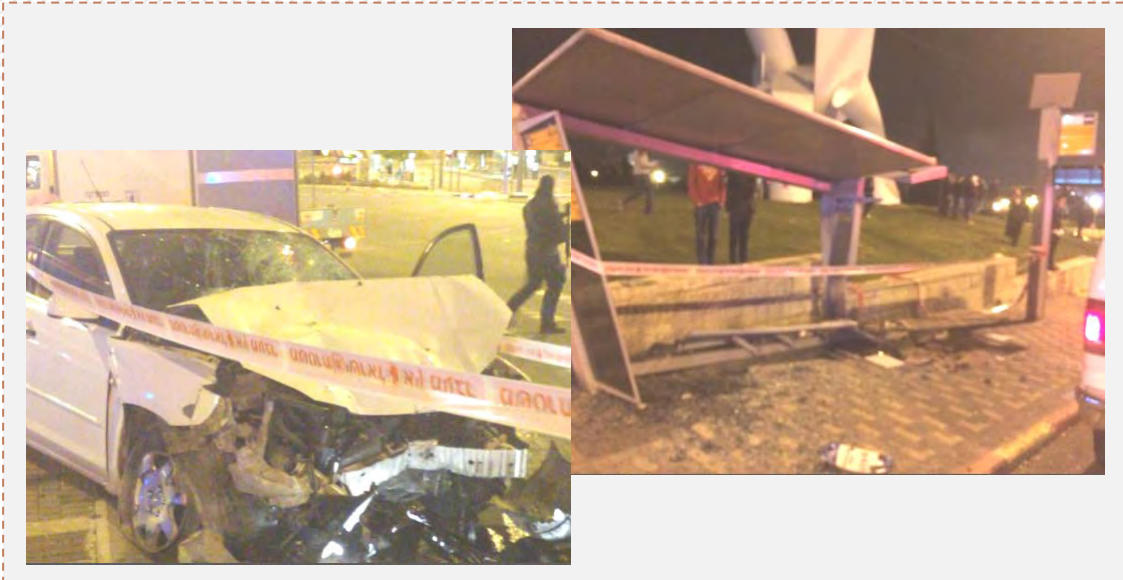




News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

(April 15 – 21, 2015)



Vehicular attack on French Hill in Jerusalem: one man killed and one woman critically injured. Left: The car used in the attack. Right: The scene of the attack (Fire and Rescue Service Spokesperson, April 16, 2015)

Overview

- This past week Israel's south remained quiet. In Judea and Samaria violence and terrorism continued at the usual friction points. The most prominent event was the vehicular attack carried out at bus stop at the French Hill junction in Jerusalem, where an Israeli man was killed and a woman was critically injured. Throughout Judea and Samaria there were demonstrations and marches to mark Palestinian Prisoners' Day.
- Senior Hamas figures attending Palestinian Prisoners' Day events said the organization intended to abduct Israeli soldiers and "settlers" everywhere. That would be done to promote deals to free Palestinian prisoners.
- Israel and the Palestinian Authority reached a compromise regarding the tax revenues frozen by Israel and the outstanding Palestinian debt to the Israel Electric Company. According to the arrangement one billion shekels (about \$327 million) will be transferred to the Palestinians after half a billion shekels are deducted from the total sum to pay Palestinian debts, primarily to the Israeli Electric Company.

Vehicular Attack in Jerusalem

■ Late in the evening on April 16, 2015, an Israeli man and woman waiting at a bus stop on French Hill in Jerusalem were run over in a vehicular attack. The car drove at high speed from the direction of French Hill, swerved and hit the two civilians standing at the bus stop. The man was fatally injured, dying at the hospital, and the woman was critically injured.

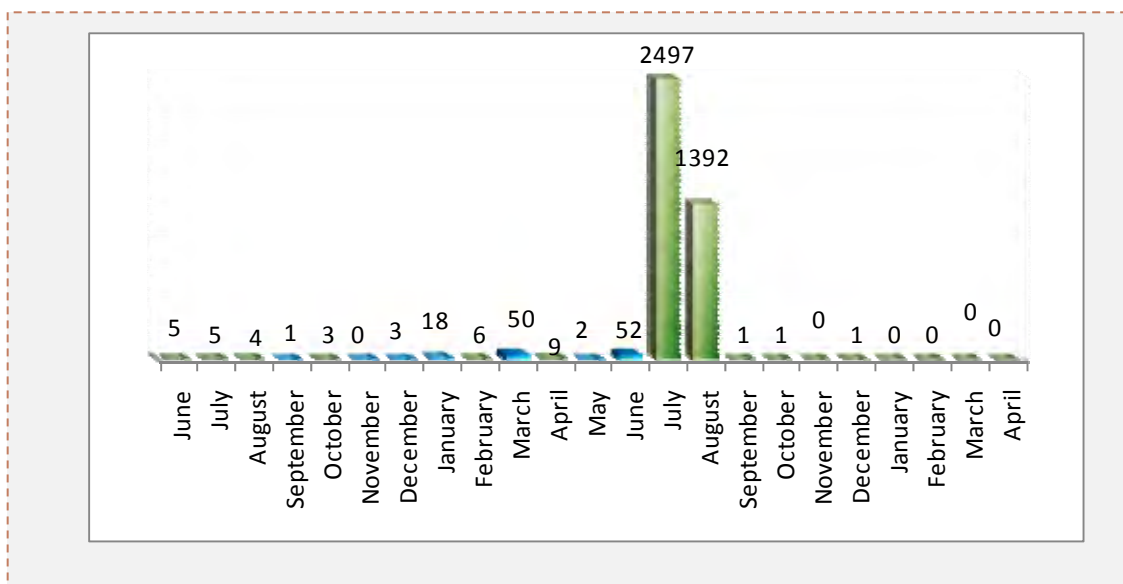
■ The Israeli victim was **Shalom Yohai Sharki**, 25, from Jerusalem. The driver of the car, who sustained minor injuries, was Khaled Qutina, 37, from the village of Anata; he was detained and interrogated. The results of the interrogation indicated that the incident was a vehicular attack and not a traffic accident. His detention was extended and the incident is still under investigation.

Israel's South

Rocket Fire Attacking Israel

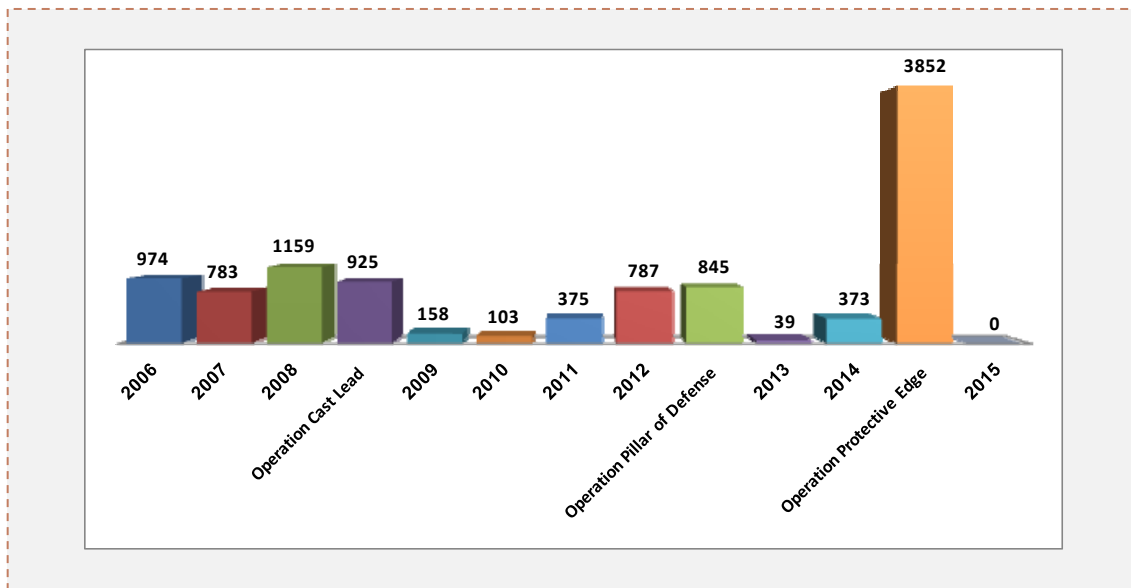
■ This past week Israel's south remained quiet. No rocket or mortar shell hits were identified in Israeli territory.

Monthly Distribution of Rocket Fire (2013 – 2015)¹



¹ As of April 21, 2015. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire or rockets which misfired and fell inside the Gaza Strip.

Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire in Israel's South²



Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem

Hamas Figures Detained in Nablus

■ In the wake of increased Hamas terrorist activity in the **Nablus** region, on April 15, 2015, Israeli security forces detained 29 Hamas figures. Among them were senior operatives and former prisoners. The detainees were involved in Hamas terrorist activity (IDF Spokesman, April 15, 2015). According to the Palestinian website Ma'an, 31 wanted Palestinians were detained. Hamas websites posted the names of 28 Palestinians who had been detained. The Hamas websites also claimed that most of the detainees were senior Hamas figures.

■ Hamas strongly condemned the detentions:

- Hamas spokesman **Husam Badran** claimed the IDF had detained [the Hamas figures] because Israel was worried Hamas' power was increasing in Judea and Samaria. He claimed the detentions would not prevent Hamas from continuing the "resistance" [i.e., terrorism and violence] (Hamas website, April 15, 2015)
- **Ismail Radwan**, senior Hamas figure in the Gaza Strip, criticized the Palestinian Authority (PA) for its silence regarding the detentions. He claimed the PA's apparatuses had secured the IDF forces during the detentions (Palestine-info.info, April 15, 2015).

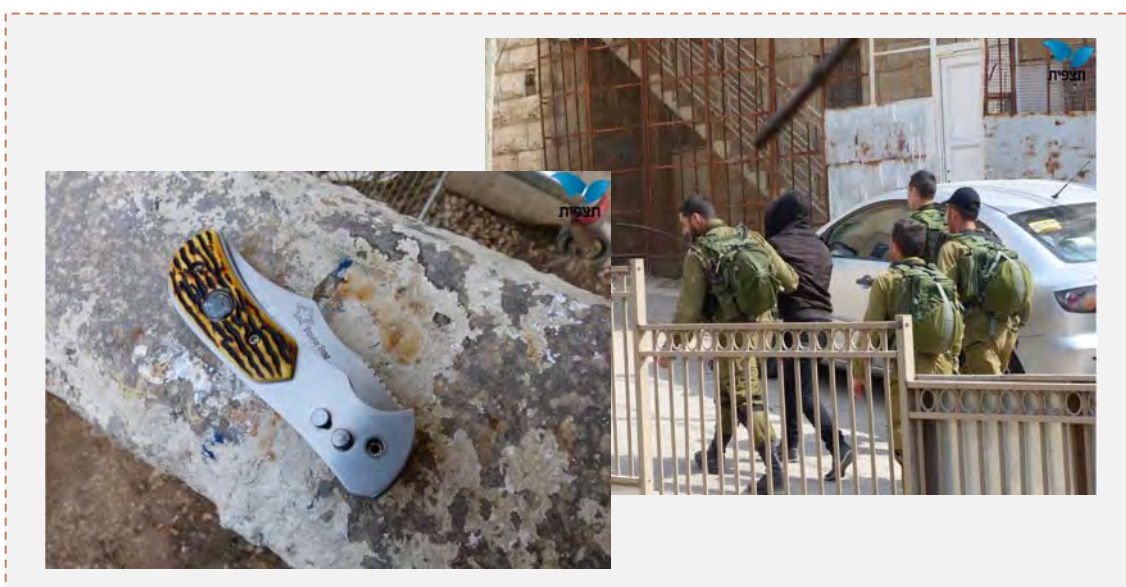
² The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.

"Popular Resistance" Terrorism and Violence Continue

■ This past week the wave of violence and rioting continued at the usual locations in Judea, Samaria and east Jerusalem, part of what the Palestinians call the "popular resistance." The violence mainly centered on throwing stones, rocks and Molotov cocktails. Over the weekend there were also events to mark Palestinian Prisoners' Day. Some of the events turned into riots in which Palestinians confronted Israeli security forces (See below for further details)

■ Some of the prominent attacks were the following:

- On **April 17, 2015**, an 18 year-old Palestinian was detained at an IDF roadblock near the Cave of the Patriarchs after he threatened the soldiers with a knife (Tazpit.org.il, April 17, 2015).



Left: The Palestinian's knife. Right: IDF soldiers detain the knife-wielding Palestinian (Photo by Tzipi Schlissel for Tazpit.org.il, April 17, 2015).

- On **April 19, 2015**, two IDF soldiers were attacked by three Palestinians at the entrance to the Jewish quarter of Hebron near the Cave of the Patriarchs (Tazpit.org.il, April 19, 2015).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

The Crossings – Recent Developments

The Kerem Shalom Crossing

■ Hamas intends to institute a new tax, called a "solidarity tax," on merchandise imported into the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom crossing. Sources in the Gaza Strip reported that the tax still had to be authorized by the

Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC). The Palestinian Ministry of Economics will be responsible for the tax, which will average 10% of the value of the imported merchandise. **Hatem Uweidha**, Deputy Minister of Economics in the Gaza Strip, claimed the tax would be imposed only on merchandise imported from Israel and not from Judea and Samaria. He claimed imposing the tax was the decision of the PLC and not the Ministry of Economics (Sawa.ps, April 15, 2015).

■ As a result, merchants in the Gaza Strip decided not to import fruit through the Kerem Shalom crossing, and there is now reportedly a scarcity of fruit in the Gaza markets (Maannews.net, April 19, 2015). **Jamal Nasser**, a Hamas-faction member of the PLC, said that it was not the merchants who were being harmed by the new tax, but rather the Gazan residents (Video uploaded to the social networks documenting a meeting of Gaza Strip merchants and Jamal Nasser).



Difficult exchanges during the meeting of Gaza Strip merchants and Jamal Nasser (Alquds.com, April 19, 2015).

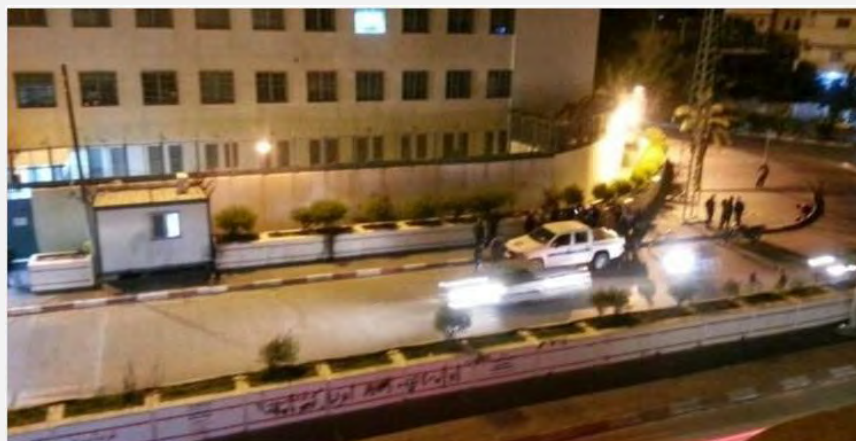
Comment on the Closing of the Rafah Crossing

■ **Iyad al-Bazam**, spokesman for the ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip, claimed that 2015 has been the worst year since 2009 for the operation of the Rafah crossing. He claimed that since the beginning of the year it had been closed for more than 100 days and open exceptionally for only five. He called on the Egyptian authorities to open the Rafah crossing immediately for the passage of residents and to be "wise" in weighing their policies regarding the Gaza Strip (Website of the ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip, April 18, 2015).

IEDs Explode in the Gaza Strip

■ **This past week there was a series of explosions in the Gaza Strip.** No casualties were reported. According to the Hamas-controlled Gazan security forces, the IEDs had been put in place during hours when there was no electricity in the Gaza Strip, making it impossible for the security cameras to photograph the perpetrators. The explosions were the following:

- On **April 18, 2015**, it was reported that two IEDs exploded near the entrance to UNRWA headquarters in Gaza City. According to the media, the perpetrators were unknown. **Iyad al-Bazam**, spokesman for the ministry of the interior, claimed the security forces were investigating the circumstances surrounding the explosions. He claimed no casualties had been reported but that there had been minor property damage (Paltoday.ps, April 18, 2015).



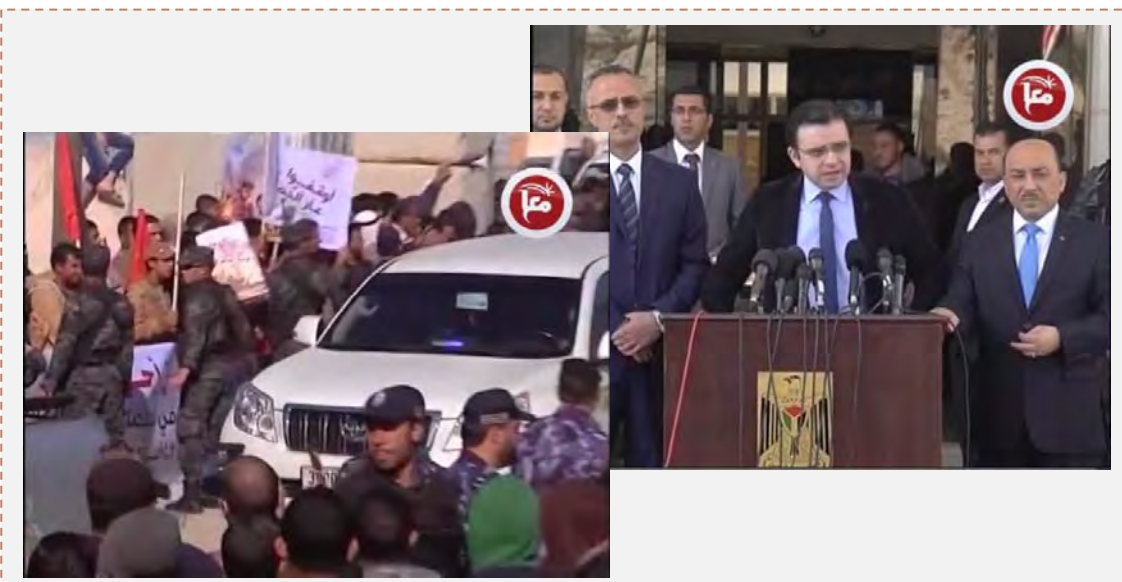
The scene of an IED explosion near UNRWA headquarters in Gaza City (Quds.net, April 18, 2015).

- An IED exploded near Mahmoud Abbas' house in Gaza City; the house is used as the government residence. It occurred before the arrival in the Gaza Strip of a delegation from the Palestinian national consensus government.
- The Palestinian media reported that on **April 16, 2015**, unknown persons placed an IED in front of the main entrance of the **Al-Huda' kindergarten in Beit Lahia**. The explosion caused minor damage to the building. The kindergarten is run by the **Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)** and directed by individuals affiliated with the organization (Quds.net, April 15, 2015).

Palestinian National Consensus Government Delegation Arrives in the Gaza Strip

- On April 19, 2015, a delegation from the Palestinian national consensus government entered the Gaza Strip through the Erez crossing. It included 30 Palestinians, some of them ministers in the national consensus government and some administrators. **The objective of the visit was to deal with the issues of [the salaries of] government employees and the crossings.** Conspicuous by their absence were **Rami Hamdallah**, prime minister of the national consensus government, **Riyadh al-Maliki**, foreign minister, and **Shukri Bishara**, treasury minister, who had all gone to Indonesia to participate in the Asia-Africa summit meeting (Alaraby.co.uk, April 19, 2015).

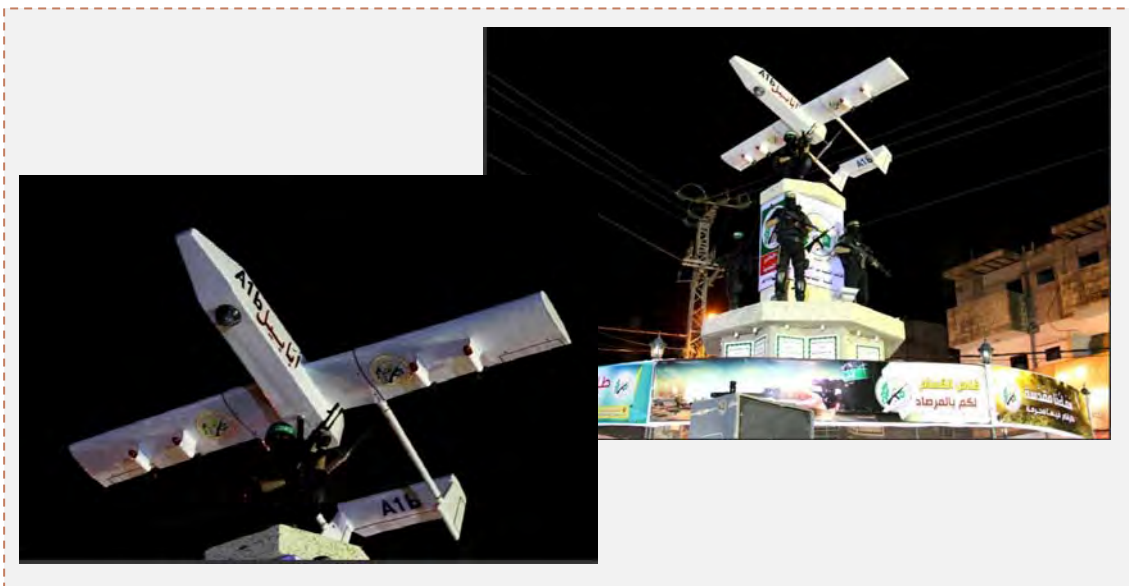
- Hamas thanked the delegation for coming but conditioned the success of its visit on the discourse and coordination to follow. Hamas spokesman **Sami Abu Zuhri** called on the national consensus government to commit itself to implementing all the agreements relating to employees and the crossings (Facebook page of Sami Abu Zuhri, April 19, 2015). **Ismail Radwan**, referring to Rami Hamdallah's visit to Indonesia, claimed it was clear the Gaza Strip was not a top priority for the national consensus government (Farsnews.com, April 19, 2015). On April 20, 2015, the delegation left the Gaza Strip, earlier than expected, indicating the possible failure of the visit.



Left: The delegation's vehicles received by Gazans demonstrating against the national consensus government. Right: A spokesman for the national consensus government holds a press conference upon the delegation's arrival in the Gaza Strip (Ma'an News Agency's satellite TV channel, April 19, 2015).

Monument in Honor of UAV

■ To mark the 11th anniversary of the death of Abd Aziz Rantisi, a senior Gazan Hamas terrorist operative, the Shejaiya Battalion of Hamas' Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades unveiled a monument of Hamas' Ababil-type UAV. It was allegedly developed and manufactured by Hamas' military-terrorist wing and used during Operation Protective Edge. The unveiling was attended by senior Hamas figure **Khalil al-Haya**, who officially dedicated it. Hamas speakers at the ceremony stressed Hamas' adherence to the concept of "resistance" [i.e., terrorism] as the path to "liberate Palestine" (Paltimes.net and Alwatanvoice.com, April 17 and 18, 2015).



The Ababil-type UAV monument (Paltoday.ps, April 18, 2015).

Graduation Exercises for a DFLP Military-Terrorist Training Course

■ On April 17, 2015, the **military-terrorist wing of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP)** held graduation exercises for a **military-terrorist training course** held at its facility in Rafah. The course was attended by 60 terrorist operatives from the central and southern Gaza Strip. During the exercises the graduates simulated **storming IDF posts and abducting soldiers**. **Ziyad Jarou'n**, a member of the DFLP's political bureau, praised the graduates, stating that the DFLP would continue its struggle against Israel (Facebook page of the DFLP's National Resistance Battalions, April 18, 2015).



Graduation exercises for a DFLP training course: terrorist operatives simulate storming an IDF post and abducting a soldier (Facebook page of the DFLP's National Resistance Battalions, April 18, 2015)

The Palestinian Authority

Palestinian Prisoners' Day³ Events

Overview

■ On Friday, **April 17, 2015**, Palestinian Prisoners' Day was marked in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip. Hundreds of Palestinians participated in the events, which included demonstrations, marches and rallies. At some of the sites there were confrontations between Palestinians and Israeli security forces, and two Palestinians were injured. In the Gaza Strip there were a number of events held with senior members of the Palestinian terrorist organizations in attendance. Five Palestinians were wounded by IDF fire near the border security fence. Senior PA and Hamas figures noted **they intended to bring the issue of the prisoners to the International Criminal Court in The Hague (ICC).**

³ Palestinian Prisoners' Day is held every year on April 17, the date when Palestinian prisoners were first released by Israel in a prisoner exchange deal. Events are held annually in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip to mark the day and are attended by senior Palestinian figures.



Left: Military display in the Al-Bureij refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip, during which Hamas terrorist operatives burned a "coffin" symbolizing the State of Israel and a model of an Israeli prison (Paltimes.net, date, 2015). Right: A march in Nablus to make Palestinian Prisoners' Day (Wafa.ps, April 16, 2015).

The PA

■ For Palestinian Prisoners' Day the Palestinian national consensus government issued an announcement stressing its dedication to the prisoners' cause and its adherence to effecting their release. According to the announcement, the PA leadership, headed by Mahmoud Abbas and the government, was monitoring the issue of the prisoners and working to involve all the international organizations in order to obligate Israel to unconditionally release all the prisoners (Wafa.ps, April 16, 2015).

■ **Mahmoud Abbas** gave a speech for Palestinian Prisoners' Day in which he noted the deep commitment of the Palestinian leadership to the prisoners, and said that any potential agreement with Israel would have to include a positive response to the Palestinian demand to release all the prisoners. He also claimed that without fail the issue would be one of those brought before the ICC (Wafa.ps, April 16, 2015).

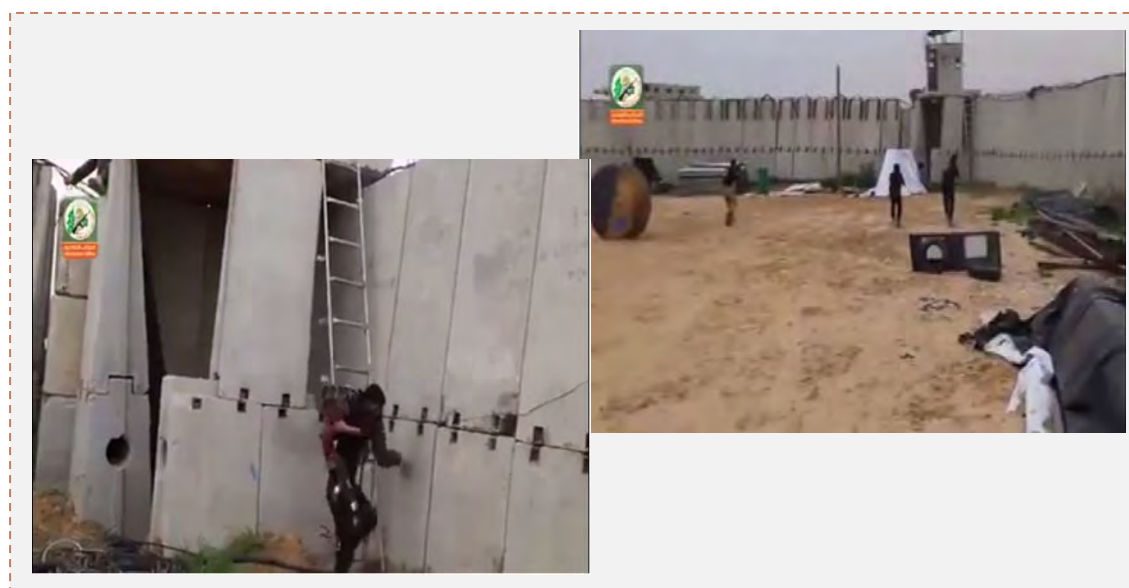
Hamas

■ **Khaled Mashaal**, head of Hamas' political bureau, praised the Palestinians in a recorded message for Palestinian Prisoners' Day and the 11th anniversary of the death of senior Hamas terrorist Abd Aziz Rantisi. He said the only way to release the prisoners and return the refugees was the path of jihad and "resistance" [i.e., terrorism] (Al-Aqsa TV, April 16, 2015).

■ **Ismail Haniya**, deputy head of Hamas' political bureau, claimed that every discussion with Israel would be held with the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades. He also said he knew the conditions of the prisoners were hard, adding that the Palestinians would use every means at their disposal to secure their release (Al-Aqsa TV, April 16, 2015).

■ **Khalil al-Haya**, a member of Hamas' political bureau, said that the Palestinian "resistance," led by the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, would be able to release the prisoners as it had released them in the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal. He claimed it would not take long. He warned Israel that **the Palestinians intended to abduct soldiers and settlers in every place and claimed it was their right to do so** (Alquds.com, April 16, 2015).

■ **Rawhi Mushtaha**, a senior member of the Hamas leadership and one of the Palestinian terrorists freed in the Gilad Shalit deal, claimed that Hamas did not spare its efforts to release the prisoners. He claimed that Hamas' military wing had made a clear-cut decision to abduct soldiers to further prisoner release deals (Al-Risala, April 17, 2015).



Participants in the Al-Futuwwa [school military program] practice taking over an IDF post and abducting an IDF soldier (Facebook page of PALDF, April 16, 2015).

The Palestinian Tax Revenues

■ Israel and the Palestinian Authority reached a compromise to settle the dispute over the tax revenues frozen by Israel and the Palestinians' outstanding debts to the Israel Electric Company and other Israeli bodies. The Israeli Coordinator for Government Activities in the Territories met with Palestinians officials and **reached an agreement whereby the Palestinians would receive the tax revenues frozen**

between December 2014 and February 2015. According to the agreement one billion shekels (about \$327 million) will be transferred to the Palestinians and half a billion shekels will be deducted from the total sum to pay Palestinian debts, primarily to the Israeli Electric Company (Wafa.ps, April 19, 2015).

■ At the beginning of a meeting of the PLO's Executive Committee, **Mahmoud Abbas** reported that an agreement had been reached with Israel according to which Israel would transfer the entire sum of tax revenues to the PA. He announced that a joint [Israeli-Palestinian] committee had been appointed to examine the debts of both sides (Wafa.ps, April 19, 2015).

The Northern Arena

Palestinian Reactions to ISIS's Attempt to Takeover the Yarmouk Refugee Camp

■ **Ahmed Majdalani**, a member of the PLO's Executive Committee and Mahmoud Abbas's envoy to Syria, reported that the battles in the Yarmouk refugee camp between ISIS and Al-Nusra Front continued. He said that the PLO had voted to send another delegation to the Yarmouk refugee camp to monitor closely the treatment received by the Palestinian refugees remaining in the camp. He claimed the Syrian regime had coordinated with the delegation regarding its visit. The delegation would include representatives of the various Palestinian organizations and work to provide emergency aid for the camp residents (Quds.net, April 29, 2015). According to media reports, residents had fled to the neighboring towns but there were still about 10,000 people left in the camp (Almayadeen.net, April 19, 2015).

■ **Mahmoud Abbas** claimed the Palestinian leadership supported a political solution for the crisis in the Yarmouk refugee camp. The leadership, he claimed, was not a side in the fighting. The Fatah movement had reportedly made it clear that its operatives were not permitted to carry arms and it did not want to be a side in a military escalation (Alwatanvoice.com, April 18, 2015).

■ Senior Hamas figure **Ismail Radwan** claimed President Assad's accusations that Hamas was supporting the organizations in Syria were false. He claimed the Hamas movement did not interfere in the internal affairs of the Arab states and denied it had any ties to the organization called the Environs of Jerusalem fighting in the Yarmouk refugee camp (Aa.com.tr, April 19, 2015).