



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (January 14-20, 2015)



Protest demonstration against France ("Support for the prophet Muhammad") organized by Hamas and held on the Temple Mount (Facebook page of PALDF, January 16, 2015)

Overview

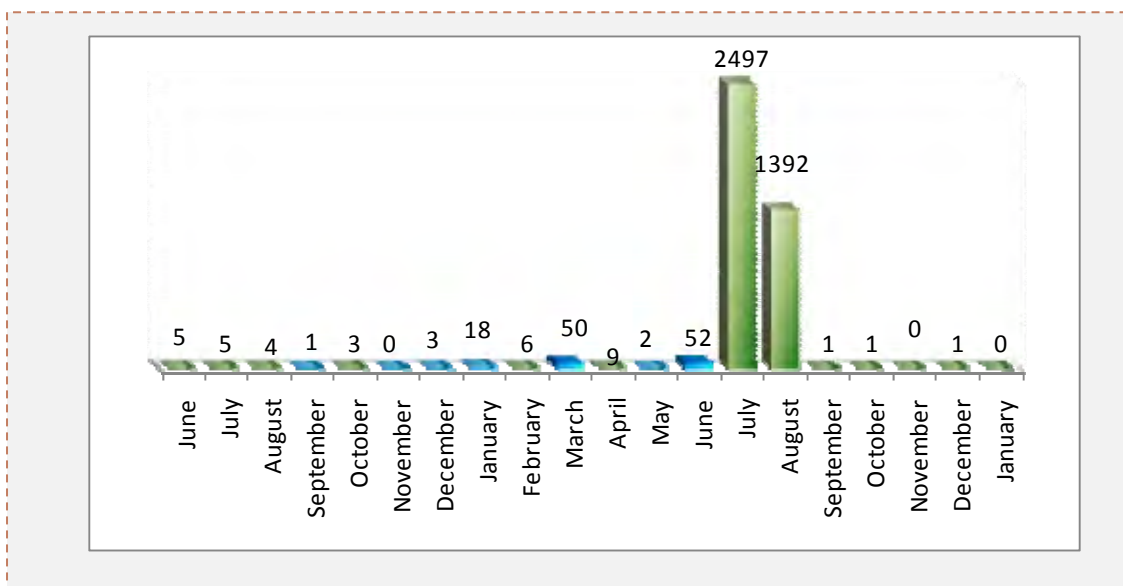
- Israel's south remains quiet. In Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem violence and terrorism continue, although their intensity has abated somewhat. According to an Israel Security Agency report, in December 2014 there was a decrease in the number of terrorist attacks carried out in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem compared with November.
- Ms. Fatou Bensouda, the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, announced a preliminary examination would be carried out into the situation in "Palestine" to determine if there was a reasonable basis for an investigation by the Court. The Palestinian Authority (PA) and Hamas expressed satisfaction and said they would "cooperate" with an investigation. According to a Hamas spokesman, the organization is prepared to present thousands of documents and reports "proving" the Israel carried out "terrible crimes" against the Gaza Strip.
- On January 18, 2015, a convoy of Hezbollah operatives was attacked in the northern Syrian Golan Heights. Six Hezbollah terrorist operatives were killed, among them Jihad Mughnieh, the son of senior Hezbollah terrorist Imad Mughnieh, who was killed in Damascus in 2008. Muhammad Ali Allahdadi, a senior commander in Iran's Revolutionary Guards, was also killed. According to media reports five additional Iranians were killed (the information has not been verified and we have no information about their identities). The foreign media claimed Israel was responsible for the attack; the State of Israel did not officially conform or deny involvement.

Israel's South

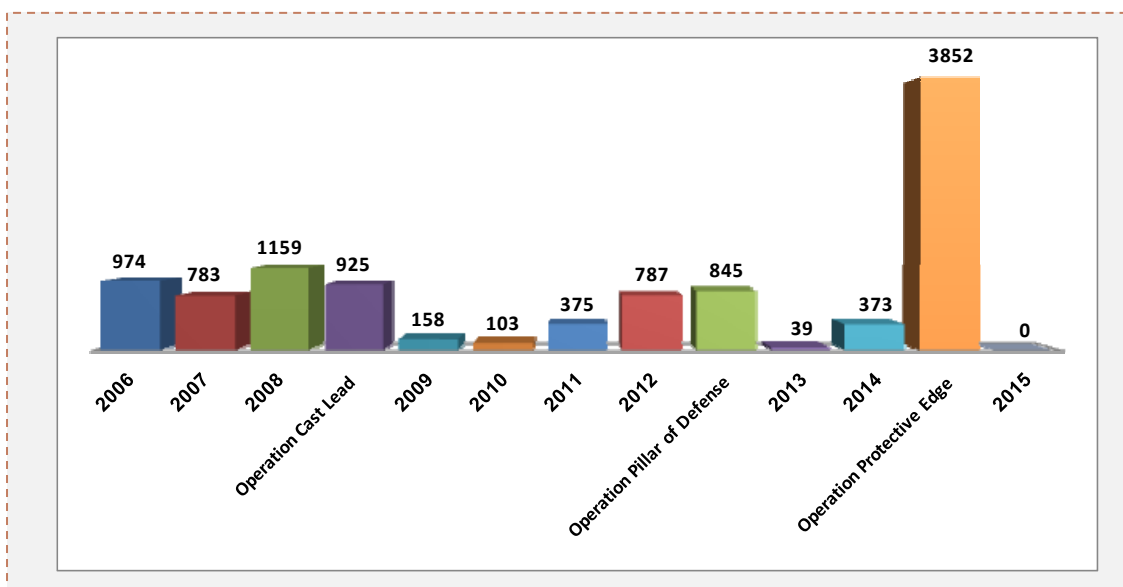
Rocket Fire Attacking Israel

- This past week no rocket or mortar shell hit was identified in Israeli territory.

Monthly Distribution of Rocket Fire (2013 – 2015)¹



Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire in Israel's South²



¹ As of January 20, 2015. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire or rockets which misfired and fell inside the Gaza Strip.

² The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.

Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria

Summary of Terrorist Attacks Carried Out in December 2014

■ In December 2014 **there was a decrease in the number of terrorist attacks carried out in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem, compared with November 2014**. In December 2014 there were 159 attacks, 212 in November (Shabak.gov.il):

- **Regional distribution:** There were 133 terrorist attacks in Judea and Samaria (166 in November 2014), and 26 in Jerusalem (46 in November).
- **Types of attacks:** Most of the attacks involved **Molotov cocktails** (127, 24 in Jerusalem). Twenty-five attacks involved **IEDs**, there were **three stabbings** (one in Jerusalem), **two shooting attacks involving light weapons**, **two attacks in which acid was thrown** (one in Jerusalem).³
- **Victims:** Nine Israelis were wounded (six civilians and three members of the Israeli security forces). Five Israelis were stabbed, two were injured by IEDs and one by acid.

Additional "Popular Resistance" Terrorism and Violence

■ This past week the usual wave of violence and rioting continued in the traditional friction spots in Judea, Samaria and east Jerusalem, part of what the Palestinians call the "popular resistance." This past week they focused on protesting against France ("support for the prophet Muhammad") because of the cartoons published in the iconoclastic Charlie Hebdo. The protestors also condemned Mahmoud Abbas for his participation in the solidarity march in Paris. Hamas organized and directed a large protest rally on the Temple Mount (Paltimes.net and the Facebook page of PALDF, January 16, 2015).

■ Riots were held throughout Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem in which stones, rocks, IEDs and Molotov cocktails were thrown. Shots were fired at an IDF force. The prominent attacks were the following:

- On **January 18, 2015**, a pipe bomb was thrown from a passing car at the front gate of the village of Neveh Suf (on the trans-Benjamin highway in Judea). It exploded in an open area. There were no casualties and no damage was reported (Tazpit.org.il, January 18, 2015).

³ The summary does not include the scores of attacks in which stones were thrown.

- On **January 17, 2015**, a pipe bomb was thrown from the direction of Jelazoun at the front gate of the village of Beit El (north of Ramallah). The bomb exploded; there were no casualties and no damage was reported (Tazpit.org.il, January 17, 2015).
- On **January 14, 2015**, shots were fired at an IDF engineering force removing a burning tire from the road near the village of Halamish (northwest of Ramallah). There were no casualties. A search of the area revealed ammunition and a magazine. Tracks led to the village of A'about, near Halamish.
- On **January 14, 2015**, Molotov cocktails were thrown at an Israeli bus driving on the trans-Benjamin highway. One hit the bus and exploded. There were no casualties. Damage to the bus was reported (Tazpit.org.il, January 14, 2015).



One of the Molotov cocktails thrown at the bus (Tazpit.org.il, January 14, 2015)

Developments in the Gaza Strip

The Crossings

The Rafah Crossing

■ **The Rafah crossing was closed for most of this past week.** Hundreds of Gazans answered Hamas' call and held a mass Friday prayer nearby. They appealed to Egypt to open the crossing (Al-Quds TV, January 16, 2015). On January 20, 2015, the Egyptian authorities opened the crossing for three days. Many Gazans rushed to exit the Strip, causing excessive crowding (Facebook page of PALDF and the Palestinian ministry of the interior, January 20, 2015).



Left: Excessive crowding as the Rafah crossing opens (Facebook page of PALINFO, January 16, 2015). Right: The mass Friday prayer held in front of the Rafah crossing (Facebook page of the ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip, January 16, 2015).

The Erez Crossing

■ **Nasr Sarraj**, head of the civilian committee in the Gaza Strip, claimed that the crisis at the Erez crossing would be resolved in the near future.⁴ He claimed great effort was being invested to reopen the crossing. Somewhat later **Nazmi Muhanna**, PA head of the crossings authority, claimed that the crisis had ended. He claimed the issue had been resolved with Hamas, whose operatives removed the post they had erected near the crossing (Paltoday.tv, January 13, 2015).

The Kerem Shalom crossing

■ On January 18, 2015, a number of cement merchants in the Gaza Strip demonstrated on the Gazan side of the Kerem Shalom crossing. They were protesting what they claimed was the unjust distribution of the cement delivered to the Gaza Strip through the oversight mechanism. They were removed by Hamas' security forces (Sawa.ps, January 18, 2015).

The Reconstruction of the Gaza Strip

■ According to a UNICEF report, as of January 2, 2015, there were 17,913 Palestinians living in UNRWA shelters.

■ The Gazan electric company reported that the money sent from Qatar for the power plant led to the activation of three additional turbines. The result was that the

⁴ Hamas declared it would man the Palestinian side of the Erez crossing, which until then had been manned by operatives of the PA's security forces. The PA forces left the crossing and all movement through the crossing halted (Quds.net, January 11, 2015).

Gaza Strip would not alternate between eight hours with electricity and eight hours without (Alwatanvoice.com, January 17, 2015).

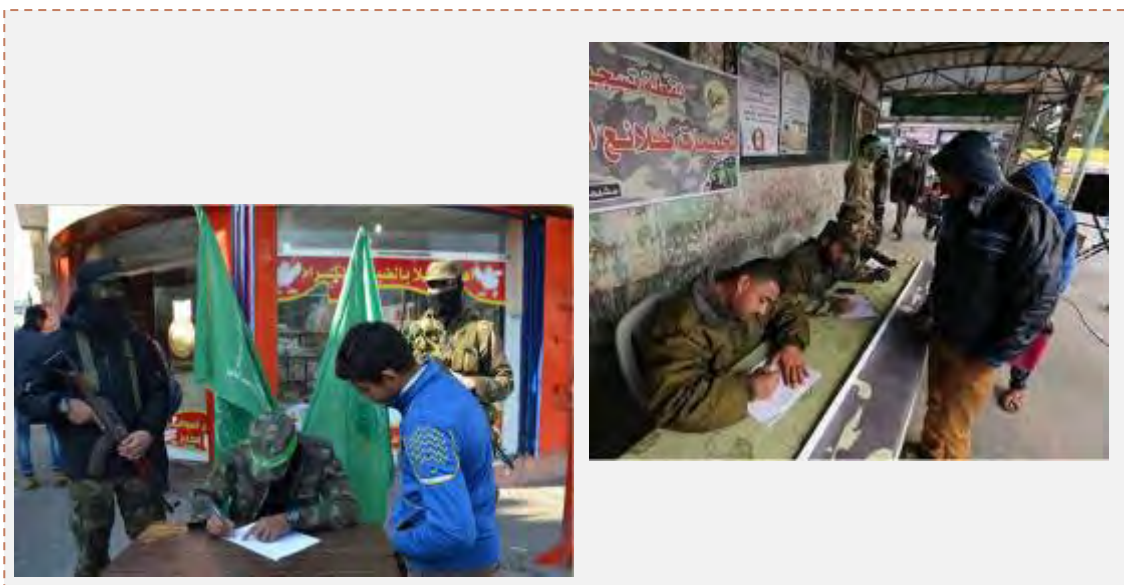
■ Sources in Hamas continue to accuse the PA, and especially Mahmoud Abbas, of delaying the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip. **Musa Abu Marzouq**, a member of Hamas' political bureau, claimed Mahmoud Abbas had expressed **a** genuine and political-inspired lack of desire to rebuild the Gaza Strip. He also claimed Mahmoud Abbas was exerting pressure on the Palestinian national consensus government not to fulfill its obligations to the Gaza Strip (Alhayat.com, January 18, 2015). Senior Hamas figure **Mahmoud al-Zahar** also accused Mahmoud Abbas of responsibility for the delay in the Gaza Strip's reconstruction and the continuing closure of the Rafah crossing (Sawa.ps, January 18, 2015).

Egypt Destroys Smuggling Tunnel

■ Egyptian security sources in the northern Sinai Peninsula reported that the Egyptian security forces had destroyed a tunnel 1.2 kilometers (3/4 of a mile) long along Egypt's border with the Gaza Strip. According to the sources, the tunnel opening, which was constructed of concrete, wood and steel, was inside a residential building. The security forces also found a large quantity of mortar shells, ammunition and TNT in the area (Aswatmasriya.com, January 16, 2015).

Enrollment in Hamas' Youth Camps

■ After Hamas announced the opening of its "Pioneers of liberation" youth camps, enrollment began in various locations in the Gaza Strip on January 17, 2015. The enrollment sites were **manned by masked, armed Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades terrorist operatives**. The camps are supposed to open on January 20, 2015, and according to initial estimates, **so far 15,000 young Gazans have already enrolled** (Facebook pages of PALINFO and PALDF, January 17; Facebook page of the Pioneers of liberation camps, January 18; Paltimes.net, January 20, 2015).



Enrollment sites for Hamas' youth camps (Facebook page of PALINFO, January 17, 2015)

Hamas Condemns Charlie Hebdo Cartoons

■ Hamas condemned the publication of the Charlie Hebdo cartoons depicting the prophet Mohammed. **Izzat al-Rishq**, a member of Hamas' political bureau, claimed the magazine was exploiting the solidarity it had received to insult the sanctity of Islam, and that was in no way related to freedom of expression (Qudspress.com, January 14, 2015). Hamas spokesman **Fawzi Barhoum** claimed that the cartoons of the prophet Muhammad proved that it was a campaign of "the Zionist lobby" against Muslims and their culture. He called for the end of the campaign because, he claimed, it would have dire consequences for the lives of Muslims in the West (Palestine-info.info, January 14, 2015).

The Salafist-Jihadi Organizations in the Gaza Strip

Demonstrate against France

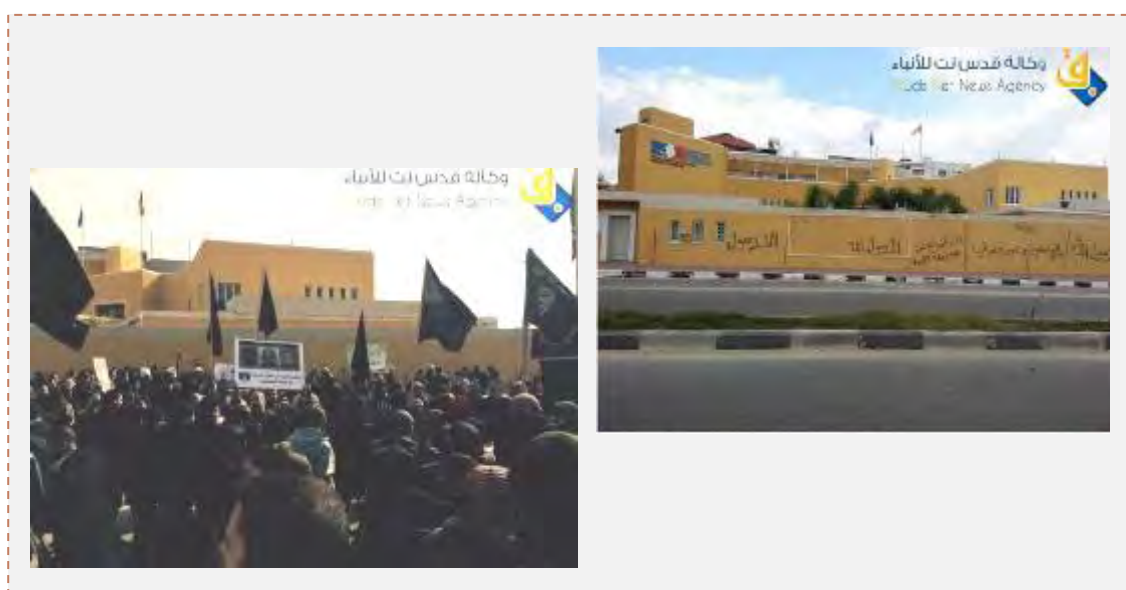
■ On January 19, 2015, a demonstration was held in front of the French cultural center in Gaza City to protest the cartoons of Muhammad published in Charlie Hebdo.⁵ The demonstration was attended by several dozen Salafist-jihadi activists in the Gaza Strip who **carried signs condemning the cartoons and called for support of ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi**. Operatives from Hamas' security forces detained seven demonstrators (Alqudsnews.net, January 19, 2015). A few

⁵ The French cultural center in Gaza City has been a target for terrorist attacks before. On December 12, 2014, a bomb exploded in the building. On January 18, 2015, Salafist-jihadi network affiliated with the global jihad and calling itself Jund Ansar Allah posted a video to YouTube claiming responsibility for the attack.

days previously anti-France graffiti were sprayed on the wall of the cultural center to protest the cartoons.

■ In response, **Iyad al-Bazam**, spokesman for the ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip, claimed the demonstration had been organized by a group of youngsters calling themselves "the fighting Salafist youth" and **held under the supervision and control the Hamas' security forces**. He claimed that "freedom of expression" and the preservation of safety and order were protected by law (Website of the Hamas ministry of the interior, January 19, 2015).

In ITIC assessment the protest demonstration was authorized and supervised by Hamas, otherwise it could not have been held (with all due respect to "freedom of expression" in the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip). **In all probability the demonstration was held to allow the ISIS-supporting jihadi organizations to let off steam and also to express Hamas' dissatisfaction with the cartoons**, as noted above (in addition to the Hamas-orchestrated demonstration on the Temple Mount).



Left: ISIS-supporting Salafist-jihadi operatives demonstrate in the Gaza Strip in front of the French cultural center in Gaza City, waving black ISIS flags (Quds.net, January 19, 2015). Right: Anti-France graffiti sprayed on the walls of the French cultural center (Quds.net, January 17, 2015).

The United States Designates Leader of Mujahidin Shura Council in the Environs of Jerusalem a Terrorist

■ The United States State Department added **Abdallah al-Ashqar**, leader of the global jihad-affiliated **Mujahidin Shura Council in the Environs of Jerusalem**, to its list of terrorists. The State Department Media Note described al-Ashqar as a Palestinian national and reportedly "a leader of the Mujahidin Shura Council in the Environs of Jerusalem...a designated Foreign Terrorist Organization and Specially

Designated Global Terrorist entity... and serves on their military committee. Al-Ashqar also serves as a foreign relations official for the group. In addition to his leadership activity, al-Ashqar has sought missiles and other materials with which to attack Israel...[The Mujahidin Shura Council] has claimed responsibility for numerous attacks on Israel since the group's founding in 2012. For example, in August 2013, [it] claimed responsibility for a rocket attack targeting the southern Israeli city of Eilat. Previous attacks have also included improvised explosive devices, claiming civilian lives."⁶



The State Department media note (Website of the American State Department, January 14, 2015).

The Mujahidin Shura Council in the Environs of Jerusalem is the prominent Salafist-jihadi organization in the Gaza Strip. It claimed responsibility for the Grad rocket attack on the southernmost Israeli city of Eilat on April 17, 2013. The organization was also responsible for a number of rocket and mortar shell attacks targeting Israel from the Gaza Strip.

The Palestinian Authority

Palestinian Activity in the International Arena

The ICC Decision and Palestinian Reactions

- The ICC registrar received a document from the Palestinian government stating its acceptance of the authority of the ICC in The Hague as of June 13, 2014, under Article 12.3 of the Rome Statute. The UN Secretary General also announced he had received the Palestinian documents authorizing the Rome Statute, adding that it would enter into force for the "State of Palestine" on April 1, 2015 in accordance with

⁶ <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/01/235955.htm>

the court's procedures (AP.org, January 7, 2015). He also authorized receipt of 16 documents from the permanent Palestinian UN observer (UN website, January 7, 2015).

■ On January 16, 2015, **Ms. Fatou Bensouda**, the prosecutor of the ICC, said that a **preliminary investigation had been opened into the situation in "Palestine" to examine whether there was a basis to institute an ICC investigation**. According to the rules of the ICC, "A preliminary examination is not an investigation but a process of examining the information available in order to reach a fully informed determination on whether there is a **reasonable basis to proceed with an investigation** pursuant to the criteria established by the Rome Statute." Furthermore, "depending on the facts and circumstances of each situation, the Office will decide whether to continue to collect information to establish a sufficient factual and legal basis to render a determination; initiate an investigation, subject to judicial review as appropriate; or decline to initiate an investigation" (Website of the ICC, January 16, 2015).⁷

■ **Riyadh al-Maliki**, foreign minister in the Palestinian national consensus government, praised the prosecutor's decision. He claimed the next step would be an internal ICC investigation that would take several weeks or months and examine the information. He said **the Palestinians would cooperate with the investigation and provide all the information, evidence and statements necessary to prove that crimes had been committed against the Palestinian people during Operation Protective Edge**. He claimed Israel could present opposing statements and evidence or refuse to cooperate (Al-ayyam.com, January 17, 2015).

■ On another occasion **Riyadh al-Maliki** claimed that the decision to open the investigation was "a historic precedent" in the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. That was because for first time the order of world conduct had changed and the occupied state of Palestine was lodging a complaint in an international forum against the occupying country. He added that it was the first time an international forum had related to the complaint positively. He claimed the United States would not be able to support Israel in the ICC because it was not a member, and because the ICC was an independent body that could not be influenced. However, he added that political pressures existed that might influence the investigation and also its conclusions (Voice of Palestine, January 18, 2015).

⁷ http://www.icc-cpi.int/en_menus/icc/press%20and%20media/press%20releases/Pages/pr1083.aspx

■ **Issa Qaraqa**, head of the Palestinian authority for prisoner affairs, claimed that joining the ICC had opened many other avenues the Palestinians could take to protect the prisoners. He claimed **the authority for prisoner affairs was preparing case files to lodge with the ICC, including information and documentation about "Israeli violations of the law" against Palestinian prisoners** (Radio Ajjal, January 18, 2015).

Other Reactions to the Decision

■ **Hamas** also reacted with praise and satisfaction. Hamas spokesman **Sami Abu Zuhri** claimed that the ICC's decision to begin an investigation was correct. He claimed practical steps had to be taken to make it possible to try Israeli leaders for their "crimes." He claimed that **Hamas would support any step that advanced bringing Israel to trial** (Alresala.net, January 17, 2015). Hamas spokesman **Fawzi Barhoum** said that Hamas held the ICC in great esteem for opening an investigation into the "war crimes" committed by Israel. He claimed it was an important step that gave "a spark of hope" to the Palestinian people, and that **Hamas was prepared to present "thousands of documents and reports" proving that Israel had committed "terrible crimes" against the Gaza Strip and the Palestinian people** (Facebook page of Fawzi Barhoum, January 17, 2015).

■ The United States objected to the ICC prosecutor's decision, **Jeff Rathke**, State Department spokesman, said that the United States was "deeply troubled by Palestinian action at the ICC. Our position on this is clear, **and we don't think that the Palestinians have established a state, and we don't think they're eligible to join the International Criminal Court**"(Website of the State Department, January 16, 2015).⁸

The PA Considers Another Appeal to the UN Security Council

■ After having failed in its appeal to the UN Security Council in December 2014, **the PA is considering the proposal of another resolution**. "Informed sources" claim that the new resolution proposed to the Security Council will be different from the previous one, especially regarding east Jerusalem. There will also be changes relating to the refugees and the exchange of territory. Mention will also be made of the General Assembly's November 29, 2012 recognition of the "State of Palestine" as an observer state (Alqudsnews.net, January 13, 2015).

⁸ <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2015/01/236076.htm#MIDDLEEASTPEACE>

■ **Mahmoud Abbas** held a press conference during his **official visit to Turkey**, where he claimed that the PA would appeal to the UN in the near future and never stop trying to realize the rights of the Palestinian people and [their desire to] attain freedom and independence. In addition, he gave a speech at a meeting of the Arab League where he claimed that in principle the Palestinians were always prepared to engage in political negotiations and in the past had even agreed to the suggestion proposed by American Secretary of State John Kerry to extend the negotiating period. However, he claimed, the Palestinians did not believe they could achieve anything through negotiations, even after the elections in Israel, and therefore they demanded international guarantees. He called on the Americans for new proposals. He also claimed that the PA planned to appeal to the UN Security Council again, in coordination with the Arab League (Maannews.net, January 15, 2015).

Threats to Halt the Security Coordination with Israel

■ Calls are repeatedly heard in the PA to halt the security coordination with Israel. **Mahmoud Abbas** said in an interview that if the Palestinians continued to face obstacles in the Security Council they would end their security coordination with Israel, which would then be responsible for the PA territories (Albawabanews.com, January 16, 2015).

■ According to **Al-Quds Al-Arabi**, in response to Israel's freezing the PA's tax revenues, Mahmoud Abbas asked a Palestinian team, including senior security and political figures, to discuss halting security coordination with Israel and limiting it to "vital interests," that is, humanitarian aid. According to the report the team's initial conclusion was that the PA could stop the security coordination without harming itself (Alquds.co.uk, January 18, 2015).

The PA Condemns the Charlie Hebdo Cartoons

■ The PA condemned the Charlie Hebdo cartoons of the prophet Muhammad, while stating that it stood beside the French people, who been attacked by terrorists, and that terrorism should be condemned around the globe. However, the PA also made it clear that no one had the right to exploit freedom of expression to attack the faith and religious symbols of other people, and that religious sentiments had to be respected (Wafa.ps, January 15, 2015).

Angry Reception for Canadian Delegation in Ramallah

■ A Canadian delegation headed by Canadian Foreign Minister John Baird went to Ramallah to meet with Riyadh al-Maliki, the foreign minister of the Palestinian national consensus government. As they left the foreign ministry the delegation was

pelted with eggs and shoes by Palestinians protesting Canada's pro-Israel policies, as demonstrated by its veto of the Palestinian proposal in the Security Council (Maannews.net, January 18, 2015).



The Canadian delegation attacked in Ramallah (Maannews.net, January 18, 2015).

A Possible ISIS Notice Distributed in the Balata Refugee Camp in Nablus

■ On January 12, 2015, a Facebook page affiliated with the Balata refugee camp in Nablus stating that operatives calling themselves "the liberators of the Balata camp" had recently distributed notices stating their intention **to leave Fatah and join the ranks of ISIS**. According to the notice that was because Fatah had abandoned the armed struggle, because Mahmoud Abbas had joined the solidarity march in Paris, and because of the corruption spreading through the ranks of senior Fatah figures.

In ITIC assessment **there is no connection between "the liberators of the Balata camp" and ISIS**. The notice was apparently the result of quarrels and anarchy in the camp, and was intended to undermine order and attack the control of Fatah and the PA.



The notice disseminated in the Balata refugee camp, allegedly by the Palestinian branch of ISIS (Facebook page of the news of the Balata refugee camp, January 12, 2015).

The Northern Arena

Convoy of Hezbollah Operatives in the Gaza Strip Attacked

- On January 18, 2015, a convoy of Hezbollah terrorist operatives was attacked in Mazrat al-Amal in the northern Golan Heights. According to reports, six Hezbollah operatives and six operatives of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards were killed in the attack.
- Among those killed were **Jihad Mughnieh**, son of senior Hezbollah terrorist Imad Mughnieh, and **Muhammad Ali Allahdadi**, a senior commander in the Iranian Revolutionary Guards. The Iranians claimed he was part of an auxiliary force supporting the Syrian administration in its struggle against Salafist groups (The Revolutionary Guards public relations office, January 19, 2015). The foreign media claimed Israel was responsible for the attack; Israel refrained from commenting.

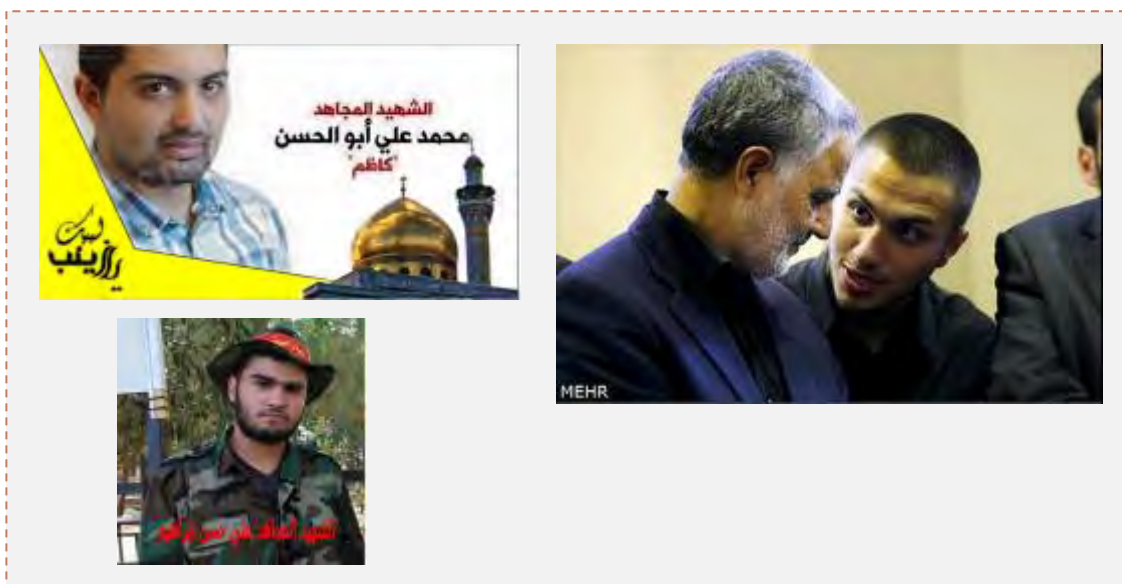


Muhammad Ali Allahdadi, senior commander in the Iranian Revolutionary Guards (Website of the town of Jibshit, south Lebanon, January 19, 2015)

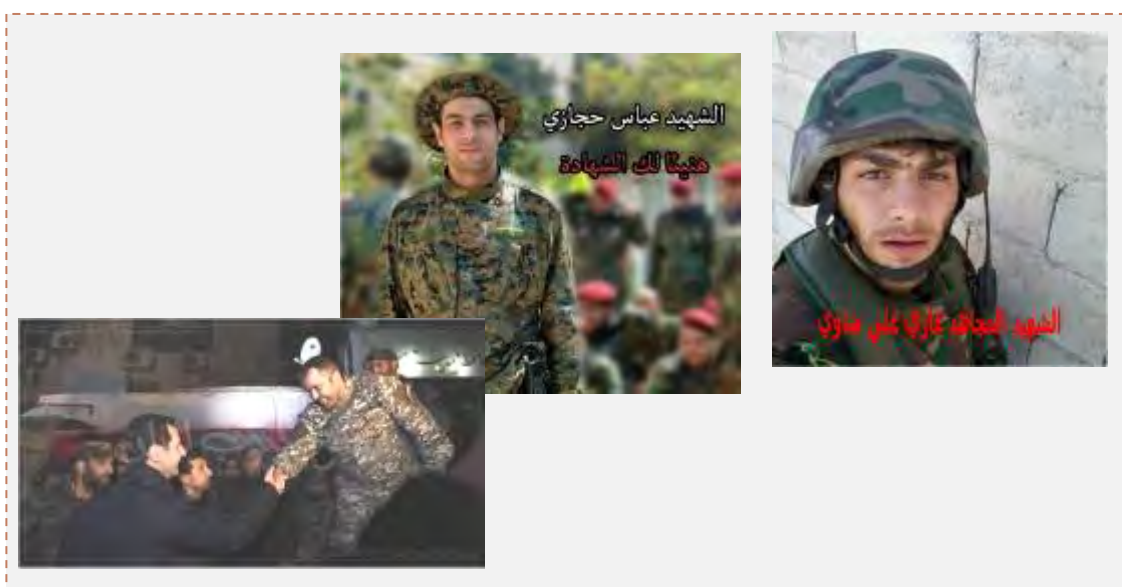
- The six Hezbollah operatives who were killed came from **south Lebanon**. At least some of them had **extensive military experience, including fighting in Syria**. The initial information about them was published in the Lebanese media (Assafir.com, January 19, 2015).
 - **Jihad Mughnieh** – Born in 1989, from the village of Tair Debba in south Lebanon. Son of Imad Mughnieh (Hassan Nasrallah's second in command, killed in Damascus on February 12, 2008). Finished university studies, appointed commander in Hezbollah, **made responsible for the Golan Heights region** and stationed near Quneitra. With Nasrallah's approval, buried in same graveyard as his father (also used as a site for ceremonies and "pilgrimages").
 - **Muhammad Ali Abu al-Hassan (aka Kazim)** – Born in 1985, from Eyn Qana in south Lebanon.
 - **Ali Hassan Ibrahim (aka Ihab)** – Born in 1993, from Yohmor al-Shaqif in south Lebanon.
 - **Ghazi Ali Dhawi (aka Danial)** – Born in 1988, from Al-Khayam in south Lebanon. Joined Hezbollah in 2000 and participated in the Second Lebanon War. Wounded while fighting in the ranks of Hezbollah in Al-Qusayr in Syria.
 - **Abbas Ibrahim Hijazi (aka Al-Sayid Abbas)** – Born in 1979, from the village of Fila in south Lebanon. Participated in the Second Lebanon War in Bint Jbeil and also fought in Al-Qusayr in Syria. Had ties to the Iranian Revolutionary Guards.

- **Muhammad Ahmed Issa (aka Abu Issa)** – Born in 1972, from Arab Salim in south Lebanon. In the past was Hezbollah operative responsible for the al-Khayam sector. Fought in Syria.

Pictures of the Casualties



Upper left: Muhammad Ali Abu al-Hassan (aka Kazim) (Website of south Lebanon, January 18, 2015). Lower left: Ali Hassan Ibrahim (aka Ihab) (Website of Bint Jbeil, January 18, 2015). Right: Jihad Mughnieh with Qassem Suleimani, commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards' Qods Force (Al-Akhbar.com, January 18, 2015).



Left: Muhammad Ahmed Issa shakes hands with Syrian President Bashar Assad in the village of Jobar (Website of south Lebanon, January 18, 2015). Center: Abbas Ibrahim Hijazi (aka Al-Sayid Abbas). Right: Ghazi Ali Dhawi (aka Danial) (Website of Bint Jbeil, January 18, 2015)