



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

(July 28 – August 4, 2015)



Jewish terrorism: a baby murdered by the firebombing of a home in the village of Duma, near Nablus. Left: The funeral held in Duma for the baby, Ali Dawabsha (Wafa News Agency, July 31, 2015). Right: A notice issued by Hamas calling to the Palestinian public after the attack in Duma. The Arabic reads, "Oh, my Palestinian people, rise up" (Palinfo, July 31, 2015).

Overview

- This past week events focused on the murder of a Palestinian baby and the injuring of three of his family member in a firebombing attack in the village of Duma (near Nablus). **The Israeli prime minister and president condemned the attack** in the strongest terms, declaring it violated the tenets of Judaism. The **security cabinet** designated it a terrorist attack in every respect and authorized a series of measures to fight Jewish terrorism, **including the use of administrative detentions**.
- **The Palestinian Authority** blamed the government of Israel, accusing it of responsibility for the attack and announcing it would take a number of measures. One of them was the inclusion of the attack in the file submitted to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague. However, senior PA figures did not use rhetoric that might inflame the emotions of the Palestinians and cause the situation on the ground to deteriorate. Senior Hamas figures, on the other hand, called for revenge.
- Several rockets were launched at Israel from the Gaza Strip by Salafist-jihadi networks. They have been responsible for the rockets fired in the past few months.

Israel's South

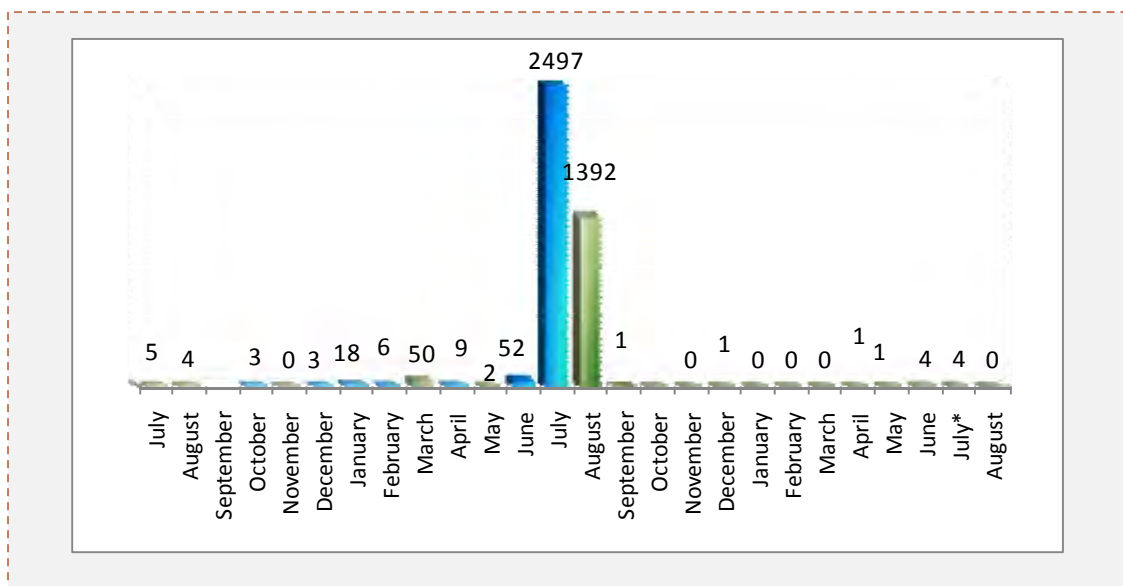
Rocket Fire Attacking Israel

- This past week a number of rockets were launched at Israel from the Gaza Strip. They fell inside the Gaza Strip and near the border security fence. **ISIS's Sinai Province claimed responsibility for the rocket fire** (Twitter account of the Sinai Province, August 1, 2015).
- Responsibility for the rocket fire was also claimed by an ISIS-affiliated Salafist-jihadi network in the Gaza Strip calling itself "the descendants of the Prophet [Muhammad]'s followers – greater Jerusalem – Gaza." According to its Twitter account, it is responsible for the rockets fired at Israel during the past week. They include a rocket fired at the community of Zikim (north of the Gaza Strip) on July 31, 2015; the firing of two rockets at the community of Beeri (western Negev) on August 1, 2015; and the firing of two rockets at the community of Re'em (western Negev) on August 1, 2015 (Twitter account of the network, August 1, 2015). The reliability of the claims is unclear.



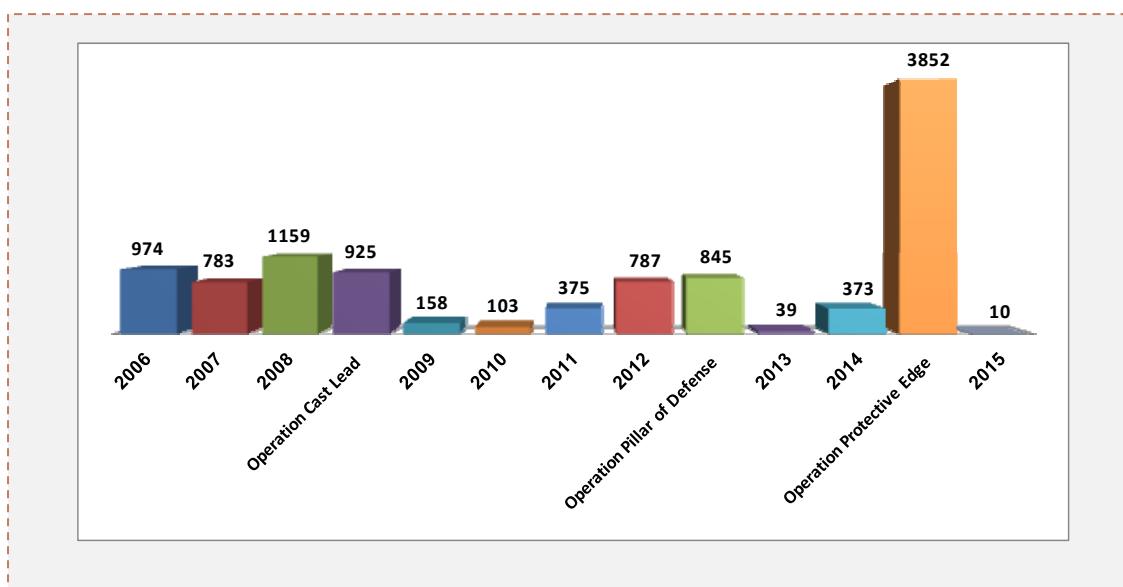
The claim of responsibility issued by the ISIS-affiliated Salafist-jihadi network in the Gaza Strip (Twitter account, August 1, 2015).

Monthly Distribution of Rocket Fire (2013 – 2015)¹



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

Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire in Israel's South²



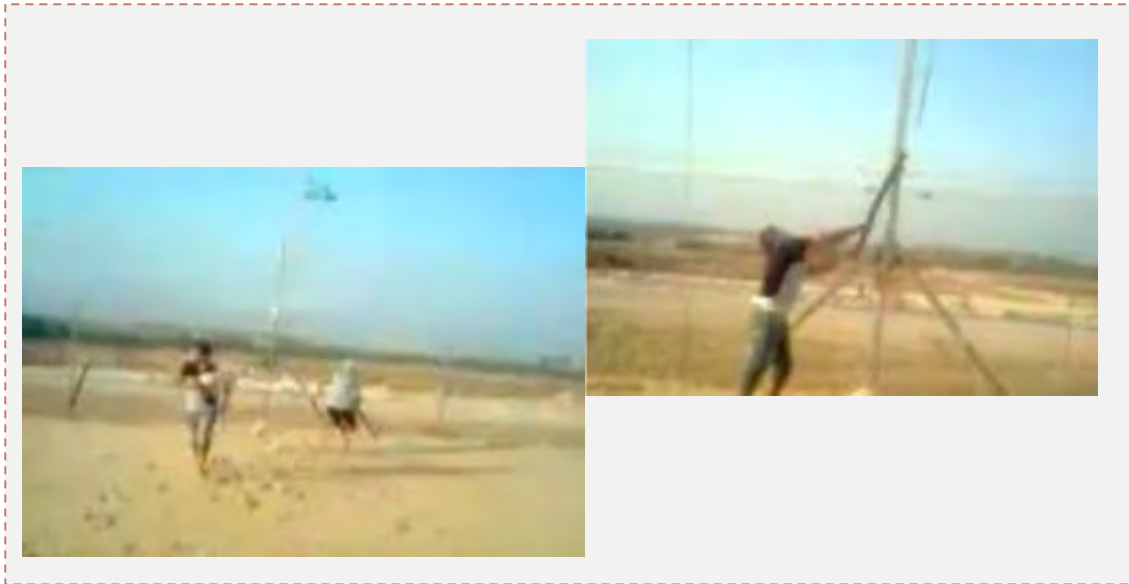
*The data include the three rockets launched by ISIS's Sinai Province from the Sinai Peninsula

■ A Palestinian youth was shot and killed by an IDF force. **Muhammad al-Masri**, 17, was shot at a location **north of Beit Lahia, near the security fence in the northern Gaza Strip**. He and another Palestinian approached the border security fence and did

¹ As of August 4, 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.

not heed the IDF's calls to turn back (Ynet, August 1, 2015). A video posted on a Facebook page from the Gaza Strip **showed al-Masri go to the fence, hang a Hamas flag on a camera pole, vandalize the cameras with a stick and then run away.** The Palestinians claimed he was avenging the death of the baby, Ali Dawabsha (Facebook page of Shihab, August 1, 2015).



Left: Al-Masri and another Palestinian run away. The Hamas flag is at the top of the pole. Right: Muhammad al-Masri uses a stick to vandalize the cameras (Facebook page of Shihab, August 1, 2015).

Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem

Jewish Terrorist Attack in Duma

- On the night of July 30, 2015, a baby was murdered and three of his family members were injured by a firebombing attack on a house in Palestinian village of Duma (near Nablus). The initial investigation revealed that at around 0400 hours two masked persons went to the village, broke windows in the houses of two Palestinian families and tossed in Molotov cocktails. Hebrew hate graffiti was sprayed on the walls of houses in the village.
- One of the houses was empty at the time of the attack. Ali Dawabsha, an eighteen month-old baby, was killed, and his parents and four year-old brother were critically injured. They were evacuated to a hospital in Israel. Reinforcements were sent and IDF soldiers searched the area to locate the arsonists and bring them to trial as quickly as possible (IDF Spokesman, July 31, 2015).
- On August 1, 2015, the funeral of Ali Dawabsha was held. Among those attending were **Rami Hamdallah**, prime minister of the Palestinian national consensus

government; **Muhammad al-Alul and Sultan Abu Al-Einein**, both members of Fatah's Central Committee; **Akram Rajoub**, Nablus district governor; **Faraj al-Alul**, head of general intelligence; and other senior PA figures (Wafa News Agency, August 1, 2015).



Ali Dawabsha, the murdered baby (RoyaNews, July 31, 2015).

Responses

Israel

■ **Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu** opened the weekly government meeting by saying, "Our policy toward these crimes is zero tolerance. I have instructed security and law-enforcement officials to use all legal means at their disposal to apprehend the murderers and deal with [them]... to the fullest extent of the law. We are determined to vigorously fight manifestations of hate, fanaticism and terrorism from whatever side. The fight against [them] unites us all...This is a matter of basic humanity and is at the foundation of our enlightened Jewish values" (Website of the Israeli prime minister, August 2, 2015).

■ **The Israeli political security-cabinet** said in a statement that it regarded the firebombing attack and murder in Duma as **a terrorist attack in every respect**. The cabinet instructed Israeli security forces to take all the measures necessary to bring those responsible to justice and prevent similar attacks in the future. It also authorized the use of all measures necessary against Jewish terrorists, **including administrative detentions** when warranted, and asked for the Knesset to pass a bill quickly to fight all types of terrorism.

■ The IDF Spokesman said that the attack in Duma was **a terrorist attack in every respect**. **IDF Chief of Staff Gadi Eisenkot** condemned the attack and called it

"extremely serious." He held a meeting to discuss the issue and ordered a series of measures to be instituted in Judea and Samaria to keep the situation from deteriorating, prevent friction and preserve stability (IDF Spokesman, July 31, 2015).

The Palestinian Authority

■ **The PA was enraged and blamed the government of Israel and its settlement policy for the murder.** Senior PA figures called on the international community to take steps against Israel and to add the Jewish extreme group, the so-called the "hilltop youth," to the list of global terrorist organizations. Mahmoud Abbas convened an emergency meeting of the Palestinian leadership. One of the responses was a decision to include the incident in the file the PA was submitting to the ICC (Wafa News Agency, July 31, 2015). **However, senior figures in the PA did not make statements that could inflame the Palestinians' emotions.**

■ A selection of statements made by the senior PA figures were the following:

- Speaking to the Palestinian leadership, **Mahmoud Abbas** strongly condemned the attack. He claimed it was the direct result of the Israeli government's continuing settlement policies. He claimed they were directed against the Palestinian people and their objective was to evict the Palestinians from their land (Wafa News Agency, July 31, 2015). He also claimed there were many Muslim organizations the Israelis considered terrorist organizations, and demanded the international community, the UN and the United States also recognize the Jewish groups as terrorist organizations. He claimed the attack was a war crime and a crime against humanity, and therefore nothing could prevent the Palestinians from appealing to the ICC (Palestinian TV, July 31, 2015).

- Mahmoud Abbas' spokesman **Nabil Abu Rudeina** claimed the crime would not have occurred if the Israeli government had not insisted on continuing construction in the settlements. He also claimed that the silence of the international community and the immunity of the Jewish terrorists were what had led to the attack. He claimed the killing at the village of Duma would "spearhead" the files the Palestinians presented to the ICC (Wafa News Agency, July 31, 2015). He called on the American government and the EU, which opposed the settlements, to take steps. However, **he said that security coordination with Israel would continue because it served the Palestinian people and not only Israel** (Almayadeen, July 31, 2015).

- **Riyadh al-Maliki**, the foreign minister of the Palestinian national consensus government, demanded the groups of settlers, the so-called "price tag" or "hilltop youth," be considered terrorist organizations in every respect and be outlawed. He went to The Hague where he met with Ms. Fatou Bensouda, the ICC's attorney general, and gave her a report on the attack in Duma. He called on the ICC to accelerate its investigation of the affair (Facebook page of Palestinian foreign ministry, August 3, 2015).



Riyadh al-Maliki meets in The Hague with Ms. Fatou Bensouda, the attorney general of the ICC (Facebook page of Palestinian foreign ministry, August 3, 2015).

Hamas

- Senior Hamas figures accused Israel of responsibility for the baby's murder. **They also called on the Palestinians to intensify the "military attacks" [i.e., terrorism] against Israel in Judea and Samaria in response.**
- The statements of some of the senior Hamas figures were the following:
 - **Khaled Mashaal**, head of Hamas' political bureau, claimed it was a "despicable crime" against the Palestinian people and against all humanity, and the Israeli leadership was responsible. He claimed the fire lit by the settlers would not be extinguished as long as there were settlements on Palestinian land. He called for a response to the attack (Hamis website, July 31, 2015).
 - Senior Hamas figure **Musheir al-Masri** said the blood of the "shaheed infant" had not been shed in vain because it would curse all the adults coordinating with and who had connections to Israel, and all those [i.e., the PA] persecuting the "resistance." He claimed the only way to end the crimes of the Zionist enemy was

the solution found by the Palestinians in the intifadas of 1987 and 2000 (Al-Aqsa TV, July 31, 2015).

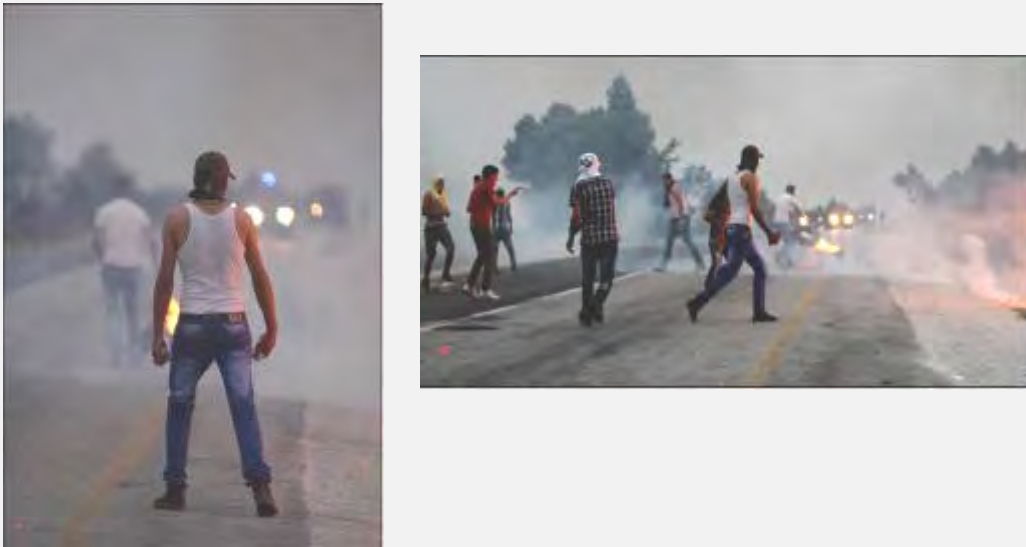
- Hamas spokesman **Husam Badran** claimed the Israeli leadership was responsible for the torching of the house in Duma because it incited Israelis to murder Palestinians. He claimed the crime turned the soldiers of the "occupation" and the settlers into legitimate targets for the resistance in every place and in every situation (Facebook page of Husam Badran, July 31, 2015).
- Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades spokesman **Abu Obeida** accused the Israeli government of responsibility for the attack, claiming that Hamas' military wing was now entitled to respond the burning of the baby (Ma'an News Agency, July 31, 2015).

The Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)

- PIJ secretary general **Ramadan Shallah** called on all the organizations, especially the PIJ's military wing, to escalate attacks against Israel (Alresala.net, date, 2015). Senior PIJ figure **Ahmed al-Mudallal** claimed the PA had to end the security coordination with Israel (Al-Aqsa TV, July 31, 2015).

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. The attacks increased in intensity following Hamas' announcement last week of a "day of rage" after the deaths of three Palestinians, and it increased even more after the attack in Duma.
- Riots occurred at a number of locations, among them Nablus, Hebron, the Jelazoun refugee camp and the Aida refugee camp (north of Bethlehem), Bayt Furik and the Qalandia roadblock. A large number of stone- and Molotov cocktail-throwing attacks were documented in Jerusalem.



Palestinians clash with Israeli security forces at the entrance to the village of Duma (Wafa News Agency, August 2, 2015).

■ Some of the central events were the following:

- On **August 3, 2015**, Palestinians threw a **Molotov cocktail** at an Israeli vehicle on the road near Beit Hanina north of Jerusalem. **The vehicle caught fire and a 27 year-old Israeli woman was seriously injured.**



Israeli firefighters put out the blaze caused by the Molotov cocktail thrown near Beit Hanina (Facebook page of QudsN, August 3,2015).

- On **August 3, 2015**, Palestinians threw stones at an Israeli vehicle near Beit Horon (west of Qalandia). There were no casualties and no damage was reported (Red Alert, August 3, 2015).

- On **August 3, 2015**, Palestinians threw stones and a Molotov cocktail at the Israeli security forces during a riot in Abu Dis, east of Jerusalem. There were no casualties (Red Alert, date, 2015).
- On **August 1, 2015**, a Palestinian youth was shot and wounded by Israeli security forces after he threw a Molotov cocktail at an IDF guard post near Bir Zeit; he later succumbed to his wounds (Ynet, August 1, 2015). The Palestinian media reported that **Laith Khaldi**, 17, from the village of Jifna, was wounded in the chest and evacuated to the hospital in Ramallah, where he was pronounced dead (Wafa and Ma'an news agencies, Alresala.net, August 1, 2015). He was accorded a funeral with full military honors. **The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)** issued a death notice claiming Khaldi had been one of their operatives (Arab48, August 2, 2015).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

Civil Affairs

- In response to UNRWA's announcing it would close its schools because of a budget deficit, Hamas warned of the consequences of such a step. **Suhail al-Hindi**, head of the UNRWA workers' union, blamed the agency for its deficit, claimed the motives [for closing the schools] were political and not financial, and that it was part of a comprehensive, long-range plan to stop all UNRWA activity (Filastin al-'Aan, July 27, 2015).

Hamas-Iran Relations

- In an interview with Al-Jazeera, **Musa Abu Marzouq**, a member of Hamas' political bureau, spoke about **Hamas' relations with Iran**. He said that despite the attempts made during frequent meetings Hamas had held with Iran, **relations had not improved as expected and the support Iran had given them in the past was no longer being provided**. He said the support had been **extensive and significant**, and **had contributed greatly to the activities of the "resistance"** [i.e., to the operations of Hamas' military-terrorist wing]. He said that **both military and civil support had been suspended**. He noted that Hamas sought closer and stronger relations with Iran but **so far all efforts to improve those relations had been unsuccessful** (Al-Jazeera, July 27, 2015).

The Salafists in the Gaza Strip

■ **Omar Kayed**, a political commentator and columnist for the Saudi Arabian newspaper Al-Hayat, wrote an article entitled "Worries about terrorist activity – the first signs of the early strikes against ISIS in the Gaza Strip." **He said that the Salafi-jihadists in the Gaza Strip were not yet a genuine threat to Hamas' control.** He said that there were **no more than two hundred Salafi-jihadist operatives** in the Gaza Strip. However, in his assessment their numbers would grow and they would become more powerful. That would leave Hamas no choice but to strike them hard and early, as it had the faction of the Jund Ansar Allah at the Ibn Taymmiyah mosque in 2009 (Al-Hayat, July 30, 2015).

Body of Hamas Terrorist Killed in Operation Protective Edge Located

■ The local Gazan media reported that on July 29, 2015, the body of **Mu'min Kamel al-Batash (Abu Islam)**, a Hamas military-terrorist wing operative from its elite Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades *nukhba* unit had been found. His body was found during road works carried out near one of the houses in the Al-Fatah neighborhood in eastern Gaza City. According to reports, al-Batash was killed on July 29, 2014 during Operation Protective Edge (Facebook page of "Al-Qassam shaheed" Mu'min Kamel al-Batash, July 29, 2015). In ITIC assessment there are still operatives missing, especially from the *nukhba* unit of Hamas' military-terrorist wing, whose names have not been made public.



Left: The funeral held for al-Batash in Gaza City. Right: Mu'min Kamel al-Batash (Facebook page of "Al-Qassam shaheed" Mu'min Kamel al-Batash, July 28, 2015).

Hamas' Summer Camps

■ On August 1, 2015, Hamas announced the opening of a new round of summer camps to be held in the schools throughout the Gaza Strip, called "The *Nukhba* Generation." They are meant for young Gazans, younger than those participating the "Pioneers of Liberation" camps. At a press conference for the launching of the camps, Hamas spokesman **Sami Abu Zuhri** noted their importance and the role they played in preparing the next generation. According to **Hani Muqbil**, spokesman for the central camp committee, **more than 50 thousand children are expected to attend the camps, where various activities will be held, including military activities.**



The logo of the "Nukhba Generation" summer camps

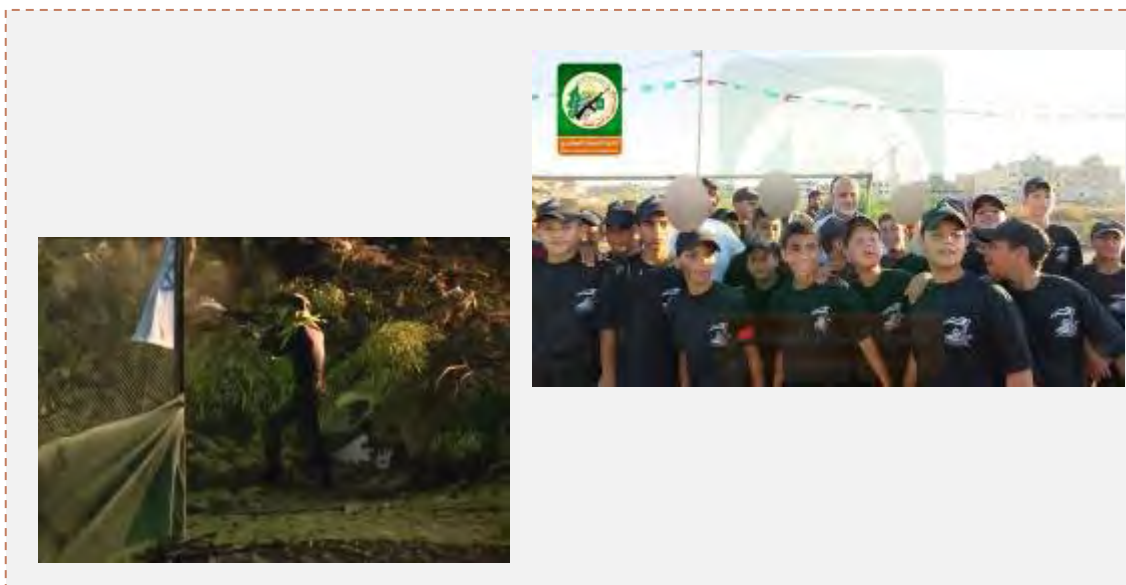
■ During the Hamas camps held last week throughout the Gaza Strip, the campers demonstrated their activities, which included **various types of military exercises.** There were many new displays (for both practical and propaganda purposes) **inspired by Operation Protective Edge** (Facebook page of the Pioneers of Liberation summer camps, July 28 – August 4, 2015):

- **Guarding an Israeli prisoner:** The display was held in a Pioneers of Liberation camp in the northern Gaza Strip. Two Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operatives were seen guarding a jail cell with a picture of Israeli Operation Protective Edge MIA IDF soldier Oron Shaul.
- **Naval exercises:** Campers in Khan Yunis held naval exercises. They were equipped with underwater guns and professional diving equipment.

- **Taking over an IDF camp:** In Khan Yunis a simulation was held of the takeover of an IDF camp and guard post during which the campers entered both, attacked the "Israeli soldiers" and abducted them through a tunnel.
- **Shooting at an IDF post and attacking it through a tunnel:** At a camp in the northern Gaza Strip campers simulated launching mortar shells at an IDF post, after which a number of them **entered the post through a tunnel**, abducted a "soldier" and escaped in a vehicle.
- **Breaking into an Israeli jail:** Campers in a Pioneers of Liberation camp in Rafah simulated breaking into an Israeli jail and releasing the Palestinian terrorist operatives imprisoned there.



Left: Naval activity. Right: Guarding the "cell" of MIA IDF soldier Oron Shaul (Facebook page of the Pioneers of Liberation summer camps, July 28, 2015).



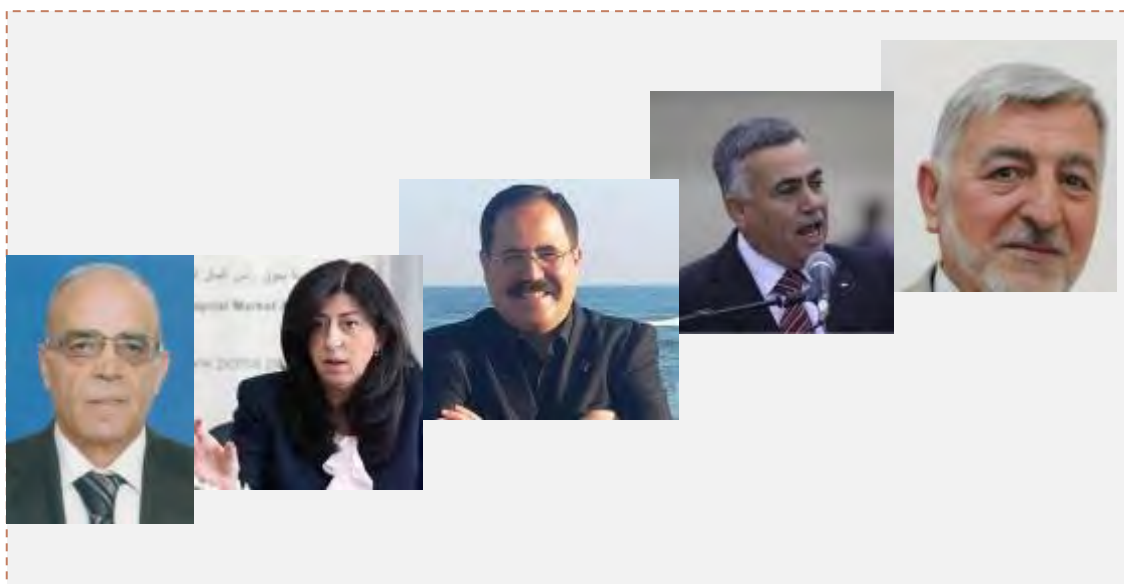
Left: Simulated attack on an Israeli post through a tunnel. Right: Ismail Haniya, instructors (with their faces blocked out) and children at a summer camp in the northern Gaza Strip (Facebook page of the Pioneers of Liberation summer camps, July 29, 2015)

- There were also displays of weapons at the camps. They included various types of Russian- and Chinese-manufactured RPG launchers, sniper rifles, sub-machine guns, diving equipment and Strela 2 anti-aircraft missiles, made in Russia in 1968 (Facebook page of Quds.net, August 2, 2015).

The Palestinian Authority

Five New Palestinian Ministers

- On July 31, 2015, **five new Palestinian national consensus government ministers** were quietly sworn in at the presidential residence in Ramallah, with Mahmoud Abbas and Rami Hamdallah attending. The ceremony was not widely covered. According to an official statement, the swearing in was not conducted publicly out of respect for the baby Ali Dawabsha, who was killed that morning. The ministers are **Sufian al-Tamimi**, minister of agriculture; **Hussein al-A'araj**, minister of local government; **Sabri Sidam**, minister of education (including higher education); **Ms. Abir Awda**, minister of national economy; and **Samih Tabila**, minister of transportation (Muhit, Misr al-Arabiya, July 30, 2015).



Five new Palestinian national consensus government ministers. Left to right: Samih Tabila, minister of transportation (Al-Hadath Al-Youm, August 1, 2015); Ms. Abir Awda, minister of national economy; Sabri Sidam, minister of education (including higher education); Hussein al-A'raj, minister of local government; and Sufian al-Tamimi, minister of agriculture (Ma'an News Agency, July 30, 2015).

■ **Hamas was strongly critical of the appointment of the new ministers. Musa Abu Marzouq** claimed it turned the national consensus government into the "Fatah national government," and replacing ministers without Hamas agreement blocked the path to reconciliation. He claimed that only a united national government would make it possible to continue the reconciliation process. He warned that Hamas would not cooperate with the new ministers, but nevertheless you not resign from the national consensus government (Facebook page of Musa Abu Marzouq, July 31, 2015).