



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

(June 24-30, 2015)



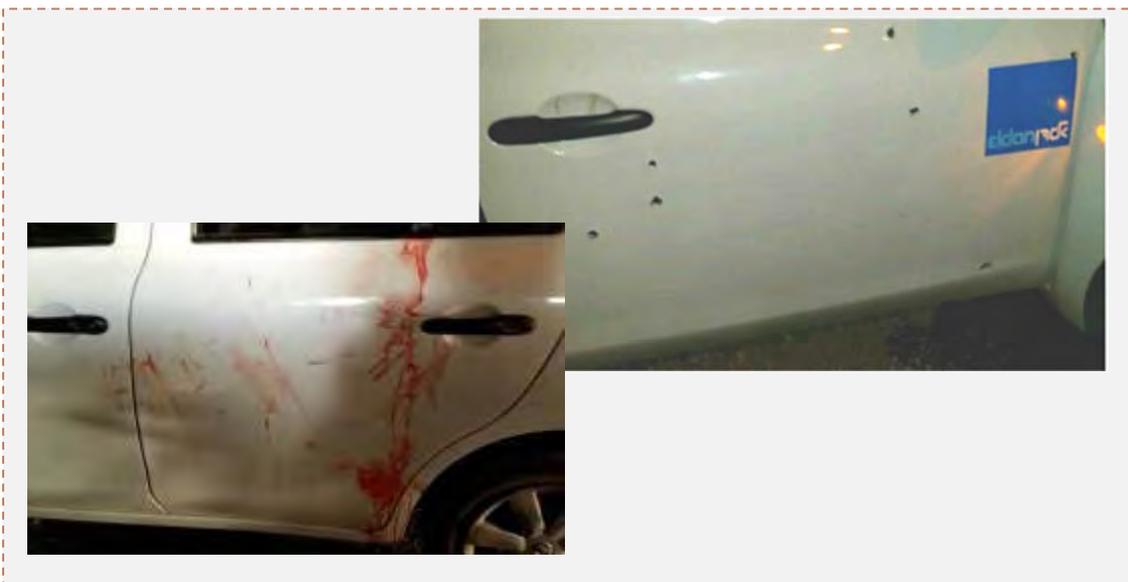
Israeli ambulance shot at in an attack on the road to Beit El (north of Ramallah). There were no casualties (Photo by Hillel Meir for Tazpit News Agency, June 27, 2015).

Overview

- This past week there was a wave of terrorist attacks in Judea and Samaria. There were **three shooting attacks**: one targeting an Israeli vehicle near the village of Shilo (north of Ramallah); another targeting an ambulance en route to the village of Beit El (north of Ramallah); and a third targeting an IDF force at the Beqat roadblock (in the northern Jordan Valley). In the attack near Shilo an Israeli civilian was killed and three were wounded. In addition, there was a stabbing attack near the tomb of Rachel in which a female IDF soldier was seriously injured. Hamas and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) praised for the attacks. The Palestinian Authority (PA) did not condemn them.
- A rocket fired from the Gaza Strip landed in the western Negev near the southern Israeli coastal city of Ashqelon. It was the fourth rocket hit identified in Israeli territory since the beginning of June 2015 (the highest number of monthly rocket hits identified since Operation Protective Edge) and the sixth since the beginning of 2015. Responsibility for the rocket attack was claimed by the same ISIS-affiliated jihadi network that claimed responsibility for the previous attacks. The rockets were apparently fired to coerce Hamas into relieving the pressure it is exerting on the Salafist-jihadi networks in the Gaza Strip.

Terrorist Attacks in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem

■ **On June 29, 2015, four Israelis were wounded by gunfire when their vehicle was attacked at the Shvut Rachel junction, near the village Shilo** (north of Ramallah). The four young men, all from the village of Kochav HaShahar (southeast of Shilo), **were shot at by Palestinians in a car coming from the opposite direction**. One passenger was killed and three were wounded. The attackers drove off. Israeli security forces initiated a search of the area. According to a security source, the terrorists had apparently parked on the side of the road and waited to carry out an attack (Tazpit News Agency, June 30, 2015).



The Israeli car attacked by Palestinian terrorists at the Shvut Rachel junction (Tazpit News Agency, June 19, 2015).

■ **The military wing of the PFLP** issued a statement praising the attack, saying that "the hands of our people's heroes are to be blessed" (PFLP website, June 30, 2015). Hamas spokesman **Husam Badran** praised all the recent attacks and called for more to be carried out (Hamas website, June 30, 2015). The announcements are not proof that either organization is responsible for the shooting attacks.

Stabbing Attack near Bethlehem

■ **On June 29, 2015, a female IDF soldier was the victim of a stabbing attack**. The attack took place at the Rachel roadblock, near the Tomb of Rachel in Bethlehem. A 19 year-old Palestinian woman approached the soldier, took out a knife and stabbed her in the neck. The soldier was seriously wounded.

■ Israeli security forces at the roadblock subdued and detained the attacker. **A search of her person revealed two more knives** (Tazpit News Agency, June 29,

2015). The terrorist was **Maysoon Musa**, from Bethlehem. During interrogation she admitted she had planned to kill an IDF soldier and **tried to carry out her plan as soon as an opportunity presented itself at the Rachel roadblock** (Haaretz, June 29, 2015).



The knife used by terrorist **Maysoon Musa** near the tomb of Rachel (Israel Police Force spokesman, June 29, 2015)

Shooting Attack in Beit El

■ On June 27, 2015, shots were fired at a Magen David Adom ambulance going around a curve on the road between the Givat Asaf junction and the village of Beit El (north of Ramallah). There were no casualties. **Investigation showed that between 15 and 19 shots had been fired at the ambulance**, at least four of which hit it. IDF forces searched the region (south of Beit El) (Ynet, June 27, 2015).

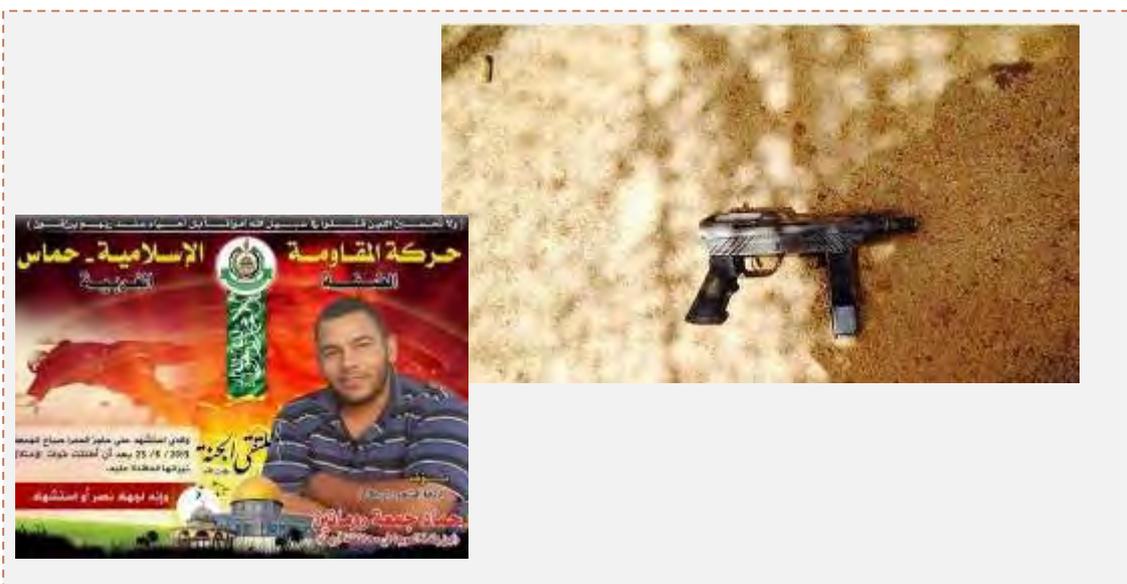
Shooting Attack in the Northern Jordan Valley

■ **On June 26, 2015, a Palestinian opened fire at an IDF force at the Beqaot roadblock** (in the northern Jordan Valley). The Palestinian drove to the roadblock, took out an improvised gun and shot at the Israeli soldiers. The soldiers returned fire, shooting and killing the terrorist. The Palestinian media reported the death of **Hamad Jumaa' 'Ata Rumanin**, 24, from the village of Uja (near Jericho). Following the incident there were confrontations between the residents of Uja and IDF forces who entered the village to search the terrorist's house (Paltoday, June 26, 2015).

■ **Saeb Erekat, a member of the PLO's Executive Committee**, denied that Hamad Rumanin had shot at the IDF forces at the roadblock. A **Hamas spokesman** expressed regret at the death of the young man and condemned Israel's "crimes,"

which, he said, necessitated a strong response from the Palestinian people and the "resistance" [i.e., the terrorist organizations] (Paltoday, June 26, 2015).

■ On June 27, 2015, Hamas issued a notice mourning its "heroic son," the shaheed Hamad Rumanin, who, according to the notice, was "one of the [Hamas] movement's loyal youths and [from] a family known for its religious and national devotion." Hamas also threatened to avenge his killing, "sooner or later" (Facebook page of PALINFO, PALINFO, Filastin al-'Aan, Hamas website, June 26-27, 2015). However, at the funeral held for Rumanin there were no Hamas symbols and his body was draped in the Palestinian flag.



Left: Hamas' death notice for Hamad Rumanin (PALDF, June 26, 2015). Right: The gun used by Hamad Rumanin (IDF Spokesman, June 27, 2015).

Israel's South

Rocket Fire Attacking Israel

■ On June 24, 2015, a rocket hit was identified in Israeli territory. The rocket was fired from the Gaza Strip and landed in an open area in the western Negev. There were no casualties and no damage was reported. It was the fourth rocket hit identified in Israeli territory in June 2015 and the sixth since the beginning of the year.

■ An ISIS-affiliated Salafist-jihadi organization calling itself the Sheikh Omar Hadid Company claimed responsibility for the rocket fire, the response, according to the claim, to "the crimes of the Jews in Jerusalem" (Twitter account of the organization, June 24, 2015). It was the same organization that claimed responsibility

for recent rocket attacks resulting from the conflict between Hamas and the Salafist-jihadi organizations.

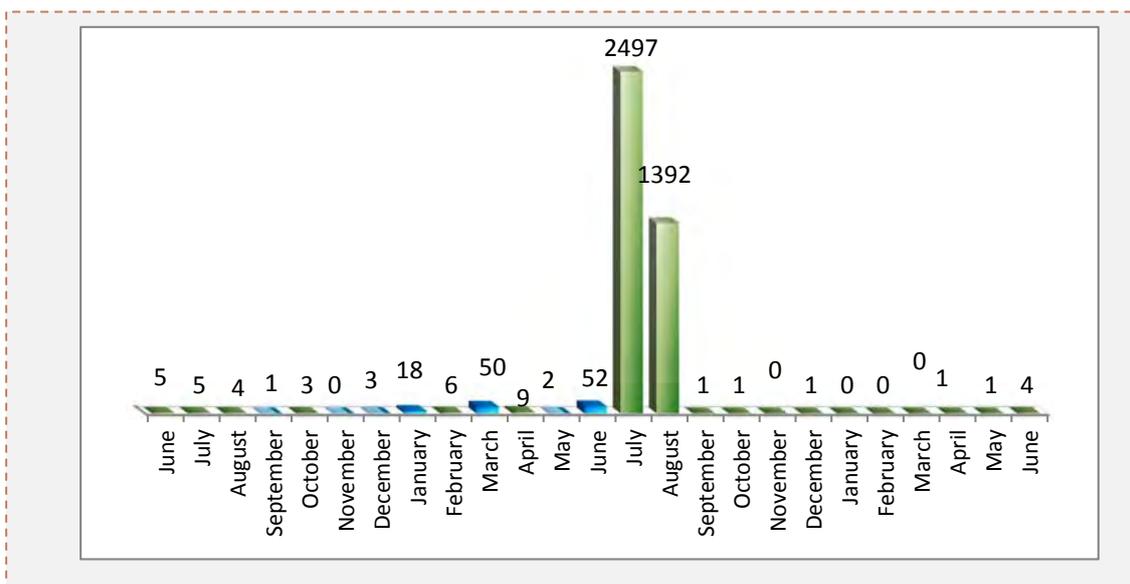
- On the morning of June 28, 2015, another rocket was fired at Israel, falling inside the Gaza Strip.



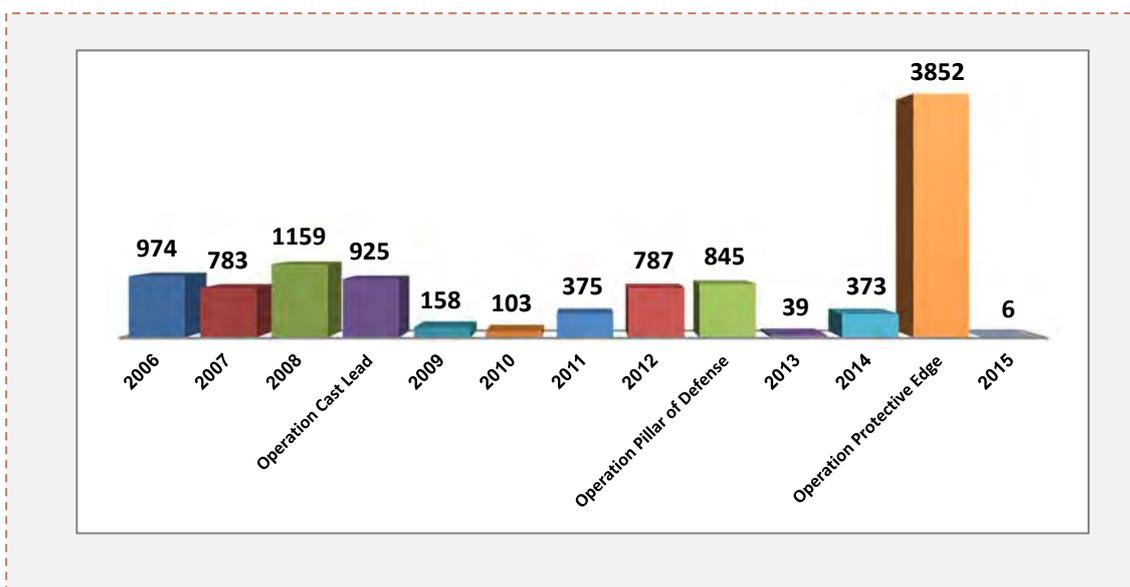
The notice issued by the Sheikh Omar Hadid Company claiming responsibility for the rocket fire attacking Israel (Twitter account of the organization, June 23, 2015).

During the month of June 2015 four rocket hits were identified in Israeli territory. It was the largest monthly number of rocket hits since Operation Protective Edge. The rockets were probably fired by an ISIS-affiliated network to coerce Hamas to relieve the pressure it exerted on the Salafist-jihadi networks in the Gaza Strip and release their operatives.

Monthly Distribution of Rocket Fire (2013 – 2015)¹



Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire in Israel's South²



Israeli Response to the Rocket Fire

- In response to the rocket fire Israel Air Force aircraft attacked the rocket launcher from which the rockets had been fired, in Beit Hanoun (northern Gaza Strip).

UAV from the Gaza Strip Enters Israeli Airspace

¹As of June 23, 2015. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire or rockets which misfired and fell inside the Gaza Strip.

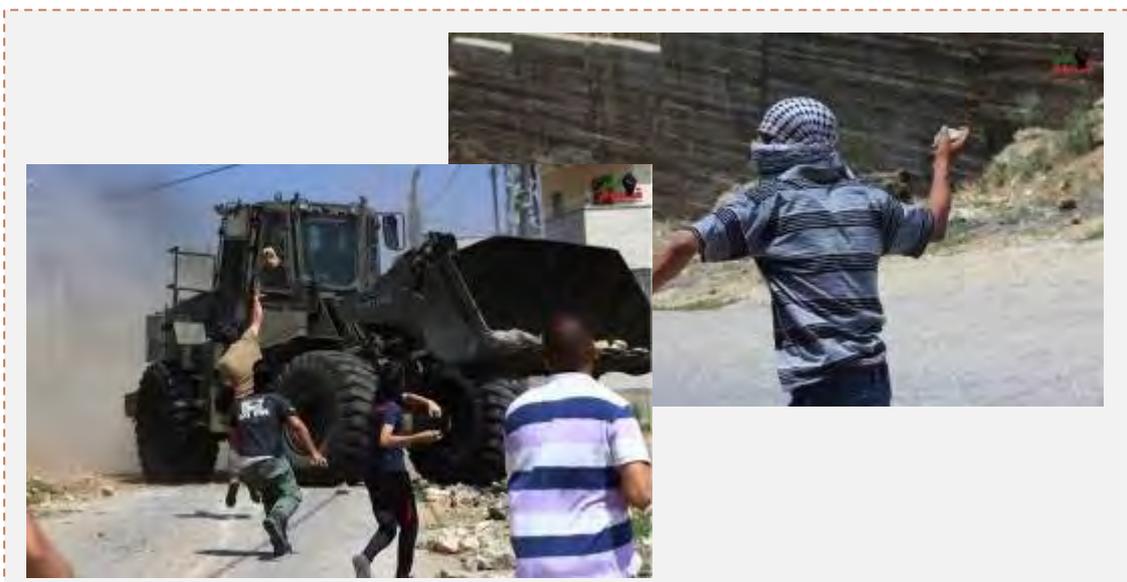
² The statistics do not include mortar shell fire or rockets which misfired and fell inside the Gaza Strip.

■ On the afternoon of June 25, 2015 **an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) entered Israeli airspace from the Gaza Strip**. It crashed in an open area on the Israeli side of the border security fence. It was apparently a UAV about the size of a flying model aircraft, and was launched from inside the Gaza Strip. It circled the sky above the region, and crashed after a flight of about forty minutes.

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.



Palestinians throw stones at the Israeli security forces during the weekly riot in Kafr Qaddum (Facebook page of Kafr Qaddum, June 26, 2015)

■ **On June 28, 2015**, a Palestinian woman was apprehended while trying to cross the security fence into Israeli territory from Qalqiliya. She had a rifle in her possession. During interrogation she admitted that she had been sent by Hamas to carry out a terrorist attack (Red Alert, June 28, 2015).



The rifle found in the possession of the Palestinian woman (IDF Spokesman, June 28, 2015).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

The Crossings – Recent Developments

The Rafah Crossing

- Between June 23 and 25, 2015 the Rafah crossing was open, closing on June 26, 2015 until further notice. **Maher Abu Subha**, Hamas director of the crossings authority in the Gaza Strip, claimed there was a good chance it would be open three days a week for the coming five weeks (Dunia al-Watan, June 23, 2015). During the three days the crossing was open more than 11,000 tons of cement, 2,500 tons of pitch and 2,250 tons of gravel entered the Gaza Strip (PALDF, June 24, 2015).

Hamas Responses to the UN Investigatory Commission Report (Continued)

- Regarding the UN investigatory commission report, **Ismail Haniya**, deputy head of Hamas' political bureau, claimed it was more important than the Goldstone Report. That was because it called the activity of the "resistance" [i.e., the terrorist organizations] and its weapons **legitimate**. He claimed the results of the war [i.e., Operation Protective Edge] still pursued the leaders and citizens of Israel (Dunia al-Watan, June 26, 2015).

Hamas Detains Salafi-Jihadists

- Sources close to the Salafi-jihadists in the Gaza Strip reported that during the past few days **Hamas' security forces continued their wave of detentions of Salafi-**

jihadists. Among those detained were operatives suspected of recently firing rockets into Israel; they will reportedly be tried (Al-Ayyam, June 26, 2015). That might also be a reason for the Salafi-jihadists' firing rockets into Israeli territory.

The Palestinian Authority

The PA Files Submissions to the ICC

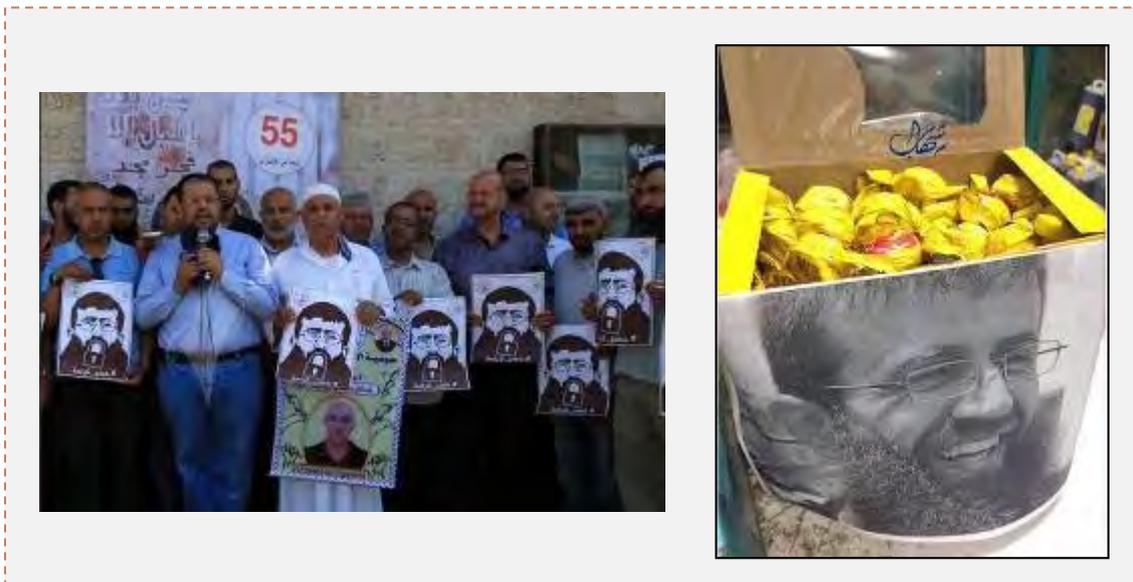
- On June 25, 2015, a Palestinian delegation headed by **Riyadh al-Maliki**, the Palestinian foreign minister, and **Nabil Abu Zneid**, the PA representative in Holland, **filed submissions to the ICC in The Hague**. The submissions ("files," according to the PA) dealt with **the settlements, the IDF operations – especially Operation Protective Edge – and the Palestinians imprisoned in Israel** (Wafa News Agency, June 26, 2015).

- **Riyadh al-Maliki** claimed submitting the "files" would ensure that the "crimes of Israel" would not be repeated. He claimed a new era had begun in which the Palestinians were documenting and recording the "crimes" Israel committed and therefore Israel had to be careful of every step it took against the Palestinians. **He claimed the Palestinians wanted to bring the subject [of Israel's "crimes"] before the ICC but that at first they would focus on certain specific issues**. He also claimed that they had reached an agreement with the court prosecutor that an ICC delegation would visit the PA territories, hopefully by the end of July 2015, despite the difficulties raised by Israel (Al-Jazeera, June 25, 2015).

Arrangement Reached with Administrative Detainee Khader Adnan

- The lawyer and wife of **Khader Adnan**, administrative detainee and **senior Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) operative in northern Samaria** who has been on a hunger strike for 56 days, announced that an arrangement had been reached whereby he would be released on July 12, 2015. As a result, **Adnan, who is hospitalized, will end his hunger strike**. PIJ-affiliated sources called the agreement a "victory" for the detainee and an Israeli "surrender." In a telephone conversation with Khader Adnan's family, **Ramadan Shalah**, leader of the PIJ, congratulated them on their son's "victory" (Facebook page of QudsN, June 28, 2015). PIJ spokesman **Daoud Shihab** claimed the campaign for the release of Palestinian prisoners had not ended and that activities to support them would continue (Paltoday, June 29, 2015).

■ In the Gaza Strip the relatives of the Palestinian terrorist operatives imprisoned in Israel used their weekly rally in front of the Red Cross headquarters to mark the Adnan's "victory" over Israel. The various social networks and websites posted notices of support and encouragement (Facebook page of QudsN, June 28, 2015). In a number of villages in Judea and Samaria local residents distributed candy and cookies to passersby from boxes bearing Adnan's picture (Facebook page of PALDF, June 29, 2015). On June 29, 2015, the PIJ held celebratory marches in Gaza City, Khan Yunis and Rafah after the evening prayers in the mosques (Paltoday, June 30, 2015).



Left: Relatives of Palestinian terrorist operatives imprisoned in Israel use their weekly rally in front of Red Cross headquarters in Gaza to mark Khader Adnan's "victory" (Paltoday, June 29, 2015). Right: Candies and cookies distributed from a box with a picture of Khader Adnan (Facebook page of PALDF, June 29, 2015).

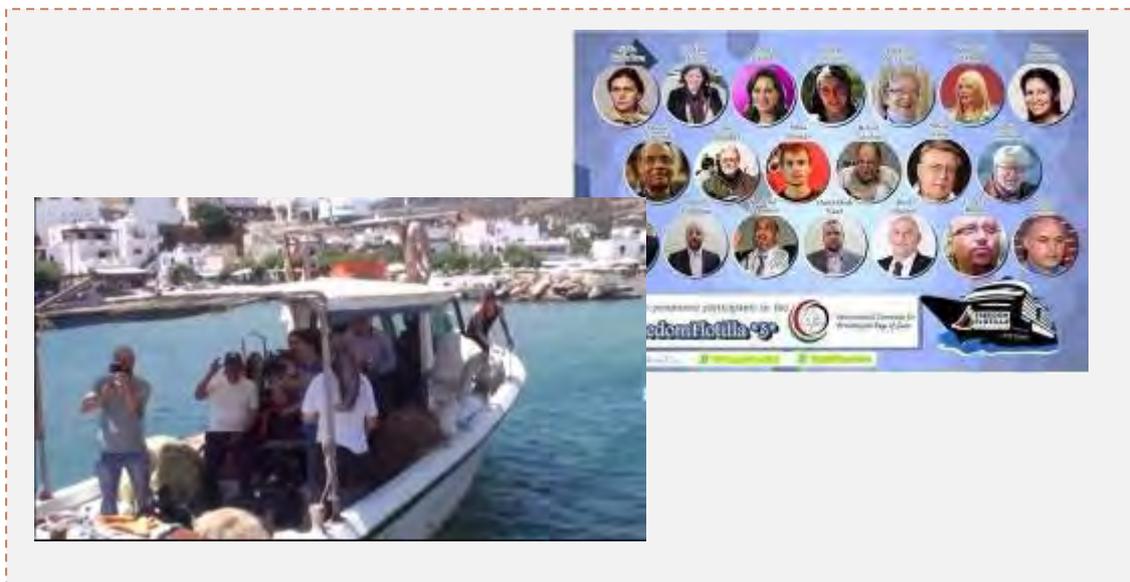
The Battle for Hearts and Minds

"Freedom Flotilla" 3 to the Gaza Strip

■ After a number of delays, on June 26, 2015, the "Freedom Flotilla 3" set sail for the Gaza Strip. The first ship was the *Marianne*, which flew the Swedish flag. Three additional ships set sail from Crete, the *Vittorio*, the *Rachel* and the *Juliano* (Freedom Flotilla website, June 27, 2015). A fourth ship was supposed to set sail from Greece but was delayed.

■ There were **47 passengers aboard the three ships**, 18 aboard the *Marianne*, including Israeli Knesset (Parliament) member Basel Ghattas, former Tunisian president Moncef Marzouki and former Israeli Dror Feiler, who currently lives in Sweden. There were eight passengers aboard the *Rachel*, nine aboard the *Vittorio*

and 12 aboard the *Juliano* (ICBSG website, June 28, 2015). **Zaher al-Birawi**, one of the flotilla's organizers, claimed that 90% of the activists were European and Western. Among the Arab passengers were representatives from Jordan, Algeria and Morocco (Al-Aqsa TV, June 24, 2015). In addition to passengers the boats reportedly carried medical and humanitarian aid and solar panels.



Left: The Israeli Knesset Member and the former Tunisian president on the boat bringing them to the *Marianne* (Twitter account of GazaFlotilla, June 27, 2015). Right: The flotilla participants (ffe.freedomflotilla.org, June 28, 2015).

- **Before dawn on June 29, 2015, Israeli naval forces took control of the *Marianne*.** The takeover was **short and there were no casualties**. The ship was towed to the port of Ashdod during the night. Activists aboard the ship were to be deported after a short interrogation. **The other ships en route for the Gaza Strip turned around and sailed back.** According to **Rami Abda**, a member of European Campaign to End the Siege on Gaza (ECESG), the ships had planned to turn around to keep from being damaged and so that they could participate in future flotillas to the Gaza Strip (Al-Aqsa, June 29, 2015).

- The IDF Spokesman reported that the IDF had decided to take control of the *Marianne* only after all diplomatic channels had been exhausted and the activists had made it clear they had no intention of cooperating or accepting the invitation to sail to the port of Ashdod under their own steam (IDF Spokesman, June 29, 2015).



The Marianne (Facebook page of Freedom Flotilla, June 25, 2015).

Reactions to Israel's Taking Control of the Ship

Israel

■ **Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu** said, "I would like to commend the sailors and commanders of the Israel Navy for their determined and efficient action in detaining the passengers...This flotilla is nothing but a demonstration of hypocrisy and lies that is only assisting the Hamas terrorist organization and ignores all of the horrors in our region..."³ **Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Yaalon** said the flotilla was neither humanitarian nor concerned with the welfare of a single individual. The only objective of the participants, he said, was to continue the campaign to delegitimize the State of Israel. He said Israel was the only country in the region that permanently allowed goods to enter the Gaza Strip and humanitarian projects to be conducted (Ynet, June 29, 2015).

The Palestinians

■ The Palestinians condemned Israel's action to prevent the boat from reaching the Gazan shore:

- **Hamas** called the action "savage behavior and a violation of international law." **Sami Abu Zuhri**, Hamas spokesman in the Gaza Strip, claimed the message of "Freedom Flotilla 3" had been sent and the action of the [Israeli] navy

³ <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Spokesman/Pages/spokeYam290615.aspx>

was a violation of international law which reflected Israel's "savagbehavior" (Hamas website, June 29, 2015).

- **Nabil Shaath, a member of Fatah's Central Committee**, condemned the **event** and called for the immediate end of the siege of the Gaza Strip (Quds.net, June 29, 2015). He claimed that although a takeover of the ship had been effected, the *Marianne* had sent the message that there were a million and a half people in the Gaza Strip suffering from the siege (Wafa News Agency, June 29, 2015).
- **Khader Habib**, senior PIJ figure, said that Israel continued to use "political terrorism" because it was protected by the international community (Aqsa TV, June 29, 2015).
- **Mustafa Barghouti, secretary general of the Palestinian National Initiative movement**, condemned the Israeli action, calling it "unprecedented racial piracy." He claimed it could be added to the other issues filed against Israel at the ICC in The Hague (Quds.net, June 29, 2015).