



# News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

(June 17-23, 2015)



Two stabbing shooting attacks were carried out this past week. Left: The scene of the stabbing attack near the Nablus Gate in east Jerusalem (Tazpit News Agency, June 21, 2015). Right: The scene of the shooting attack near the village of Dolev east of Modi'in (Photo by Matanya Aharonowitz for Tazpit News Agency, June 19, 2015).

## Overview

- This past week terrorist events focused on two terrorist attacks, one a **shooting attack** near the village of Dolev east of Modi'in and the other a **stabbing attack** near the Nablus Gate in Jerusalem. Both were apparently carried out by lone wolf terrorist operatives. An Israeli civilian was killed in the shooting attack and a Border Police soldier was critically wounded in the stabbing attack.
- Hamas praised both attacks. Its military-terrorist wing claimed responsibility for the shooting attack, although reliability of the claim is doubtful. The Palestinian Authority (PA) did not condemn the attacks. Following the attacks the Israeli prime minister and defense minister cancelled some of the measures Israel declared for Ramadan to ease restrictions on the Palestinians in Judea and Samaria.
- The "Freedom Flotilla 3," which has at least three ships, has completed its preparations to sail to the Gaza Strip. According to one of the flotilla's coordinators, the ships are expected to set sail for the Gaza Strip on June 25, 2015. In the Gaza Strip, preparations are being made to use the flotilla to make anti-Israeli propaganda capital.

## Terrorist Attacks in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem

- At 1600 hours on Friday, June 19, 2015, a shooting attack was carried out near a spring located between the village of Dolev (east of Modi'in and the Palestinian village of Deir Ebzea', which lies to the south. Two young Israeli civilians returning from a visit to a local spring were driving on a dirt road towards the main road and stopped for a young Palestinian man (who seemed to be asking for their assistance). When the car stopped the Palestinian took out a gun, shot them and fled. The driver, Danny Gonen, 25, from Lod, was mortally wounded and died. The passenger suffered minor wounds.
- The Israeli security forces initiated a search for the shooter; so far he has not been found. An examination of the victims' vehicle indicated the shooter fired at least ten bullets at point-blank range. Four of them hit the car.



**The scene of the shooting attack**  
(Photo by Matanya Aharonowitz for Tazpit News Agency, June 19, 2015).

- The Marwan al-Qawasmeh and Omar Abu Ayisha<sup>1</sup> group of **Hamas' military-terrorist wing** claimed responsibility for the attack. An announcement was issued claiming that in preparation for the attack surveillance was frequently carried out of Israelis who came to visit the area. The announcement also claimed the operatives had returned safely. The objective of the murder, according to the announcement, was to send the message that the "resistance" [i.e., violence and terrorist attacks] was continuing and that it could strike when and where it pleased (PALDF forum, June 20, 2015). The reliability of the claim is doubtful.

<sup>1</sup> Two Hamas terrorist operatives who abducted and murdered three Israeli youths in June 2014.

■ **Hamas spokesman Husam Badran** used his Facebook page to praise the attack. He wrote, "All sons of the Palestinian people raise their eyes with respect to honor the pure hands that cling to the resistance and aim their weapons at the occupation." He also warned Israel not to continue its attacks on Al-Aqsa mosque and to stop oppressing the prisoners (Facebook page of Husam Badran, June 19, 2015). Interviewed by Al-Aqsa TV, he said **Hamis supported those who carried out attacks regardless of their political opinions, and praised every "resistance action" in the West Bank**. He appealed to all Palestinians to "resist the occupation" during Ramadan (Al-Aqsa TV, June 19, 2015).



Left: A notice linking the shooting attack to Operation Protective Edge. At the upper left is an illustration of Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operatives shooting IDF soldiers at point-blank range in a pillbox near the village of Nahal Oz during Operation Protective Edge. Below it is a picture of the car attacked near Dolev. The Arabic reads, "From Gaza to the [West] Bank, at point-blank range" (Facebook page of PALDF, June 19, 2015). Right: Husam Badran's Facebook page, June 19, 2015.

■ **The Jerusalem Brigades**, the military-terrorist wing of the **Palestinian Islamic Jihad** (PIJ) also praised the attack, claiming the "resistance actions" would continue as long as the [Israeli] "occupation" continued (Jerusalem Brigades website, June 19, 2015). **The Popular and Democratic Fronts for the Liberation of Palestine** praised the attack and called for more attacks against Israel (Popular and Democratic Fronts' websites, June 19, 2015).

## Stabbing Attack near the Nablus Gate

■ On June 21, 2015, a stabbing attack was carried out near the Nablus Gate in east Jerusalem. A Border Police soldier was stabbed in the neck and critically wounded by an 18 year-old Palestinian from a village near Hebron. The soldier managed to shoot

and seriously wound his attacker. During the evening riots broke out at the site of the attack, and several dozen Palestinians threw stones at Israeli security forces.



The site of the stabbing attack in Jerusalem (Tazpit News Agency, June 21, 2015).

■ The Palestinian terrorist who carried out the attack was **Yasser Yassin Tarawa**, 18, from the village of Sa'ir in the northern part of the Hebron district (Facebook page of PALDF, June 21, 2015). He was a student at the Palestine Polytechnic University in Hebron and an activist in Hamas' Islamic bloc at the university (Facebook page of QudsN, June 21, 2015).



Left: The knife used in the stabbing attack (Facebook page of PALDF, June 21, 2015). Right: Terrorist operative Yasser Yassin Tarawa (Facebook page of QudsN, June 21, 2015).

■ The Palestinian News Agency, which is directly subordinate to the office of **Mahmoud Abbas**, issued a report headed "Young man wounded by occupation force



gunfire in Jerusalem." It claimed that Yasser Yassin Tarawa was shot and critically wounded by a Border Police soldier in Jerusalem. It quoted "eye witnesses" who claimed that the "occupation police" attacked young Tarawa after "shooting him seven times." According to the report, Israeli sources claimed that the young man had carried out a stabbing attack, during which he wounded two Border Policemen, one of them seriously (Wafa News Agency, June 21, 2015).

■ **Hamas praised the attack.** On June 21, 2015, the Facebook page of the Islamic bloc at the Palestine Polytechnic University in Hebron posted messages of support and encouragement for the terrorist. Hamas spokesman Husam Badran praised the stabbing attack, boasting it was "the second attack in 48 hours," and claiming it was an important event which reflected the courage and heroism of the attacker (Facebook page of Husam Badran, June 21, 2015). Senior Hamas figure **Ismail al-Shaqar** claimed the attacks were the result of Israel's increased crimes against the Palestinian people. He said the expansion of the settlements, the roadblocks in the West Bank cities and the siege of the Gaza Strip encouraged the Palestinians to carry out attacks in revenge (Dunia al-Watan, June 21, 2015).



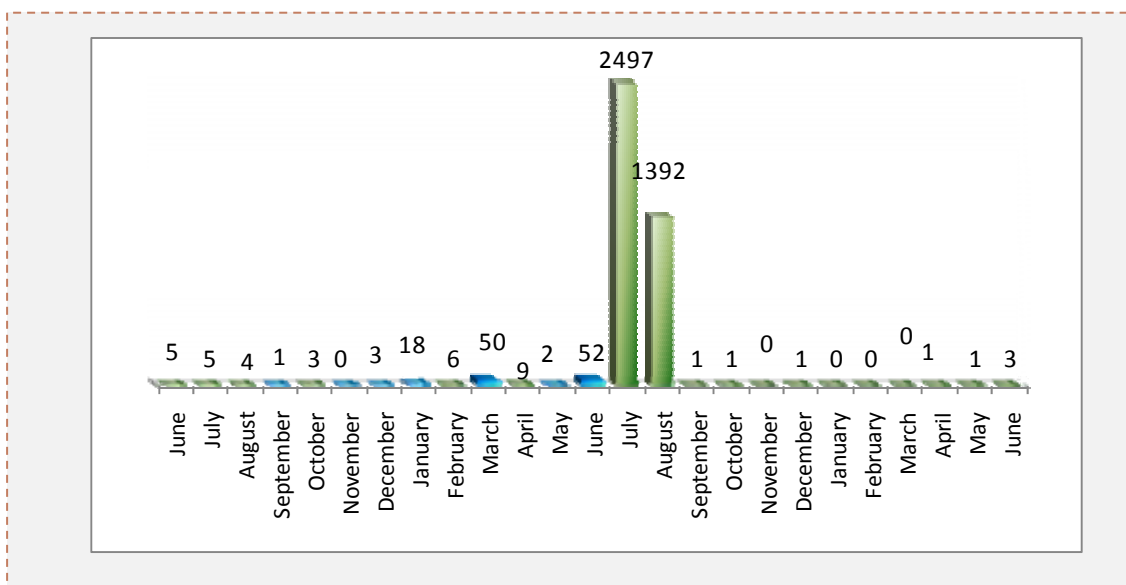
Notices of support and encouragement for the terrorist operative who carried out the stabbing attack, issued by the Islamic bloc at the Palestine Polytechnic University in Hebron. Left: "Ramadan...the month of jihad and the mujahedeen [jihad fighters]. The Islamic bloc of the Polytechnic University in Hebron praises the heroic attack in Jerusalem carried out by 'the lion of the Islamic bloc, Yasser Yassin Tarawa from the town of Sa'ir north of Hebron.'" Right: The Arabic reads, "Stab [him/them], oh lion of Hebron. The man who carried out the attack in Jerusalem (Facebook page of the Islamic bloc of the Palestine Polytechnic University in Hebron, June 21, 2015).

## Israel's South

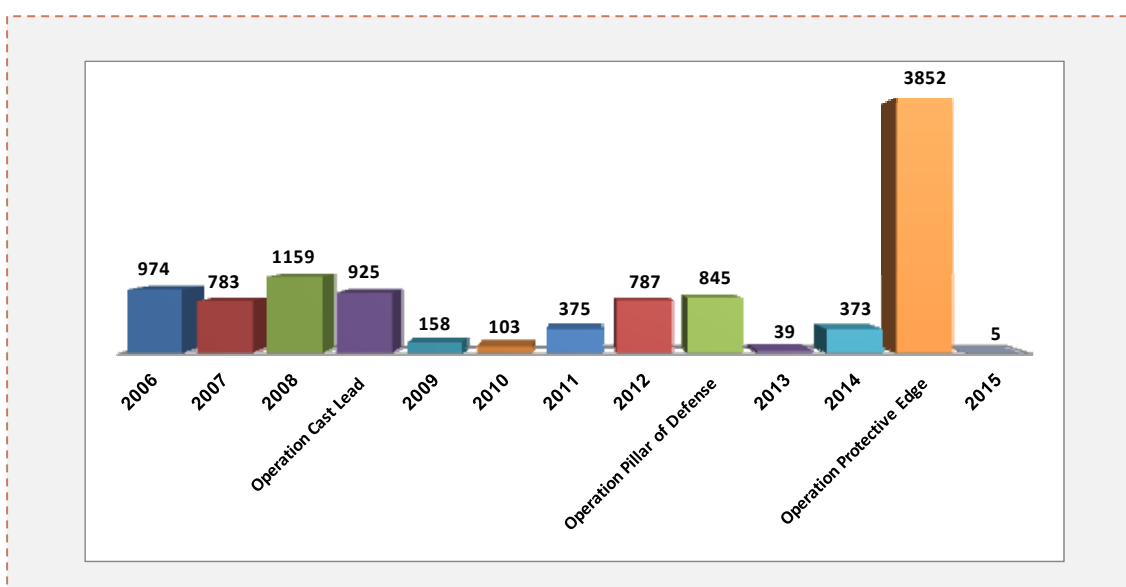
### Rocket Fire Attacking Israel

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

### Monthly Distribution of Rocket Fire (2013 – 2015)<sup>2</sup>



### Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire in Israel's South<sup>3</sup>



<sup>2</sup> As of June 23, 2015. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire or rockets which misfired and fell inside the Gaza Strip.

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## Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem

### "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 Israeli security forces and civilians. Exceptional incidents occurred in the region of the Nablus Gate in east Jerusalem, before and after the stabbing attack.



Left: An Israeli vehicle stoned by Palestinians near the Nablus Gate in Jerusalem (Facebook page of PALDF, June 20, 2015). Right: Palestinians burn an Israeli flag during the weekly riot in the Kafr Qaddum (Wafa News Agency, June 19, 2015).

- Some of the prominent attacks were the following:
  - On the evening of **June 21, 2015**, Molotov cocktails and stones were thrown at an Israeli bus on the Hizma road (north of Jerusalem). The bus driver was wounded and evacuated to a hospital. Two passengers went into shock. Police searches to locate the perpetrators found a Molotov cocktail which had been thrown but did not damage the bus and another Molotov cocktail ready for throwing.



The bus attacked on the Hizma road (Photo by Hillel Meir for Tazpit News Agency, June 21, 2015)

- On **June 21, 2015**, in the Ma'aleh Zeitim neighborhood of east Jerusalem, Palestinians threw a Molotov cocktail at an Israeli police patrol car. The car was damaged and the police began a search for the Palestinian who had thrown the Molotov cocktail (Tazpit News Agency, June 22, 2015).

## Restrictions Eased for Palestinians in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip for Ramadan

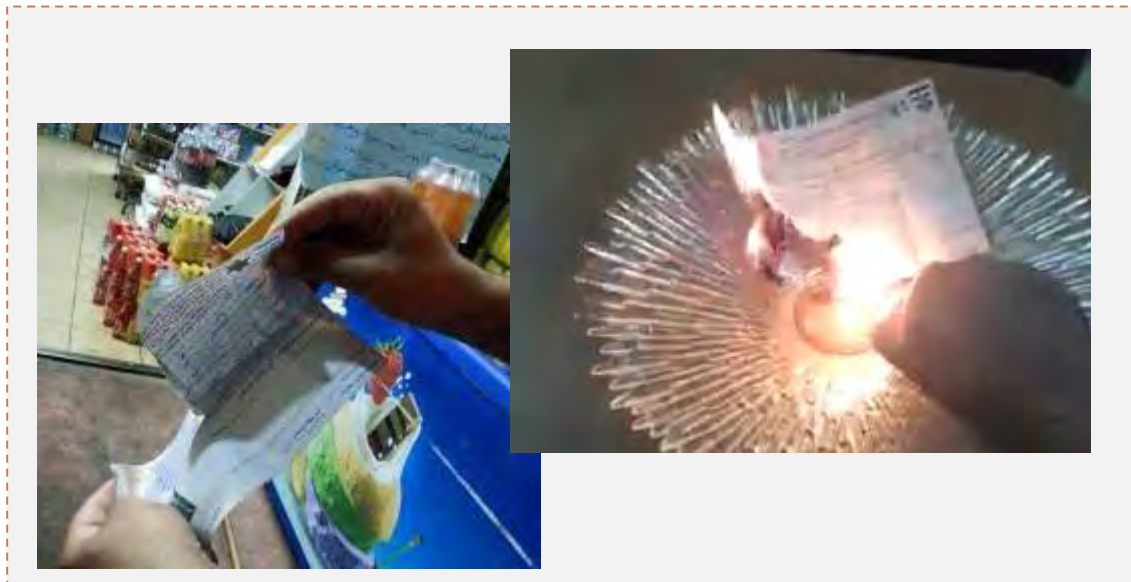
■ For the Muslim religious month of Ramadan, Israel, in coordination with the Palestinian security forces, authorized the issue of various permits and eased restrictions for the residents of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip. They included authorization for Palestinians to be brought to Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem non-stop by bus from Ramallah and Bethlehem, and allowing them to pass through the roadblocks with a rapid inspection. Palestinians living abroad will be able to enter Israel to visit relatives in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip. Palestinians will be able to enter Israel to visit first-degree relatives. In addition, 500 Palestinians have been permitted to fly out of Israel's Ben Gurion Airport. However, it was made absolutely clear to the Palestinians that any deterioration in the security situation or any attempt to exploit the easing of restrictions in order to carry out terrorist attacks would result in a strong response, including a revoking of some of the measures instituted (Israeli HaYom, June 16, 2015).

■ A meeting was held of **Fatah's Revolutionary Council**, headed by **Mahmoud Abbas**, after which a presidential edict was issued forbidding residents of Judea and Samaria to use the Israeli permits. **Adnan al-Husseini**, the governor of the Jerusalem district and minister for Jerusalem affairs, said the edict came as a



response to Israel's attempt to dictate conditions to the Palestinians arriving in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem, and that restrictions should be eased to enable Palestinians to fulfill their religious duties on a permanent basis, not only during Ramadan (Al-Quds, June 21, 2015).

■ **In the wake of the terrorist attacks this past week Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Moshe Yaalon decided to revoke some of the measures.** That included revoking permits for residents of the village of Sa'ir in the Hebron district and revoking the 500 permits given to Palestinians to leave the country (Walla News, June 22, 2015). In response the Palestinian social networks launched a protest campaign with the slogan "Tear up the permit," in which Palestinians tear them up and post their pictures on the campaign's Facebook page.



The "Tear up the permit" protest campaign, featuring pictures of torn and burned permits (Facebook pages of PALDF and PALINFO, June 21-22, 2015)

## Detention of Palestinian Who Carried Out a Vehicular Attack in May 2015

■ ]The Israeli security forces detained **Muhammad Yusuf Irfa'iya**, 22, from Hebron, who carried out a vehicular attack at the Alon Shvut junction (south of Jerusalem) on May 14, 2015.<sup>4</sup> During interrogation he admitted to being a PIJ operative but claimed he had carried out the attack alone. He claimed he had left the house with a knife on

<sup>4</sup> On May 14, 2015, a vehicular attack was carried out at the entrance to the village of Alon Shvut in Gush Etzion. Four youngsters standing at a bus stop were injured. Three sustained minor injuries and one was seriously injured.

several occasions in the past, planning to stab settlers, but the circumstances were not right (Israel Security Agency, June 18, 2015).

## Developments in the Gaza Strip

### The Crossings – Recent Developments

#### The Rafah Crossing

■ **The Egyptian authorities** kept the Rafah crossing open on June 18 and 19, 2015, and will open it again between June 23 and 25 for Ramadan (Al-Shorouk, June 21, 2015). **Maher Abu Subha**, Hamas head of the crossings authority, claimed the Egyptians had promised to keep the crossing open in the coming days. The [Gazan] ministry of the interior issued a notice commending the Egyptians for their decision, and said it hoped for a change in Egypt's approach to the Gaza Strip (Filastin al-'Aan, June 16, 2015).

#### Initial Responses to the UN Report on Operation Protective Edge

■ On June 22, 2015, the UN published the findings of the international commission that investigated the events of Operation Protective Edge. In response Hamas issued a formal announcement praising the UN decision to condemn Israel for carrying out "war crimes" during Operation Protective Edge. According to the announcement, what is now necessary is to try senior Israeli figures in the International Criminal Court (ICC) and other international courts (Hamas website, June 22, 2015).

■ Hamas called for an end to the [Israeli] "occupation" and to lift the Israeli siege of the Gaza Strip. The announcement did not mention the UN report's accusations that Palestinian "armed groups" were also accused of war crimes for having fired rockets into Israel and for executing their opponents in the Gaza Strip during Operation Protective Edge (Hamas, responsible for the war crimes, was not specifically mentioned by name in the UN report).



**Hamas' formal announcement praising the decision of the UN investigatory commission condemning Israel for carrying out "war crimes" in the Gaza Strip during Operation Protective Edge (Hamas website, June 22, 2015).**

- The **PA** also praised the findings. According to **Ibrahim Kharisha**, PA representative in the UN's Human Rights Council (HRC), **the Palestinians now intend to formulate a resolution for the HRC in Geneva to confirm the report.** The proposal will be lodged on June 29, 2015, during an open session of all HRC members. The Palestinians' objective is to give the report **official standing** which will support the Palestinian move in the ICC in The Hague (Al-Saha, June 22, 2015).

## Promoting a Long-Term Lull Agreement with Israel

- The Palestinian and Arab media continue to report on efforts to promote a long-term lull agreement between Israel and Hamas. Senior Hamas figures in the Gaza Strip reported that suggestions and ideas for a lull between Israel and Hamas had been transmitted indirectly, but stressed that it was not an official initiative. According to the sources, Hamas is interested in a lull so that it can resolve internal Gazan problems (Agence France-Presse, June 16, 2015).

- **Ibrahim Hamdan**, in charge of Hamas' international relations, confirmed that Hamas had in fact received written suggestions regarding an agreement. He claimed Hamas would examine them and respond at a later date (Filastin al-'Aan, June 16, 2015).

- **Musa Abu Marzouq**, a member of Hamas' political bureau, claimed the suggestions had not been proposed in their final form. He claimed Hamas had not received written ideas for such an agreement. In any event, Hamas would

agree only after having received a national Palestinian consensus (Sama, June 16, 2015).

- **Senior Hamas figure Khalil al-Haya** claimed the publicity surrounding the lull agreement was meant to bring it to public attention and to create the illusion that the problems of the Gaza Strip would be resolved with a lull (Twitter account of Khalil al-Haya, June 17, 2015).

## Constructing the Road along the Israeli-Gazan Border

■ Sources within Hamas continue dealing with the road being constructed along the Israeli-Gazan border. A senior source in Hamas' military-terrorist wing claimed it was being built for the Gaza Strip's internal security needs. He claimed that recently many Palestinians had been caught trying to cross the border, and it had become clear they had ties to Israel. He also claimed the road was meant to protect the "tunnels of the resistance" from Israel and collaborators who report to Israel about the tunnel locations (Quds.net, June 19, 2015)

## The Palestinian Authority

### Mahmoud Abbas Interviewed by the Egyptian Media

■ Interviewed by the Egyptian newspaper Ruz al-Yusuf, PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas strongly criticized both Israel and Hamas. He accused Israel of violating its commitments to the PA, and **claimed the PA was promoting a plea to the ICC and weighing the possibility of reexamining the agreements signed with Israel. He also called on the international community to boycott products manufactured over in the settlements.** He also claimed the Palestinian wanted to renew the negotiations and were interested in the two-state option.

■ Mahmoud Abbas accused Hamas of responsibility for prolonging Operation Protective Edge and for the lack of progress in the internal Palestinian reconciliation. He also accused Hamas of holding direct negotiations with Israel for the establishment of a "state of Gaza" (Ruz al-Yusuf, June 17, 2015).

### Document Issued by Saeb Erekat Supports Negotiations

■ **Saeb Erekat**, a member of the PLO's Executive Committee and chief of the Palestinian negotiating team, issued a document describing the Palestinians' strategy. Entitled "**Determining Palestinian-Israeli Relations: Changing, Not Merely Improving, the Situation**," it deals with his evaluation of the Arab, Israeli and



international steps taken before and after the formation of the new Israeli government headed by Benjamin Netanyahu. The document presents a series of recommendations regarding relations with Israel, which are directed at the Palestinian leadership, the Fatah movement and the various organizations. The document was presented to Fatah's Revolutionary Council and was broadly supported.

■ The topics referred to were the following:

- **Israeli-PA linkage** – The Israeli-PA linkage should be examined. **The situation should be changed, not improved.** The change will be made by **limiting the ties with Israel in every sphere, include security coordination**, according to the decisions made by Fatah's Central Council in March 2015. Israel should be made fully responsible for the West Bank.
- **Recognition of Israel** – The PLO's recognition of Israel, with relation to the Oslo Accords, should be reexamined. It should be conditioned on the existence of two states, Israel and Palestine, with the 1967 borders. Every international request based on the recognition of Israel as a Jewish state should be refused, as well as requests to have Israeli forces remain in the Jordan Valley or any request that reduces Palestinian sovereignty over east Jerusalem.
- **Activity in the international arena** – There is a need to deepen the [diplomatic] involvement, with the EU as the preferred force in the international arena. Efforts should be focused on widening recognition of the Palestinian state and advancing actions in the ICC.
- **The issue of the "resistance"** – Direct support must be given to the "popular resistance" and to boycotting the settlements [i.e., military attacks are not mentioned and by implication should not be taken].

## **Palestinian Terrorist in Administrative Detention on a Hunger Strike**

■ The Palestinian media reported the deterioration in the health of **Khader Adnan**, a PIJ terrorist operative in administrative detention in an Israeli jail, who has been on a hunger strike for fifty days. Solidarity rallies and demonstrations were held in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip (Wafa News Agency and Paltoday, June 22, 2015).

■ Following reports of the prisoner's failing health, the **PIJ issued an announcement claiming Israel was fully responsible for the life of Adnan and calling for the intervention of the relevant agencies** (Filastin al-Yawm, June 19, 2015). At a press conference in Ramallah, Ahmed al-Auri, PIJ spokesman in Judea

and Samaria, **claimed that if Khader Adnan died the lull in the Gaza Strip would be cancelled. He claimed the death of Adnan was a "red line" that could not be crossed in silence** (Ma'an News Agency, June 22, 2015).



Press conference held in Ramallah in support of Khader Adnan, with the participation of (left to right) Qadoura Fares, chairman of the Palestinian prisoner's club; Ahmed al-Auri, PIJ spokesman in Judea and Samaria; Khader Adnan's father; and Issa Qaraqa, head of prisoners' and released prisoners' affairs in the PA (Wafa News Agency, June 22, 2015).

## The Battle for Hearts and Minds

### "Freedom Flotilla" 3 to the Gaza Strip

- Preparations have been completed for "Freedom Flotilla 3" to set sail for the Gaza Strip. The International Committee for Breaking the Siege of Gaza said in an announcement that the countdown had begun for the voyage to the Gaza Strip. **Zaher al-Birawi**, Committee coordinator in the Gaza Strip, claimed that **"Freedom Flotilla 3" had at least three ships. It would set sail for the Gaza Strip, he said, on June 25, 2015, and was expected to reach it three days later.**
- He claimed about one hundred activists from twenty countries, including members of various parliaments, would participate in the flotilla (Alresala.net, June 18, 2015). On another occasion al-Birawi claimed it was a "flotilla of peace" and that those participating did not intend to act violently (Alresala.net, June 22, 2015).
- **Preparations are being made in the Gaza Strip to receive the flotilla.** Palestinian boats will await it, including boats for correspondents and other media personnel (Safa, June 17, 2015). There will also be an operations room and an information center to support the flotilla (Sawa, June 16, 2015). **Ismail Haniya,**

deputy head of Hamas' political bureau, praised those participating in the flotilla and their efforts to lift the siege of the Gaza Strip (Al-Ra'i, June 21, 2015).



The Swedish ship Marianne and its passengers leave the port of Messina in Italy on June 20, 2015, en route to the Mediterranean Sea (Shiptogaza website, June 20 2015).

■ **Mehmet Kaya**, Gaza Strip representative of the Turkish Islamist organization IHH, claimed that during the past few years the IHH had worked to dispatch flotillas and organized support conferences in Istanbul every year. He claimed IHH had been a full partner in the "Freedom Flotilla" project since its inception, but that **this year the organization had decided to leave responsibility in the hands of the Europeans** in light of the fact that Israel claimed the IHH was a terrorist organization (Al-Aqsa TV, June 22, 2015).