



August 6, 2014

## "War of the Casualties:" the Hamas-controlled ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip issued a warning not to divulge information about terrorist operatives killed in Operation Protective Edge



The warning issued by the ministry of the interior on its Facebook page (Facebook.com)

### Announcement from the Ministry of the Interior in the Gaza Strip

1. At 2254 hours on the night of August 5, 2014, the ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip issued an announcement **warning the Palestinians not to divulge information about terrorist operatives ("resistance" casualties) killed during Operation Protective Edge**. That was because, claimed the announcement, the "occupation" [i.e., Israel] was collecting all the information and reports [about casualties] and would use them as evidence to "justify its crimes against [Palestinian] civilians."

2. The announcement reads as follows:

"The ministry of the interior and national security [in Gaza] calls on all our [Palestinian] people and the resistance factions [i.e. the terrorist organizations] **to be wary of disseminating information and pictures of fatalities of the resistance, and [about] mentioning details about [the circumstances of] their deaths as martyrs and where they died**. That is because the occupation is collecting all the information and reports [about the martyrs] and uses them as evidence to

justify its crimes against [Palestinian] civilians and [to justify] the destruction of buildings and to take advantage [of the information] for security purposes. [We appeal] especially to social network activists and in the media belonging to the resistance factions. During the past few hours **we have located many postings with sensitive information detrimental to our people and its resistance.**<sup>1</sup> Mention of the acts of heroism of our martyrs and of the men of our resistance should not be a reason for causing greater damage, because our people's battle against the occupation continues."

## Assessment of the Announcement's Background and Significance

3. The Hamas-controlled ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip is responsible for **enforcing Hamas' policy of concealment and deception, which seeks to minimize the extent of information about the numbers and identities of terrorist operatives killed in Operation Protective Edge** to preserve the image of "victory" Hamas is attempting to establish. At the same time, Hamas is trying to minimize the number of terrorist operatives killed and to maximize the number of civilian casualties **to smear Israel and exert media, political and legal pressure on it the morning after.**

4. So far Hamas has maintained a policy of not divulging details about its own and the other terrorist organizations' operatives killed in Operation Protective Edge. It provides generalized lists with a minimum number of details, creating the impression that they were civilians. The daily notices published by the Hamas-controlled ministry of health clearly serve that policy. In ITIC assessment, the warning issued by the ministry of the interior was intended to enforce supervision of divulging information about terrorist operatives who were killed. That is because of the many details of their identities (including pictures) that were revealed about them (see, for example, the ITIC documents), raised concerns within Hamas. Another possible Hamas concern is that the identity of many other terrorist operatives will be revealed once their bodies have been found evacuated from under the rubble.

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<sup>1</sup> At 1750 hours in the evening on August 5, 2014, the ITIC posted a bulletin containing the names of 150 more Palestinians killed during Operation Protective Edge with a great deal of information about the identity of terrorist operatives who were killed. For further information see the August 5, 2014 bulletin "Examination of the names of Palestinians killed in Operation Protective Edge - Supplement 1." In ITIC assessment the Hamas-controlled ministry of the interior's warning was a response to the bulletin posted on the ITIC website. Its objective was to pose additional difficulties in the identification of the terrorist operatives killed in Operation Protective Edge.