



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

(August 12-18, 2015)



Stabbing attacks against the Israeli security forces at roadblocks. Left: The knife used in the stabbing attack of August 15, 2015 (Office of the Israel Police Force Spokesman, August 15, 2015). Right: The Tapuah junction (south of Nablus) where Palestinians carried out two stabbing attacks (Facebook page of Red Alert, August 15, 2015).

Overview

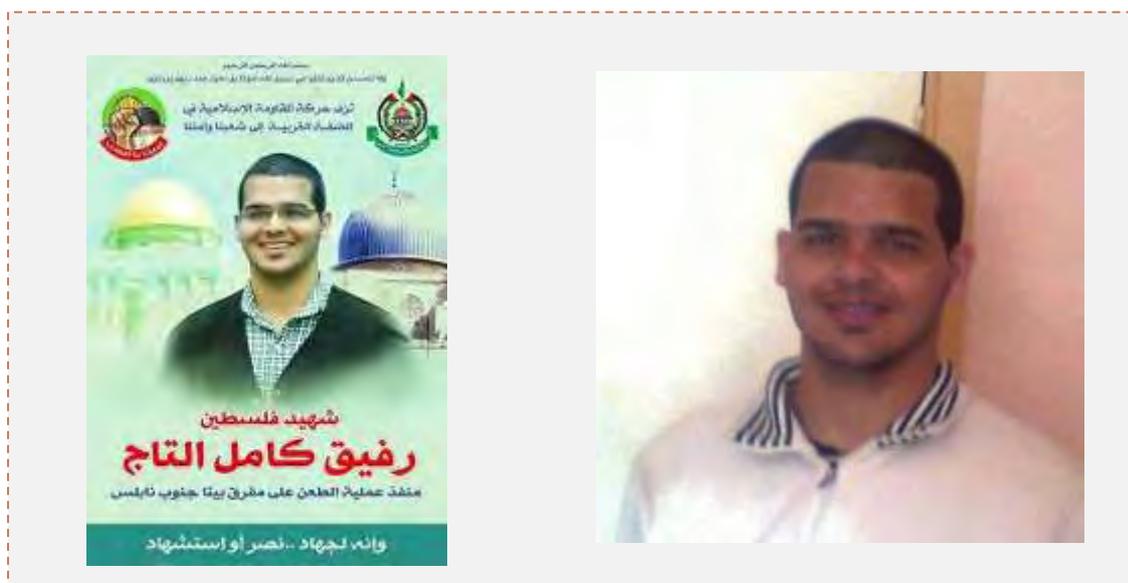
- This past week terrorist events focused on three stabbing attacks against Israeli security forces at roadblocks, two of them at the Tapuah Junction (south of Nablus) and one on Route 443 (which links Modi'in and Jerusalem and where there have recently been a number of terrorist attacks). Two of the attackers were killed by the Israeli security forces and one was injured. Three members of the Israeli security forces were wounded. Hamas praised the attacks. The Palestinian Authority (PA), as usual, did not condemn the attacks and accused Israel of responsibility for them, claiming it was killing Palestinians on a daily basis.
- Sporadic rocket fire continues from the Gaza Strip. This past week a rocket was fired and fell near the border security fence. An ISIS-affiliated jihadi organization behind previous rocket attacks claimed responsibility.
- The administrative detainee Muhammad Allaan, a Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) operative, lost consciousness after a hunger strike of 59 days. He was put on life support at a hospital and regained consciousness after a number of days. PIJ terrorist operatives threatened to respond violently if Allaan died, including ending the lull in the fighting with Israel from the Gaza Strip.

Stabbing Attacks

■ This past week Palestinians carried out **three stabbing attacks** against Israeli security forces at roadblocks. Two were carried out at the Tapuah Junction, south of Nablus. Three members of the Israeli security forces were wounded. Two of the Palestinian attackers were killed by the Israeli security forces and one was wounded.

Stabbing Attacks at the Tapuah Junction

■ In the early evening of **August 15, 2015**, an Israeli Border Police soldier stationed at the **Tapuah Junction** (south of Nablus) was stabbed in the back by a Palestinian. The attack took place during a routine security check at the roadblock. A Border Police soldier standing nearby shot and killed the Palestinian attacker. He was **Rafiq Kamel Rafiq al-Taj**, 16 (or 21) years old (different ages were reported), from Tubas (northeast of Nablus). When his death was reported Palestinians set tires on fire at the entrance to the village of Beita (south of Nablus). Hamas issued a death notice for al-Taj despite the fact that he was not affiliated with Hamas.



Left: Hamas death notice for Rafiq Kamel Rafiq al-Taj, calling him a "shaheed of Palestine" (Facebook page of the Islamic Bloc of the Palestine Polytechnic University in Hebron, August 15, 2015). Right: Rafiq al-Taj (Facebook page of the Islamic Bloc of Bir Zeit University, August 15, 2015)

■ On **August 17, 2015**, a Palestinian went to the Tapuah Junction. He told Border Police soldiers stationed at the roadblock that he did not feel well. They told him to approach, and when he did he took out a knife and stabbed one of them. Another soldier shot and killed him (Facebook page of the Israel Police Force, August 17, 2015). The Palestinian terrorist was **Muhammad Bassam al-Atrash Abu Amsha**, 25, from Kafr Ra'i, southwest of Jenin. Hamas issued a death notice for him, but as far as is known he was not affiliated with Hamas.



The death notice issued by Hamas for Muhammad Bassam Abu Amsha, calling him a "heroic martyr, the son of Palestine" (Facebook page of PALDF, August 18, 2015).

Stabbing Attack on Route 443

■ On the morning of August 15, 2015, a Palestinian stabbed an IDF soldier stationed at a roadblock on Route 443 (the main road linking Modi'in and Jerusalem) (IDF Spokesman, August 15, 2015). Arriving at the roadblock, the Palestinian asked a soldier for water. Before the soldier could bring water to him the Palestinian stabbed him with a sharp instrument. Another soldier shot and wounded the stabber. The Palestinian terrorist was **Mahmoud Nasim Jumhour** from Bayt Anan (north of Jerusalem). During interrogation he claimed he had fought with his father and been hit by him, and then he left the house to carry out the attack.

Responses to the Stabbing Attacks

■ **Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu** told the weekly Israeli government meeting that, "I would like to commend IDF and Border Police soldiers for their determined action over the weekend in which they neutralized several terrorist actions" (Website of the Israeli prime minister, August 16, 2015). **Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Yaalon** praised the IDF soldiers and the Border Police for their rapid response in neutralizing the terrorists (Ynet, August 15, 2015).

■ **The PA and the Palestinian media continue to support the Palestinians who carry out stabbing attacks and blame Israel.** For example, the Palestinian media reported that Israel had killed a young Palestinian man at a junction near Hawara [the Tapuah Junction south of Nablus] and wounded another near Bayt 'Ur [i.e., Route 443] claiming they had stabbed two soldiers. After the death of one of the terrorist attackers **Mahmoud Abbas' office** issued a statement accusing the Israeli government of

responsibility for the "dangerous escalation" and the continuing series of "daily killings," which could not be ignored. Other senior figures in the PA condemned the killing of Palestinians who carry out stabbing attacks, and called them an unending Israeli crime.

■ A joint meeting of Hamas and PIJ senior figures in the Gaza Strip praised the lone wolf terrorist attacks and the "popular awakening" in the Gaza Strip, Jerusalem and the "1948 territories" [i.e., Israel]. They also noted objection to any attack on or attempt to stop the "popular rage" by any agency [i.e., the PA] (Safa Press Agency, August 16, 2015).

Israel's South

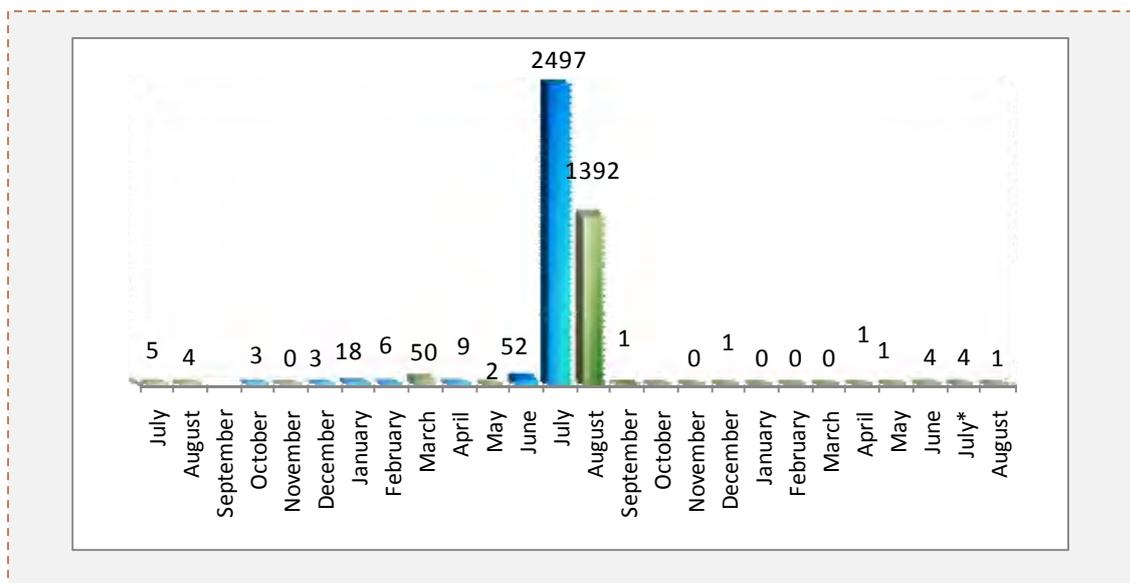
Rocket Fire Attacking Israel

■ On the night of August 17, 2015, a rocket was fired targeting Israeli territory. It fell inside the Gaza Strip near the border security fence (Facebook page of Red Alert, August 17, 2015). An ISIS-affiliated network calling itself the Descendants of the Comrades of the Prophet claimed responsibility for the rocket fire (Twitter account of the network, August 18, 2015).



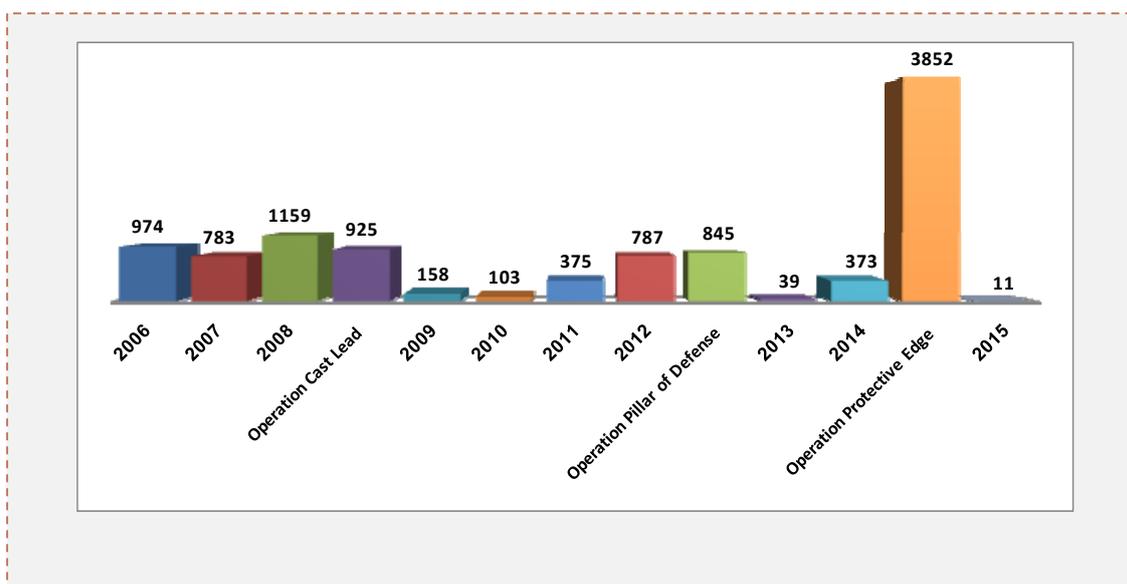
The claim of responsibility issued by the Descendants of the Comrades of the Prophet (Twitter account of the network, August 18, 2015)

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

¹ As of August 18, 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.

Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem

Riots, Clashes and Popular Terrorism

- 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. Many of the Friday riots were devoted to supporting hunger-striking Palestinian terrorist operative Muhammad Allaan.
- Some of the prominent attacks were the following:
 - On **August 17, 2015**, Palestinians threw stones at Jerusalem's light railway at Shuafat. There were no casualties. A railway car was damaged (Facebook page of Red Alert, August 17, 2015).
 - On **August 17, 2015**, Palestinians threw stones and Molotov cocktails at Border Police soldiers in the Shuafat refugee camp. One soldier was injured (Facebook page of Red Alert, August 17, 2015).
 - On **August 16, 2015**, Palestinians threw a pipe bomb at the compound of the Tomb of Rachel in Bethlehem. There were no casualties and no damage was reported. Palestinians also threw a pipe bomb on August 13, 2015 (Facebook page of Red Alert, August 16 and 13, 2015).
 - On **August 15, 2015**, Palestinians threw stones at two buses on the road linking Givat Asaf and Beit El (north of Ramallah). There were no casualties. The buses were damaged (Facebook page of Red Alert, August 15, 2015).
 - On **August 12, 2015**, Palestinians threw a Molotov cocktail at an IDF post near the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron. There were no casualties. Palestinians threw two Molotov cocktails at Israeli vehicles west of Hebron. There were no casualties and no damage was reported (Facebook page of Red Alert, August 12, 2015).

"Popular Defense Committees" Established to Protect Palestinian Villages

- Since the Jewish terrorist attack in the village of Duma, reports have been received of **the establishment of "popular [self-] defense committees" by Palestinians in various locations in Judea and Samaria**. Their objective is to

prevent extremist Jewish settlers from attacking Palestinians. **Jibrin al-Bakri**, governor Bethlehem, reported he had recently decided to establish "popular guard committees" in the villages near the Jewish settlements (Voice of Palestine Radio, August 11, 2015). **Ibrahim Ramadan**, governor of Jenin, announced the establishment of "popular guard committees" in the villages of Ya'abad, A'rraba, Silat el-Harithiya and Barta'a. He stated it was the duty of Jenin residents to defend their lands. He said he would not permit another arson attack in the Jenin district, and said **the local residents would defend themselves, no matter what the cost** (Wafa News Agency, August 10, 2015).

The Hunger-Striking Palestinian Terrorist

- On August 14, 2015, the condition of the hunger-striking PIJ terrorist operative Muhammad Allaan deteriorated. After 59 days on a hunger strike he lost consciousness and was put on life support at the hospital (the first medical intervention since he was hospitalized). His condition was stabilized and **according to the Israeli media he regained consciousness**. Hospital doctors and Red Cross representatives have tried to convince him to end his 63-day hunger strike, but so far he has refused.

- According to a report in the Israeli daily newspaper Haaretz on August 18, 2015, a representative of the state told an Israeli high court that if Muhammad Allaan agreed to leave Israel for four years the state would consider releasing him from administrative detention. However, in view of reports of the deterioration of his condition, **the PIJ's military-terrorist wing said in a statement that it Israel was responsible for his life, and threatened that if Allaan died it would respond with violence and the lull in the fighting against Israel from the Gaza Strip**.

- According to **Ahmed Mudallal**, a senior PIJ figure in the Gaza Strip, "all options are open to halting the crimes of Israel against the prisoners and holy places." **Khader Adnan**, a senior PIJ figure in Judea and Samaria and who was recently released after a hunger strike, called for an intifada and a response from the "resistance" [i.e., the terrorist organizations]. PIJ activists held demonstrations and marches in support of Allaan throughout Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip (Filastin al-Yawm, August 14, 2015).

- [Bullet] On August 16, 2015, dozens of demonstrators tried to reach the hospital in Ashqelon where Allaan was hospitalized. They rioted, threw stones at the Israeli security forces and attacked them. The police dispersed the riot and detained 13 rioters (Facebook page of the Israel Police Force, August 16, 2015).



Left: the notice issued by the military-terrorist wing of the PIJ threatening to end the lull in the fighting against Israel from the Gaza Strip (Jerusalem Brigades website, August 14, 2015). Right: Demonstration held in Ramallah in support of Muhammad Allaan (Wafa News Agency, August 14 and 15, 2015).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

The Crossings – Recent Developments

The Rafah Crossing

■ **The Rafah crossing has been closed continuously for more than 40 days.** The Egyptian authorities said they would open it to traffic in both directions for four days, August 17-20, primarily for the passage of humanitarian cases (Palestinian ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip, August 16, 2015; Facebook page of Quds.net, August 17, 2015). The opening of the Rafah crossing may also be exploited by delegation of the Hamas leadership, led by Ismail Haniya, deputy head of Hamas' political bureau, to leave the Gaza Strip. The delegation is supposed to spend more than a month in meetings in Qatar, Turkey and Iran, and for a pilgrimage to Mecca (PNN, Khalij Online, August 17, 2015).



The first bus that left the Gaza Strip for Egypt (Palestinian ministry of the interior, August 17, 2015).

The New School Year in the Gaza Strip

■ Sources in UNRWA continue to warn that schools in the Gaza Strip will not open for the new school year because of a budget deficit. Hamas held protest marches throughout the Gaza Strip. Senior Hamas figure **Muhammad Abu Askar** claimed it was a "political plot" concocted by the international community to end the "right of return" (Ma'an News Agency, August 14, 2015).

Smuggling Fiberglass into the Gaza Strip Prevented

■ Israeli customs officials at the Nitzana border crossing, collaborating with the Israeli security forces, **prevented two tons of rolled fiberglass sheets from being smuggled into the Gaza Strip**. They were discovered in a shipment allegedly containing clothing that aroused the suspicions of the customs officials. A similar smuggling attempt was foiled last week at the Kerem Shalom crossing, when fiberglass was discovered in a shipment of school supplies.

■ According to the Israeli security forces, fiberglass is a raw material used in the manufacture of long-range rockets and the shipments were meant to be delivered to the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip. During Operation Protective Edge a number of rockets made of fiberglass were fired at the coastal area of Palmachim, midway between Ashdod and Tel Aviv (Facebook page of Red Alert, August 17, 2015).



Rolls of fiberglass sheets meant to be smuggled into the Gaza Strip (Facebook page of Red Alert, August 17, 2015).

Contacts for a Long-Term Lull Agreement

- On August 11, 2015, **Tony Blair**, the former International Quartet's emissary to the Middle East, met in Qatar with **Khaled Mashaal**, chairman of Hamas' political bureau. They discussed Hamas' position on a long-term lull in the fighting against Israel. According to Palestinian sources, Israel had agreed to a lull of between seven and ten years. According to the conditions of the agreement, a seaport would be built to connect the Gaza Strip to Cyprus and siege would be fully lifted. However, it was reported that the activity of the Gaza Strip airport would not be renewed (Al-Hayat, August 16, 2015). The PLO, Fatah and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine all opposed the agreement.
- Sources in the Gaza Strip said the following:
 - **Ahmed Yussuf**, formerly Ismail Haniya's political advisor, claimed the talks had been conducted over a long period of time and that **in the near future "something" about the issue would be announced**. He claimed the lull agreement was not political but rather humanitarian and part of concluding the (Operation Protective Edge) ceasefire talks (Al-Hayat, August 16, 2015).
 - Senior Hamas figure **Ziyad al-Zaza** claimed contacts regarding a lull had not yet been concluded and that the matter had not yet been presented to the other organizations (Al-Risala, August 13, 2015).

- Hamas spokesman **Sami Abu Zuhri** claimed Hamas was holding meetings with representatives of the various organizations in the Gaza Strip to update them on the contacts to advance the lull agreement led by Tony Blair.
- According to **Walid al-Awad**, from the Palestinian People's Party in the Gaza Strip, the agreement included the construction of a floating sea port three kilometers off the Gazan coast. It would link the Gaza Strip to Turkish Cyprus and operate under joint Israeli-NATO supervision. He also claimed the Erez and Kerem Shalom crossings would be open to all types of traffic, under Israeli supervision. He noted that the agreement did not include the renewal of the activity of the Gaza Strip airport and that the PA was not involved in the contacts (Samaa, August 13, 2015).

Khaled Mashaal-Headed Hamas Delegation Visits Turkey

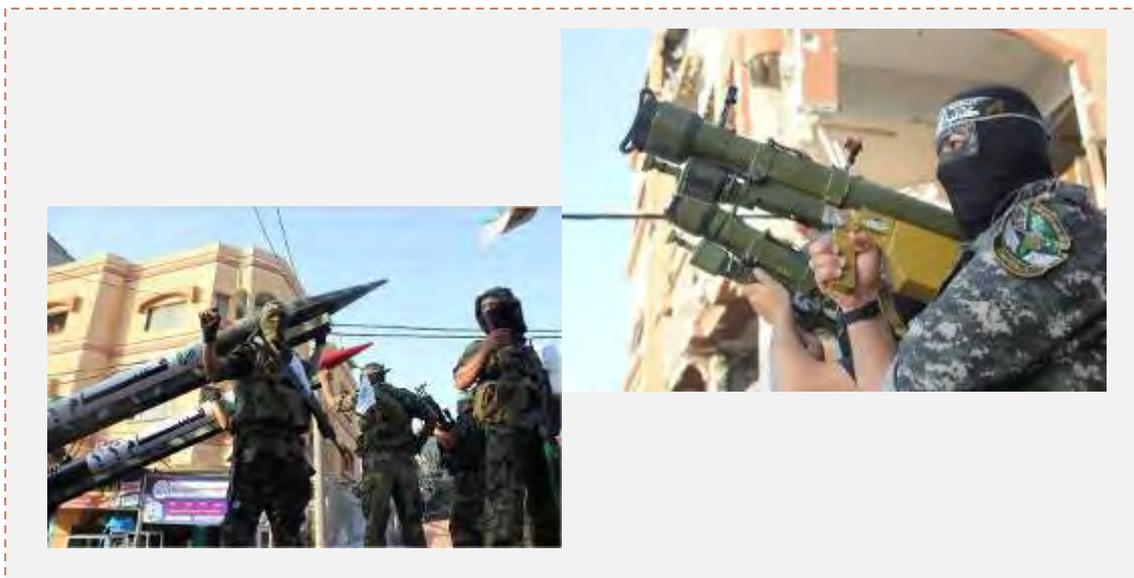
- This past week a Hamas delegation, led by **Khaled Mashaal**, chairman of Hamas' political bureau, paid a visit to Turkey and met with the Turkish prime minister. The meeting was reportedly a success. The **Turkish president** expressed his support for the Palestinian people and the recognition of a Palestinian state. **Musa Abu Marzouq**, a member of Hamas' political bureau, wrote on his Facebook page that during the visit to Turkey and the meetings with Turkish president Erdogan, Turkish prime minister Davutoğlu and a number of ministers, they found responsiveness to all the issues on the agenda (Facebook page of Musa Abu Marzouq, August 14, 2015).
- **Yassin Aqtay**, advisor to the Turkish prime minister, claimed **the Gaza Strip was on its way to a comprehensive agreement regarding the lifting of the siege, the opening of the crossings and a lull agreement with Israel**. He claimed the Hamas delegation, headed by Khaled Mashaal, had discussed the issue and received Turkish commitments to the Gaza Strip (Al-Risala, August 16, 2015).



Khaled Mashaal meets with Turkish president Erdogan in Ankara (Facebook page of PALDF, August 12, 2015).

Hamass' Military-Terrorist Wing Holds a Show of Force

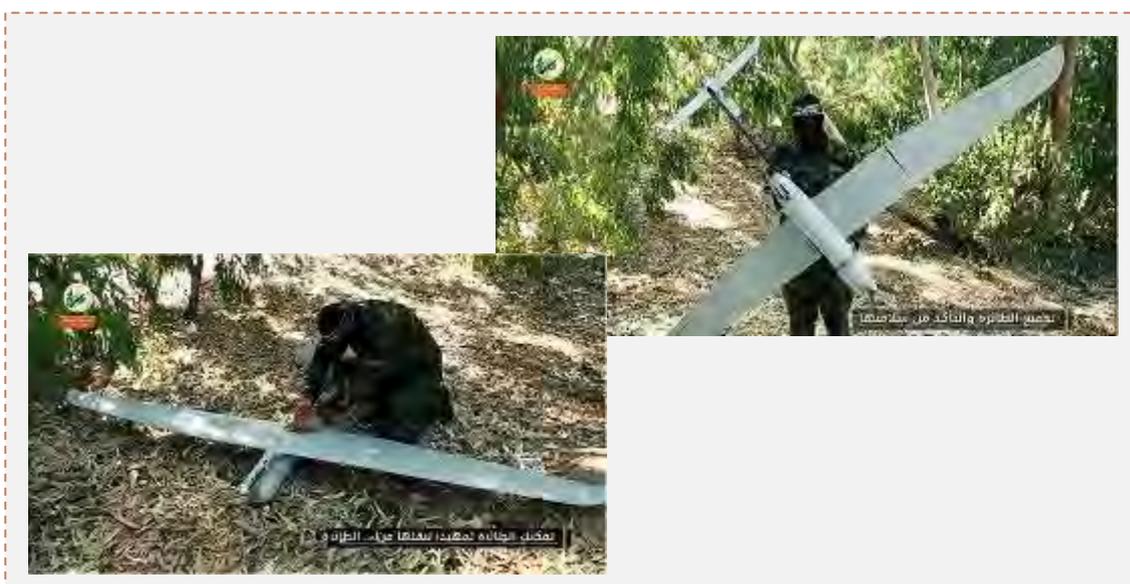
- On August 11, 2015, the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades held a military parade through the streets of Beit Hanoun (northern Gaza Strip) attended by many local residents. The various units of the military-terrorist wing displayed their capabilities. There was also an aerial defense unit that displayed anti-aircraft missiles (Facebook pages of Gaza al-'Aan and Quds.net, Al-Aqsa TV, August 11, 2015).



The Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades' show of force in Beit Hanoun (Facebook page of Gaza al-'Aan, August 11, 2015).

- On August 12, 2015, the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades issued a video documenting an Israeli Skylark 1 unmanned aerial vehicle which, they claimed, fell

inside the Gaza Strip on July 22, 2015. According to their claims, military wing operatives took the UAV, improved it and made it operational (Facebook page of PALDF, August 12, 2015).



The video posted by the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades documenting how the [Israeli UAV] that fell inside the Gaza Strip was made operational (Facebook page of PALDF, August 12, 2015).

Hamas and PIJ Leaderships Hold Coordination Meeting

■ On August 16, 2015, a meeting was held attended by the Hamas leadership, headed by **Ismail Haniya**, deputy head of Hamas' political bureau, and the PIJ leadership, headed by **Mahmoud al-Zahar**. The stated **objective of the meeting was to improve collaboration between the two organizations**. They discussed the lifting of the siege, the condition of the Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails and using international connections to establish the ceasefire (Facebook page of Quds.net, August 16, 2015).



Left: A section of the joint declaration issued by Hamas and the PIJ after the leadership meeting (Hamas website, August 16, 2015). Right: The Hamas and PIJ leaderships meet in the Gaza Strip (Facebook page of Quds.net, August 16, 2015).

The Northern Arena

Iranian Involvement in Terrorist Attacks on Israel in the Golan Heights

■ According to a "high-ranking source in the IDF," **Iran was behind the attempted attack of April 26, 2015.**³ He said that most of the attacks against Israel from the Golan Heights since December 2013 have been carried out with **Iranian direction and guidance**. The **Iranians also provided the weapons**. Iran also supports Hezbollah terrorist operatives, as well as Samir Kuntar (a Druze terrorist operative released from an Israeli jail in an exchange deal with Hezbollah) (Ynet, August 16, 2015). According to the IDF source, "there is an 'Iranian fingerprint' on the weapons and direction." He added that the Iranians exploit the Golan Heights border to recruit terrorist squads, [operating through proxies such] as Mughnieh, Kuntar and others (Haaretz, August 17, 2015).

The Campaign to Delegitimize Israel

■ Palestinian sources reported that Palestinian NGOs, such as **Al-Haq, Al-Mezan and Al-Dameer, were planning to present the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague with a separate report from the one presented by the PA.** It will deal

³ On the evening of April 26, 2015, an IDF surveillance force identified four figures approaching the border security fence in the northern Golan Heights. They had backpacks and it later became apparent that they contained IEDs. The four terrorists, Druze from the village of Khader, were killed by IDF forces while they were planting IEDs in three separate locations along the border. According to an IDF source they laid the IEDs in three small circles about 15 to 20 meters from one another in "classic Hezbollah style" (Haaretz, August 17, 2015).

with Israel's so-called violations of human rights. It will be presented separately because of differences of opinion between the heads of the organizations, among them Shawan Jabarin, head of Al-Haq, and the PA.

■ The sources claimed that the **heads of the NGOs expressed lack of faith in the policy dictated by Mahmoud Abbas**, chairman of the PA, **and that they were dissatisfied with the reports presented to the ICC by the PA so far**. According to the NGOs, the Palestinian PA's reports lacked evidence and professional analysis. **In their opinion, the reports endanger the interests of the Palestinians because information in them harms Hamas** (The Levant News, August 13, 2015).

In ITIC assessment, that information (if verified) may indicate differences of opinion between the PA and Palestinian NGOs specializing in anti-Israeli lawfare regarding reports presented to the ICC. It is the opinion of the NGOs that the reports have to be unilaterally anti-Israel and not deal in any way with war crimes and violations of international law committed by Hamas. They NGOs may be concerned that serious difference of opinion between the Palestinian and Hamas will affect the contents of Palestinians' appeals to the ICC and harm Hamas.