July 20, 2015

Estimate of the number of Hamas operatives killed in Operation Protective Edge (Part Eleven)¹

A poster in memory of Abd al-Rahman al-Qataa and Hamam Hassan Hamada, two operatives in the Al-Nukhba elite unit of Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades (Twitter). Their names and the names of many other Al-Nukhba operatives did not appear in the lists of fatalities affiliated with Hamas, which were published in the Gaza Strip.

Overview

1. This document is the eleventh in a series of publications of the Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center (ITIC), examining the names of the Palestinians killed in Operation Protective Edge. **The findings of our investigation so far** (based on an examination of approximately 61% of the names of the dead) suggest that **terrorist operatives constitute 48.7% of the names that have been identified, and non-involved civilians constitute approximately 51.3%**.² This ratio may vary in the future, **but not significantly, in our assessment**.

2. The conclusion of the examinations carried out by the ITIC to date is, therefore, that **nearly half of those killed in Operation Protective Edge were terrorist**

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¹Further to the ITIC Information Bulletin from February 19, 2015: “Examination of the names of Palestinians killed in Operation Protective Edge - Part Ten.”

²To date, 1,314 fatalities in Operation Protective Edge have been examined. Of these, 1,136 names have been identified (around 86.5% of the dead). For further information, see the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from February 19, 2015, Part Ten.
operatives, and slightly more than half of them were non-involved civilians. In the Information Center’s assessment, about 65% of the terrorist operatives killed were operatives affiliated with Hamas, and the others were PIJ operatives and operatives from other terrorist organizations.

Estimate of the number of Hamas operatives killed in Operation Protective Edge, following the identification of additional Hamas operatives whose names do not appear on the lists of fatalities

3. The Appendix to this document contains details about 50 additional terrorist operatives killed in Operation Protective Edge whose names do not appear on the Hamas-affiliated lists of the dead originating in the Gaza Strip. Of these 50 operatives, 43 are Hamas operatives, including 13 from Hamas’s elite unit (Al-Nukhba). In total, the ITIC has published names and details of 337 Hamas operatives who were killed during Operation Protective Edge, of which 284 names appeared on the Hamas-affiliated lists of fatalities (around 75%) and 93 names did not appear on the lists (around 25%).

4. The number of Hamas fatalities identified by the ITIC so far is partial, because up to now, the ITIC has examined the names of around 61% of the Palestinians killed in Operation Protective Edge. It is also likely that there are still Hamas operatives whose names do not appear on the Hamas-affiliated lists. In the estimation of the ITIC, the total number of Hamas-affiliated operatives killed in Operation Protective Edge is 600-650 operatives. Hamas, on its part, unofficially reported that it lost 400 fighters in Operation Protective Edge. In the ITIC’s assessment, however, this is lower than the actual number and its purpose is to serve political and propaganda goals. In addition, this figure apparently does not include fatalities affiliated with Hamas’s security apparatus and Hamas’s civilian infrastructure that supports its military activity.

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3This ratio differs from the findings of the report of the UN Commission of Inquiry, indicating that 1,462 civilians were killed, out of 2,251 Palestinians fatalities, i.e., around 65% of all the casualties were civilians. Thus, by implication, according to the UN report, around 35% of the dead were terrorist operatives, although the report refrains from saying explicitly that all the others are operatives affiliated with terrorist organizations (the report uses the phrase “Palestinian armed groups”).

4According to Dr. Ashraf al-Qudra, the Palestinian Health Ministry spokesman in the Gaza Strip, 2,157 Palestinians were killed in Operation Protective Edge (Al-Quds Al-Arabi, September 14, 2014). A similar number of fatalities (2,145) was reported in October 2014 by the Health Ministry of the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah. Since these figures were published, the number of fatalities has risen, and is now over 2,200 (apparently due to the discovery of other bodies). According to the report by the commission of inquiry of the United Nations Human Rights Council, 2,251 Palestinians were killed in the Gaza Strip (UN Human Rights Council website, June 19, 2015).
5. The ITIC’s estimated total number of Hamas fatalities is compatible with the findings of the examinations conducted by the IDF, as published in the report issued by the State of Israel on Operation Protective Edge (May 2015). According to IDF data, 936 operatives were killed in Operation Protective Edge, including 631 Hamas-affiliated operatives who have been identified among the Palestinians killed in the operation (i.e., about 67% of all the terrorist operatives killed in the operation were affiliated with Hamas). The number of Hamas fatalities and the ratio between them and the remaining terrorist operatives seems reasonable, given that Hamas is the main organization that bore the burden of the fighting. In addition to Hamas fatalities, according to IDF data, 201 of the dead were affiliated with the PIJ (around 22% of all the terrorist operatives killed) and around 11% belonged to other terrorist organizations (such as Fatah networks or organizations affiliated with the global jihad).

6. As part of its examination, the ITIC identified the names of 50 additional terrorist operatives whose names do not appear on Hamas's lists of fatalities originating in the Gaza Strip. Most of the names (28) did not appear on the list of fatalities published by the Palestinian Health Ministry in Ramallah, via the Palestinian News Agency (WAFA). The rest of the names (22) appeared on the lists published by the Palestinian Health Ministry in Ramallah but did not appear on the Hamas-affiliated lists. The 50 new names are in addition to the names of 50 operatives that were

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5 The report issued by the State of Israel: “The 2014 Gaza Conflict 7 July - 26 August 2014, Factual and Legal Aspects.”
6 Dr. Ashraf al-Qudra and the Palestinian Health Ministry based in the Gaza Strip, both affiliated with Hamas, published a basic list including the names of 1,032 fatalities. Two additional supplementary lists appeared in Hamas bulletins in the Gaza Strip: a list of 1,281 names appeared in the newspaper Felesteen, and a more up-to-date and extensive list of 1,452 names in the newspaper Al-Rai. In total, Hamas-affiliated sources published lists that included the names of about two-thirds of the Palestinian fatalities in Operation Protective Edge. These lists are the basis for the examination of the identity of the dead being carried out by the ITIC.
7 The only list of all the fatalities in Operation Protective Edge was published by the Palestinian Health Ministry in Ramallah, via the Palestinian News Agency (WAFA), on September 14, 2014. The list includes the names of 2,128 fatalities, along with the ID numbers of most of them, and the date and place of death. In general, the list was in chronological order, but this became harder and harder to maintain towards the end of Operation Protective Edge. In the period that has elapsed since then, no complete, updated list of fatalities has been issued. The list issued by the Palestinian Health Ministry, which was prepared in Ramallah on the basis of information obtained from the Gaza Strip, is questionable. Hamas, on its part, has not recognized this list as an authorized expression of the number of Palestinians killed in Operation Protective Edge. The ITIC’s examinations are not based on this list.
not included on the Hamas-affiliated lists of Palestinian fatalities whose names were published by the ITIC in December 2014.\(^8\)

7. Following is the distribution of the 50 additional names of terrorist operatives by organizational affiliation:

A. 43 Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operatives. 13 of them belonged to the elite Al-Nukhba unit, two of whom had served concurrently in the Hamas security apparatus in the Gaza Strip.\(^9\)

B. 3 operatives belonged to a Salafist-jihadi terrorist network operating in the Gaza Strip. All three were killed by the IDF on August 26, 2014, while launching rockets at Israel from Rafah.

C. 2 operatives belonged to the PIJ.

D. 1 fatality belonged to the Popular Resistance Committees (PRC).

E. 1 fatality belonged to an extremist Islamic terrorist network, based on former Fatah operatives, by the name of the Al-Mujahedin Battalions.

8. In the previous examination carried out by the ITIC (December 2014), all 50 of the dead who were identified were Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operatives. **So far a total of 93 Hamas operatives who did not appear on Hamas's lists of fatalities in Operation Protective Edge have been identified.** On the other hand, so far 284 names that appear on the Hamas-affiliated lists have been identified. In total, 377 Hamas operatives who were killed during Operation Protective Edge have been identified so far, based on an examination of around 61% of the names of the dead.

9. Hamas's failure to include the names of some of its operatives in the fatality lists, and the publication of new names of its operatives, is not coincidental. According to the ITIC's assessment, it stems from a combination of several reasons:

   A. **Technically** – Hamas found it hard to absorb and document in real time - and sometimes even after the fact - the information pertaining to the fatalities,

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\(^8\)See the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from December 29, 2014: “Additional findings in the examination of the names of Palestinians killed in Operation Protective Edge - Part Eight.”

\(^9\)In the previous list of fifty fatalities whose names were not included in the Hamas-affiliated lists of fatalities, the large number of operatives belonging to Al-Nukhba was salient. Not included in the lists, among others, were Al-Nukhba operatives killed in Israeli territory and/or those whose bodies are in the hands of Israel.
especially those whose whereabouts were unknown; fatalities whose bodies remained under the rubble or in tunnels that were blown up; or those whose bodies are still in the hands of Israel (the reason for the relatively large number of operatives of Al-Nukhba, an elite unit of Hamas, who carried out special operations and operated within Israeli territory).

B. Politically – the failure to include names of Hamas operatives in the lists of names of the fatalities, and the failure by Hamas-affiliated institutions in the Gaza Strip to publish an updated and comprehensive list of the names of the fatalities, is also due to Hamas’s policy of concealment. This policy is designed to serve the political, and propaganda and lawfare campaign against Israel. Based on past experience it is possible that, in due course, after the campaign against Israel has run its course, Hamas will publish real data on the number of its fatalities and admit that the figure is higher, just as it did two years after Operation Cast Lead.10

C. Gradual exposure for internal purposes: although Hamas does not publish the names of its fatalities in a single list and does not formally announce the total number of fatalities, it is evident that it actually does not prevent the publication of the individual names at the grassroots and local level. This includes ceremonies commemorating certain groups of fatalities (those killed in a specific institution, neighborhood or mosque) and private Facebook pages and YouTube videos commemorating the heroism of the dead. This stems from a basic need, at the grassroots level, to glorify and commemorate the dead and not to ignore their role in the campaign against Israel, even at the cost of slightly compromising the policy of concealment. This is in contrast to the policy that characterized the actual days of fighting, during which Hamas explicitly warned against issuing such publications. This could explain the gradual increasing exposure of the names of the dead operatives, who did not previously appear in Hamas’s lists, even after many months had passed since the operation. This exposure is all the more evident as the anniversary of Operation Protective Edge approaches.

10 For further details on this matter, see the ITIC’s Information Bulletin from August 10, 2014: “War of the Casualties: Even during Operation Cast Lead, Hamas adopted a policy of concealing information about its operatives killed by the IDF. Actual data on the extent of the losses was published only two years after the operation, after the false information that Israel carried out mass killings of civilians in Gaza pervaded world public opinion and after the Goldstone Report.”

11. The appendix to the report states that according to the interim findings of the IDF’s analysis, 2,125 Palestinians were killed in the operation. At least 936 of the dead (44% of all the fatalities) were terrorist operatives (“militants”) and 761 (36% of all the fatalities) were civilians. 428 of the dead (20% of the fatalities), all males aged 16-50, were designated as unidentified, i.e., it was not possible to determine with certainty whether they were terrorist operatives or non-involved civilians.\(^\text{11}\)

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{distribution.png}
\caption{Distribution of Palestinian fatalities according to the findings of the IDF’s examination (page A-11 of the report published by the State of Israel)}\end{figure}

12. The appendix to the report also details the organizational distribution of 936 terrorist operatives whose names have been identified. According to the findings of the IDF’s examination, 631 are terrorist operatives affiliated with Hamas (67% of the terrorists killed), 201 are terrorist operatives affiliated with the PIJ (22% the terrorists killed), and 104 (11% of the terrorists killed) are affiliated with other

\(^{11}\)Hence, according to the findings of the IDF’s examination, 1,697 fatalities, i.e., around 80% of all the Palestinians killed, have been identified. Of the fatalities who have been identified, the percentage of terrorist operatives is around 55% and the percentage of non-involved civilians is around 45%. Twenty percent of those killed have not yet been identified. In the ITIC’s assessment, they include both terrorist operatives and non-involved civilians (when their identity is clarified, this may slightly alter the ratio between terrorist operatives and civilians). According to the ITIC’s findings, (which are not yet final), the percentage of identified terrorist operatives is slightly lower (around 49%) than in the IDF’s examination, and the percentage of identified civilians is slightly higher (around 51%).
terrorist organizations (such as Fatah/the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades or organizations affiliated with the global jihad (page A-10).

Hamas’s (unofficial) version

13. On February 13, 2015, Associated Press reported that a “Hamas official” had said that Hamas lost 400 fighters in Operation Protective Edge. According to a claim by the same source, this figure includes many operatives killed in the combat arenas against Israel and a smaller number of operatives killed in Israeli airstrikes. In the ITIC’s assessment, the number of fatalities cited by the Hamas official is lower than the actual figure, mainly due to anti-Israeli propaganda considerations. In practice, in the ITIC’s assessment, the actual number is higher by around 200-250 operatives, i.e., the number of Hamas operatives killed in Operation Protective Edge is approximately 600-650 operatives.
Appendix

Hamas operatives killed in Operation Protective Edge whose names were not included in the Hamas-affiliated lists of fatalities originating in the Gaza Strip


Poster issued by the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades in memory of Mustafa Jamal Malka (YouTube)

2. Ahmed Ibrahim Al-Jamasi, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades commander. A video in his memory produced by the media arm of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades states that he was "one of those who carried out the attack behind enemy lines east of the Al-Tuffah neighborhood." The date and circumstances of his death are unknown. His name did not appear on the Hamas-affiliated lists and on the Palestinian Health Ministry in Ramallah’s list.
4. **Hamada Khaled Maqat**, PIJ military wing operative. Killed on August 5, 2014, in an attack in the northern Gaza Strip. Three other operatives from his organization were killed along with him. The Palestinians claim that he managed the SAJA news agency’s website.¹² His name did not appear on the Hamas-affiliated lists of fatalities, but did appear on the Palestinian Health Ministry in Ramallah’s list.

Hamada Khaled Maqat, PIJ military wing operative (Facebook)

5. **Abdullah Nasser Khalil Fahjan**, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operative. May also have worked as a reporter for Hamas’s Voice of Al-Aqsa Radio.¹³ The Palestinians claim that he was killed on August 1, 2014, in an Israeli attack in Gaza City’s Al-Zeitoun neighborhood. His name did not appear on the Hamas-affiliated lists of fatalities, but did appear on the Palestinian Health Ministry in Ramallah’s list.

¹²For further details, see the ITIC Information Bulletin from February 12, 2015: “Examination of the Names of 17 Journalists and Media Personnel Whom the Palestinians Claim Were Killed in Operation Protective Edge (Part Nine).”

¹³For further details, see the ITIC Information Bulletin from February 12, 2015: “Examination of the Names of 17 Journalists and Media Personnel Whom the Palestinians Claim Were Killed in Operation Protective Edge (Part Nine).”
6. **Nidal Mohammad Abdullah**, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades engineering unit operative. The date and circumstances of his death are unknown. His name did not appear on the Hamas-affiliated lists of fatalities, but did appear on the Palestinian Health Ministry in Ramallah’s list.


[Image: Mohammad Kamal Qdeih, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operative (Facebook)]


[Image: Haitham Al-Awour, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operative (Facebook)]

13. **Ahmed Kamel Jarbu’a**, Salafist-jihadi network operative in the Gaza Strip. Killed on August 26, 2014, in an attack on a group of terrorist operatives in Rafah, while they were launching rockets at Israel. His name did not appear on the Hamas-affiliated lists and on the Palestinian Health Ministry in Ramallah’s list.

Death notice on Twitter in memory of Ahmed Kamel Jarbu’a, Salafist-jihadi network operative in the Gaza Strip (Twitter)

14. **Muhammad Salah al-Riyati**, Salafist-jihadi network operative in the Gaza Strip. Killed on August 26, 2014, in an airstrike on a group of terrorist operatives in Rafah, while they were launching rockets at Israel. This is the same incident in which Ahmed Kamel Jarbu’a (No. 13 on the list) was killed. His name did not appear on the Hamas-affiliated lists and on the Palestinian Health Ministry in Ramallah’s list.

Burial of Salafist-jihadi operative Muhammad Salah al-Riyati (PALDF.com)
15. **Yussuf Ghanam**, Salafist-jihadi network operative in the Gaza Strip. Killed on August 26, 2014, in an airstrike on a group of jihadi terrorist operatives in Rafah, while they were launching rockets at Israel. His name did not appear on the Hamas-affiliated lists and on the Palestinian Health Ministry in Ramallah’s list (Note: in the past, he was erroneously identified by the ITIC as a PIJ operative).

17. Hamam Hamada, operative in the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades elite (Al-Nukhba) unit. The circumstances and date of his death are unclear. His name did not appear on the Hamas-affiliated lists and on the Palestinian Health Ministry in Ramallah’s list.

18. Abd al-Rahman al-Qataa, operative in the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades elite (Al-Nukhba) unit. The circumstances and date of his death are unclear. His name did not appear on the Hamas-affiliated lists of fatalities and on the Palestinian Health Ministry in Ramallah’s list.
19. **Muhammad Rasmi Salem Al-Najjar**, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operative. How and when he was killed is unknown. His name did not appear on the Hamas-affiliated lists of fatalities, but did appear on the Palestinian Health Ministry in Ramallah’s list.

21. **Hassan Shaaban al-Khamisi**, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operative. The date and circumstances of his death are unknown. His name did not appear on the Hamas-affiliated lists and on the Palestinian Health Ministry in Ramallah’s list.

22. **Hamed Mohammad Aslim**, operative in both the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades and Hamas’s security apparatus. Killed in Shejaiya on an unknown date. His name did not appear on the Hamas-affiliated lists and on the Palestinian Health Ministry in Ramallah’s list.

24. **Ahmed Nazmi Saada**, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operative. According to the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades website, he was killed in battle with the IDF on July 19, 2014, in the central Gaza Strip. His name did not appear on the Hamas-affiliated lists and on the Palestinian Health Ministry in Ramallah’s list.

![Amr Tareq Qandil, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operative (Pinterest)](image)

26. **Nidal Khaled al-Zaanin**, operative in the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades elite (Al-Nukhba) unit. The date and circumstances of his death are unknown. His name did not appear on the Hamas-affiliated lists and on the Palestinian Health Ministry in Ramallah’s list.

![Nidal Khaled al-Zaanin, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operative (YouTube)](image)
27. **Rashad Ahmed Rashad Al-Najjar (Abu Ahmed), Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operative** killed on August 6, 2014, in fighting with IDF forces in the area of Ikhza’a. His name did not appear on the Hamas-affiliated lists of fatalities, but did appear on the Palestinian Health Ministry in Ramallah’s list.

![Rashad Ahmed Rashad Al-Najjar (Abu Ahmed), Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operative](alnajjar.ps)


![Ismail Zuheir Muhammadin, operative in the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades elite (Al-Nukhba) unit](YouTube, October 18, 2014)


33. Muhammad Talal al-Masri, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operative. The date and circumstances of his death are unknown. His name did not appear on the Hamas-affiliated lists and on the Palestinian Health Ministry in Ramallah’s list.


![Mahmoud Abdul Nasser Bahar, operative in the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades elite (Al-Nukhba) unit (paldf.net)](image)


![Issam Muhammad Ibrahim Abu Salah, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operative (YouTube)](image)
37. **Fadi Mohammed Abu Odeh**, operative in the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades elite (Al-Nukhba) unit. Killed on August 9, 2014, in fighting with the IDF when he emerged from an assault tunnel and attacked an IDF tank in Al-Qarara, in the area of Khan Yunis. His name did not appear on the Hamas-affiliated lists and on the Palestinian Health Ministry in Ramallah’s list.

![Fadi Mohammed Abu Odeh](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

38. **Bassem Mohammad al-Agha**, operative in the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades elite (Al-Nukhba) unit. Killed on August 9, 2014, in fighting with the IDF when he emerged from an assault tunnel and attacked an IDF tank in Al-Qarara, in the area of Khan Yunis. Killed in the incident in which Fadi Mohammed Abu Odeh (No. 37 on the list) was killed. His name did not appear on the Hamas-affiliated lists and on the Palestinian Health Ministry in Ramallah’s list.

![Bassem Mohammad Al-Agha](https://via.placeholder.com/150)
Killed on July 22, 2014, in an attack on his house in the Abasan neighborhood of 
Khan Yunis. His name did not appear on the Hamas-affiliated lists and on the 
Palestinian Health Ministry in Ramallah’s list.

40. **Shadi Muhammad Jumaa Abu Zaher**, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operative. 
Killed on August 1, 2014, probably in the area of Nuseirat. His name did not appear 
on the Hamas-affiliated lists of fatalities, but did appear on the Palestinian Health 
Ministry in Ramallah’s list.
41. **Issam Mohammad Hosni Abu Yusuf**, operative in the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades elite (Al-Nukhba) unit. How and when he was killed is unknown. His name did not appear on the Hamas-affiliated lists of fatalities, but did appear on the Palestinian Health Ministry in Ramallah’s list.


46. *Ali Jandiya*, Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades commander. Also belonged to one of Hamas’s security apparatus (the national security force). Killed in an airstrike on his house in Shejaiya on July 18, 2014. His name did not appear on the Hamas-affiliated lists and on the Palestinian Health Ministry in Ramallah’s list.


Left: Poster in his memory issued by the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades (Facebook). Right: Muhammad Kashku, operative in the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades elite (Al-Nukhba) unit, in a Facebook page opened in his memory (Facebook).

50. **Shadi Salman Ali Aliwa**, commander in the Al-Quds Battalions, the military wing of the PIJ. Killed on August 26, 2014, in an attack in eastern Gaza. His name did not appear on the Hamas-affiliated lists and on the Palestinian Health Ministry in Ramallah’s list.