



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

(May 6-12, 2015)



Model of an Israeli Merkava tank constructed by Hamas for training purposes, photographed at a Hamas military-terrorist training camp in the Gaza Strip (Facebook page of QudsN, May 12, 2015).

Overview

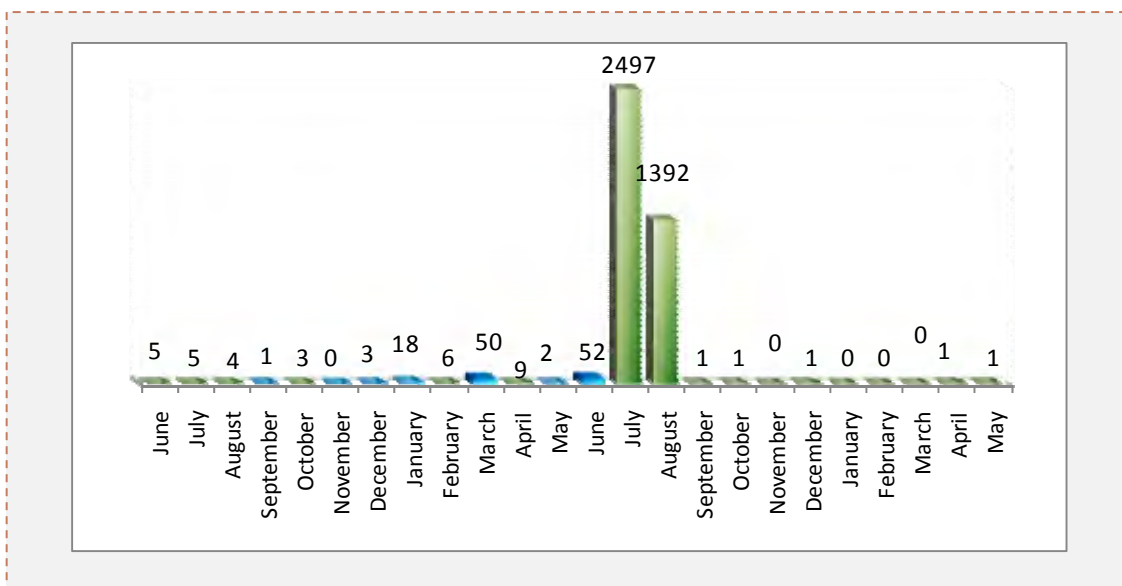
- This past week no rocket hits were identified in Israeli territory. There were several incidents along the Israeli-Gazan border between IDF forces and suspicious Palestinians. Israeli Navy gunboats opened fire on fishing boats which had sailed beyond the fishing zone off the northern Gaza Strip. In Judea and Samaria there were a number of clashes and incidents, including a stabbing attack in Mishor Adumim.
- Clashes continued between Hamas' security forces and Salafist-jihadists. The Hamas security forces erected roadblocks and detained jihadist operatives. Salafist-jihadist operatives laid IEDs near the Shejaiya junction and in proximity to an Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades post. They also claimed responsibility for rocket fire targeting a Hamas post in Khan Yunis. However a senior Salafist-jihadi activist called for calming the situation and a Hamas spokesman called for minimizing the significance of the incidents.

Israel's South

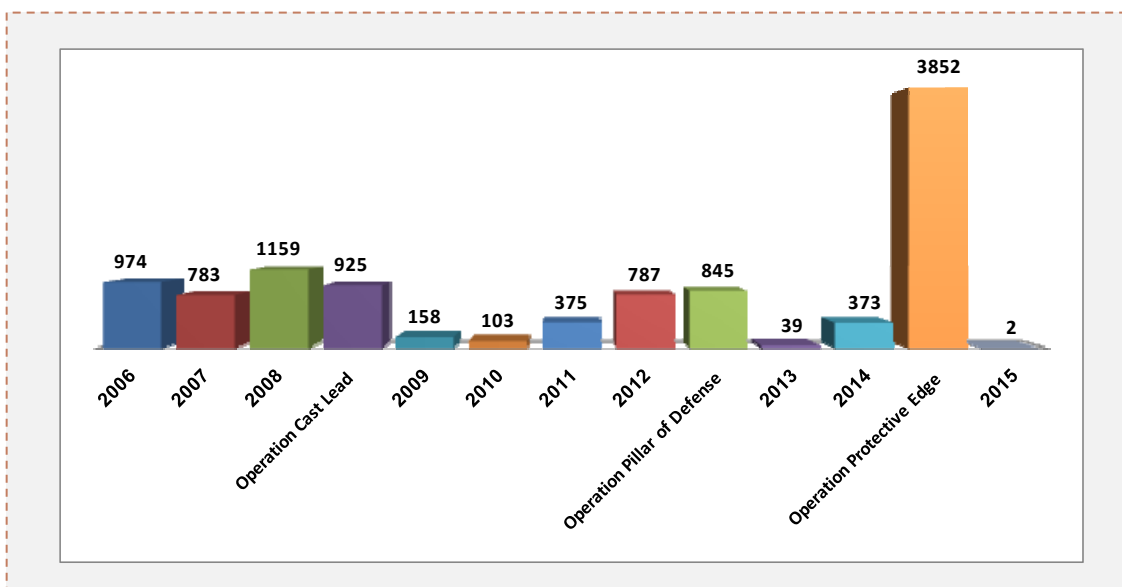
Rocket Fire Attacking Israel

- This past week no rocket or mortar shell hits were identified in Israeli territory.

Monthly Distribution of Rocket Fire (2013 – 2015)¹



Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire in Israel's South²



¹ As of May 12, 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.

Clashes along the Israeli-Gazan Border

■ This past week there were a number of clashes along Israel's border with the Gaza Strip:

- On **May 9, 2015**, IDF forces opened fire at three suspicious Palestinians near the security fence in Khan Yunis (southern Gaza Strip) (Facebook page of Red Alert, May 10, 2015). The Palestinian media reported that three farmers from Khan Yunis had been wounded (Paltoday.tv and Safa.ps, May 9, 2015).
- On **May 8, 2015**, an IDF force detained two Palestinians who had crossed the security fence in the western Negev. A third Palestinian who approached the fence was shot and critically wounded (Facebook page of Red Alert, May 8, 2015).
- On **May 7 and 8, 2015**, Israeli Navy gunboats opened fire on fishing boats which had sailed beyond the fishing zone off the northern Gaza Strip (Facebook page of Red Alert, May 8, 2015). The Palestinian media reported that a Gazan fisherman had been wounded near the Beit Lahia shore (Felesteen.ps and Alwatanvoice.com, May 8, 2015).

Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem

"Popular Resistance" Terrorism and Violence Continue

■ This past week the wave of terrorist attacks and violence 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. In some instances Palestinian rioters clashed with the Israeli security forces. Prominent was the stabbing attack in Mishor Adumim, east of Jerusalem.

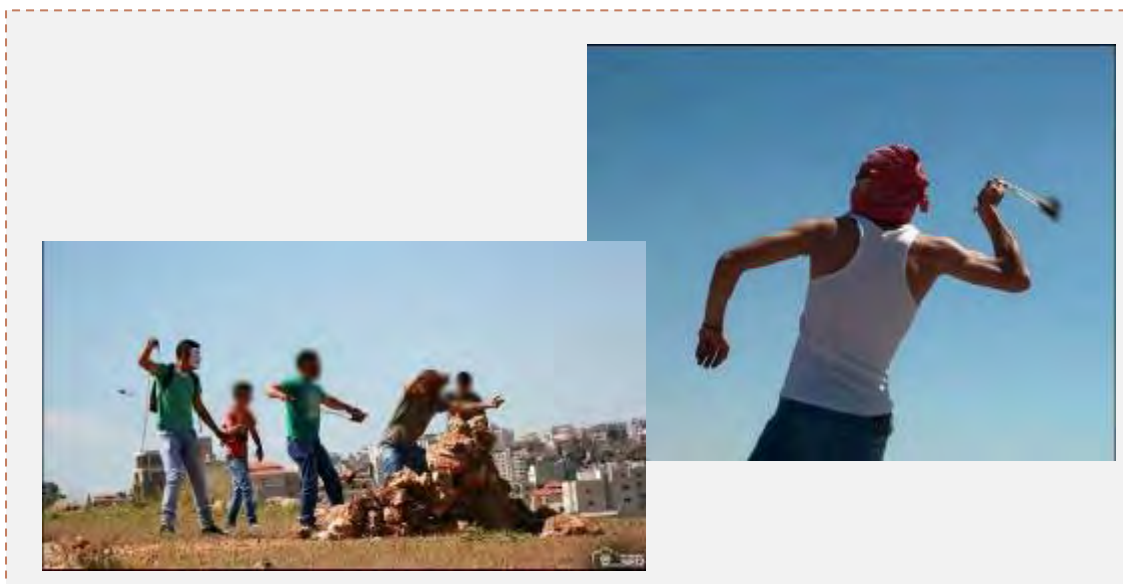
■ The prominent attacks were the following:

- On **May 11, 2015**, a 19 year-old Jewish man sustained minor injuries in a stabbing attack in **Mishor Adumim** (east of Jerusalem). A Palestinian ran towards him while he was waiting at a bus stop and stabbed him in the back. He was taken to a hospital (Ynetnews.co.il, May 11, 2015).
- On the night of **May 9, 2015**, shots were fired from the direction of Jelazoun at the David neighborhood of the village of **Beit El**. One of the houses was

damaged (Tazpit.org.il, May 19, 2015). A network calling itself the Marwan al-Qawasmeh and Amer Abu Aisha³ Groups claimed responsibility for the shooting (Qudspress.com, May 11, 2015).

- On **May 9, 2015**, Israeli policemen on a patrolling mission identified a suspicious vehicle. The driver refused to halt, increased his speed and hit a policeman standing next to the patrol car. On May 10, 2015, two Palestinians from Hebron were detained on suspicion of involvement in the vehicular attack (Facebook page of the Israel Police Force, May 10, 2015).
- On **May 8, 2015**, two Palestinians who threw a Molotov cocktail at a military vehicle neat the Tapuah junction (Samaria) were captured. A Molotov cocktail was also thrown at a vehicle in the Har Bracha area (Samaria). There were no casualties; the Molotov cocktail caused a fire (Facebook page of Red Alert, May 8, 2015).
- On **May 8, 2015**, a pipe bomb was thrown at an IDF force in Jelazoun (Ramallah region). There were no casualties (Facebook page of Red Alert, May 8, 2015).
- On **May 7, 2015**, Palestinians threw stones at the light railway in the Shuafat region of north Jerusalem. There were no casualties; the railway was damaged (Facebook page of Red Alert, May 7, 2015).

³ Marwan al-Qawasmeh and Amer Abu Aisha were the Palestinian terrorist operatives who abducted and killed the three Jewish youths in Gush Etzion in June 2014.



Left: Palestinians throw stones at the Israeli security forces during a riot in front of the Ofer jail.
 Right: A Palestinian slings stones at Israeli security forces during a riot in Nebi Saleh
 (Paltimes.net, May 8, 2015).

Terrorist Attacks – April 2015⁴

■ During April 2015 **the number of terrorist attacks in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem increased**, as compared with March 2015. A total of **120 terrorist attacks** were carried out (compared with 89 in March 2015):

- **Location** – 82 terrorist attacks were carried out in Judea and Samaria (58 in March) and 38 in Jerusalem (31 in March).
- **Modus operandi** – Most of the terrorist attacks (108 of 120) involved **Molotov cocktails**.⁵ There were **three stabbing attacks**, **seven IEDs were laid** and there were **two vehicular attacks**.
- **Casualties** – One man was killed (in a vehicular attack in Jerusalem) and nine were injured; eight belonged to the Israeli security forces and were wounded in stabbing and vehicular attacks.

Financing Terrorism

■ According to data made public by the legal advisor of the Military Prosecutor's Office in Judea and Samaria, **5 million shekels (about \$1.3) of terrorism-financing funds were confiscated in Judea and Samaria during 2014** (double the amount of 2013). The confiscations were the result of approximately one hundred Israeli security

⁴ According to Israel Security Agency data.

⁵ The monthly summary does not include the dozens on instances in which stones are thrown.

force actions carried out during the year. Money and property with monetary value were confiscated. The significant rise in the sum was the result of increased Israeli security force activity in June 2014, carried out to locate the three Jewish youths who had been abducted, as well as increased enforcement in administration (IDF Spokesman, May 11, 2015).

Developments in the Gaza Strip



Palestinian women demonstrate in front of the UNRWA offices in Gaza City to protest the delays in the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip (Paltoday.tv, May 6, 2015).

The Destruction of the Tunnels

■ The Egypt security forces reported they had **destroyed 31 tunnels** in the Rafah region (YouTube site of the Egyptian Ministry of Defense, May 11, 2015). Seven tunnel workers were seriously suffocated when the Egyptian army released gas into a tunnel on the Rafah border (Alwatanvoice.com, May 5, 2015).

Hamas Activity against Salafist-Jihadi in the Gaza Strip

■ This past week **the Hamas security forces continued detentions and other activities** targeting Salafist-jihadists in the Gaza Strip. The activities were concentrated in Rafah, Khan Yunis, the central Gaza Strip, Shejaiya and Sheikh Radwan. Hamas' security forces erected a large number of roadblocks and detained Salafist-jihadists. They also encircled the Abu al-Baz mosque, which belongs to the Salafists in Beit Hanoun, and detained a number of activists. Salafist sources used their affiliated social networks to report the detention of three activists in the areas of Al-Bureij, Al-Nuseirat and Khan Yunis (Aawsat.net, May 7, 2015).

- In ITIC assessment Hamas was motivated by its concern regarding ISIS's influence in the Gaza Strip and possibly **wanted to signal Egypt that Hamas' action against the Salafist-jihadi organizations in the Gaza Strip could be likened to Egypt's campaign against the same organizations in the Sinai Peninsula.**



Hamas security force operatives deployed in Gaza for nighttime activities to preserve public order (Website of the ministry of the interior, Gaza, May 7, 2015).

- In response, Salafist-jihadists carried out attacks in the Gaza Strip:
 - **On May 4, 2015**, Hamas security forces defused two IEDs which had been placed in vehicles at the Shejaiya junction after one vehicle began burning (Samanews.com, May 4, 2015).
 - An IED exploded near an Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades post west of Khan Yunis. A network calling itself the Supporters of the Islamic State in Greater Jerusalem⁶ claimed responsibility for the attack. The network warned Gazans not to approach military and security posts, and appealed to them to join the "nation of the men of truth" (Al-Minbar al-'Ilami al-Jihadi forum, May 8, 2015).
 - The network calling itself the Supporters of the Islamic State in Greater Jerusalem also claimed responsibility for firing mortar shells at a Hamas post in Khan Yunis.

⁶ The organization calling itself the Supporters of the Islamic State in Greater Jerusalem is a Salafist-jihadi network in the Gaza Strip which issued Hamas an ultimatum for the release of Salafist-jihadist detainees.



A notice claiming responsibility for firing mortar shells at a Hamas post in Khan Yunis (Twitter account affiliated with the organization, May 8, 2015).

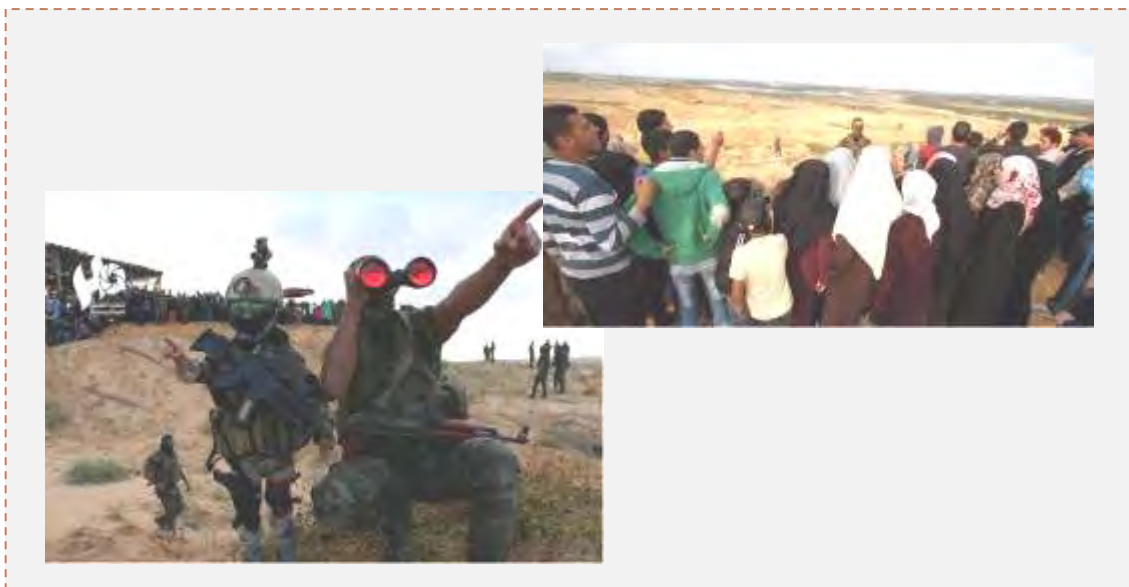
Responses

■ In view of the tension between Hamas and the Salafists, **Abu al-'Ainaa' al-Maqdisi**, a senior Salafist-jihadist in the Gaza Strip, claimed that efforts were being made **to defuse the situation, including both sides' stopping their activities and the release of the Salafist-jihadists held by Hamas**. He claimed he was optimistic an arrangement would be reached in the near future. That was because, he claimed, Hamas' security forces had evidence that a "third party" was setting off bombs in an attempt to increase the tension between Hamas and the Salafists (Al-ayyam.com, May 10, 2015). **Salafist sources stressed that they did not want a military confrontation with Hamas** (Al-ayyam.com, May 5, 2015).

■ **Iyad al-Bazam**, spokesman for Hamas' ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip, claimed that public order and local security were being maintained despite "exceptional incidents," which were dealt with by the security forces, and called on the Gazans not to believe "media exaggerations" spread mainly by the social media (Facebook page of Iyad al-Bazam, May 5, 2015). Senior Hamas figure **Khalil al-Haya** denied the presence of ISIS in the Gaza Strip, claiming "media exaggeration." He also denied that Hamas had exaggerated the extent of ISIS's presence in the Gaza Strip to send positive messages to Egypt and Saudi Arabia (PNN.ps, May 10, 2015).

Event to Mark Nakba Day Held on the Israeli-Gazan Border

- On May 5, 2015, Hamas' department of refugee affairs held an event to mark Nakba Day. It took place in the northern Gaza Strip near Beit Hanoun, about one kilometer (.6 miles) from the border security fence. The event was attended by senior Hamas figures and Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades terrorist operatives. Also present were Gazans, who used binoculars to observe Israel.
- **Dr. Ahmed Bahar**, chairman of the Palestinian Legislative Council, claimed "the resistance would continue until the last Israeli soldier was thrown out of Palestine." He also claimed that the "right of return" was the "natural right" of the Palestinian people and that anyone who signed an agreement [with Israel] waiving that right would be accused of treason. **Fathi Hamad**, a member of Hamas' political bureau, said the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades would continue training operatives, more posts would be built and rockets would continue to be launched. He denied Hamas was holding secret talks with Israel and stressed that the only dialogue was "through a gun barrel" (Hamas website, Facebook page of PALDF, May 5, 2015).



Left: An Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operative and a child wearing a uniform and armed with a gun use binoculars to observe Israel (Facebook page of PALDF, May 5, 2015). Right: Gazans attending a Nakba Day event listen to an Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operative explaining the border with Israel (Hamas website, May 5, 2015).

Military Course for PFLP Terrorist Operatives

- On **May 8, 2015**, graduation exercises were held for a military refresher course given by the **Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)** in the northern Gaza Strip. The course lasted a month and participants were trained in physical

fitness, studied martial arts and **trained in infiltrating an Israeli post to abduct a soldier**. Senior PFLP figures were present as observers (PFLP website and the Facebook page of the Shaheed Rashad Mushamar organization, May 8, 2015).



Left: Course graduates demonstrate their military capabilities. Right: Senior PFLP activists give the graduates certificates (PFLP website, May 8, 2015).

The Palestinian Authority

Reactions to the Formation of Israeli Government

■ The Israeli prime minister's announcement of the formation of the new government, which he would head, was followed by a wave of reactions from senior Palestinian Authority (PA) and Hamas figures. **Most of them were critical of the government's rightist nature** and repeatedly stated that the **Palestinians were determined to appeal to international agencies**. Some of the reactions were the following:

The Palestinian Authority

■ Presidential spokesman **Nabil Abu Rudeina** claimed the Palestinian demand to jumpstart the stalled negotiations was clear. He claimed the Palestinians would continue taking steps for membership in international institutions, especially now, after the forming of a rightist government in Israel (Wafa.ps, May 7, 2015).

■ **Saeb Erekat**, a member of the PLO's Executive Committee, claimed the new Israeli government was "a coalition against peace and regional stability" and a government united for war. He called on the international community to end its support of Israel (AFP.com, May 7, 2015).

■ **Amin Maqboul**, secretary of Fatah's Revolutionary Council, said the new Israeli government was a continuation of its predecessor only with more racism, extremism and the desire to erase Jerusalem's Arab identity. He claimed the Palestinian leadership would appeal to international agencies and the International Criminal Court (ICC) for sanctions against the Israel government (Alwatanvoice.com, May 7, 2015).

Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)

■ Hamas spokesman **Sami Abu Zuhri** claimed the new Israeli government reflected the racist, extremist atmosphere in Israel, and therefore it was necessary to strengthen Palestinian national unity. (Hamas website, May 7, 2015).

■ Senior Hamas figure **Ismail Radwan** claimed the new government reflected Israeli society's extremism and the growth of support for the right. Israel society, he claimed, "fundamentally believes only in racism and terrorism." He claimed the new government made it necessary for the PA to adopt the path of "resistance" [i.e., terrorism] and to prevent negotiations with Israel (Alwatanvoice.com, May 7, 2015).

■ Senior PIJ figure **Yusuf al-Husseini** claimed that during the last elections the Israelis announced that the peace process had been buried and its place had been taken by hatred and racism. He warned that the formation of the new government would mean more security difficulties for the Palestinian people (Alwatanvoice.com, May 7, 2015).

Interview with Saeb Erekat

■ **Saeb Erekat**, a member of the PLO's Executive Committee, said the following in an interview (Alqudsnews.net, May 9, 2015):

- **The Palestinian appeal to the ICC in The Hague** – Saeb Erekat claimed that teams of Palestinian jurists were working around the clock to prepare the claims for the ICC regarding the settlements and Israel's so-called aggression against the Gaza Strip (Operation Protective Edge).
- **The American administration** – Erekat claimed the American administration had to stop relating to Israel as a country above the law and to promote the peace process and the two-state solution "in defiance of the Israeli government."
- **The European Union** – Erekat claimed contacts between the Palestinians and the EU countries had increased, especially with the objective of recognizing

a Palestinian state with the 1967 borders with east Jerusalem as its capital. He also claimed the Palestinians demanded that the EU boycott products manufactured in the settlements and cooperate in formulating a resolution that would be presented to the UN Security Council.

The Battle for Hearts and Minds

Flotilla from Sweden to the Gaza Strip

■ The *Marianne of Gothenburg*, a ship purchased by Ship to Gaza Sweden and Ship to Gaza Norway, left its homeport on **May 10, 2015**, sailing towards the **Gaza Strip**. It will be joined by other ships to form the so-called "Freedom Flotilla III." It will call at various European ports where demonstrations will be held to protest the closure of the Gaza Strip. The ship will carry a limited cargo, which will include medical equipment. In addition to the five-man crew, eight passengers will join at the various ports of call. One of the passengers on board is the Israeli-Swedish activist Dror Feiler, who participated in previous flotillas to the Gaza Strip (Shiptogaza.se, May 10, 2015).



Left: Activists fly the Palestinian flag in a Swedish port (Facebook page of PALINFO, May 11, 2015).
Right: The Marianne of Gothenburg (Shiptogaza.se, May 10, 2015).