



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

(July 15 –21, 2015)



A Hamas military-terrorist wing banner on the Temple Mount for Eid al-Fitr. In the center it shows a hand holding dog tags, apparently those of the IDF soldiers killed in Operation Protective Edge whose bodies are held by Hamas. The Arabic reads, (left) "Oh, Jerusalem, we are coming," with a picture of Hamas military wing spokesman Abu Obeida, and (right), "[To] our prisoners: victory is coming soon and the promise will be kept" (Facebook page of the Islamic bloc, Hamas' student organization at Bir Zeit University, July 18, 2015).

Overview

- This past week one rocket hit was identified in the western Negev in the region of the southern coastal city of Ashqelon. Responsibility was claimed by the ISIS-affiliated jihadi network that also claimed responsibility for other rockets recently fired. Five cars belonging to senior Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) operatives were blown up in the Gaza Strip, apparently by the same ISIS-affiliated network. Hamas responded with a wave of detentions.
- During July 2015 there has been a decrease in the number of terrorist attacks in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem, but **their lethality and the daring of the perpetrators increased**. This past week the Israeli security forces exposed two networks, one Hamas and the other Fatah, that had carried out a number of shooting attacks, killing two Israelis and wounding four. The network included operatives who had previously been imprisoned in Israel, among them **two who had been released in the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal**. The Hamas network was directed from **Jordan** by Hamas terrorist operatives released in the Gilad Shalit deal.

Israel's South

Rocket Fire Attacking Israel

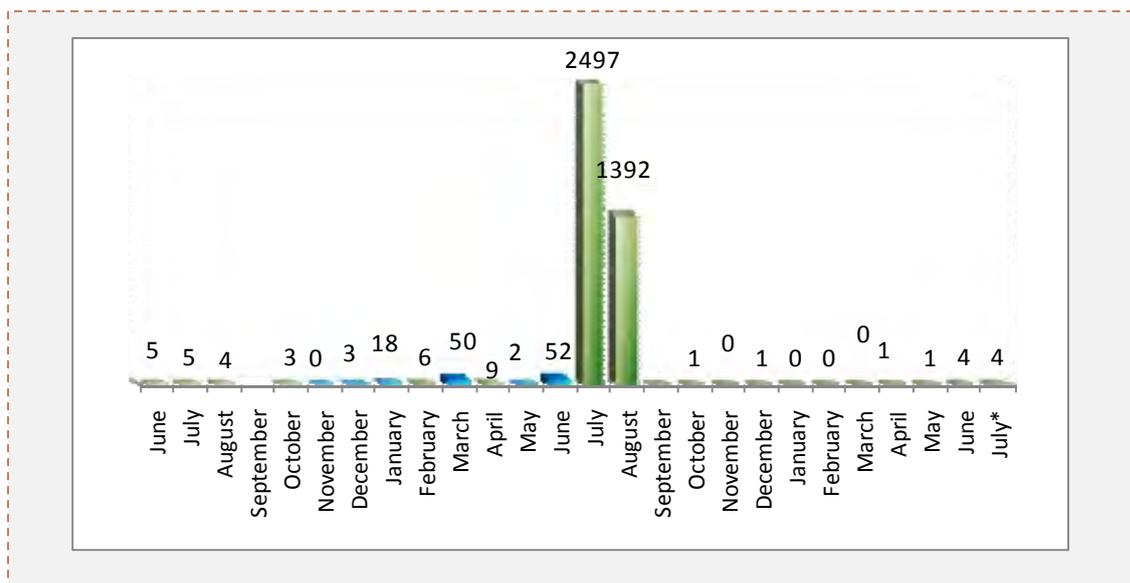
- On July 16, 2015, a rocket hit was identified in the western Negev in the region of Ashqelon. It fell in an open area; there were no casualties and no damage was reported. As in the other instances of rocket fire in June and July, responsibility was claimed by an ISIS-affiliated network calling itself the **Company of Sheikh Omar Hadid – Bayt al-Maqdis**.¹ According to the network's claim, two rockets were fired in response to "Israel's crimes" against the Palestinians in Jerusalem and because Israeli planes attack in the Sinai Peninsula. It also claimed the rockets had hit an electric company installation in Ashqelon (The Company of Sheikh Omar Hadid Twitter account, July 16, 2015).



The claim of responsibility issued by the Company of Sheikh Omar Hadid (Company of Sheikh Omar Hadid Twitter account, July 16, 2015).

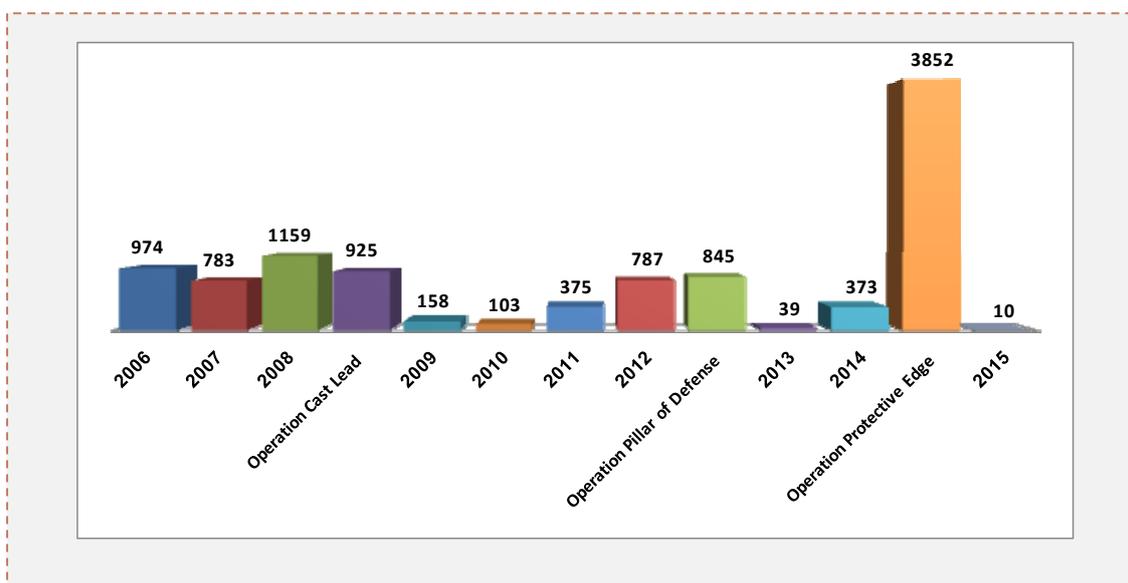
¹ For further information about rocket fire attacking Israel since Operation Protective Edge, see the July 16, 2015 report, ["The Gaza Strip One Year after Operation Protective Edge: An Overview."](#)

Monthly Distribution of Rocket Fire (2013 – 2015)²



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

Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire in Israel's South³



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

² As of July 21, 2015. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire or rockets which misfired and fell inside the Gaza Strip.

³ The statistics do not include mortar shell fire or rockets which misfired and fell inside the Gaza Strip.

Israel's Response

■ In response to the rocket fire Israel Air Force (IAF) aircraft attacked terrorist sites in the Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman, date, 2015). The Palestinian media reported that a Hamas military post in the region of the Al-Bureij refugee camp in the southern Gaza Strip was attacked, and that a woman was injured. It was also reported that the IAF attacked in the region of the Jabaliya refugee camp (Alresala.net and Paltoday, July 16, 2015).



Hamas post attacked by IAF aircraft (Facebook page of PALDF, July 16, 2015).

Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem

"Popular Resistance" Terrorism and Violence Continue

■ This past week violence and popular terrorism continued at the usual locations in Judea, Samaria and east Jerusalem, part of what the Palestinians call the "popular resistance" (i.e., popular terrorism). The violence mainly centered on throwing stones, rocks and Molotov cocktails at Israeli security forces and civilians. Some of the prominent attacks were the following:

- On **July 19, 2015**, a Palestinian threw an improvised IED near Na'ale (west of Ramallah). It did not explode (Red Alert, July 19, 2015).
- On **July 18, 2015**, a Palestinian threw a Molotov cocktail at an Israeli vehicle near the Tunnel Junction in Gush Etzion. There were no casualties (Red Alert, July 18, 2015).
- On **July 17, 2015**, Palestinians threw Molotov cocktails and stones at the Israeli security forces during operational activities in the Silwan neighborhood of

east Jerusalem and the village of Jayus in Samaria. An IDF soldier incurred minor injuries (Red Alert, July 17, 2015).

- On **July 15, 2015**, an IDF soldier was stabbed and wounded by a female Palestinian in an attack that took place at the Bitilu junction near the Jewish community of Nahliel west of Ramallah.



The Palestinian woman who carried out the stabbing attack (Tazpit News Agency, July 15, 2015).

Exposure of Terrorist Networks that Carried Out Shooting Attacks

■ This past week the Israeli security forces exposed **two Palestinian terrorist networks that recently carried out a number of shooting attacks, killing two Israelis and wounding four**. The operatives from one network **belonged to Hamas** and **their activities were directed from Jordan**. The other network **belonged to Fatah-Tanzim**. In both networks there were operatives who had been imprisoned in Israel in the past for terrorist activities, **two of whom were released in the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal**. It was not the first time operatives from the Gilad Shalit deal were involved in terrorist attacks where Israelis were killed, including the abduction and murder of the three Jewish youths from Gush Etzion in June 2014.

Exposure of the Hamas Network that Carried out the Shooting Attack⁴

- The Israeli security forces detained operatives of a Hamas military-terrorist network, all, with the exception of one, from the town of Silwad (northeast of Ramallah). **The operatives were involved in the shooting attack on June 29, 2015, near the Israeli community of Shvut Rachel, killing Malachi Rosenfeld and wounding three other young men.**⁵ Some of the operatives were detained by the Palestinian Authority's (PA) security forces.
- **The terrorist network was also responsible for a shooting attack two days earlier that targeted an Israeli ambulance and other vehicles.** During interrogation the operatives revealed the attacks were directed by **Ahmed Najar**, a Hamas operative imprisoned in Israel for shooting attacks which killed six Israelis. Ahmed Najar was released in the Gilad Shalit deal and deported to the Gaza Strip. **He moved from there to Jordan**, where he directed attacks of Palestinian terrorist operatives in Judea and Samaria.
- Information about the operatives in the network:
 - **Amjad Najar**, Hamas terrorist operative, brother of network handler Ahmed Najar. In the past he was arrested in Israel several times for popular terrorist activities. During interrogation he said he had transmitted instructions, weapons and funding from his brother to the network for carrying out terrorist attacks.
 - **Abdallah Isshaq** was detained in the past for arms dealing and popular terrorist activities. He was involved in planning the attack and drove the car.
 - **Muaz Hamed**, Hamas operative, was detained a number of times in the past for involvement in planning terrorist attacks. He is currently in the hands of the Palestinian security forces. He was apparently the shooter.
 - **Ahmed Shabrawi**, Hamas operative, was detained a number of times in the past for involvement in planning terrorist attacks and is currently in the hands of the Palestinian security forces. He apparently provided the weapons for the attacks.

⁴ Israel Security Agency, July 19, 2015

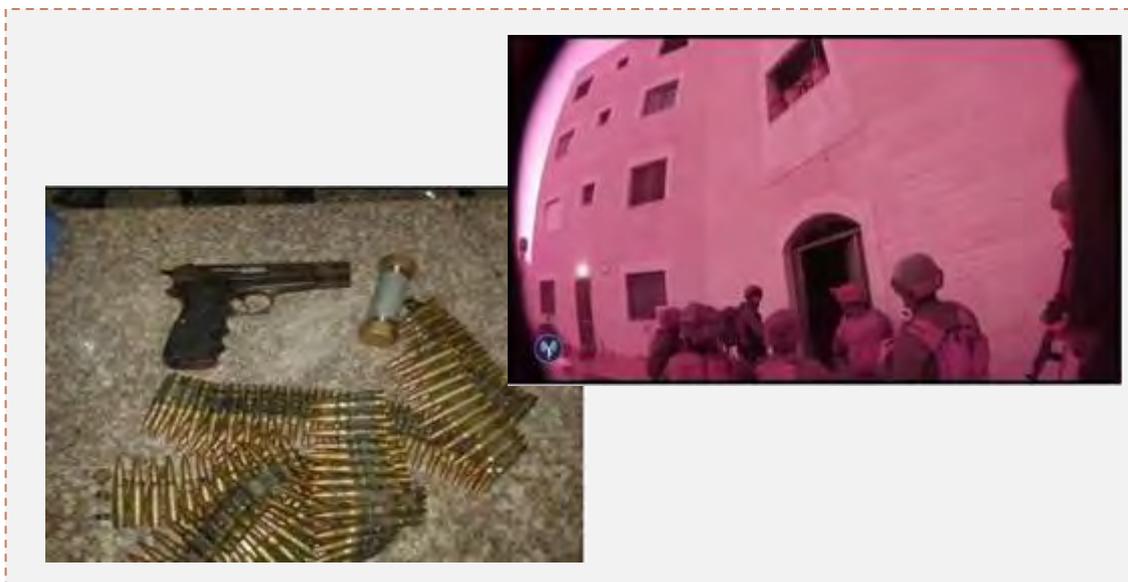
⁵ On June 29, 2015, four Israelis were wounded by gunfire from a passing Palestinian vehicle near the community of Shvut Rachel in Judea. All four were from the community of Kochav HaShahar in northern Judea. The shooters fled the scene.

- [Bullet] **Faez Hamed**, senior Hamas operative, was detained a number of times in the past for involvement in Hamas terrorist activities. He helped plan the shooting attack.
- **Jamal Jamil Yunis**, from Qusra in Samaria, is Amjad Najjar's father-in-law. He took the car used in the attack to be compacted, mediated the purchase of the weapons and **met with Najjar in Jordan**.

Detention of the Perpetrators of the Attack Carried Out in the Region of Dolev

- Israeli security force activity resulted in the detention of a squad of five Palestinian terrorist operatives from the Qalandia refugee camp (south of Ramallah). The terrorists carried out **a number of shooting attacks**, including the one at a local spring in the region of the Jewish community of Dolev on June 19, 2015 (killing Danny Gonen and wounding another Israeli civilian). During interrogation they revealed that before the attack near Dolev they had carried out a number of shooting attacks targeting Israeli security forces in the region of the Qalandia refugee camp, and that in preparation for the attack they conducted surveillance of the area around the spring to locate Israelis (Israel Security Agency, July 15, 2015).
- Information about terrorist operatives in the squad:
 - **Muhammad Abu Shahin**, a Fatah-Tanzim operative, was formerly an operative in Fatah's "Force 17." He receives a salary from the PA. Imprisoned in Israel in the past for having carried out shooting and stabbing attacks. He shot and killed Danny Gonen near the spring close to Dolev. In preparation for the attack he went to the spring a number of times. During 2014 he carried out six shooting attacks, wounding an IDF soldier in an attack he carried out in A-Ram.
 - **Amjad Adwan**, a Fatah-Tanzim terrorist, was detained and imprisoned a number of times in the past for dealing arms. He was involved in shooting and IED attacks.
 - **Ashraf Amar**, a PA military intelligence operative, along with Muhammad Abu Shahin, tried to carry out a terrorist attack at the spring near Dolev, but the two were unsuccessful.
 - **Osama Asad**, a Fatah-Tanzim terrorist, was imprisoned in the past for dealing arms and "popular resistance" (i.e., popular terrorism) activities. He was released in the Gilad Shalit deal.

- **Muhammad Adwan**, with no known terrorist organization affiliation or previous detentions. He hid a gun in his home. It was used to kill Danny Gonen, and in other shooting attacks.



Left: The gun used for the attack and ammunition found in the possession of squad's operatives (Israel Security Agency, July 15, 2015). Right: The apprehension of the terrorist squad in Silwad (IDF Spokesman, July 19, 2015).

Terrorist Attacks Carried Out in June 2015

■ There was a **decrease in the number of terrorist attacks** carried out in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem in June 2015. There were 120 attacks, compared with May 2015. However, **there was an increase in their lethality and in the daring of the perpetrators**. The following is an overview of the attacks (Israel Security Agency, July 14, 2015):

- **Modus operandi** – Most of the attacks involved **Molotov cocktails** (98 of the 120). **There were four shooting attacks (light arms), two stabbing attacks** (one of which was in Jerusalem), and 16 attacks involving IEDs.⁶
- **Victims** – **Two Israeli civilians were killed in shooting attacks in Judea and Samaria**. Eight Israelis (five civilians and two members of the security forces) were injured, some of them seriously.
- **Location** – There were 69 terrorist attacks in Judea and Samaria (compared with 91 in May 2015), and 51 in Jerusalem (60 in May 2015).

⁶ The statistics do not include the dozens of stones thrown at Israeli security forces, civilians and vehicles.

Developments in the Gaza Strip

The Crossing – Recent Developments

■ The Hamas crossings and border authority said in an announcement that **Maher Abu Subha**, who headed the authority for four years, would step down. A new head will be appointed by the department of civil affairs and passports in the Hamas ministry of the interior. The crossing authority praised Maher Abu Subha for the work he did during his term of office (Safa News Agency, July 14, 2015).

IED Attacks in the Gaza Strip

■ At approximately 0600 hours on July 19, 2015, **a series of explosions occurred in the Sheikh Radwan and Al-Nafaq neighborhoods of Gaza City**. The IEDs were placed in **the vehicles of five senior operatives of the military-terrorist wings of Hamas and the PIJ**. **ISIS graffiti** were sprayed near one of the bombed cars. Two passersby incurred minor injuries and damage was done to nearby buildings. An ISIS-affiliated network claimed responsibility for the attacks.

■ **Iyad al-Bazam**, spokesman for the Hamas ministry of the interior, said the security services had begun investigating the event. He later announced that a number of suspects had been apprehended and were being interrogated by Hamas security (Facebook page of the ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip, July 19, 2015).

■ According to a posting on the Facebook page of the association of Salafist families of detainees in the prisons in the Gaza Strip, a number of hours after the explosions **Hamas' security forces initiated a wave of detentions of Salafist activists**. According to the posting, the Salafists in the Gaza Strip were in no way involved in the IED attacks, and would respond Hamas' actions against them **by firing rockets at Israel**.

■ The military-terrorist wings of Hamas and the PIJ issued a joint statement claiming that the bombings served the interests of Israel and those responsible for them were traitors trying to sabotage the "resistance" [i.e., the Palestinian terrorist organizations]. According to the statement, they would **pursue the perpetrators** and at the same time continue to defend the Palestinian people and plan for a confrontation with Israel (Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades website, July 19, 2015).

■ **Ahmed al-Mudallal**, a senior PIJ operative, said that whoever was responsible for the bombings obviously supported Israel (Al-Quds TV, July 19, 2015). **Salah al-Bardawil**, senior Hamas operative in the Gaza Strip, accused Israeli intelligence and

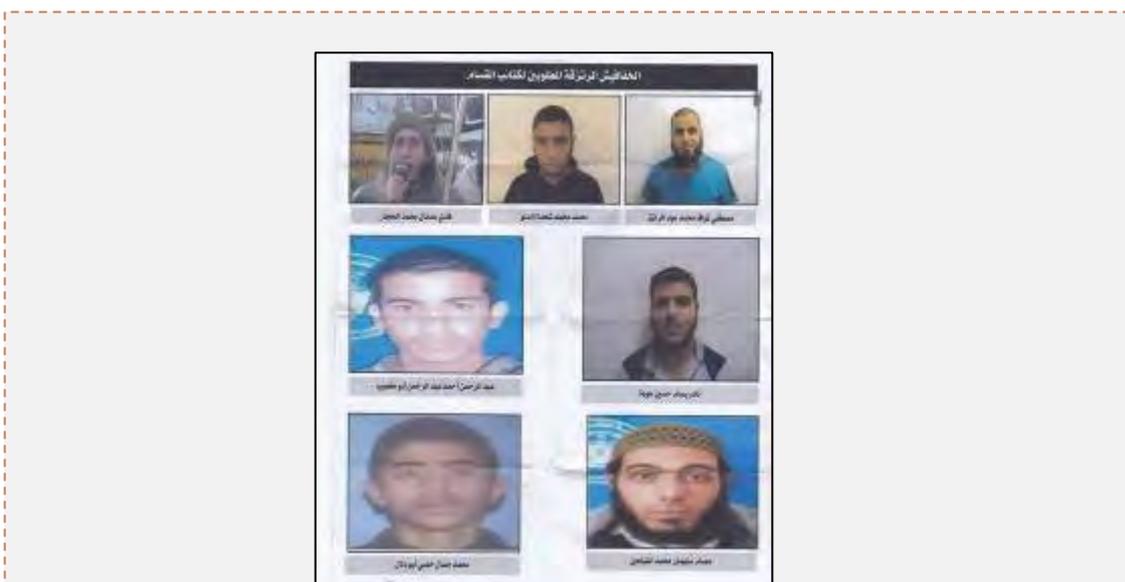
the PA of responsibility for the bombings, whose objective, he claimed, was to embarrass "the Palestinian resistance" (Palinfo, July 20, 2015).



Left: ISIS graffiti sprayed on a wall near site of one of the explosions. Right: The vehicle after the IED attack (Facebook page of PALDF, July 19, 2015).

■ On July 20, 2015, Hamas military-terrorist wing posted the **pictures of seven ISIS operatives** in the Gaza Strip wanted for involvement in the bombings in the Sheikh Radwan neighborhood. Their names were (Facebook page of PALDF, July 20, 2015):

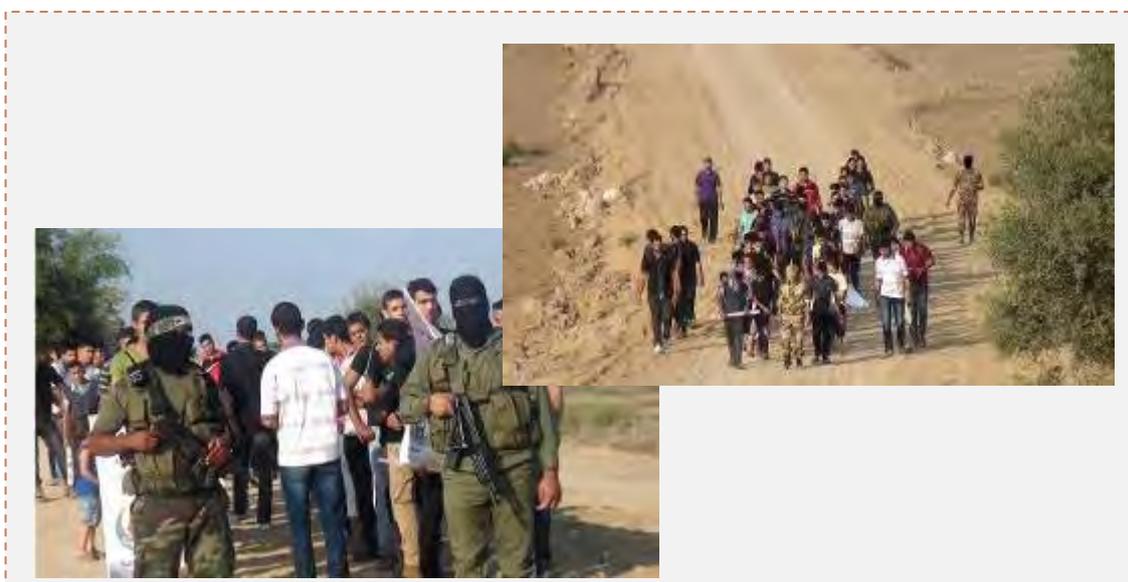
- Muhammad Muhammad Shhadeh al-Dilu
- Mustafa Nawaf Muhammad Abd al-Razeq
- Nader Bassam Hussein Jawda
- Issam Suleiman Muhammad al-Nabahin
- Muhammad Jamal Hilmi Abu Dalal
- Abd al-Rahman Ahmed Abd al-Rahman Abu Mughasib
- Fadi Adnan Muhammad al-Hajar



The seven ISIS-affiliated operatives in the Gaza Strip wanted by Hamas' military-terrorist wing for involvement in the bombings in the Sheikh Radwan neighborhood of Gaza City (Facebook page of PALDF, July 20, 2015).

Hamas Holds a Tour of the Gaza Strip Border with Israel

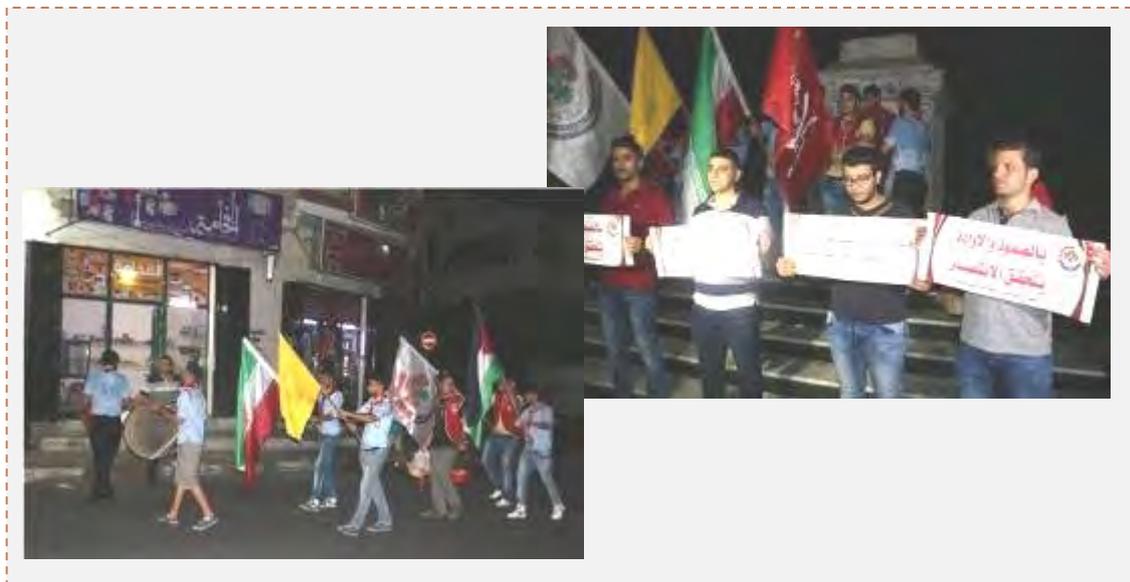
- On July 15, 2015, Hamas operatives organized a tour along the Gaza Strip border with Israel to mark the first anniversary of Operation Protective Edge. It was held in the region known as Abu Mutibaq (near the Israeli community of Ein HaShlosa, infiltrated by Hamas terrorists who then killed two IDF soldiers).



Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operatives lead a tour along the Gaza Strip border with Israel (Ghaza al-A'an, July 15, 2015).

Demonstration in the Gaza Strip in Support of Iran

■ On July 16, 2015, the youth wing of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) held a march in Gaza City in support of the nuclear agreement signed by Iran and the world powers, which they called "the victory of Iranian determination." Marchers waved Hezbollah and Iranian flags and distributed candy (Facebook page of the Holy Land Network for Communications, July 16, 2015).



Iranian and Hezbollah flags and signs in support of Iran in a march held by PFLP activists in the Gaza Strip (Facebook page of the Holy Land Network for Communications, July 16, 2015).

Hamas Delegation Visits Saudi Arabia

■ A Hamas delegation headed by **Khaled Mashaal**, head of Hamas' political bureau; **Musa Abu Marzouq**, a member of the bureau; and senior Hamas figures **Saleh al-Arouri and Muhammad Nizal**, paid an official visit to Saudi Arabia, **the first in three years**. They met with **Salman bin Abd Aziz**, the Saudi king; the Emir **Muhammad bin Naif**, the heir apparent; and several other senior figures (Hamas website, July 18, 2015). After the visit **Ismail Haniya**, deputy head of Hamas' political bureau, claimed it had been successful and that he hoped it would be the beginning of renewing the historic relations between Hamas and the Saudis (Safa News Agency, July 18, 2015).

In ITIC assessment the **Hamas political leadership feels it is in its own best interests to improve relations with Saudi Arabia**. One reason is to **leverage those relations into closer ties with Egypt to relieve Hamas' political isolation**. However, improved ties with Saudi Arabia are a point of dissention between Hamas' political and military wings. While favored by the political wing, the military wing wants better relations with Iran, which it regards as a source of funding and weapons, and thus it raises obstacles to improved relations with the Saudis and Egyptians.



Left: Three senior Hamas figures in Mecca (Facebook page of Quds.net, July 17, 2015) Right: Khaled Mashaal meets with the Saudi king (Saudi TV, July 17, 2015).

The Palestinian Authority

Terrorism Encouraged by Hamas' Student Organization

- On the eve of Eid al-Fitr Hamas hung a giant banner in front of Al-Aqsa mosque. In the center it shows a hand holding dog tags, apparently those of the IDF soldiers killed in Operation Protective Edge whose bodies are held by Hamas. The Arabic reads, (left) "Oh, Jerusalem, we are coming," with a picture of Hamas military wing spokesman Abu Obeida, and (right), "[To] our prisoners: victory is coming soon and the promise will be kept" (Facebook page of the Islamic bloc, Hamas' student organization at Bir Zeit University, July 18, 2015).
- On the eve of Eid al-Fitr the Islamic bloc of Al-Najah University in Nablus posted its own version of the traditional Eid al-Fitr blessing. The Islamic bloc's version encourages the "resistance" (i.e., terrorism). The picture shows armed, masked Hamas military-terrorist operatives standing behind two armed children.



From the Facebook page of the Islamic bloc in Al-Najah University, July 18, 2015.

The Battle for Hearts and Minds

The Palestinian Return Centre (PRC) Receives UN Accreditation

- On July 20, 2015, the UN gave official accreditation to the Palestinian Return Centre (PRC), regardless of Israel's argument that the organization is affiliated with Hamas. The decision came after the UN Committee on NGOs recommended the organization receive status as a consultant. Israel failed to prevent the decision. In the vote, which was held on July 20, 2015, 13 countries supported the Israeli request, 16 countries opposed and 18 abstained, and **the PRC was officially accredited**. The PRC stated it would sue Israel for slander (Twitter account of the PRC, July 21, 2015).
- The PRC represents itself as an independent consultation organization dedicated to finding a solution for the problem of the Palestinian refugees. In reality, it is an anti-Israeli propaganda organization established in London in 1996. **It is affiliated with Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood and several of its senior figures are Hamas operatives who sought and found a safe haven in Britain**. Founded in opposition to the Oslo Accords, it strongly denies the right of the State of Israel to exist. It advocates the so-called "right of return" of the Palestinian refugees and their descendants to the places they fled from in 1948, and considers it as its main tool to destroy Israel and prevent any political process. The PRC conducts extensive anti-Israeli propaganda activity in Britain, Europe and other countries around the globe

and is an important organization in the network waging the international campaign to delegitimize Israel.⁷

Proposal for ICC Deliberation of the Mavi Marmara Affair

- On July 16, 2015, the Union of the Comoros lodged a proposal with the chief prosecutor of International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague to reconsider the decision not to investigate the Israeli attack on the *Mavi Marmara* flotilla (ICC website, July 16, 2015).
- On November 6, 2014, the chief prosecutor issued a ruling stating that after the initial investigation requested by the Union of the Comoros, it was decided not to prosecute because the necessary legal conditions for continuing the investigation according to the Rome Convention had not been met, and that the event did not justify additional action by the court. On January 29, 2015, the Union of the Comoros requested that the initial ruling be reexamined (ICC website, July 16, 2015).
- In response, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that "DF soldiers acted in self-defense in stopping an attempt to break through the maritime closure that was carried out in accordance with international law as determined by a committee appointed by the UN Secretary General, a commission headed by a Supreme Court judge and international observers..." (Israeli prime minister's website, July 16, 2015).

⁷ For further information see the March 30, 2011 bulletin, ["The Palestinian Return Centre: London-based center for anti-Israeli propaganda, affiliated with Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood, outlawed in Israel. It promotes the demand of the Palestinian refugees to return as a way of destroying Israel. Senior PRC figures send flotillas and convoys to the Gaza Strip and transfer funds to Hamas."](#)