



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

(August 26 – September 1, 2015)



Rise in popular terrorism in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem. A Border Police jeep burns in the A-Tor neighborhood of Jerusalem, set on fire by a Molotov cocktail (Facebook page of Quds.net, August 26, 2015). Palestinians threw stones at a fire engine sent to extinguish the blaze.

Overview

- This past week another rocket hit was identified in the western Negev. An ISIS-affiliated network that claimed responsibility for previous rocket attacks claimed this one as well. In response Israel Air Force aircraft struck a Hamas site for the manufacture of weapons. Hamas has an interest to continue the lull in the fighting but so far has not managed to put an end to the rocket fire initiated by ISIS-affiliated networks.
- in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem popular terrorism continues, with Palestinians carrying out stabbing and vehicular attacks, and throwing stones and Molotov cocktails. Palestinians also carried out a drive-by shooting attack against an Israeli vehicle near the community of Kedumim (in Samaria west of Nablus), wounding the driver. During the past year Palestinians have carried out several drive-by attacks on the roads in Judea and Samaria.

Israel's South

Rocket Fire Attacking Israel

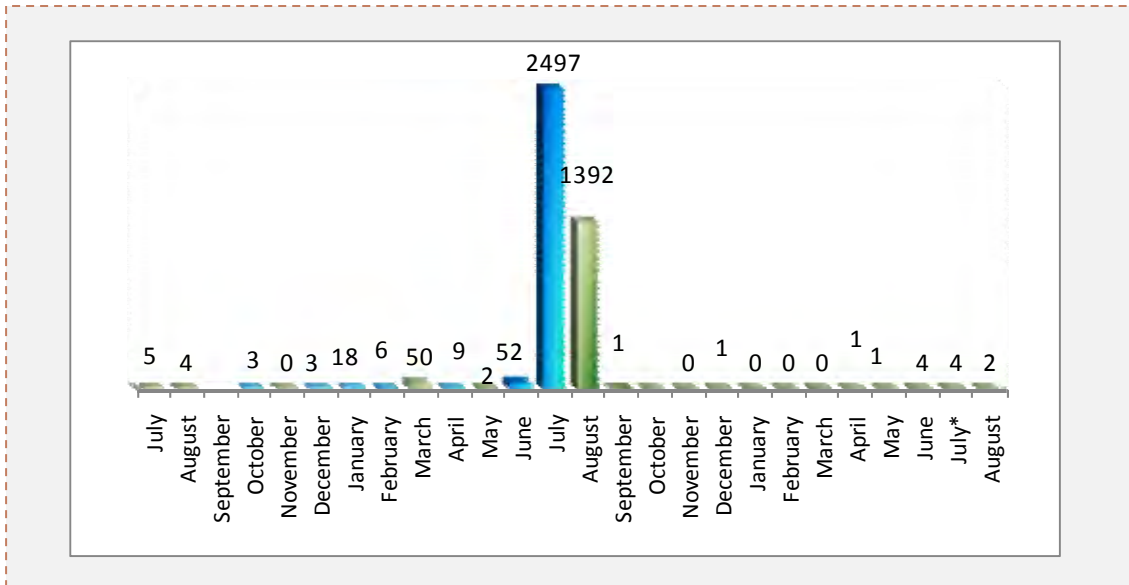
- Close to midnight on August 26, 2015, a rocket hit was identified in Israeli territory in an open area in the western Negev, landing between an Israeli community and the border security fence. There were no casualties and no damage was reported (Western Negev's Spokesman's Office, August 27, 2015). An ISIS-affiliated jihadi network in the Gaza Strip called the Company of Sheikh Omar claimed responsibility for the rocket fire (Twitter account of the network, August 27, 2015). Another rocket fire was fired at Israel on September 1, 2015, landing inside the Gaza Strip.
- In response to the rocket fire, Israel Air Force (IAF) aircraft struck a Hamas site in the central Gaza Strip used for the manufacture of weapons (IDF Spokesman, August 27, 2015). Palestinian reports claimed a training camp of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades (Hamas' military-terrorist wing) near the Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip was attacked (Facebook page of the Battalions of National Resistance, the military-terrorist wing of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, August 27, 2015).



Left: The IAF attack on the Hamas terrorist site near the Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip (Facebook page of the Battalions of National Resistance, August 27, 2015). Right: Claim of responsibility (Twitter account of @watheqpress, August 27, 2015).

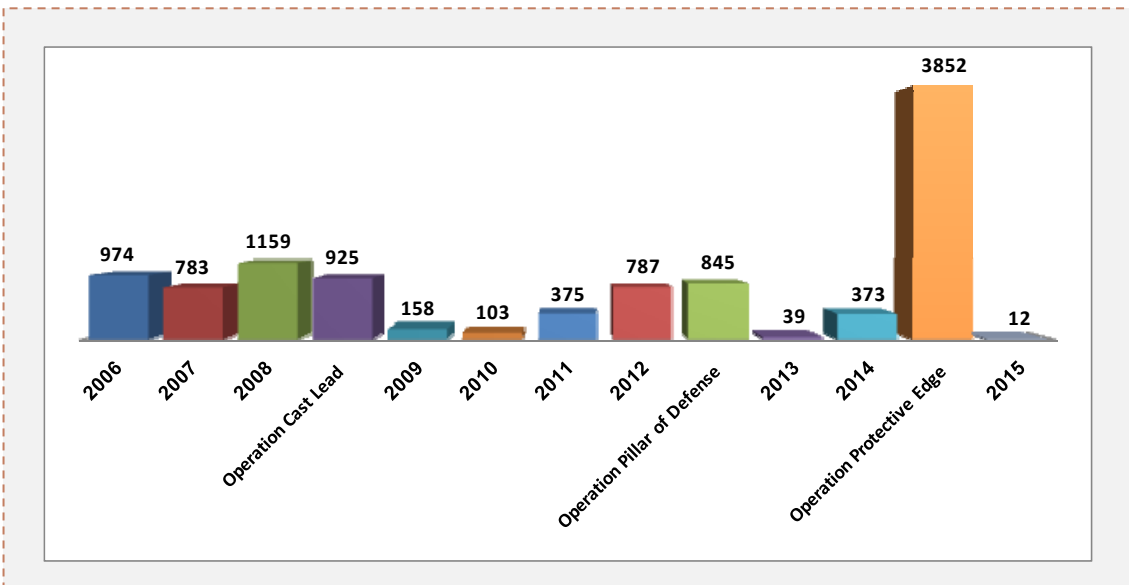
It was the most recent in a series of sporadic rocket attacks occurring over the past few months. They were carried out by an ISIS-affiliated network. **Hamas has an interest to continue the lull in the fighting but has not managed to put an end to the rocket attacks.**

Monthly Distribution of Rocket Fire (2013 – 2015)¹



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

Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire in Israel's South²



*Three of the rockets that hit Israeli territory in 2015 were launched by ISIS's Sinai Province.

¹ As of September 1, 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

Stabbing Attack at the Nablus Gate in Jerusalem Using an Axe

- On the evening of August 26, 2015, a Border Police soldier's leg was wounded by a Palestinian in an attack carried out near the Nablus Gate in Jerusalem. The attacker approached a group of Border Police soldiers patrolling in the Old City with the intention of attacking them. The soldiers overcame and detained him. As he was being detained, the Palestinian hacked the leg of a soldier with an axe.
- The Palestinian terrorist was **Muammar Ata Mahmoud**, 56, from Hebron. He was an operative who had been imprisoned until 2013 for **the murder of Professor Menahem Stern** in the Valley of the Cross in Jerusalem in 1989. He was released as part of the third phase of Palestinian prisoner releases. He said he had planned to attack Israeli policemen, and to that end **bought a knife and an axe**. Seeing a group of Border Police soldiers, he came up behind them and used the axe to attack (Facebook page of the Israel Police Force, August 26, 2015).
- Hamas spokesman **Sami Abu Zuhri** praised the attack and called for more to be carried out against [Israel's] "policy of Judaization and Israeli crimes" (Dunia al-Watan, August 26, 2015).

Vehicular Attack in Mt. Hebron

- On **August 29, 2015**, a Palestinian drove to the guard post at the junction south of Hebron and tried to run over four soldiers stationed at the post. He rammed into the leg of one of them and drove away. IDF forces shot at the car. The wounded soldier did not need to be evacuated for medical treatment. A search was carried out later to find the attacker.

Shooting Attack at the Jit Junction (Samaria)

- On **August 30, 2015**, an Israeli civilian was wounded by gunfire at the Jit Junction (near Kedumim in Samaria west of Nablus). **Nine bullets were fired at his car in a drive-by shooting, wounding him**. This past year Palestinians have carried out several drive-by shooting attacks.

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 Palestinians throwing stones, rocks and Molotov cocktails at Israeli security forces and civilians. Prominent this past week was the rise in the number of attacks in and around Jerusalem.



Palestinians throw stones at Israeli security forces in Kafr Qaddum during the weekly riot held to protest the Jewish communities (Wafa News Agency, August 28, 2015).

- The most prominent attacks were the following:
 - On the night of **August 31, 2015** Israeli security forces undertook a security activity to detain a senior Hamas terrorist in the village of Burqin (west of Jenin). They destroyed the house the terrorist was suspected of hiding in. During the operation hundreds of Palestinians threw stones, Molotov cocktails and IEDs at the Israeli security forces, seriously injuring an Israeli fighter (IDF Spokesman, September 1, 2015). The house, which was encircled and destroyed, belonged to **Majdi Abu al-Hija'a, 40, a senior Hamas operative in Judea and Samaria**. He was detained with his brother and son. The Palestinian media reported that at least five Palestinians were injured (Quds.net, Wafa, Facebook page of Shihab, PALDF, September 1, 2015).



Left: IEDs thrown by Palestinians at Israeli soldiers during the riot in Burqin. The IED is marked, "The State of the Jenin refugee camp." Right: Riots in the village of Burqin (Facebook page of Quds.net, September 1, 2015).



Notice issued by Hamas with a picture of Majdi al-Hija'a (center). The Arabic reads, "Abu al-Hija'a...family of shaheeds and prisoners. The impregnable fortress of the resistance." The two smaller pictures are of two of Majdi al-Hija'a's brothers, Hamas operatives who were killed in 1994. Under the pictures are the logos of the "At your orders, Oh, Al-Aqsa" campaign and the Hamas movement (Facebook page of PALDF, September 1, 2015).

- On **August 31, 2015**, Palestinians threw an IED at a square near the **Tomb of Rachel in Bethlehem**. One person was injured and another had to be treated for shock (Red Alert, August 31, 2015).
- On **August 30, 2015**, Palestinians threw stones at the Jerusalem light railway in the **Shuafat area**. There were no casualties; a railway car window was damaged. A similar attack was carried out on August 27, 2015 (Facebook page of Red Alert, August 27 and 31, 2015).

- On **August 28, 2015**, Palestinians threw stones at an Israeli vehicle on **Route 443** (linking Jerusalem and Modi'in) near Bayt Ghur al-Tahta. There were no casualties and no damage was reported (Facebook page of Red Alert, August 28, 2015).
- On **August 27, 2015**, Palestinians threw stones at an Israeli vehicle on Route 446 near Ni'llin (north of Modi'in), wounding the driver of the car (a woman) (Facebook page of Red Alert, August 27, 2015).
- On **August 27, 2015**, during an Israeli security force activity in **Jenin**, Palestinians threw an IED at the soldiers. It detonated; there were no casualties and no damage was reported (Facebook page of Red Alert, August 27, 2015).
- On **August 27, 2015**, Palestinians threw Molotov cocktails at a bus north of the **Halhul Junction** (Hebron region). It exploded and caught fire on the road. There were no casualties and no damage was reported (Facebook page of Red Alert, August 27, 2015).
- On **August 26, 2015**, masked Palestinians threw stones and Molotov cocktails at a Border Police force in the **A-Tor neighborhood** of Jerusalem. A Molotov cocktail hit one of the their vehicles and set it on fire. One of the soldiers was treated for smoke inhalation (Facebook page of the Israel Police Force, August 26, 2015).

Increase in Violent Events in the Old City of Jerusalem

- New data issued by the Ministry of Construction and Housing, which operates a security system in Jerusalem's Old City, indicate that during June and July 2015 **there were hundreds of instances of stones and Molotov cocktails thrown by Palestinians in the Old City and the Mount of Olives**. The numbers did not include attacks in the eastern part of the city (Shuafat, Beit Hanina, Issawiya, Jabel Mukaber, etc.).
- According to the data, during those two months there were 580 violent incidents that targeted Israeli civilians and security forces. Most of them (477) involved Palestinians throwing stones at vehicles; 28 involved Molotov cocktails. There were also incidents of Palestinians throwing ordinary glass bottles, shooting fireworks and vandalizing property (Ynet, August 26, 2015).

Exposure of Squad Planning to Attack Worshippers at Joseph's Tomb in Nablus

- The Israeli security forces exposed a squad of four terrorist operatives from Tulkarm, Nablus and Jenin. They were planning to **use IEDs to attack Jewish worshippers at Joseph's Tomb in Nablus** who come to pray without prior coordination with the Israeli security forces (and thus are not secured).
- Interrogation revealed that the squad was compartmentalized and each operative had a specific task: providing weapons, collecting intelligence and carrying out the actual attack. Interrogation also revealed that the squad's activities were directed from the Gaza Strip by **Rafat Muhammad Darwish**, a Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) **operative who organized the weapons for the squad** (Israel Security Agency, August 25, 2015).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

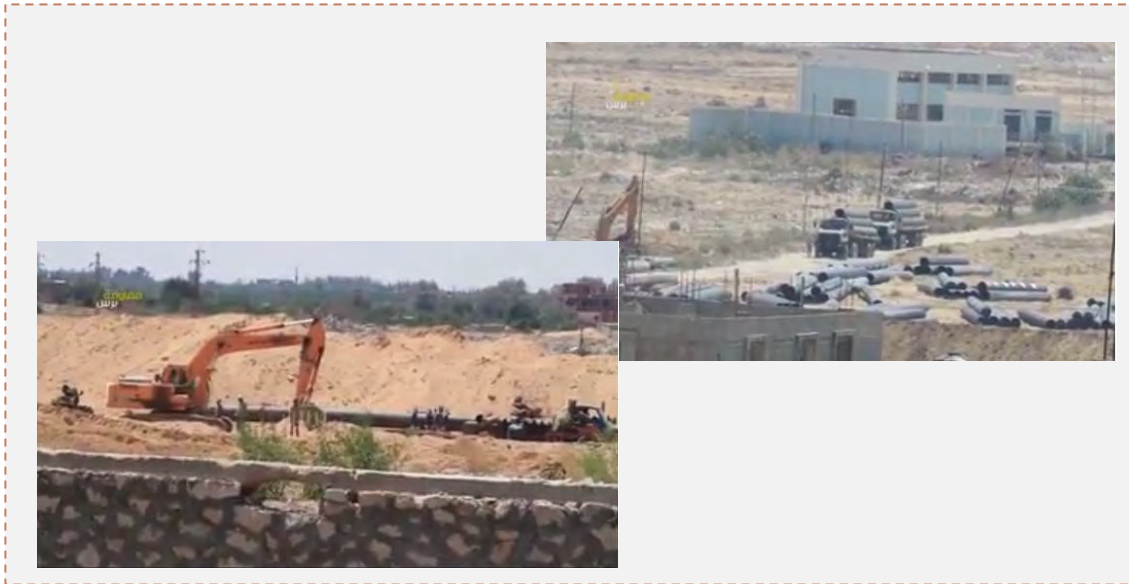
The School Year Begins

- On August 24, 2015, the school year began in the Gaza Strip, after UNRWA received funds to cover its deficit and allowing it to open its schools. As soon as the schools opened the parents called a strike to protest overcrowding in the classrooms. The governmental (non-UNRWA) schools joined the strike as part of the general strike called by the clerks' union. The **UN spokesman in Gaza, Adnan Abu Hasna**, said the strike complicated matters and might influence the willingness of the donor countries to contribute money to UNRWA. He said the strike meant there were a quarter of a million children on the streets instead of in school (Sawa, August 26, 2015).
- On August 29, 2015, UNRWA said in a statement that Kuwait had donated \$15 million to Gaza's educational system. According to UNRWA, the donation will help open the school year in a more organized fashion (Filastin al-Yawm, August 29, 2015). After a week-long strike, it was decided to reopen the schools. The parents' council of the UNRWA schools said they would freeze their protest until September 10, 2015 (Samaa, August 30, 2015).

The Egyptian Army Upgrades the Buffer Zone

- The Palestinian and Egyptian media reported that on August 25, 2015, the Egyptian army had begun **digging a canal in the Rafah region along the Gaza Strip border**. It is intended to reinforce the fight against the smuggling tunnels.

According to Egyptian army sources, the canal will be 13 kilometers (a little more than 8 miles) long, 20 meters (almost 22 yards) deep and 20 meters wide. Local sources in Egyptian Rafah expressed concern and dissatisfaction with the Egyptian army's activities in the region (Facebook page of QudsN, Al-Hadath, August 25 and 27, 2015).



The canal under construction by the Egyptian army along the Gaza Strip border (Sada, August 27, 2015)

Hamas Operative Killed During Construction of Attack Tunnel

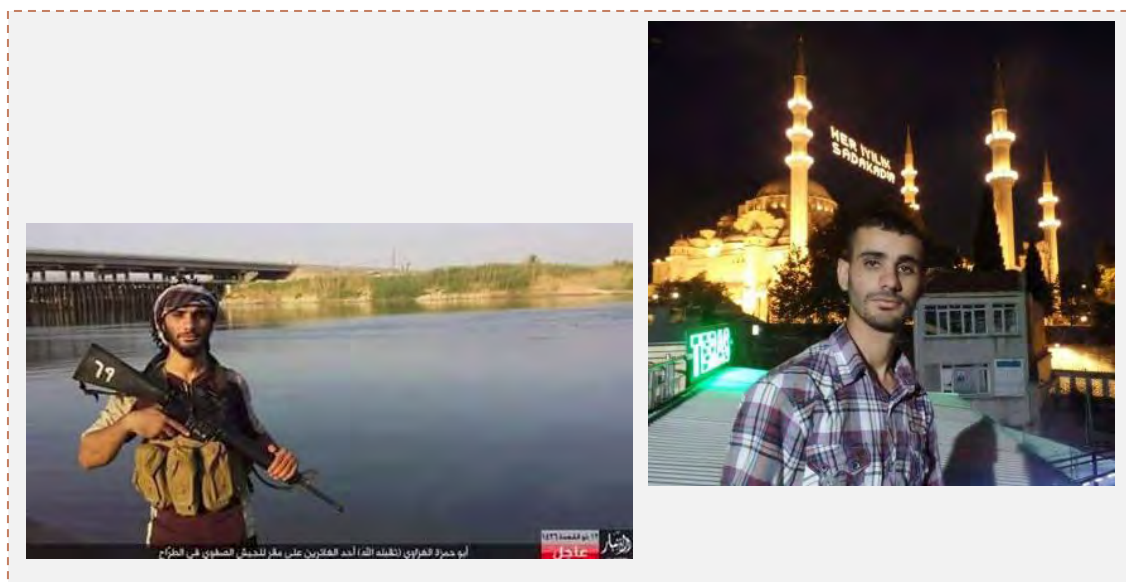
■ Hamas' military-terrorist wing issued a death notice for **Anwar Faraj al-Ghalban**, who died while working on "one of the resistance tunnels" in east Khan Yunis (Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades website, August 29, 2015). **Ismail Haniya**, deputy head of Hamas' political bureau, and other senior Hamas figures, paid a condolence call to the family (Alresala.net, August 31, 2015).



Left: Anwar Faraj al-Ghalban (Facebook page of Shihab, August 29, 2015). Right: The Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades death notice for Anwar Faraj al-Ghalban (Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades website, August 28, 2015).

Salafist Activity in the Gaza Strip

- A Salafist source in the Gaza Strip claimed that approximately 100 Salafist-jihadi operatives in the Gaza Strip had sworn allegiance to ISIS. Abu al-Inaa' al-Ansari, a Salafist-jihadi leader in the Gaza Strip, refused to comment when asked for a response (WND, August 24, 2015).
- The Ibn Taymmiyah Media Center, which is affiliated with the Salafists in the Gaza Strip, issued a statement about the death of a Gazan from the Al-Shati refugee camp who was killed in Iraq. According to the statement, **Abdallah al-Jaml**, aka **Abu Hamza the Gazan**, carried out a suicide bombing attack for ISIS against the Iraqi army in Al-Anbar Province (ISIS-affiliated Twitter account, August 28, 2015).
- **Abdallah al-Jaml**, 24, was described as a former Hamas military operative. Without prior notice he left the Gaza Strip a number of months ago and went to Turkey. After about a month in Turkey, he crossed the border into Syria and later made his way to Iraq (Quds News, August 28, 2015). On his Facebook page he is called **Abu Hamza Abdallah (Abu Hamza al-Ramlawi)**. His Facebook page has pictures of him in Turkey, apparently en route to Iraq (Facebook page of Abdallah al-Jaml, June 26, 2015).



Pictures from the Facebook page of Abdallah al-Jaml (Abu Hamza Abdallah). Left: As an ISIS operative in Iraq. Right: In Istanbul, Turkey.

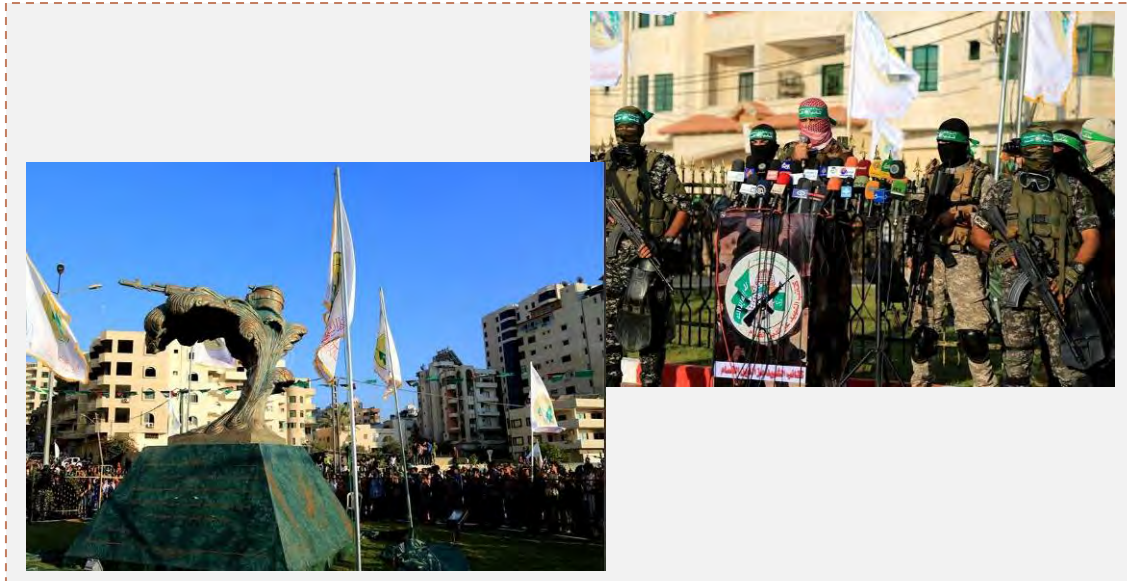


Memorial notice for Abdallah al-Jaml issued by the Ibn Taymmiyah Media Center, the information wing of the Salafists in the Gaza Strip (Twitter account of @bentymela0008, August 28, 2015).

Memorial Service for Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades Naval Commandos

- On August 26, 2015, Hamas' military-terrorist wing held a memorial service for naval commandos killed during Operation Protective Edge. A memorial was unveiled on the Gaza shore. Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades spokesman **Abu Obeida** gave a speech in which he claimed that Operation Protective Edge had signaled a strategic change and was "a historic chapter" in jihad history. Speaking to Israel, he claimed that if the siege of the Gaza Strip were not lifted the patience of the Palestinian

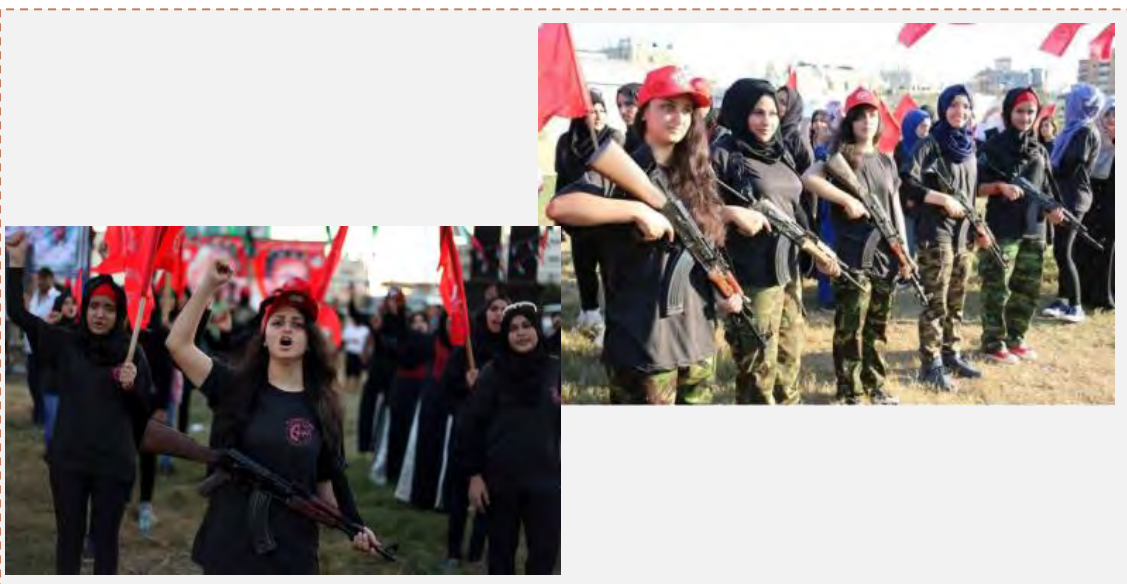
people and the "resistance" [i.e., terrorist organizations] would expire (Al-Aqsa TV, August 26, 2015).



Memorial service unveiling a monument dedicated to the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades naval commandos killed in Operation Protective Edge (Paltoday, August 26, 2015).

Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) Ceremony

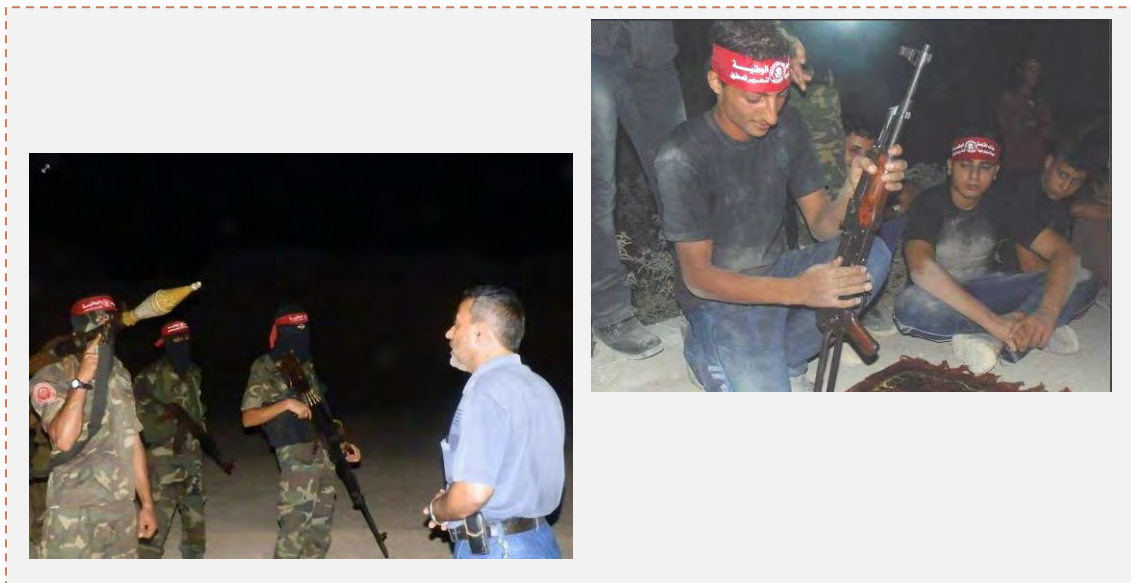
■ The **PFLP** held a ceremony marking the end of a **self-defense course for women** in its "Pioneers of the Return" camps (Dunia al-Watan, August 30, 2015). At the camps, held over the summer, **a thousand young men and women underwent military training**, sports exercises, and engaged in so-called "cultural activities" (Facebook page of Quds.net and Dunia al-Watan, August 29, 2015).



The graduation of the women's self-defense course held by the PFLP (Facebook page of Quds.net and Dunia al-Watan, August 29, 2015).

Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) Activities

■ DFLP operatives held a **summer camp in the Gaza Strip for dozens of elementary and high school pupils**. Activities included military training and familiarity with weapons. **Ziyad Jarghoun**, a member of the DFLP's political bureau, visited the camp and told the campers they were "the generation of liberation and the standard bearers of the resistance" (Facebook page of the Battalions of National Resistance, August 26, 2015). He called on the operatives to continue their training and deployment in preparation for a possible confrontation with Israel (Facebook page of the Battalions of National Resistance, August 28, 2015).



Left: Ziyad Jarghoun visits DFLP terrorist operatives in the northern Gaza Strip. Right: Campers at the DFLP military-terrorist summer camp (Facebook page of the Battalions of National Resistance, August 26 and 28, 2015).

The Issue of the Four Abducted Gazans

■ The four Gazans who were abducted from a bus in the Sinai Peninsula on August 19, 2015, while en route to the Cairo airport, continue to concern senior figures in Hamas, who accuse the Egyptian regime of responsibility. Senior Hamas figure **Musheir al-Masri** claimed that only Israel benefitted from the abduction. He claimed contacts with the Egyptians were continuing. He demanded Egypt "stop talking, start acting and provide information about the abductees" (Safa News Agency, August 30, 2015). Egypt, on the other hand, claims it is not behind the abduction. According to an Egyptian source, Egypt is monitoring the issue and coordinating with Hamas (Alresala.net, August 30, 2015).

Interview with Ramadan Shallah

■ Interviewed by Al-Mayadeen TV, Ramadan Shallah, secretary general of the PIJ, referred to issues on the organization's agenda (Al-Mayadeen TV, Lebanon, August 28, 2015):

- **Rocket fire into Israel** – In response to Israeli reports, he denied the PIJ had fired rockets into Israel. He claimed that in view of the situation, the PIJ did not have a presence in Syria, with the exception of "a tiny presence" in Damascus. He claimed the organization's activity in Syria was limited because the situation there made it impossible to hold political or "resistance" [i.e., terrorist] activity.
- **The lull agreement and rocket fire into Israel from the Gaza Strip** – The lull in the fighting, he said, was a "temporary situation" meant to ease the suffering of the Palestinian people. However, it was not sacred, he said. He added that the PIJ did not have a problem discussing the establishment of the lull, but Israel had to honor its commitments. However, he said, the PIJ would not agree to a long-term lull that might remove the PIJ from the conflict with Israel.
- **The hunger-striking administrative detainees** – Muhammad Allan, Ramadan Shallah claimed, won a "great victory." It was "another defeat" for Israel after the previous one at the hands of Khader Adnan. **He claimed that if either one of them had died during their hunger strikes, the PIJ would have reacted [with violence].**
- **The situation of the PIJ** – He claimed the PIJ's situation was far better than it had been in the past. It had doubled its capabilities and resources in every field, despite the siege of the Gaza Strip.
- **The PIJ's external relations** – He claimed the PIJ's relations with **Iran** were good. He claimed that as far as Iran was concerned, the Palestinian cause and Iran's attitude towards Palestine did not depend on changing circumstances, but rather were permanent. Relations with **Qatar** were good. The PIJ still had relations with **Turkey** but they were not as good as they had been in the past. Relations with **Egypt** were good because Egypt played an important role in every facet of the Palestinian issue.

The Palestinian Authority

The Palestinian National Council Convenes

■ **Salim Zaanoun**, chairman of the Palestinian National Council (PNC), announced he agreed with Mahmoud Abbas about convening the PNC in Ramallah **on September 15, 2015**. During the meeting members will elect **a new PLO Executive Committee and a new Presidential Council for the PNC**. The PNC has 765 members; the necessary quorum is two thirds.³ He claimed that if Israel did not allow members from the Gaza Strip to attend they would be forced to hold a limited meeting to elect members to the Executive Committee (Wafa News Agency, August 27, 2015).

■ **Hamas and the PIJ objected to convening the PNC**, claiming it served Mahmoud Abbas' personal interests. **Musa Abu Marzouq**, deputy head of Hamas' political bureau, claimed the resignation of the members of the Executive Committee was meant to lead to convening an extraordinary session of the PNC without agreement from Hamas or the PIJ (Facebook page of Musa Abu Marzouq, August 30, 2015). Senior Hamas figure **Ismail Radwan** claimed the objective of convening the PNC was to reassemble the PLO's Executive Committee's personnel as Mahmoud Abbas saw fit (Al-Araby Al-Jadeed, August 31, 2015).

Mahmoud Abbas' Visit to Jordan

■ On August 30, 2015, **Mahmoud Abbas** met with Jordan's **King Abdallah** in Amman. They discussed the Palestinian issue, Jerusalem and various regional developments. Mahmoud Abbas was accompanied by **Saeb Erekat**, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee; **Majid Rash Faraj**, head of Palestinian general intelligence; and **Atta' Khiri**, Palestinian ambassador to Jordan (Wafa News Agency, August 30, 2015). Jordanian sources claimed Mahmoud Abbas told the king he wanted to resign and leave political life. He claimed that was because of the stalemate in the political process with Israel and Hamas' activity to upset the internal Palestinian reconciliation (Samaa, August 31, 2015).

³ The last time the full PNC was convened was in 1998 in the Gaza Strip, attended by American President Bill Clinton. Since then it has met a number of times with partial attendance, with no more than half the number of members.



Mahmoud Abbas meets with King Abdallah of Jordan (Wafa News Agency, August 30, 2015).