## The Situation on the Ground

### IDF Activity

3. In view of the continuing rocket fire and the attempts to infiltrate Israeli territory through the tunnels, the political leadership decided to begin a ground operation in the Gaza Strip. At 2200 hours on July 17, 2014, the IDF began a ground incursion, focusing on destroying the terrorist infrastructures, especially the tunnel system. According to IDF Spokesman Mordechai Almoz, Hamas planned to use the tunnels to carry out mass-killing attacks in Israeli population centers or IDF camps, and/or to abduct Israeli civilians and soldiers from Israeli territory into the Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman, July 19, 2014).

4. By the morning of July 20, **IDF forces had exposed 34 terrorist tunnel shafts and five tunnels leading from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory.** So far, several dozen terrorist operatives have been killed and 13 have been detained and transferred to Israel for interrogation. To prevent the civilian population from being harmed, the IDF sent text and voice messages and distributed flyers throughout the Gaza Strip calling on civilians to leave the combat areas. However, the terrorist organizations exploited the situation to use vacated houses for their activities (IDF Spokesman, July 18, 2014).



**Tunnels exposed by the IDF in the Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman, July 19, 2014).**

5. The main activities carried out on the ground in and near the Gaza Strip were the following (IDF Spokesman, July 20, 2014):

1) **July 20, 2014**

a) During the night **IDF forces destroyed two tunnels** planned to be used against Israeli civilians. There was heavy fighting with armed Palestinian terrorist operatives. An IDF tank and APC were ambushed and attacked.

b) After heavy fighting in the neighborhood of Sajaiya, with reports of many Palestinian casualties, Israel agreed to Hamas' request, transmitted by the Red Cross, to a humanitarian pause of two hours. However, Hamas violated the pause a short time after it went into effect. The IDF announced it was setting up a field hospital at the Erez crossing to treat wounded Palestinians. **(Note:** During the heavy battles in Sajaiya 13 IDF soldiers and dozens of terrorist operatives were killed. In addition, dozens of uninvolved civilians, who, under Hamas

pressure, did not vacate the area, were killed. Additional information will be provided in Update 9).

2) **July 19, 2014**

a) **During the afternoon the IDF prevented a killing attack/abduction near the security fence in the central Gaza Strip.** The target was apparently one of the Israeli communities nearby. A number of terrorist operatives infiltrated through a tunnel and attacked an IDF force with machine guns and anti-tank missiles. The soldiers returned fire and forced the terrorist operatives back into the Gaza Strip.

**Weapons left behind by the terrorists (IDF Spokesman, July 19, 2014).**

b) During the afternoon **a terrorist operative riding a motorbike tried to carry out a suicide bombing attack in the midst of an IDF force.** He was shot and killed.

c) During the afternoon two terrorist operatives fired an anti-tank missile and light arms at an IDF force in the southern Gaza Strip. They were killed in the exchange of fire.

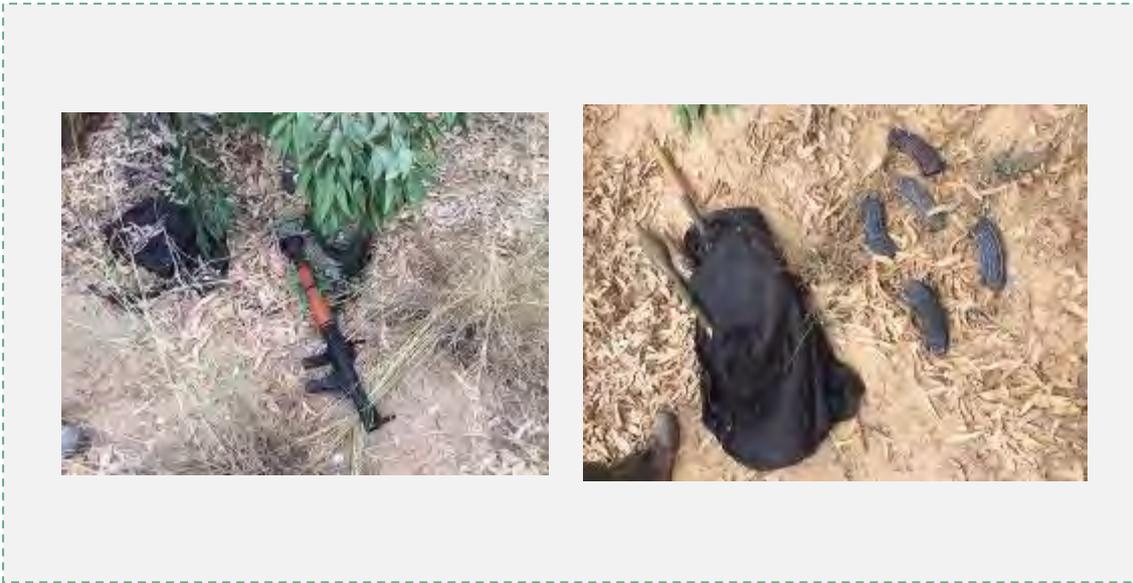
d) During the evening an IDF force came upon a terrorist operative **who had exited a tunnel shaft and opened fire.** He was shot and killed.

3) **July 18, 2014**

a) During the afternoon an attack was prevented in the central Gaza Strip. A terrorist operative with five grenades in his possession asked for medical help from the forces on the ground. When they agreed he tried to attack them with the grenades.

b) During the evening IDF forces located the shafts of 13 tunnels used for the passage of weapons and terrorist operatives. During the activity terrorists opened fire on the soldiers.

c) Close to midnight there was a firefight between an IDF force and a terrorist operative who was hiding in a house in Beit Lahia. Several soldiers were wounded. The terrorist operative was killed.



**Weapons found in a house of terrorist operatives in the Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman, July 19, 2014).**

6. Hamas continues issuing false announcements boasting of its "victories" and minimizing the achievements of Israel's military activity. The Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas military-terrorist wing, issued an announcement claiming Israel had lied about exposing and gaining control of tunnels in order to show itself as "heroic" and rehabilitate the IDF's reputation. According to the announcement, all Israel found were underground passages dug under a training camp near the border and they were only used for training purposes (Qassam.ps, July 18, 2014).

## **IDF Losses**

7. Five IDF soldiers have been killed in Operation Protective Edge:
- 1) **Sergeant Eitan Barak**, 20 from Herzliya. Killed during combat in the northern Gaza Strip.
  - 2) **Major Amotz Greenberg**, 45, from Hod Hasharon. Officer in the reserve forces. Killed in a clash with terrorist operatives who infiltrated into Israel territory.
  - 3) **Sergeant Adar Branso**, 21, from Nahariya, killed in a clash with terrorist operatives who infiltrated into Israel territory.
  - 4) **Second Lieutenant Bar Rahav**, 21, from Ramat Yishai. Soldier in the engineering corps. Killed in the Gaza Strip on the night of July 19 by an anti-tank missile that hit the vehicle he was in.
  - 5) **First Sergeant Bnaya Rubel**, 20 from Holon. Served in the infantry. Killed on the night of July 19 in a clash with terrorist operatives.

8. Eleven IDF Spokesman soldiers were wounded, two critically. (**Note:** In the meantime, scores of IDF soldiers have been wounded. Additional information will be provided in Update 9.)

## IDF Activity

### Attacks on Terrorist Targets in the Gaza Strip Continue

9. **In addition to the ground operation, the IDF continued attacking terrorist targets from the air. More than 2,570 terrorist targets have been attacked** since the beginning of Operation Protective Edge (IDF Spokesman, July 17, 2014).

10. During the past 24 hours more than 450 terrorist targets have been attacked, including the following (IDF Spokesman, July 20, 2014):

- 1) The facilities of the Hamas leadership and administration.
- 2) The facilities of the rocket and mortar shell launching systems.
- 3) Weapons caches.
- 4) Tunnels.
- 5) Houses of senior terrorist figures that served as command and control facilities.



**The house of Fathi Hamad, former Palestinian minister of the interior, attacked by the IDF (Facebook page of Ghaza al-A'an, July 18, 2014).**

11. UNRWA said in a statement that during a routine inspection its employees found **20 rockets hidden in one of its schools in the Gaza Strip**. According to the statement, UNRWA strongly condemned those responsible for hiding weapons in one of the agency's schools, calling it a violation of international law. The statement added that it was the first time a school had been put to that purpose (UNRWA website, July 17, 2014). Hamas and the other terrorist organizations routinely use educational institutions in the Gaza Strip for military purposes.<sup>1</sup>

## The Gazan Population

12. According to ITIC information, **402 Gazans have been killed** since the beginning of the operation (as of noon, July 20), and more than **2,700** have been wounded.

13. Distribution (not final) of those killed is as follows:

- 1) **130 terrorist operatives:**
  - a) **63 Hamas operatives**
  - b) **48 PIJ operatives**
  - c) **19 operatives** from other terrorist organizations
- 2) **2) 138 non-involved Palestinians**
- 3) **3) 134 Palestinians** whose identity is not yet known

14. Many families have vacated the combat areas. **UNRWA reported that 50,000 Palestinians were being housed in 44 of its schools**. UNRWA sources said they were concerned the number of people seeking shelter would grow as the operation progressed, and that they would run out of supplies (UNRWA website, July 19, 2014). A spokesman for the Gaza electric company said that 80% of the Gaza Strip was without electricity (Palestinian TV, July 18, 2014).

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<sup>1</sup> For further information see the July 20, 2014 bulletin "Hamas and other terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip use schools for military-terrorist purposes: The case of rockets found hidden in an UNRWA school during Operation Protective Edge."



Palestinians in UNRWA schools in the northern Gaza Strip after having vacated their houses (Wafa.ps, July 18, 2014).

## Support for the Gazan Population

15. The Jordanian Hashemite Charity Organisation sent a humanitarian convoy to the Gaza Strip. **Nasser Judeh**, the Jordanian foreign minister, said at a ceremony dispatching the convoy that the King of Jordan wanted to provide a solution for the Palestinians in Gaza and save them from Israel's "cruel, barbaric aggression."

## Rocket Fire into Israeli Territory

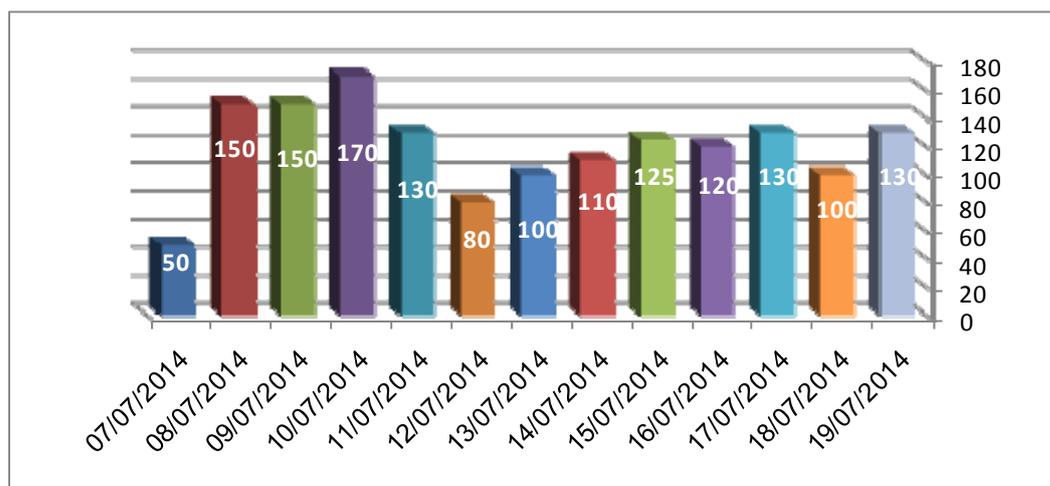
16. **Since the beginning of the operation approximately 1,545 rockets have fallen Israeli territory.** Intense rocket fire continued even after the beginning of the ground operation. Some of the rocket fire targeted IDF forces in the Gaza Strip and in Israeli territory. One man was killed. Heavy damage to property was reported:

- 1) On **July 17, 2014**, 130 rocket hits were located, after almost no rockets had been launched during the morning humanitarian pause.
- 2) On **July 18, 2014**, 100 rocket hits were located. After a relative pause in the morning, at noon rocket fire was resumed. In the afternoon two heavy barrages were fired at the greater Tel Aviv and coastal plain areas. Barrages also targeted Ashdod.
- 3) On **July 19, 2014**, 130 rocket hits were located. One fell in a Bedouin village near Dimona, killing **Ouda al-Wadj**, 32; his wife sustained minor injuries and his daughter

was critically wounded. During the day sirens were sounded in Kiryat Malachi, Gedera, the Ashdod region and throughout the western Negev.

4) On **July 20, 2014**, rocket fire into Israel continued, including Beersheba and the greater Tel Aviv area.

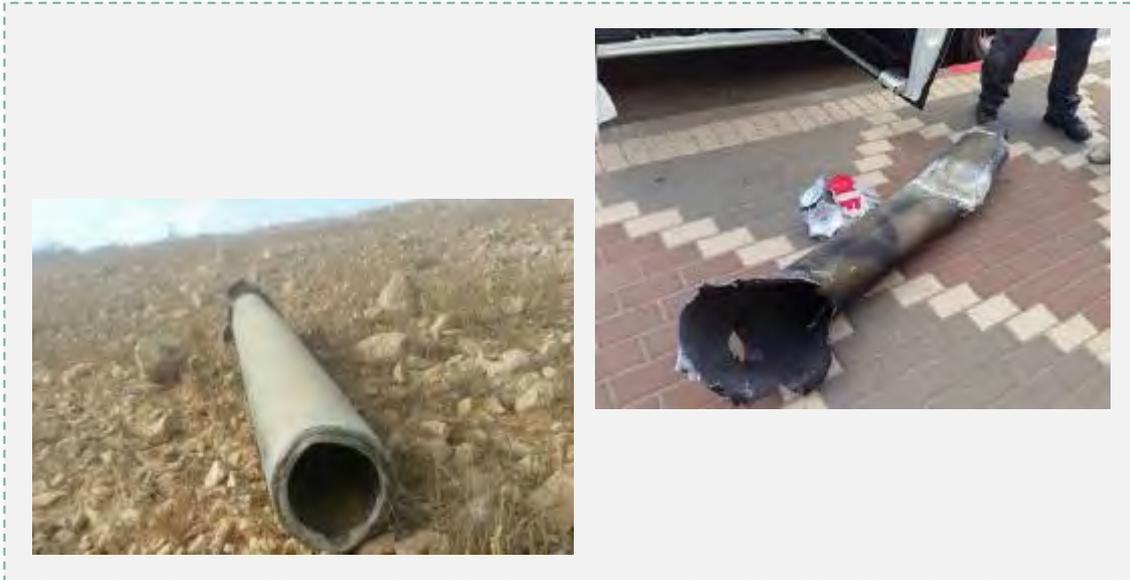
## Daily Distribution of Rocket Fire from the Gaza Strip during Operation Protective Edge<sup>2</sup>



## Claims of Responsibility for Rocket Fire

17. In recent days as well the military-terrorist wing of Hamas continued claiming responsibility for most of the rocket and mortar shell fire attacking Israel. Responsibility was also claimed by the military-terrorist wings of the PIJ, the PFLP, the DFLP and the Popular Resistance Committees. Local networks claimed responsibility for firing at populated areas around the Gaza Strip.

<sup>2</sup> The graph indicates rocket hits in Israeli territory and does to include the massive mortar shell fire or rocket launches that failed.



Left: A rocket hit in an open area near Dimona. Right: A rocket hit in Ashdod (Facebook page of the Red Alert, July 19, 2014).

## Activity on Other Fronts

### Rocket Fire from Lebanon

18. The Lebanese media reported that Lebanese security forces continued to deal with rocket fire into Israel from Lebanon. The Lebanese army continues deploying more soldiers in the region of Tyre, especially in the villages from which rocket launchers were fired and in the Al-Rashidiya refugee camp (south of Tyre). The army has erected road block in the area and examines those entering and leaving the refugee camp. **Lebanese army headquarters released the names of two Palestinians who were involved in firing rockets** (Nna-leb.gov.lb, July 16, 2014).

19. **Jihad Tahe**, a member of Hamas' political leadership in Lebanon, said that Hamas respected Lebanese sovereignty and its international commitments, especially UN Security Council Resolution 1701. He said that the Lebanese southern front was in the hands of the Lebanese government and not Palestinians. As to the detention of a suspect, he said it was "an individual matter" and "did not reflect the position of the [Hamas] movement" (Assafir.com, July 17, 2014).

## The Crossings – Update

### The Rafah Shalom Crossing

20.  **Hamas continues criticizing Egypt for not opening the Rafah crossing.** The ministry of the interior in Gaza asked the Egyptian authorities to keep the Rafah crossing continually open to answer the needs of the Gazans, in light of "Israeli aggression," and to stop using it as a means of "exerting pressure against and blackmailing the Palestinian people." **Iyad al-Bazam**, spokesman for the Hamas ministry of the interior, held a press conference where he claimed that the partial opening of the Rafah crossing did not provide for even a small part of the Palestinians' humanitarian needs. He claimed only Egyptians or foreigners had been allowed to use the crossing. He also claimed that the Egyptians had prevented three aid convoys from entering the Gaza Strip (Maannews.net, July 19, 2014).

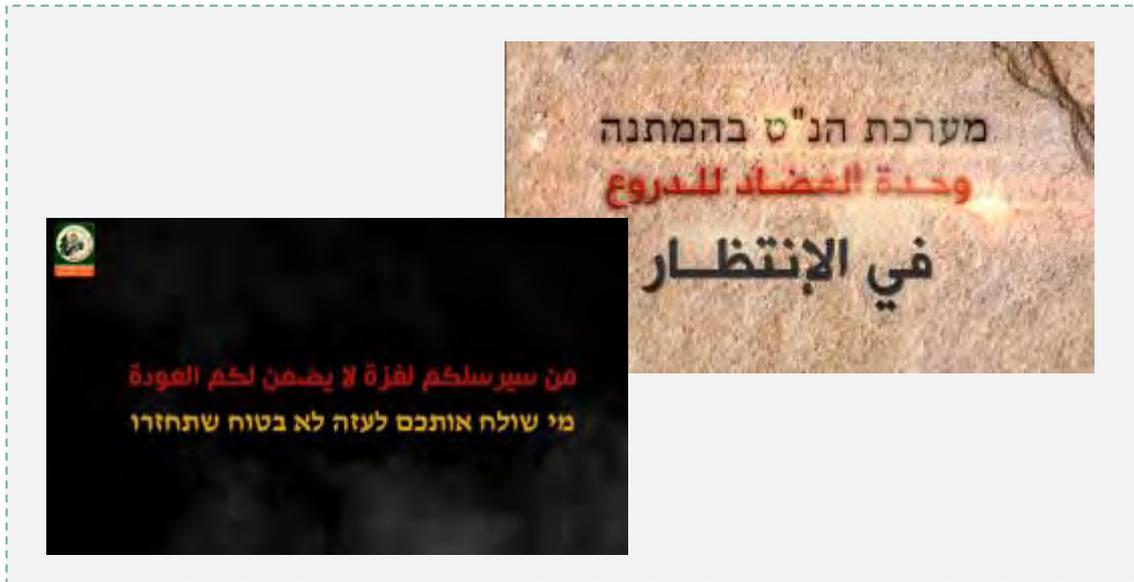
## Hamas' Propaganda Campaign

21. With the beginning of the IDF's ground operation Hamas spokesmen stressed Hamas' military power as opposed to the IDF's. Its websites posted videos and announcements boasting of the might of the terrorist organizations' military-terrorist wings:

- 1) In a recorded speech, **Abu Obeida**, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades spokesman, appealed to the Gazans not to fear the force of "the Zionist war machine." He claimed [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu and [Defense Minister Moshe] Yaalon would suffer the defeat of their army, which would return from the Gaza Strip "with its tail between its legs." Hamas, he said, had made preparations for a long campaign and the enemy had seen only a small part of the results [of it preparations] (Al-Aqsa TV, July 18, 2014).
- 2) **Hussam Badran**, Hamas' external relations spokesman, claimed the "resistance" [i.e., the terrorist organizations] was prepared for ground combat, and that the extent and nature of the surprises it had prepared for the conflict would shock the enemy. He claimed the ground combat would not change the equation [between Israel and Hamas] but would give Hamas a better opportunity to strike IDF soldiers (Facebook page of Hussam Badran, July 17, 2014).
- 3) Hamas spokesman **Fawzi Barhoum** claimed Israel had taken a dangerous step and had not learned its lesson in Operation Cast Lead. He said that Israel had taken a

"foolish step" in starting the war in the Gaza Strip and that Hamas would exact the price (Al-Jazeera, July 17, 2014).

4) Hamas spokesman **Sami Abu Zuhri** claimed that the threat of war did not frighten Hamas or the Palestinian people, and that Israel was playing with fire. He threatened that Israel would pay the price for every crime it committed during the ground operation (Al-Aqsa TV, July 17, 2014).



Threats against the IDF in Hebrew in Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades videos (Qassam.ps, July 17-20, 2014).

Left: "The one who sent you to Gaza is not sure you will return."

Right: "Anti-tank missile system [is] waiting."

## Judea and Samaria

22. Demonstrations in support of the Gaza Strip continue throughout Judea and Samaria. They have been held in a relatively limited number of locations and without exceptional events. With the beginning of the ground operation Hamas called for mass support marches (Alresala.net, July 18, 2014). At a demonstration organized by Hamas in Ramallah demonstrators called on Mahmoud Abbas to join the "resistance" and for the bombing and destruction of Tel Aviv (Felesteen.ps, July 18, 2014).

23. On Friday, **July 18, 2014**, after the Friday prayer on the Temple Mount, masked rioters threw rocks and fireworks at police forces. When there was a significant increase in the number of rocks thrown, a task force entered the Temple Mount and repulsed the rioters. Twelve suspects were detained for disturbing public order.



**Left: Clashes with the Israeli security forces near the Ofer jail (Paltoday.tv and Wafa.ps, July 18, 2014). Right: Police forces enter the Temple Mount (Facebook page of the Israel Police Force, July 18, 2014).**