



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

(July 1 –7, 2015)



Rocket attack targets Israel from the Sinai Peninsula. Left: The remains of one of the rockets found in Israeli territory (Israel Police Force spokesman, July 4, 2015). Right: One of three Grad rockets launched into Israeli territory by operatives in the Sinai Peninsula, ISIS's Sinai Province (ISIS-affiliated Twitter account, July 3, 2015).

Overview

- This past week events focused on three rockets fired into the western Negev from the Sinai Peninsula. They were launched by the Supporters of Jerusalem (Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis), ISIS's Sinai Province. It occurred two days after the organization carried out combined attacks on Egyptian security forces at several locations in the northern Sinai Peninsula. According to Israeli security sources, including the Israeli Coordinator for Government Activities in the Territories, Hamas' military-terrorist wing in the Gaza Strip gave support to ISIS operatives in the Sinai Peninsula, including by smuggling weapons to them from the Gaza Strip. Hamas strongly denied the information.
- In Judea and Samaria the wave of "popular resistance" [i.e., popular terrorism] attacks continued, manifested by Molotov cocktails, thrown stones and apparent arson attacks attacking natural forest growths in the Jerusalem region. A Palestinian was killed south of Ramallah when he threw rocks at the vehicle of an IDF colonel. The IDF fully supported the reaction of the officer, whose life was in danger. The Palestinian Authority (PA), as usual, backed the rock-thrower.

Terrorist Attacks in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem

Palestinian Killed while Throwing Rocks at IDF Vehicle

■ On July 3, 2015, the vehicle of an IDF colonel, the commander of the local regional brigade, was attacked by several rock-throwing Palestinians in the region of A-Ram (south of Ramallah). The officer, sensing his life was in danger, carried out standard IDF procedures for detaining suspects. A young Palestinian, one of the rock-throwers, was injured, evacuated to a hospital in Ramallah and later died. Several other Palestinians were injured in the incident. After a preliminary investigation, the IDF commander of the Central Command stated that he fully backed the brigade commander and his functioning. He also said that during the event the brigade commander's life was in danger. (IDF Spokesman, July 3, 2015).

■ The Palestinian media reported the death of **Muhammad Hani al-Kusba**, 17, from the Qalandia refugee camp. Al-Kusba had two young brothers who were killed in 2002, during the second intifada, while throwing stones at IDF soldiers. Hamas issued a (false) notice claiming al-Kusba had been killed during the Friday prayers at Al-Aqsa mosque, adding that the "resistance" [i.e., terrorist attacks] was the only way to confront Israel (Paltoday and Alresala.net, July 3, 2015).



Left: Rock-thrower Muhammad al-Kusba, armed with a rifle (Facebook page of QudsN, July 4, 2015). Right: The Israeli brigade commander's vehicle after being attacked with rocks (IDF Spokesman, July 3, 2015).

■ As usual, **the PA backed the Palestinian terrorist**, as it supports all Palestinians engaging in the "popular resistance." On July 6, 2015, **Mahmoud Abbas met with relatives of Muhammad al-Kusba at his office in Ramallah**. He expressed his condolences, saying that "the Palestinian people have sacrificed and will sacrifice

thousands of shaheeds, wounded Palestinians and prisoners on their path to achieving freedom and ending the occupation." He presented al-Kusba's relatives with funds for a pilgrimage to Mecca (Facebook page of Mahmoud Abbas, July 6, 2015).



Left: Mahmoud Abbas and Muhammad al-Kusba's mother meet in his office in Ramallah (Facebook page of Mahmoud Abbas, July 3, 2015) Right: The Fatah death notice issued in the Qalandia refugee camp (Facebook page of the "supporters of the shaheed, the hero Muhammad al-Kusba," July 3, 2015).

Israel's South

Rocket Fire Attacking Israel

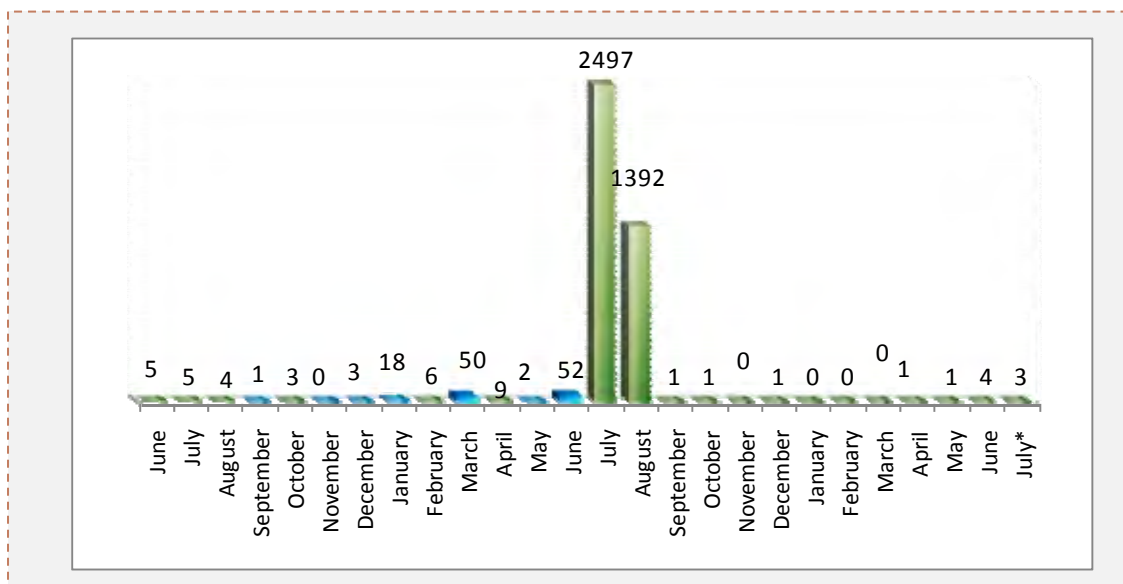
- On the afternoon of July 3, 2015, three 122mm Grad rockets were fired from the northwestern Sinai Peninsula at populated areas in the western Negev. They fell in open areas; there were no casualties and no damage was reported. The remains of two of the rockets were located in Israeli territory immediately after they were fired. The remains of the third rocket were located the following day.
- The Supporters of Jerusalem, ISIS's Sinai Province, claimed responsibility for the rocket fire. According to the organization's announcement, it fired the rockets at Israel in response to what it claimed was Israel's support of "infidels," that is, the Egyptian regime (ISIS-affiliated forum, July 3, 2015). The rockets were fired at Israel two days after the organization massively attacked Egyptian security forces at several locations in the northern Sinai Peninsula.
- The Company of Sheikh Omar Hadid (a Salafist-jihadi network in the Gaza Strip whose operatives had fired rockets into Israel on previous occasions) claimed responsibility immediately after the attack. The network later retracted the claim,

praising their "brothers" (i.e., Supporters of Jerusalem operatives) for the attack (Facebook page of the Company of Sheikh Omar Hadid and the @mouhdkhal14afah Twitter account, July 3, 2015).



Left: Three rockets ready for firing (ISIS-affiliated Twitter account, July 3, 2015). Right: The announcement issued by ISIS's Sinai Province claiming responsibility for the rocket fire targeting Israel (@deeralz Twitter Account, July 3, 2015).

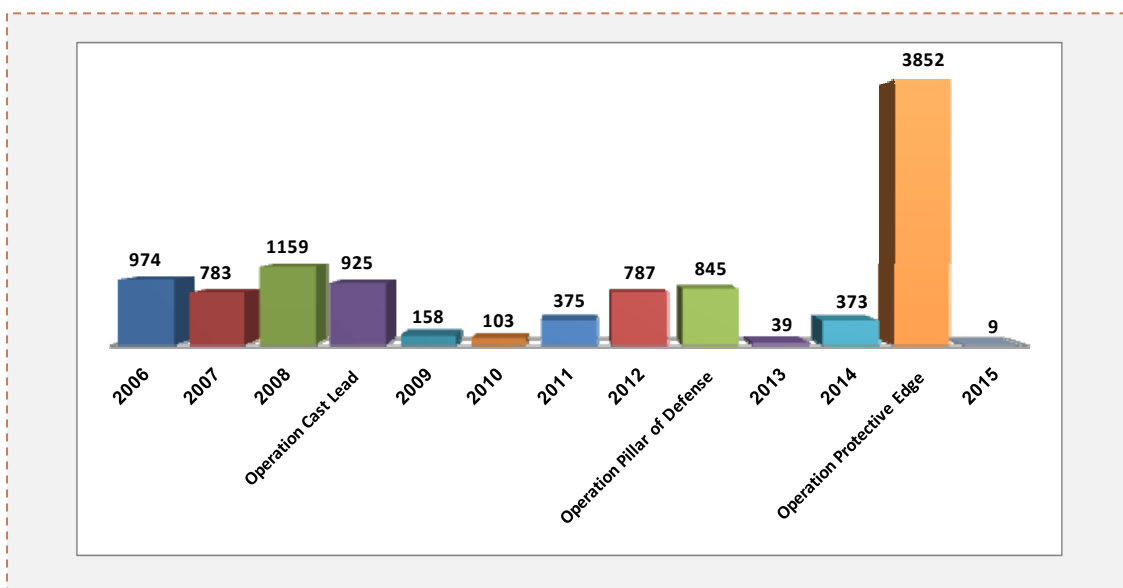
Monthly Distribution of Rocket Fire (2013 – 2015)¹



*The data include the three rockets launched by ISIS's Sinai Province from the Sinai Peninsula.

¹ As of July 7, 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



*The data include the three rockets launched by ISIS's Sinai Province from the Sinai Peninsula

Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem

"Popular Resistance" Terrorism and Violence Continue

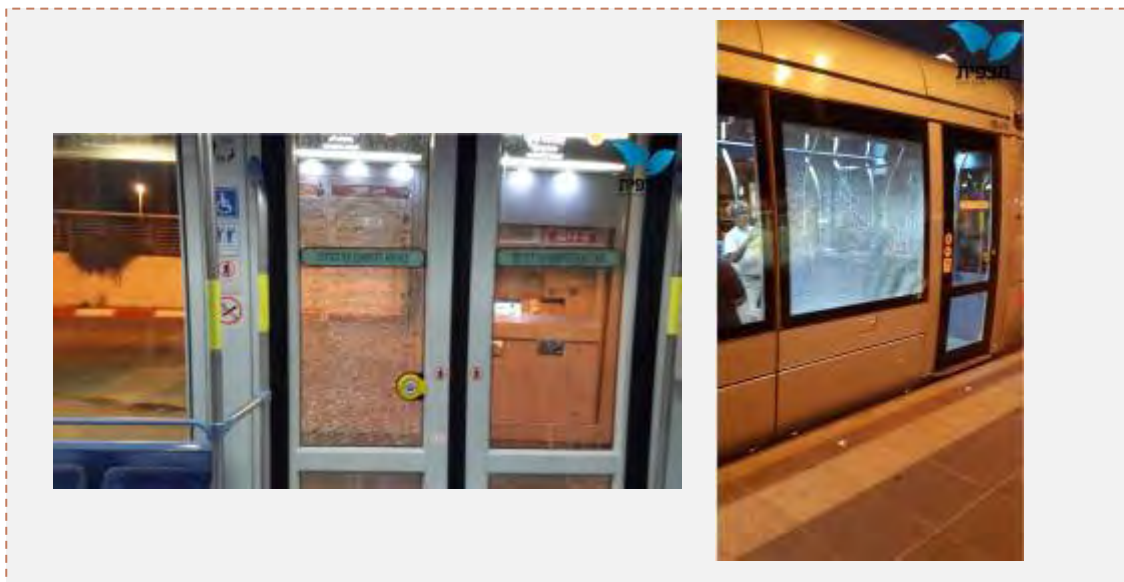
- This past week the wave of violence and rioting continued at the usual locations in Judea, Samaria and east Jerusalem, part of what the Palestinians call the "popular resistance." Many demonstrations were held to mark the anniversary of the murder of Muhammad Abu Khdeir (July 2), as well as marches and rallies at a number of locations, and his picture was waved at some of the weekly riots. On July 5, 2015, Rami Hamdallah, the Palestinian prime minister, inaugurated a town square in Al-Bireh dedicated to Abu Khdeir (Facebook page of PALINFO and PNN, July 3, 2015; Dunia al-Watan, July 6, 2015).
- The "popular resistance" violence and terrorism mainly centered on **throwing stones, rocks and Molotov cocktails at the Israeli security forces and Israeli civilians**. Some of the prominent attacks were the following:
 - On **July 5, 2015**, Palestinians threw stones at Israeli vehicles, including a bus, near Shilo (northeast of Ramallah). There were no casualties but the bus was damaged (Red Alert, July 5, 2015).

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

- On **July 5, 2015**, Palestinians threw stones at an ambulance near the Makassed Hospital in the Wadi Joz neighborhood of east Jerusalem. There were no casualties but the ambulance was damaged (Red Alert, July 5, 2015).
- This past week about **250 acres of natural forest growth in the region of Ma'aleh Hahamisha (near Jerusalem) burned in three separate incidents**. The fires were apparently arson attacks. According to several accounts, the fires were caused by Molotov cocktails thrown from a small Palestinian village nearby. A number of Molotov cocktails were found on the scene (Ynet, July 4, 2015).
- On **July 2, 2015**, Palestinians threw Molotov cocktails at an Israeli police patrol car in the Ma'aleh Zeitim neighborhood of east Jerusalem. There were no casualties and no damage was reported (Red Alert, July 2, 2015).
- On **July 2, 2015**, on at least three occasions Palestinians threw stones and rocks at the light railway in the Shuafat region of north Jerusalem. There were no casualties but train cars were damaged (Tazpit News Agency, July 2, 2015).



Palestinians throw stones and rocks at the light railway in Shuafat, east Jerusalem (Facebook page of QudsN, July 4, 2015).



Damage done to light railway car windows (Tazpit News Agency, July 2, 2015).

Hamas Network Uncovered in Nablus Region

■ **The Israeli security forces uncovered a 40-member Hamas network in the Nablus region.** The network leaders were in charge of the local area and **their objective was to renew Hamas activity in Samaria, including terrorist attacks.** During interrogation the operatives exposed a **Hamas military squad that had been planning to carry out a terrorist attack.** Members of the network included senior Hamas terrorists who had been imprisoned in Israel.

■ The following information was revealed by the interrogations (Israel Security Agency website, July 1, 2015):

- **Establishment of a central headquarters in Nablus:** Hamas has been working to renew its activity in Samaria buy establishing a central headquarters in Nablus and constructing a broad network of **preaching (da'wah) and military-terrorist activity.** To conceal their activities operatives of the headquarters took security measures including nicknames, communication by messenger, email addresses, memory cards, etc.
- **Military squad:** The interrogations led to **the exposure of a military-terrorist squad operating in the al-Far'a refugee camp (north of Nablus).** During interrogation two members of the squad confessed that they had purchased binoculars and night vision equipment in preparation for terrorist attacks. They also confessed to having **contacts with operatives of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) in Syria and with Hamas operatives in the Gaza Strip,** from whom they were supposed to receive funding for the attacks.

- **Ties to the Hamas leadership abroad:** **Hassam A'atef Ali Badran**, a Hamas terrorist operative from Nablus, **currently residing in Qatar and serving as Hamas spokesman there**, directed the activities of the Hamas leadership in Nablus and was in direct contact with them, including sending instructions by email. Hassam Badran was also party to decisions made regarding the recruitment of functionaries and **transferred hundreds of thousands of dollars to finance the activities of the Nablus network.**
- **Transferring funds:** Transfer of funds included **buying gold in Jordan** and smuggling it into Judea and Samaria. One of the people involved in the transfers was **Samih Suleiman Muhammad Aliwi**, owner of a gold jewelry store, who was the network's financial person and laundered the funds through his business.
- **Involvement of the Hamas network in Jordan:** The Hamas network in Nablus had a branch in Jordan. It included a couple named **Bassem and Mona Saih**, from Nablus, who had spent a long time in Jordan while receiving medical treatment. The couple served as an offshoot of the Nablus leadership's in Jordan, primarily for the transfer of funds.



Gold found in the possession of the Hamas network in Nablus, which was to be exchanged for funds to finance their activities (Israel Security Agency, July 1, 2015).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

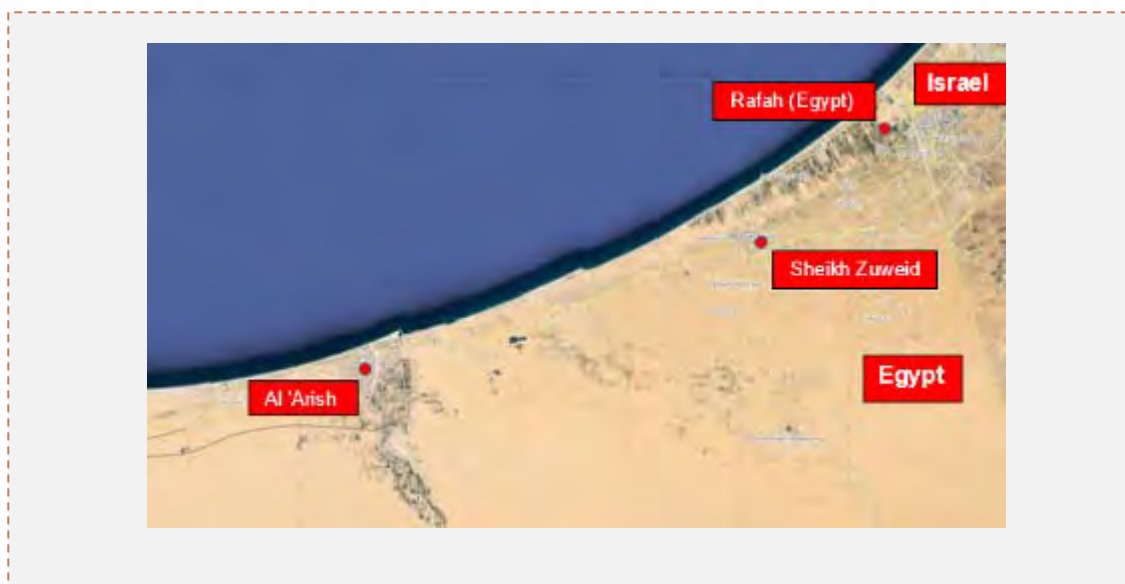
The Rafah Crossing – Recent Developments

- **This past week the Rafah crossing was closed, mainly because of the events in the Sinai Peninsula.** **Ali al-Azazi**, director of Egyptian security in the northern

Sinai Peninsula, said the security services were waiting for orders from the political leadership to open the Rafah crossing. He said no date had been set and that it depended on the security situation in the Sinai Peninsula (Al-Masry Al-Youm, July 3, 2015).

Hamas Military Wing Supported the ISIS District in the Sinai Peninsula

- On **July 1, 2015**, operatives from the Supporters of Jerusalem, ISIS's Sinai Province, **carried out combined attacks against the Egyptian security forces at a number of locations in the Sinai Peninsula. The attacks were concentrated in the northern Sinai Peninsula in the Rafah-Sheikh Zuweid-EI-Arish region**, a swath of land of about 46 kilometers (or about 28 miles).
- The main attack was in and around the village of Sheikh Zuweid, **a permanent focal point for jihadi attacks in the Sinai Peninsula**. The attacks included a car bomb and simultaneous attacks on seven Egyptian security force road blocks (a modus operandi familiar from ISIS attacks in Iraq and Syria). ISIS operatives used massive gunfire which included anti-tank missiles. They besieged the police station at Sheikh Zuweid and mined the road leading to the village. **An estimated 70 members of the Egyptian security forces were killed and many others were wounded** (Facebook page of Egyptian Armed Forces spokesman, July 3, 2015).³

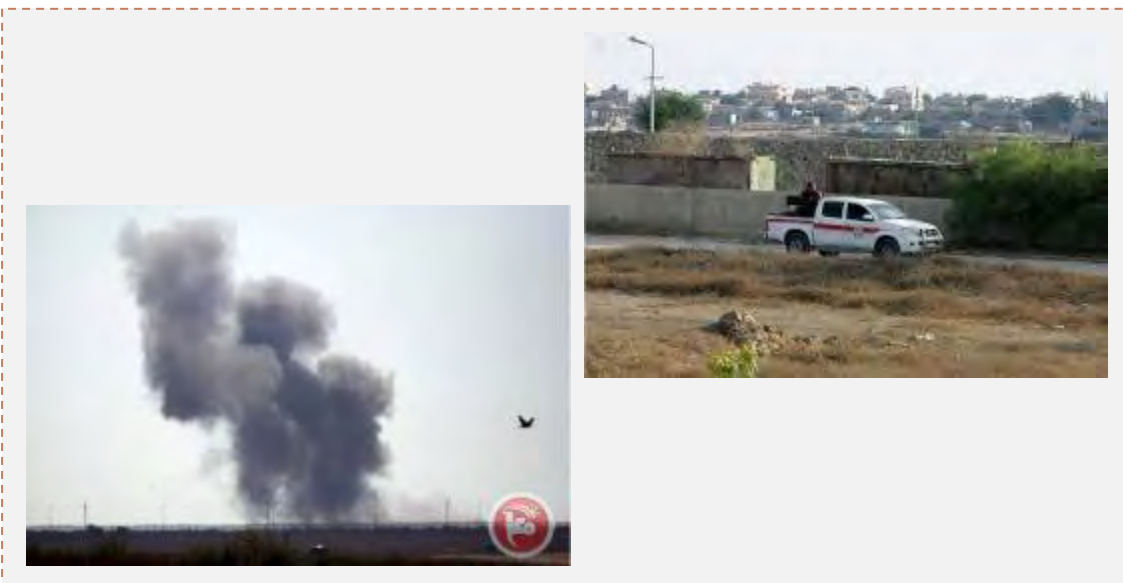


The area between Rafah and El-Arish in the northern Sinai Peninsula, the main arena for the Supporters of Jerusalem attacks on the Egyptian security forces (Wikimapia)

³ For further information see "Spotlight on the Global Jihad, July 2-8, 2015."

■ Israeli security forces, including the Israeli Coordinator for Government Activities in the Territories, reported that **Hamas was giving support to the ISIS operatives in the Sinai Peninsula**. Interviewed by Al-Jazeera TV, Major General Yoav Mordechai said that **operatives from Hamas' military-terrorist wing in the Gaza Strip were aiding ISIS in the Sinai Peninsula**. He said **most of their support involved the supply of weapons from Hamas to ISIS**. In addition, according to Major General Mordechai and Israeli security sources, Hamas also provided medical treatment for ISIS operatives who had been wounded in attacks against with Egyptian security forces and were hospitalized in the Gaza Strip. The two organizations also collaborated in **smuggling weapons in and out of the Gaza Strip** (Al-Jazeera, July 2, 2015 and Haaretz, July 3, 2015).

■ Following the ISIS attack on the Egyptian security forces, the Hamas ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip announced it would deploy more forces and increase activity along the 14 kilometer (about 9 miles) border with Egypt (Safa News Agency, July 1, 2015). Ministry spokesman **Iyad al-Bazam** claimed **the tunnels would not be used to threaten the security of either Egypt or the Gaza Strip**. He claimed the ministry had begun keeping records to prove that the tunnels between Egypt and the Gaza Strip were used for **strictly humanitarian** purposes (Facebook page of the Hamas ministry of the interior, July 1, 2015). His remarks were apparently meant to counter the information issued by Israel that Hamas was giving support to ISIS operatives in the Sinai Peninsula, which was strongly denied by Hamas.



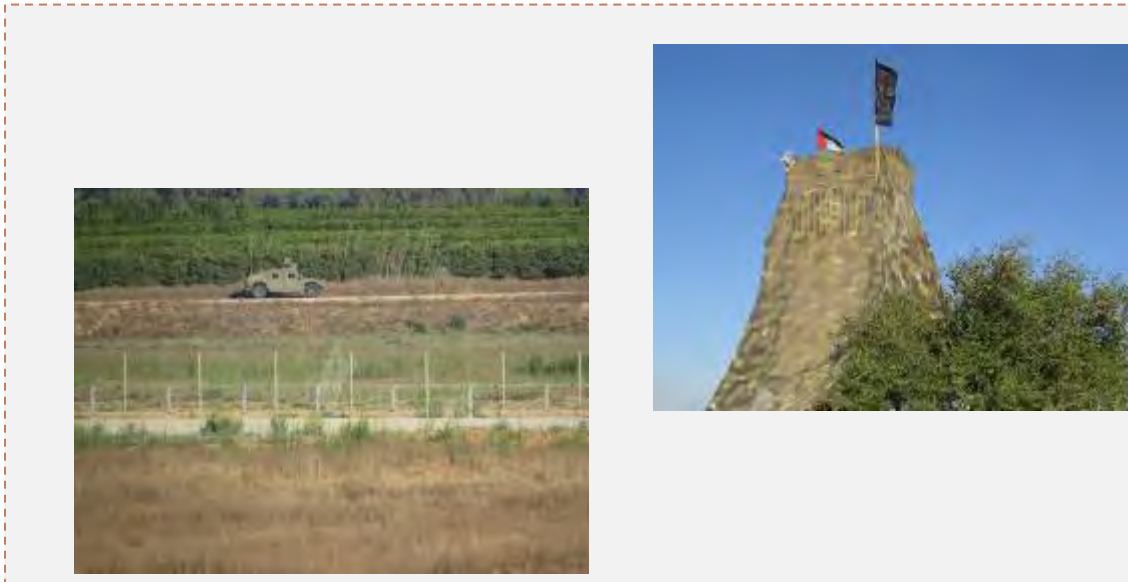
Left: The attack on the Egyptian army in the Sinai Peninsula photographed from the Gazan side of the border (Ma'an News Agency, July 2, 2015). Right: Hamas' security forces patrol along the Rafah border with Egypt (Facebook page of QudsN, July 2, 2015).

■ **Hamas strongly denied the information** issued by Israel about the organization's support for ISIS operatives in the Sinai Peninsula, and accused Israel of trying to sabotage the relations between Hamas and Egypt:

- Hamas spokesman **Sami Abu Zuhri** claimed that Israel's accusations about Hamas' support for ISIS were unacceptable and anti-Hamas incitement, and were meant to cause dissention between Hamas and the Arab states, especially Egypt. He also claimed that Hamas guarded Egypt's security and invested effort to control the Gaza Strip borders and prevent smuggling in both directions (Agence France-Presse, July 3, 2015).
- **Abu Obeida**, spokesman for Hamas' military-terrorist wing, claimed Israel's statements about the connection between Hamas military wing and what happened in the Sinai Peninsula were lies, distortions and a new attempt to shuffle the cards and cause riots (Twitter account of Abu Obeida, July 4, 2015).
- Senior Hamas figure **Ghazi Hamad** claimed that Israel was lying, and proof thereof was the war Hamas was waging against ISIS operatives in the Gaza Strip (Dot Misr, July 2, 2015).

Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) Military Activity along the Gaza Strip Border

■ **PIJ terrorist operatives set up an observation post on the Israel-Gaza border.** It was constructed to mark the anniversary of Operation Protective Edge and is called the "Challenge Post." Eight meters tall (almost 9 feet), it is **located about 650 meters (about 4/10 of a mile) from the border security fence near the town of Khirbat Ikhz'a in the southern Gaza Strip.** According to the PIJ, its objective is to "raise the morale of the fighting residents" and to emphasize the victory of the Palestinians over Israel in Operation Protective Edge. The post is used by PIJ operatives to observe the movements of IDF forces in the region (Jerusalem Brigades website, July 5, 2015).



Left: IDF forces near the border, as seen from the observation post. Right: The observation post (Paltoday, July 5, 2015).

The Palestinian Authority

- The UN Human Rights Council (HRC) adopted the Davis Report about Operation Protective Edge. The Council called on all UN agencies to implement the Report's recommendations. The Council also requested that the General Assembly examine their implementation and that following the examination, the UN representative for human rights affairs issue a report, as well as one regarding the Goldstone Report. The vote was 41 in favor, there were five abstentions and the United States voted against.

- **Ibrahim Khrisha** the PA representative to the UN, praised the HRC decision. He claimed that many countries had supported the Palestinian side, France and Germany among them. He claimed the Council recognized that Israel had carried out "war crimes" against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem. He added that another important result of the vote would be when the UN General Assembly adopted the Goldstone Report (Sawt Palestine Radio, July 6, 2015).

- **Riyadh al-Maliki**, Foreign Minister in the Palestinian national consensus government, speaking about the Davis Report in a TV interview, **indirectly criticized Hamas** and other organizations in the Gaza Strip without mentioning their names. He said that according to international law, firing rockets at populated areas was considered a crime. He said there were Palestinian organizations that boasted about firing rockets but they had not advanced the fighting or influenced its results, and **only damaged themselves and the Palestinian cause**. He said such organizations

had to take "national responsibility" so that the Palestinians "would not become victims for the hangman" (Russia Today, July 3, 2015).

An International Criminal Court (ICC) Delegation to Visit the PA

■ On July 27, 2015, **a delegation of six ICC judges is expected to pay a visit to the PA**. They were invited by the PA to inspect the materials the PA submitted to the ICC as a basis for initiating law suits against Israel. The delegation is supposed to meet with senior PA figures and to tour the areas of Judea and Samaria where the Jewish towns and villages and the border security fence are located. The delegation is also supposed to meet with the Palestinian prisoners' committee and Palestinian lawyers.

Large-Scale Detentions of Hamas Operatives in Judea and Samaria

■ On the night of July 2, 2015, the PA security forces carried out **a series of detentions throughout Judea and Samaria, apprehending scores of Hamas-affiliated operatives** (Alresala.net, July 3, 2015). Hamas responded strongly to the detentions:

- Hamas spokesman **Sami Abu Zuhri** claimed at least a hundred Hamas activists had been detained. He claimed the objective of the detentions was to win Israel's trust, but that detaining Hamas activists would not achieve the desired result (Al-Jazeera, July 3, 2015).
- Hamas spokesman **Husam Badran** claimed the wave of detentions was part of the attempts to stop the activities of the "resistance" against Israel. He claimed it had recently increased, especially after Israeli accused Hamas of being behind such activities. He called on all the organizations to oppose the detentions, claiming the "resistance" would continue its activities against Israel (Facebook page of Husam Badran, July 3, 2015).

■ **Adnan al-Damiri, spokesman for the Palestinian security forces in Judea and Samaria**, denied the recent wave of detentions had political motives. He claimed the reasons for the detentions were related exclusively to security, the result of threats made against the PA. He claimed the PA would not allow Hamas to drag Judea and Samaria into chaos and a confrontation with Israel, while at the same time Hamas was working to achieve a long-term ceasefire (*hudna*) with Israel in the Gaza Strip

(Aljazeera.net, July 3, 2015). He warned Hamas not to attack PA security force operatives, saying that if Hamas did carry out attacks that influenced Palestinian security, measures would be taken against them "that they could not imagine" (Al-Ayyam, July 6, 2015).



Cartoon posted to Hamas' Facebook page in the wake of the detentions in Judea and Samaria. The Arabic reads, "Detentions in the West Bank..." (Facebook page of PALDF, July 8, 2015).

Hamas Condemns the Return of Armed Fatah Operatives to the Streets of Nablus

■ An investigative report posted to a Hamas-affiliated website strongly attacked the PA and its security forces for letting armed, masked Fatah operatives in Nablus hold a reception for **Zaki Anis**, a Fatah operative released from an Israeli jail. The posting claimed that the center of Nablus had turned into a "battle zone" when dozens of armed Fatah operatives fired massive amounts of ammunition into the air. Local residents, according to the posting, were angry, calling it anarchy and wondering why the PA's security forces had not taken action against them (Filastin al-'Aan, July 7, 2015).



Armed Fatah operatives in Nablus (Filastin al-'Aan, July 7, 2015).

The Israeli-Jordanian Border: Iranian-Backed Terrorist Attack Prevented

Iraqi Tried in Jordan for Planning to Attack Israeli Targets

■ According to an Israeli newspaper, on July 6, 2015, the trial of Iraqi **Khaled Kazem al-Rabi'i** has begun in Jordan. **He was accused of having been sent to Jordan by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards (IRG) to attack targets in Israel.** Rabi'i, 49, was born in Iraq and expelled in 1980. He was recruited by Iranian intelligence and **sent to serve in the Qods Force of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards**, which is responsible for terrorism and subversion beyond the borders of Iran. After undergoing training he was sent to Syria and a year later went to Jordan. **During his stay in Jordan the Iranians sent him explosives and military equipment via Syria, which he hid in a warehouse in the Jordanian city of Jerash.** Rabi'i, who represented himself as a Norwegian national, **conducted surveillance of Jordan's border with Israel**, raising the suspicions of the Jordanian security forces, and he was detained on April 3, 2015 (Smadar Peri, Israeli daily newspaper Yedioth Aharonot, July 7, 2015). So far the ITIC does not have a Jordanian version of the affair.

The Battle for Hearts and Minds

"Freedom Flotilla 3" to the Gaza Strip

■ The "Freedom Flotilla 3" website issued a formal statement claiming that the mission had been successfully completed and for the ninth time had brought to public attention the so-called most important issue of our era, i.e., the siege of the Gaza Strip. It also claimed that in the coming days the Ship to Gaza organization and the coordinating body would analyze and evaluate the lessons of the most recent flotilla and make plans for the future. According to the statement, the flotilla organizers were determined to continue their activities and to sail to the Gaza Strip again (Website of the Freedom Flotilla Coalition, July 2, 2015).