



# News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

(May 20-26, 2015)



Hamas constructs a road along the Gaza Strip border with Israel. The picture was posted on a Hamas-affiliated Facebook page. Circled in red is an IDF base a short distance from the new road. Next to the bulldozer is a man in uniform, also circled in red, who is described as an Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operative, apparently supervising the work (Facebook page of Aza al-'Aan, May 23, 2015)

## Overview

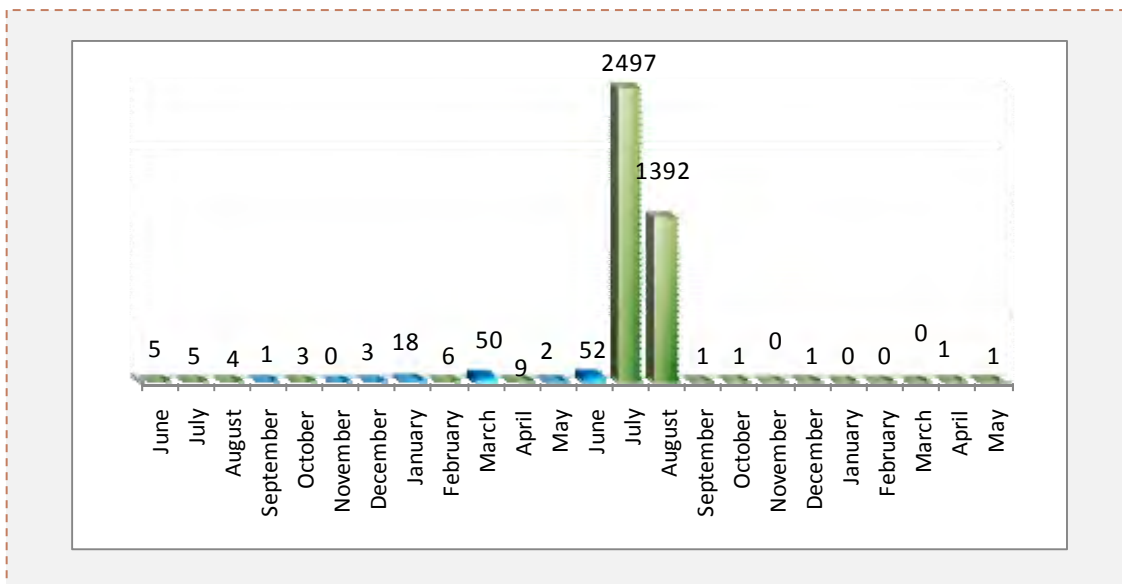
- This past week **Israel's south** remained quiet. In **Jerusalem** there was a vehicular attack targeting a group of Border Policemen, carried out on the road to the Mt. of Olives. Two policemen suffered minor injuries. The terrorist operative was shot and killed. Fatah praised the attack. The Palestinian Authority's media represented the event as a "traffic accident" and severely criticized Israel for the death of the terrorist. The PA, as usual, did not condemn the attack.
- The Palestinian media recently reported that **a dirt road was being constructed in the Gaza Strip along the border with Israel** at a distance of a few hundred meters from the border security fence. The Hamas-affiliated media reported that the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military-terrorist wing, was in charge of the roadwork. In ITIC assessment, the road challenges Israel. Its objective is to upgrade the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades' control of the region near the border fence. It also improves Hamas' operational capabilities against IDF forces on the other side of the fence, and Hamas' ability to infiltrate terrorist operatives into Israeli territory.

## Israel's South

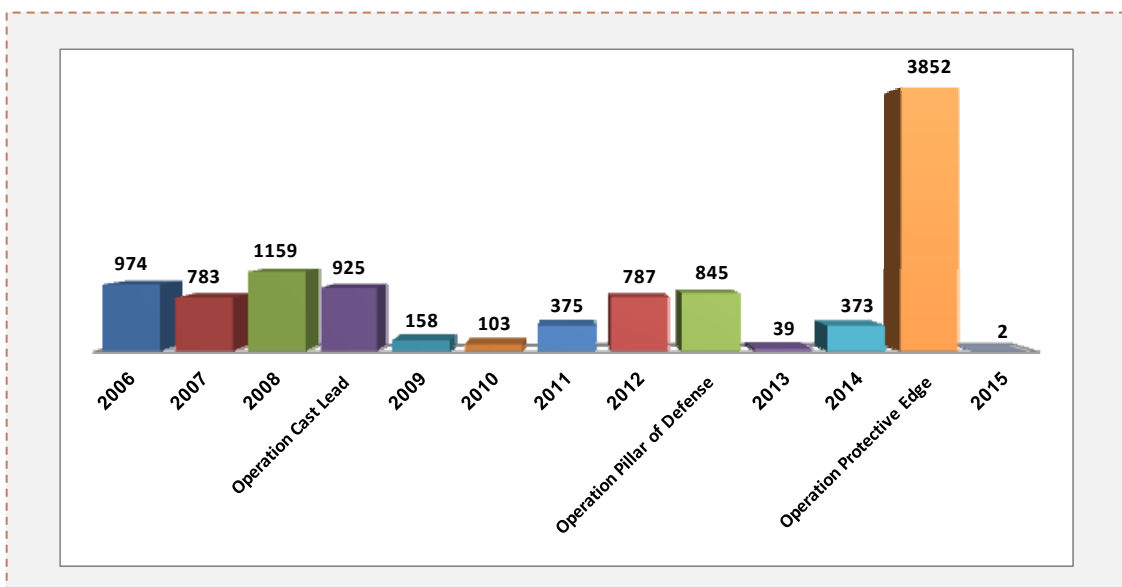
### Rocket Fire Attacking Israel

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

### Monthly Distribution of Rocket Fire (2013 – 2015)<sup>1</sup>



### Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire in Israel's South<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> As of May 26, 2015. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire or rockets which misfired and fell inside the Gaza Strip.

<sup>2</sup> The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.

## Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem

### Vehicular Attack in Jerusalem

- On the morning of May 20, 2015, a **Palestinian rammed into a group of Border Policemen standing at the A-Tur junction**, which leads to the Mt. of Olives in Jerusalem. The driver was shot and killed by one of the policemen. The initial investigation revealed that the Palestinian terrorist saw a group of policemen standing at the junction and deliberately swerved towards them with the intention of running them over. After hitting them he reversed to verify that he had in fact run them over. One of the policemen shot and killed him.
- A Border Police policeman and policewoman suffered minor injuries in the vehicular attack, and were evacuated to a hospital; they were later released. **The vehicular attack was the third during the past month and the seventh since the beginning of 2015. During the past year there was an increase in the number of vehicular attacks carried out as part of what the Palestinians call the "popular resistance."**<sup>3</sup>



The vehicular attack at the A-Tur junction in Jerusalem. Left: The vehicle involved in the vehicular attack (Facebook page of PALDF, May 20, 2015). Right: The site of the vehicular attack (Unity and Rescue, May 20, 2015).

- The Palestinian terrorist who carried out the attack was **Imran Omar Abu Dheim (aka Abu Hamzeh)**, 41, from Jebel Mukaber (south Jerusalem), married and father of

<sup>3</sup> For further information see the May 21, 2015 bulletin, ["Third vehicular attack carried out in Jerusalem in May, and as before, it received support from Fatah and the Palestinian media; the Palestinian Authority did not condemn it."](#)

five (Facebook page of PALDF, May 20, 2015). He apparently was not affiliated with a Palestinian terrorist organization and carried out the attack on his own initiative. He was related to Alaa Hashem Abu Dheim, who carried out the shooting attack at the Mercaz Ha'Rav yeshiva in Jerusalem on March 6, 2008.<sup>4</sup> According to his brother, Imran Omar Abu Dheim worked as a vehicle security officer for several Israeli transportation companies. His funeral was held before dawn in Jebel Mukaber, where a mourning tent was erected.

■ **Regarding the latest vehicular attack, as in previous attacks, the Fatah-affiliated and Palestinian Authority (PA) media represented the attack as a "traffic accident" and the terrorist who carried it out as a victim of the Israeli security forces.** The PA, as usual did not condemn the attack. The PA's foreign ministry demanded the UN appoint an international commission to investigate the circumstances of what it called the Israeli security forces' killings of Jerusalem residents (Wafa.ps, May 21, 2015).

## Stabbing Attack in Jerusalem

■ On the night May 23, 2015 two Jewish youths were stabbed; they were at the Nablus Gate in Jerusalem. The two were on their way to pray at the Western Wall when a young Palestinian man stabbed them. He then fled into the Old City. One of the wounded youths, 15 years old, was stabbed in the stomach and is in serious condition. The other, 19 years old, was not seriously wounded. A search carried out later led to the apprehension of a 19 year-old Palestinian man from the Old City, who had the knife used in the attack in his possession (Ynetnews.co.il, May 24, 2015).

## "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 at the Israeli security forces.

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<sup>4</sup> On March 6, 2008, a Palestinian terrorist carried out a mass-killing attack at the Mercaz Ha'Rav yeshiva in Jerusalem. He entered the yeshiva with a Kalashnikov assault rifle, and shot and killed eight yeshiva students and wounded ten, three of them critically and one seriously. For further information see the March 10, 2008 bulletin, ["Terrorist shooting at Yeshivat Mercaz Ha'Rav in Jerusalem leaves eight students dead."](#)

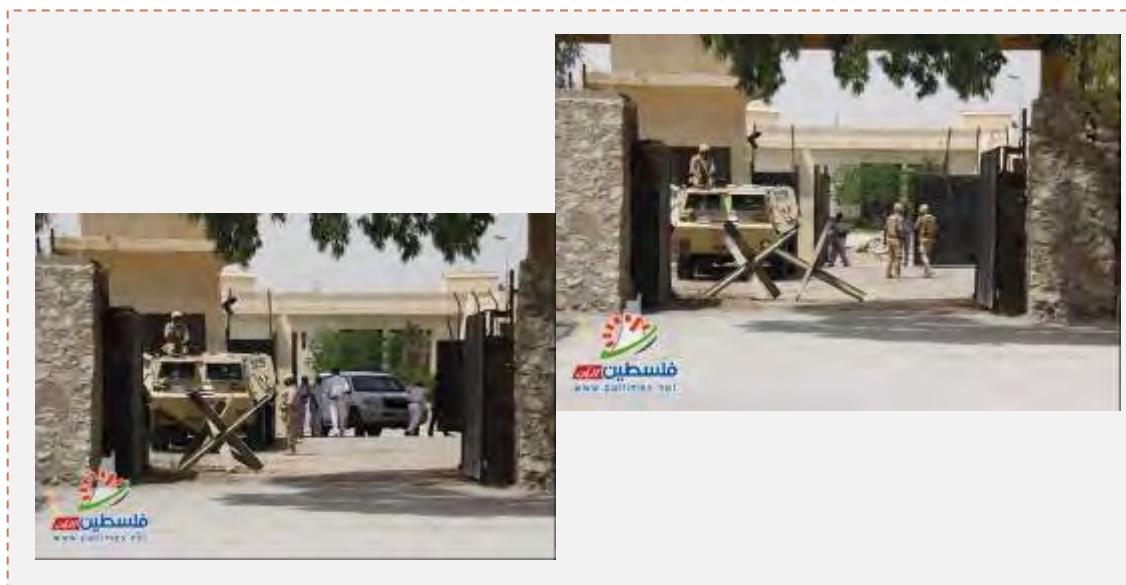


A Palestinian slings a stone at Israeli security forces in the village of Qaddoum during the weekly riot (Wafa.ps, May 22, 2015).

## Developments in the Gaza Strip

### The Rafah Crossing

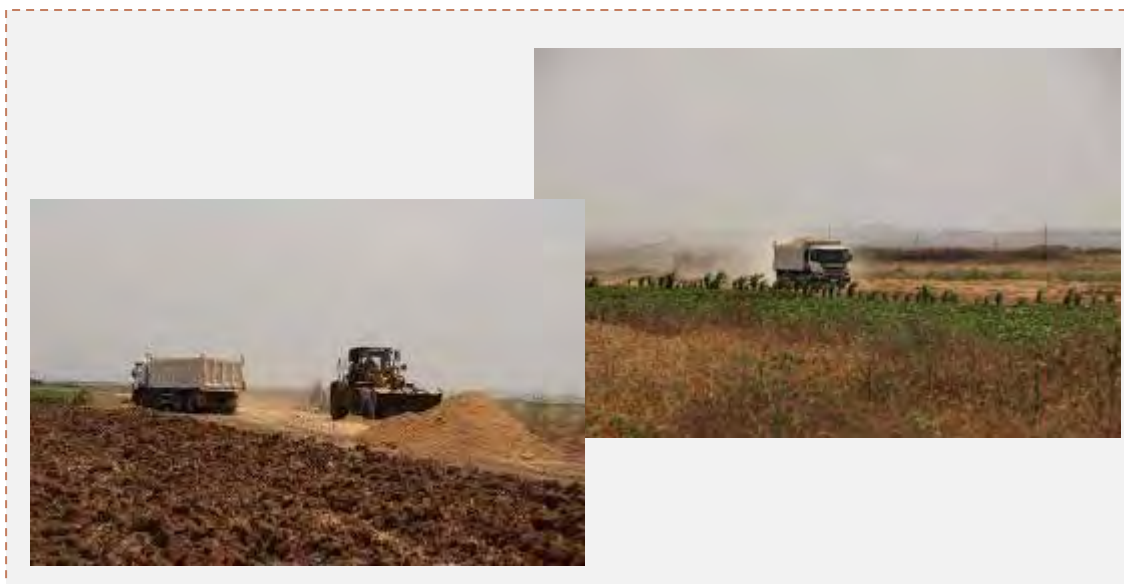
■ The Egyptian authorities announced the Rafah crossing would be open for two days, May 26-27, 2015, for foot traffic from the Egyptian side to the Gaza Strip (Omannews.gov.om, May 24, 2015). **Maher Abu Subha**, Hamas-affiliated director of the Gazan crossings and borders administration, said it was insufficient. He called on Egypt to open the Rafah crossing to the entire population (Paltoday.tv, May 24, 2015). On May 26, 2015, the Egyptian authorities opened the Rafah crossing terminal on the Egyptian side for Palestinians wishing to enter the Gaza Strip, after it had been closed for 86 days. The passage was heavily secured by Egyptian forces (Paltimes.net, May 26, 2015).



On May 26, 2015, the Rafah crossing was opened under heavy Egyptian guard (Paltimes.net, May 26, 2015).

## Road Construction along the Israeli-Gaza Strip Border

■ The Palestinian media recently reported that **Palestinian trucks and bulldozers were being used to build a road about 250 meters (about 0.15 miles) from the security fence between Israel and the Gaza Strip.** According to reports they are working a few meters from IDF bases near the border. Hamas-affiliated websites reported **that the Hamas military wing is in charge of building the road, whose purpose is to guard the border of the Gaza Strip in proximity to the border and to enable "resistance activities" [i.e., terrorist attacks]** (Raialyoum.com, May 25, 2015). According to Al-Ayam, the purpose of the road, which has sand embankments, is **to make it difficult for the IDF to identify vehicles moving along the road.** It was also claimed that Hamas was building the road with materials from the ruins of buildings (Al-ayyam.com, May 25, 2015).



The road construction near the security fence (Facebook page of PALINFO, May 24, 2015).

■ **Ibrahim al-Madhoun**, a Hamas-affiliated political commentator, **wrote an article in which he claimed that constructing the road was meant to create facts on the ground as part of the achievements of the recent fighting**. He said it also marked the change in the activity of Hamas' military wing from covert to overt (Maannews.net, May 25, 2015). **Mahmoud al-Zak**, a senior PLO figure in the Gaza Strip, criticized the road construction, claiming it was liable to widen the buffer zone at the expense of agricultural land. He claimed a number of farmers had already spoken to him about their concerns regarding the consequences of building the road on agricultural land (Al-ayyam.com, May 25, 2015).

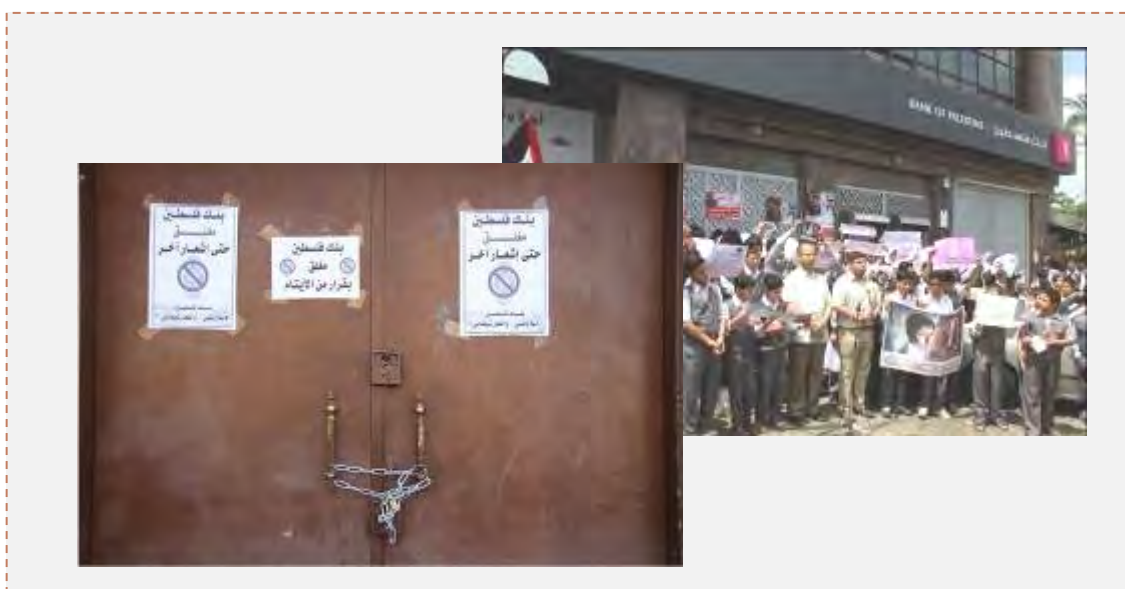
In ITIC assessment, the road is being constructed as a challenge to Israel and aimed at increasing the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades' security control of space near the Gaza Strip's border with Israel. That will make it easy for Hamas to monitor civilians who approach the fence or try to cross it and infiltrate into Israel. At the same time, it may upgrade its military-terrorist wing's capabilities in view of the ongoing security activities carried out by the IDF on the other side of the fence.

## Gazan Charitable Association Accounts Frozen

■ The Bank of Palestine recently announced **it had frozen the accounts of 31 charitable associations** and refused to open the accounts of more than 50 others. According to the announcement, the step was taken following a demand from the Palestinian Monetary Authority to prevent the annual flow of about \$2 million of funds and allotments earmarked for needy Palestinians in the Gaza Strip (Paltimes.net, May 21, 2015). **Note:** Many of the charitable associations operating in the Gaza Strip

are affiliated with Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and other terrorist organizations.

■ To protest the bank's actions, a bomb was detonated at the entrance to its Beit Lahia branch. No casualties were reported. It was also reported that needy families and orphans demonstrated in front of the bank's branches throughout the Gaza Strip. The demonstrators, who included children, held signs reading, "The Bank of Palestine has imposed a siege on the orphans of Gaza," and "Why, Bank of Palestine?" (Paltimes.net, May 21, 2015). On the morning of May 26, 2015, the protest intensified when orphans and children of needy families blocked the entrances to all the Bank of Palestine branches in the Gaza Strip. In an act of solidarity with the Bank of Palestine, the directors of the other banks operating in the Gaza Strip announced they would close their branches (Maannews.net, May 26, 2015).



**Left: Signs on the bank doors reading, "Bank of Palestine closed until further notice," "Bank of Palestine – the name is national, but the deeds are Satanic," and "Bank of Palestine, closed by order of the orphans." Right: Needy families and orphans close the Bank of Palestine branch in Deir al-Balah (Facebook page of QudsN, May 26, 2015)**

## Turkish Humanitarian Aid for the Gaza Strip

■ On May 20, 2015, a large sign was hung in Gaza City showing **Tayyip Erdogan**, the Turkish prime minister, and **Ismail Haniya**, deputy head of Hamas' political bureau. The sign read, "Thank you, Turkey, liberator of Palestine." The sign was hung by Hamas to thank the Turkish government for financing the mass wedding planned for next month of 4,000 young Gazans who could not afford to pay for their weddings themselves (Facebook page of PALDF, May 21, 2015 and Almesryoon.com, May 20, 2015).





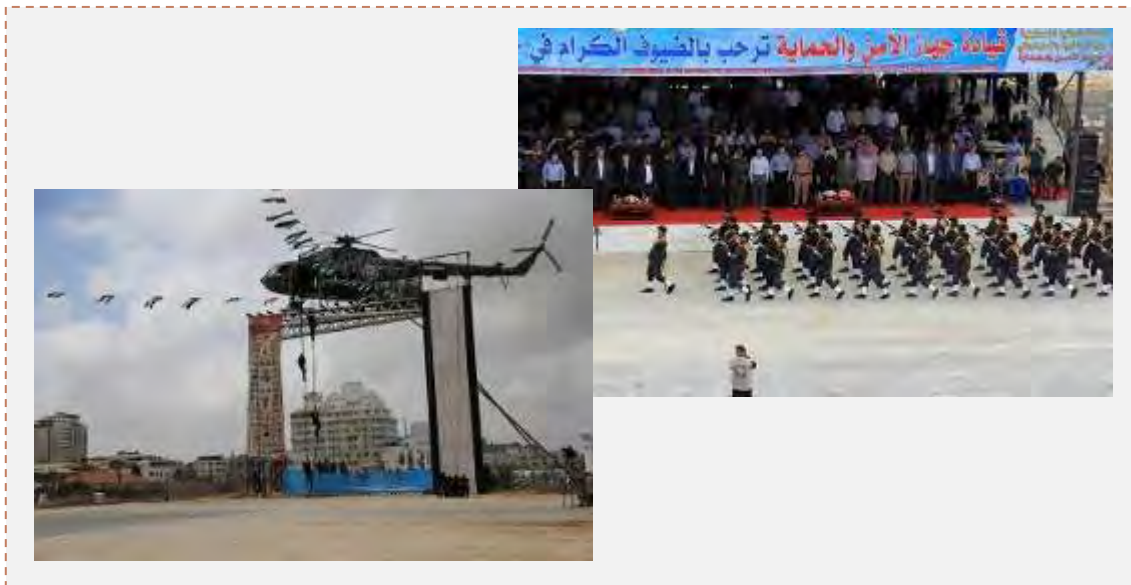
The sign hung in Gaza City, "Thank you Turkey, liberator of Palestine"  
(Facebook page of PALDF, May 21, 2015)

## Senior Salafist Operative Detained in the Gaza Strip

■ Sources in the Gaza Strip reported that Hamas' military wing recently detained **Alaa' Jaude**, a senior Salafi-jihadist, in Dir al-Balah. **Alaa' Jaude** was accused of forming an ISIS-supporting group in the Gaza Strip (Karamapress.com, May 18, 2015).

## Graduation Exercises for New Hamas Ministry of the Interior Unit

■ The Palestinian media reported that on May 21, 2015, graduation exercises were held for the sixth training course held by the ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip. The course trained operatives for a new security unit called "Liberation despite the siege." There were 130 participants in the course, operatives who trained to accompany and guard senior Hamas operatives during helicopter landings under fire (using Yasser Arafat's helicopter, which had been taken out of commission.) They also participated in an advanced swimming course (Paltimes.net, May 21, 2015; Palestinian ministry of the interior, May 21, 2015).



**Graduation exercises. Left: Lowering Hamas terrorist operatives from a helicopter (Paltimes.net, May 21, 2015). Right: Course graduates march in front of senior figures in the Hamas security forces and ministry of the interior (Palestinian ministry of the interior, May 21, 2015).**

## Preparations for Summer Camps for Gazan Youth

■ Hamas is making preparations for its annual summer camps in the Gaza Strip. Hamas spokesman **Musheir al-Masri** claimed that this year summer camps would also be held for girls. He claimed the girls would be given military training and train with weapons like the boys. **Note:** The camps are attended by Gazans between the ages of 14 and 20, and their objective, according to Hamas, is to teach them self-defense and to **imbue Gazan youth with the spirit of the "resistance"** [i.e., anti-Israeli terrorism] (Paltimes.net, date, 2015).

## The Palestinian Authority

### Mahmoud Abbas Meets with the EU's "Foreign Minister"

■ On May 20, 2015, **Mahmoud Abbas**, PA chairman, met in Ramallah with **Federica Mogherini**, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Mogherini held a joint press conference with **Saeb Erekat** after the meeting. Erekat claimed the two had "delved deeply" into developments in the peace process. He claimed the Palestinians appreciated the steps taken by the EU, especially everything concerning condemnation of the settlements and the boycott of goods they manufactured. He said that while the Palestinians had been investing their efforts in preserving the two-state solution, Israel was building settlements,

detaining and clashing with Palestinians, and imposing dictates (Wafa.ps, May 20, 2015).



**Mahmoud Abbas meets with Federica Mogherini, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, at his office in Ramallah (Wafa.ps, May 20, 2015).**

## France Plans a Security Council Resolution

■ France is planning to propose a resolution to the Security Council to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. According to media reports, draft versions of the proposal were given to Israel, the Palestinians and various EU agencies. According to Western diplomatic sources, France promised the American administration it would delay its proposal until after a nuclear agreement had been signed with Iran (Alhayat.com, May 24, 2015).

■ In response to the draft, the Palestinians objected to a number of points in the proposed resolution. One was related to the issue of recognizing Israel as a Jewish state (Alhayat.com, May 24, 2015). In response **Nabil Shaath**, a member of Fatah's Central Committee, claimed he was not aware of the details of the French proposal but that the Palestinians demands were clear. They included a cessation of construction in the settlements as long as negotiations were being held, the setting of a final date for Israel's withdrawal and the implementation of the "right of return" (Alwatanvoice.com, May 21, 2015).

## PA Dealings with International Organizations

■ **Nabil Abu Zneid**, the PA representative in Holland, claimed that on **June 25, 2015**, **Riyadh al-Maliki**, the PA foreign minister, **would present the settlements**

**and Operation Protective Edge files to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague.** He said that approximately a month later a delegation of high-ranking ICC figures would visit the Palestinian territories to examine the situation first hand (Voice of Palestine Radio, May 20, 2015).

- **Riyadh al-Maliki**, PA foreign minister, announced the Palestinians had formally joined the **World Customs Organization**. He claimed the Palestinian strategy in working with international organizations and institutions included defining the legal nature of the future Palestinian state as a nation, strengthening the legitimacy for Palestinian independence and sovereignty and ceasing the Israeli occupation (Wafa.ps, May 18, 2015).

- **General Khalil al-Naqib**, director of the PA's health services, said the PA had received full membership in the **International Committee on Military Medicine**. He claimed it was a significant achievement for the Palestinians and another victory for its policies (Al-Quds, May 21, 2015).

## The Anti-Israeli Propaganda Campaign

### The Palestinian Campaign to Expel Israel from FIFA

- On May 20, 2015, **Joseph "Sepp" Blatter**, the chairman of the International Football Association (FIFA) paid a one-day visit to the PA. He came because of the demand made by **Jibril Rajoub**, president of the Palestinian Football Association, to suspend Israel from FIFA. On the eve of his visit dozens of Palestinians rallied in front of the Olympic Committee in the center of Ramallah in favor of suspending Israel.

- In an attempt to resolve the issue, Joseph Blatter met with **Mahmoud Abbas**, **Rami Hamdallah**, prime minister of the Palestinian national consensus government, and **Jibril Rajoub**, president of the Palestinian Football Association. Mahmoud Abbas claimed that Palestinian sports were being abused by the Israelis and their attempts to limit its development. Blatter held a press conference in Ramallah where he said that on May 19, 2015, he had met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who had expressed willingness to resolve the problem and to make it easier for Palestinian athletes to move between locations in Judea and Samaria. Netanyahu said the request of the Palestinian soccer association to suspend Israel from FIFA was a dangerous precedent (Alaraby.co.uk, May 20, 2015).



Rami Hamdallah, Palestinian prime minister (second from left) meets in Ramallah with FIFA chairman Joseph Blatter (second from right) (Wafa.ps, May 20, 2015)

## The Swedish Flotilla to the Gaza Strip

- On May 25, 2015, it was reported that the *Marianne of Gothenburg* had set sail from Sweden and was en route to the Mediterranean, where it would be joined by other ships. The ship, which set sail from a port in Germany, was expected to anchor in Brest, France, where a reception would be held for it and its passengers. The ship is supposed to stop at other European ports to enlist public opinion and funds (Shiptogaza.se, May 25, 2015).