



July 23, 2014

Operation Protective Edge – Update No. 11 (As of 1200 hours, July 23, 2014)



IDF continues its operations against the terrorist tunnels (IDF Spokesman, July 22, 2014)

Overview

1. The fighting between the IDF and Hamas and the other terrorist organizations continues at various friction points in the Gaza Strip, especially the Shejaiya neighborhood. The terrorist organizations make extensive use of anti-tank rockets, sniper fire and IEDs in order to cause the IDF the greatest number of casualties possible and to show they are standing firm. IDF activity currently focuses on exposing and destroying tunnels used for terrorist purposes. **On the political front** efforts continue to mediate a ceasefire based on the Egyptian initiative, while searching for ways to circumvent Hamas' continuing rejection. Hamas wants to extract military and media achievements to give it more bargaining power in future negotiations.

2. **In the international arena** there were two prominent developments during the past 24 hours: one, as of July 22, 2014, the American (and in their wake European) airlines cancelled their flights to Israel (Hamas is encouraged by the situation and represents it as an achievement); two, the EU delegation to the UN issued a declaration calling for a ceasefire and strongly condemning the rocket fire into Israeli territory and the use of the civilian population as human shields. The declaration also noted, exceptionally, the need to disarm the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip.

The Ground Operation

IDF Activity

3. During the past 24 hours the IDF's ground operation focusing on destroying the terrorist infrastructure in the Gaza Strip continued. **The focus of the activity is the exposure and destruction of the terrorist tunnels.** During the ground operation the IDF forces have met with strong resistance from terrorist operatives. So far more than 110 terrorist operatives have been killed in the ground operation. **IDF Spokesman Brigadier General Motti Almoz** said the IDF was advancing and acting quickly to end the activity (IDF Spokesman, July 23, 2014).

4. During the past 24 hours **22 terrorist operatives have been killed and 28 caught and taken for interrogation.** Prominent events were the following (IDF Spokesman, July 23, 2014):

1) On the night of **July 22, 2014**, an IDF force located a Hamas war room used as a command and control headquarters by the organization. Israeli Air Force (IAF) aircraft attacked the war room.

2) On the evening of **July 22, 2014**, two terrorist operatives used light arms to shoot at a Givati Brigade force. The soldiers returned fire and shot and hit the terrorists. There were no IDF casualties.

3) On the evening of **July 22, 2014**, a Golani Brigade force hit four terrorist operatives shooting at IDF soldiers. Later aircraft and a Paratrooper Brigade force hit seven terrorist operatives (among them snipers who had shot at the soldiers). An IDF soldier was killed in the exchange of fire and 13 soldiers were wounded.

4) In the afternoon of **July 22, 2014**, a terrorist operative shot at an IDF force. The soldiers returned fire, killing the terrorist.

5) On the morning of **July 22, 2014**, a Paratrooper Brigade force identified a terrorist squad. The squad was attacked from the air. Ten terrorist operatives were identified as hit. **Other members of the squad were seen escaping in an ambulance.** Not wanting to hit uninvolved civilians who might also have been in the ambulance, the IDF did not attack it. There were no IDF casualties. Later on a force from the Paratrooper Brigade identified three terrorist operatives. The soldiers shot at them.

The Fighting in Shejaiya

5. During the past 24 hours **the fighting continued focusing on the neighborhood of Shejaiya**, although it is ongoing in other combat areas of the Gaza Strip. During the past few days there were dozens of clashes between IDF forces and terrorist operatives in the area. According to IDF sources, because of Shejaiya's strategic importance, Hamas has a strong force (approximately equivalent to a battalion) there. The IDF is investing efforts in Shejaiya because it is a center for terrorist activity in the Gaza Strip, with a large number of terrorist headquarters and facilities. Many tunnel shafts have been exposed in Shejaiya, **including one that extended into Israeli territory**. The neighborhood is also a focus for rocket fire into Israel. About 10% of the rockets fired into Israel have been fired from Shejaiya (IDF Spokesman, July 22, 2014).

Exposure and Destruction of Terrorist Tunnels

6. According to an IDF report, as of the morning of July 23, 2014, **the IDF had exposed 63 tunnel shafts and 28 terrorist tunnels**. The IDF has begun destroying them. The IDF Spokesman added that hundreds of IDF soldiers were currently searching for tunnels and that their mission was to locate concealed shafts (most of which have a diameter of only 60-70 centimeters, or 24-27 inches). According to the IDF Spokesman, the intelligence achievement was significant. He added that most of the tunnels revealed through intelligence had already been exposed by IDF forces (IDF Spokesman, July 23, 2014).



IDF activity in the Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman, July 22, 2014)

Air Attacks on Terrorist Targets Continue

7. In addition to the ground operation, the IDF continued attacking terrorist targets from the air. So far, more than 3,313 terrorist targets have been attacked in the Gaza Strip. Since the ground operation began, more than 1,833 terrorist targets have been attacked from the air. Among the targets were rocket and mortar shell firing facilities, houses serving as command and control centers and concealed rocket launchers (IDF Spokesman, July 22, 2014).

8. On July 22, 2014, more than 187 terrorist targets were attacked, 100 of them in Shejaiya. Among the targets were concealed rocket launchers, houses of terrorist operatives used as command and control centers, a site for the manufacture of weapons, military structures, rocket launchers and anti-tank missile launchers. During the ground operation so far, 258 terrorist targets in Shejaiya have been attacked.



On July 12, 2014, after IAF aircraft attacked the Al-Farouq mosque in Rafah, which had been used as a center for Hamas activity and rocket storage,¹ local residents wrote on the ruins "May Allah settle accounts with the traitors Sisi and Abbas" (Safad Press, July 22, 2014)

IDF Losses

9. Twenty-nine IDF soldiers have been killed in Operation Protective Edge. On the night of July 22, 2014, two armored corps officers were killed. One soldier was reported missing in action. According to the IDF Spokesman, the IDF continues to examine the site of the incident to determine its causes. Additional names of the soldiers released for publication were the following (IDF Spokesman, July 22, 2014):

¹ For further information about the use of mosques, see the July 14, 2014 bulletin "[The use of mosques in the Gaza Strip for military purposes by Hamas and other terrorist organizations: the case of the Al-Farouq Mosque.](#)"

1) **Staff Sergeant Eviatar Turgeman**, 20, from Beit Shean. Combat soldier in the Paratrooper Brigade.

2) **Captain Dmitri Levitas**, 26, from Jerusalem. Commander of an Armored Corps company. Killed by sniper fire.

3) **Lieutenant Natan Cohen**, 23, from Modi'in. Commander of an Armored Corps platoon. Killed in battle.

10. Several dozen additional soldiers have been wounded during the ground operation, some of them critically. They were evacuated to hospitals in the center of Israel.

Rocket Fire into Israeli Territory

11. Heavy rocket and mortar shell fire continues to attack Israel. **Since the beginning of the operation approximately 1,870 rockets have fallen in Israeli territory.** The Iron Dome aerial defense system intercepted **more than 400** of them. **Since the beginning of the ground operation more than 560 rocket hits have been identified in Israel.** On July 22, 2014, rocket fire continued targeting the population centers in the western Negev, the Negev, the coastal plain and the center of Israel. On July 22 **100 rocket hits** were identified. Most of the rocket fire has targeted the western Negev, although several barrages were also fired at the center of Israel.

12. The main attacks were the following:

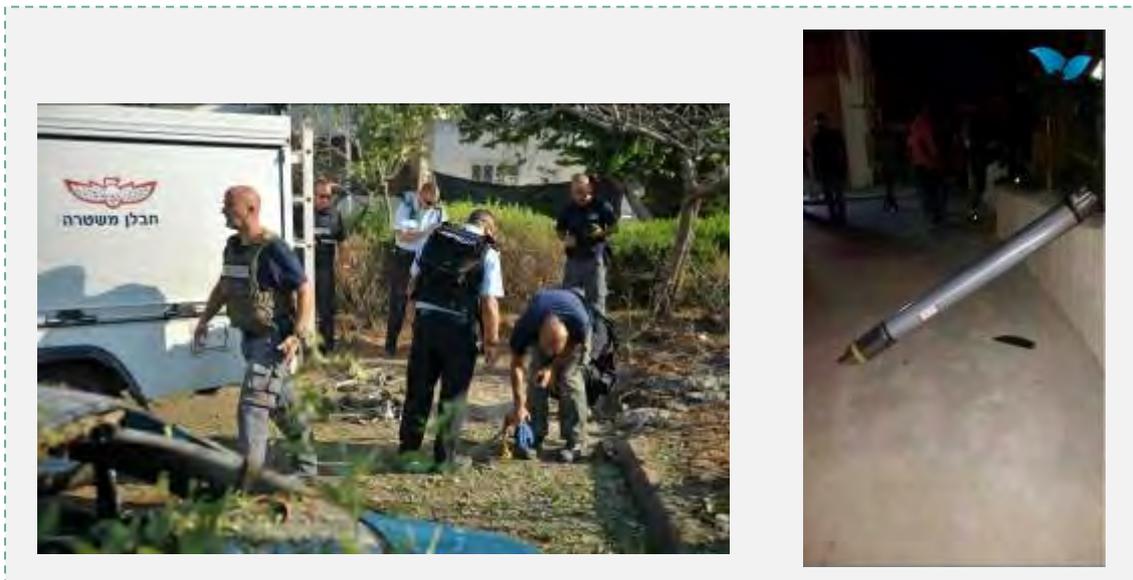
1) On the evening of **July 22, 2014**, sirens were sounded in the greater Tel Aviv area and the entire coastal plain. According to reports, a rocket was intercepted in the skies over Yavne and one hit the area of Ashdod. Another rocket hit was identified in an open area in the coastal plain.

2) On the evening of **July 22, 2014**, sirens were sounded in Beersheba. Four rockets fell in open areas. One fell in the yard of a house and caused minor damage to the building.

3) On the morning of **July 22, 2014**, a barrage of rockets was fired at the center of Israel. One rocket that was not intercepted fell in the town of Yehud and damaged several houses.

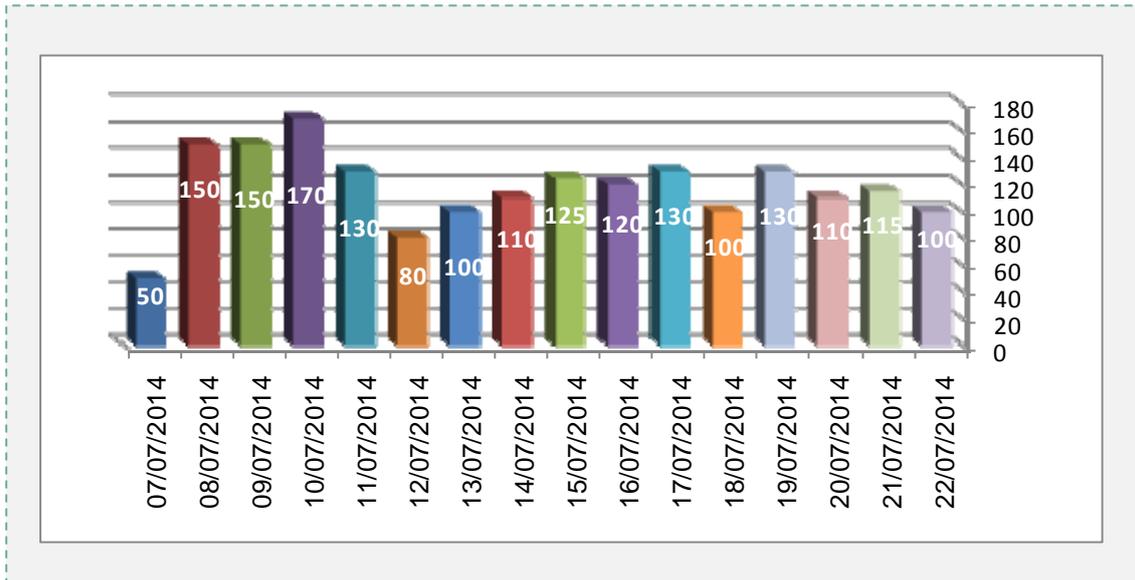


Police demolitions experts deal with the fragments of the rockets fired into Israel (Israel Police Force, July 22, 2014).



Left: Police demolitions experts collect the fragments of rockets fired into Israel (Israel Police Force, July 22, 2014). Right: A rocket that fell in the Bedouin village of Rahat and did not explode, July 22, 2014 (Photo by Atef al-Qarnawi (Abu al-Assal) for Tazpit.org.il, July 22, 2014).

Daily Distribution of Rocket Fire from the Gaza Strip during Operation Protective Edge²



13. The military-terrorist wings of Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) continue claiming responsibility for most of the rockets and mortar shells fired into Israeli territory and at the IDF forces operating in the Gaza Strip.

Commercial Flights To and From Israel Cancelled

14. Because of the rocket fire, especially the rocket fire in the region of Ben-Gurion international airport and the rocket hit in Yehud (which is close to the airport), many commercial airlines cancelled their flights to and from Israel. According to the Israeli Airport Authority, during the past 24 hours more than 80 flights were cancelled. Many Israelis abroad could not return home. According to the Israel media, the minister of transportation decided to immediately open the Ovda airport, near Eilat, as an alternative. The foreign airlines were informed, but it is not known if they will accept the proposal.

² The graph indicates rocket hits in Israeli territory and does not include the massive mortar shell fire into the western Negev or rocket launches that failed.

The Use Made of Civilian Facilities by Hamas and the Other Terrorist Organizations

Hiding Rockets in UNRWA Installations

15. **On July 22, 2014, UNRWA** reported that "in the course of the regular inspection of its premises, UNRWA discovered rockets hidden in a vacant school in the Gaza Strip. As soon as the rockets were discovered, UNRWA staff were withdrawn from the premises, and so we are unable to confirm the precise number of rockets. The school is situated between two other UNRWA schools that currently each accommodate 1,500 internally displaced persons." UNRWA added that "the Agency immediately informed the relevant parties and is pursuing all possible measures for the removal of the objects in order to preserve the safety and security of the school. UNRWA will launch a comprehensive investigation into the circumstances surrounding this incident." (UNRWA.org, July 22, 2014). It was **the second time** during Operation Protective Edge that UNRWA reported finding rockets in or near a school run by the agency in the Gaza Strip.³

Foreign Correspondents Report Hamas' Military-Terrorist Use of the Civilian Population and Hospitals

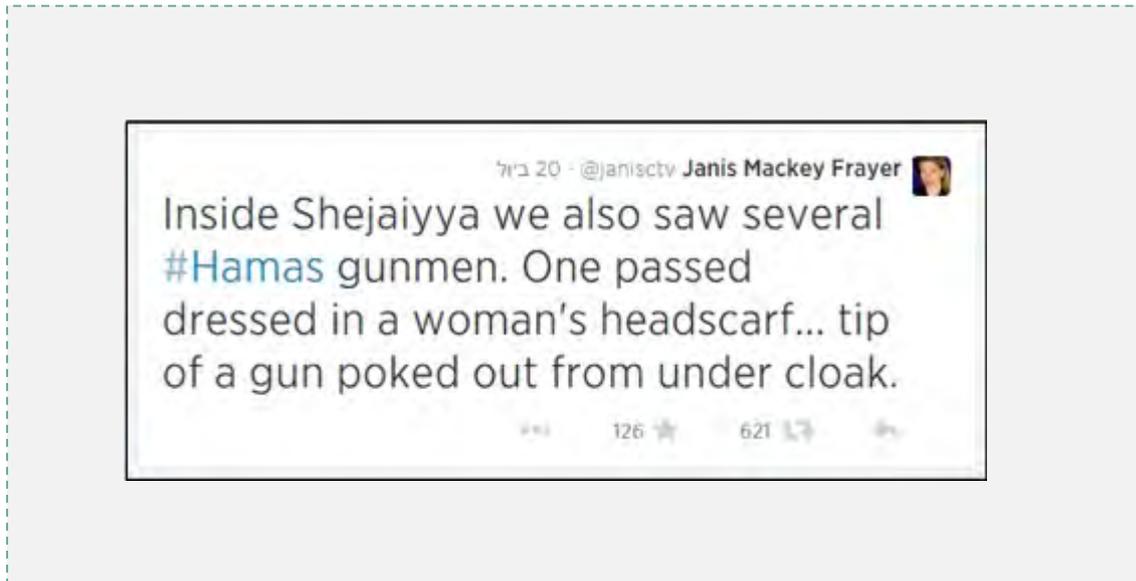
16. Several foreign correspondents currently in the Gaza Strip have recently documented cases of the use made of the civilian population and hospitals made by Hamas and the other terrorist organizations:

1) **Patrick Martin, Gaza Strip correspondent for the Canadian Globe and Mail**, wrote that "...the IDF informed the two groups that it had accepted a request from the Red Crescent for a two-hour humanitarian truce to allow medics to evacuate the dead and injured from Shejaia...as journalists arrived at the scene in Shejaia Sunday afternoon, several men with guns were scurrying from the scene. Some bore their weapons openly, slung over their shoulder, **but two, disguised as women, were seen walking off with weapons partly concealed under their robes. Another had his weapon wrapped in a blanket and held on his chest as if it were a baby**" (ITIC emphasis).⁴

³ For further information about the use of schools for military-terrorist purposes, 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.](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/humanitarian-truce-confusion-endangers-group-of-aid-workers/article19684106/)"

⁴ <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/humanitarian-truce-confusion-endangers-group-of-aid-workers/article19684106/>

2) **Janis Mackey Frayer**, a correspondent for **Canadian TV**, Tweeted the following:



3) **Washington Post correspondent William Booth** wrote on July 15 that the Al-Shifa'a Hospital had been turned into the headquarters of the Hamas leadership. He said they could be seen walking around the hospital corridors and in the offices.⁵

4) According to **another Washington Post report**, on July 17, 2014, during the humanitarian truce, a group of in a mosque in the northern Gaza Strip said they had come back from cleaning glass from windows broken the day before in attacks. However, it could be seen that they were taking small rockets into the mosque.

The Ministry of the Interior in the Gaza Strip Denies Using Civilians as Human Shields

17. **Iyad al-Bazam**, spokesman for the Hamas-controlled ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip, stressed that Israel's claims of the use the "resistance" made of hospitals, schools, mosques and civilian facilities in the Gaza Strip were lies. He added Israel was using lies to justify its attacks on the civilians of the Gaza Strip and to reduce international criticism of its actions. He claimed that his ministry was monitoring the institutions in the Gaza Strip and had not found one instance of their being used for any

⁵ For further information see the July 23, 2014 [bulletin "Hamas and the Other Terrorist Organizations in the Gaza Strip Use Medical Facilities and Ambulances for Military-Terrorist Purposes."](#)

activity connected to the Palestinian "resistance" [i.e., terrorist organizations] (Website of the ministry of the interior, July 22, 2014).



The denial issued by the Palestinian ministry of the interior (Website of the ministry of the interior, July 22, 2014)

The Gazan Population

18. According to ITIC information, **674 Gazans have been killed** since the beginning of the operation (as of 0800 hours, July 23). In ITIC assessment, there are scores of bodies of terrorist operatives killed in clashes with IDF forces in various combat areas that have not been included in the overall statistics. That is because their bodies have not yet been evacuated from the combat zones and Hamas and the other terrorist organizations may not necessarily be aware of their deaths.

19. The distribution (not final, as of July 21, 2014) of the 674 Palestinians killed is as follows:

- 1) **204 terrorist operatives:**
 - A) **118 Hamas operatives**
 - B) **59 PIJ operatives**
 - C) **27 operatives** from other terrorist organizations
- 2) **241 non-involved Palestinians**
- 3) **229 Palestinians** whose identity is not yet known

20. **Chris Gunness, UNRWA spokesman** in the Gaza Strip, said that **more than 118,300 Palestinians had vacated their houses and had taken shelter in 77 UNRWA installations** throughout the Gaza Strip. He said Gazans continued leaving their houses (Twitter account of Chris Gunness, July 22, 2014).

21. **American Secretary of State John Kerry** said the United States was donating \$47 million in aid to deal with the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip (State Department website, July 22, 2014).

The Battle for Hears and Minds: Instructions Issued by the Hamas-Controlled Ministry of the Interior

22. A few days after the beginning of Operation Protective Edge the information bureau of the Hamas-controlled ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip issued **instructions for the Palestinians active on the social networks in the Strip**. The instructions dealt, among other things, with how to report on the dead and wounded and not to publicize proof of the use of civilians as human shields.

23. The main points of the instructions were the following (YouTube, July 10, 2014):

1) **How to relate to Palestinians who were killed: the expression to be used is "innocent citizen"** [in the Arabic instructions the words "innocent citizen" also appear in English]. When giving details [of terrorist operatives] it first must be stated that the person was "a resident of Gaza" or "a resident of Palestine" before mentioning his [jihadi role] in the organization or his rank.

2) **The context of the circumstances of the deaths:** Death notices are to begin "In response to the terrible Israeli attack..." to represent Israel as "aggressive" and the Palestinians as "responding."

3) **Not to use photographs which might prove that civilians were used as human shields:** Pictures of rocket launches from the center of Gazan cities into Israel should not be used.

4) **To be careful with photographs or videos documenting terrorist operatives ("resistance operatives"):** No pictures or videos should be used documenting (rocket) fire sites or the movement of operatives, or close-ups of masked operatives armed with heavy weapons.

5) **How to relate to rocket launches:** Rockets are to be described as manufactured locally and fired in response to an aggressive Israeli action.

6) **Emphasizing the number of women and children killed:** The number of women and children killed should be emphasized. Pictures of the wounded should also be used.



Top: A video posted by the ministry of the interior on July 10, 2014 giving instructions to social network activists entitled "Be aware [of the following]."
 Bottom left: "Every time [casualties] are presented, the number of the women and children killed or injured should to be noted. There is nothing to prevent the posting of the pictures of the wounded." Bottom right: "Anyone who was killed or died as a martyr [shaheed] should be described as a resident from Gaza of Palestine before his 'jihad' role' or military rank is mentioned;" "Do not forget to add always the expression 'innocent citizen' [the words are also written in English] to describe those who died as having been killed in the attack on Gaza or by an Israeli bombing."

24. The website of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military-terrorist wing, has a link to a list of all its operatives who were killed and it is regularly updated. The last time it was updated was on July 6, 2014, the eve of Operation Protective Edge (upper right hand side of the screen). From the beginning of Operation Protective Edge Hamas stopped updating the site. It is part of Hamas' policy to make it difficult to identify the operatives killed during Operation Protective Edge and to support the propaganda image of the inflation of the number of civilians killed.



The Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades website, Qassam.ps, which posts a list of operatives who were killed.

The Crossings – Update

Overview

25. During the ground operation the IDF has left the crossings open and allowed for merchantise and humanitarian aid to enter the Gaza Strip. According to sources in the office of the Coordinator for Government Activities in the Territories, efforts are being made to distinguish between the civilian population and terrorist elements. That is being done despite the complex situation in which Hamas and other terrorist organization operatives blend into the civilian population and endanger them (Cogat.idf.il, July 22, 2014).

The Erez Crossing

26. During Operation Protective Edge more than 50 mortar shells have been fired at the Erez crossing (one Israeli civilian was killed). Nevertheless, the crossing continues operating, endangering the lives of the people working there. There

has been a decrease in the number of Palestinians seeking medical care because they are afraid of the roadblocks erected by Hamas to prevent them from reaching the crossing (Cogat.idf.il, July 22, 2014).



Evacuation of a Palestinian through the Erez crossing (IDF Spokesman, July 22, 2014)

The Kerem Shalom Crossing

27. **The Kerem Shalom crossing has remained open throughout Operation Protective Edge, even since the beginning of the ground operation**, despite its being one of the sites most threatened, especially by mortar shell fire from the Gaza Strip. On July 22, 2014, between 1000 and 1600 hours, the IDF declared it would be possible to deliver merchandise and humanitarian equipment to the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom crossing. Since the beginning of Operation Protective Edge 778 trucks carrying food, medicine and medical equipment have entered the Gaza Strip through the crossing. Diesel fuel for the Gaza Strip power plant, gasoline and cooking gas have also been delivered (Cogat.idf.il, July 21, 2014).

Contacts for a Ceasefire

28. In Cairo contacts continue between the Arab and international parties involved in mediating a ceasefire based on the Egyptian initiative. **So far, there has not been a breakthrough because of Hamas' refusal to accept the initiative.**

29. **American Secretary of State John Kerry and UN Secretary General Ban-ki Moon** also arrived in Cairo. The secretary of state met with the secretary general of the Arab League and with the Egypt president, minister of foreign affairs and head of general intelligence. Senior American sources reported that the United States had tried

to change the conditions of the ceasefire to ensure Hamas support (AFP.com, July 22, 2014). Kerry held a press conference where he said, "We are deeply concerned about the consequences of Israel's appropriate and legitimate effort to defend itself. No country can stand by while rockets are attacking it and tunnels are dug in order to come into your country and assault your people...[and] we will work to see if there is some way to not only arrive at a cease-fire of some kind, but to get to a discussion about the underlying issues" (State Department website, July 21, 2014).⁶

30. **UN Secretary General Ban-ki Moon** visited Egypt, Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA). He called the rocket fire into Israel shocking and said that it had to stop immediately. He said all countries had a duty to their citizens. He called on Israel to act with restraint and on both sides to stop fighting and start talks that would deal with the root of the conflict to prevent it from recurring in the future (AFP.com, July 22, 2014). He said he hoped the joint efforts of the UN and the United States would contribute to the efforts to mediate between the parties in the region and end the violence (State Department website, July 21, 2014).

31. **Azzam al-Ahmad**, a member of Fatah's Central Committee, said that the Palestinian leadership had made a suggestion, as part of the Egyptian initiative, that included a **ceasefire after which there would be five days of negotiations**. He said Egypt did not object to the proposal. He said Hamas still clung to its unilateral position but it was agreed to continue contacts with it to formulate a final proposal (Aa.com.tr, July 20, 2014).

EU Declaration

32. At the end of the monthly meeting of EU delegation to the UN the EU Council issued a strong announcement condemning the indiscriminate rocket fire from the Gaza Strip into Israel. **In an exceptional statement, the announcement stressed the need to disarm all the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip.** It also stressed Israel's right to defend itself. However, the ministers said they were "appalled" by the "human cost" of the operation in Shejaiya. It also called for a ceasefire and "the immediate, sustained and unconditional opening of crossings" (EU website, July 22, 2014).⁷

⁶ <http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2014/07/229574.htm>

⁷ http://www.eu-un.europa.eu/articles/en/article_15300_en.htm



The announcement of the Council of the EU (EU website, July 22, 2014).