



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

(September 2-8, 2015)



Five yeshiva students, tourists from the United States, went to the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron, got lost along the way and entered the neighborhood of Jabel Johar in the southern part of the city. Left: The tourists' car is torched and burns to the ground (Facebook page of Quds.net, September 3, 2015). Right: The tourists' car after it had been stoned (Facebook page of Gaza al-A'an, September 3, 2015).

Overview

- This past week Palestinians in the Gaza Strip fired two bullets (possibly stray) at houses in the Israeli community of Netiv HaAsara, north of the Gaza Strip. In response Israel Air Force (IAF) aircraft struck the Hamas military installation in the northern Gaza Strip where the shots were fired from. This past week no rockets or mortar shells were fired into Israeli territory.
- Rioting and terrorist attacks in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem continue, part of what the Palestinians call the "popular resistance" (i.e., popular terrorism). The most prominent event was the attack on five yeshiva students, American tourists, who were en route to the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron. They were given refuge in the house of a local resident and were rescued by IDF forces.
- The Israeli coordinator for government activities in the territories reported that Hamas operatives had forcibly taken over a warehouse in the Gaza Strip and seized building materials sent by Israel. The materials were taken to rebuild Hamas' offensive tunnels. It was not the first time Hamas used cement and other building materials meant for the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip to further its military buildup.

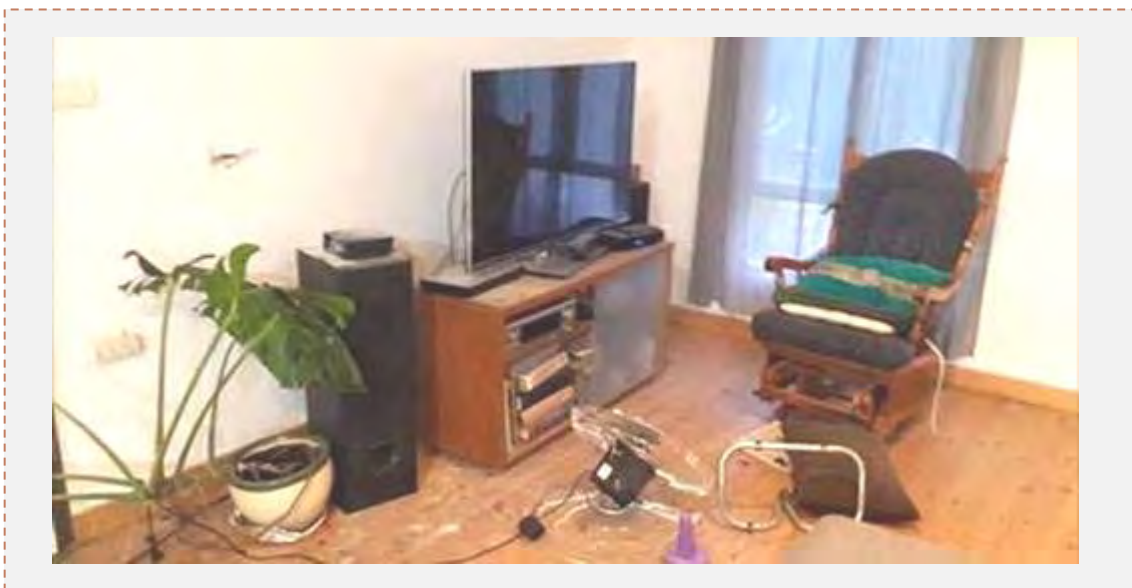
Israel's South

Rocket Fire Attacking Israel

- This past week no rocket or mortar shell hits were identified in Israeli territory.

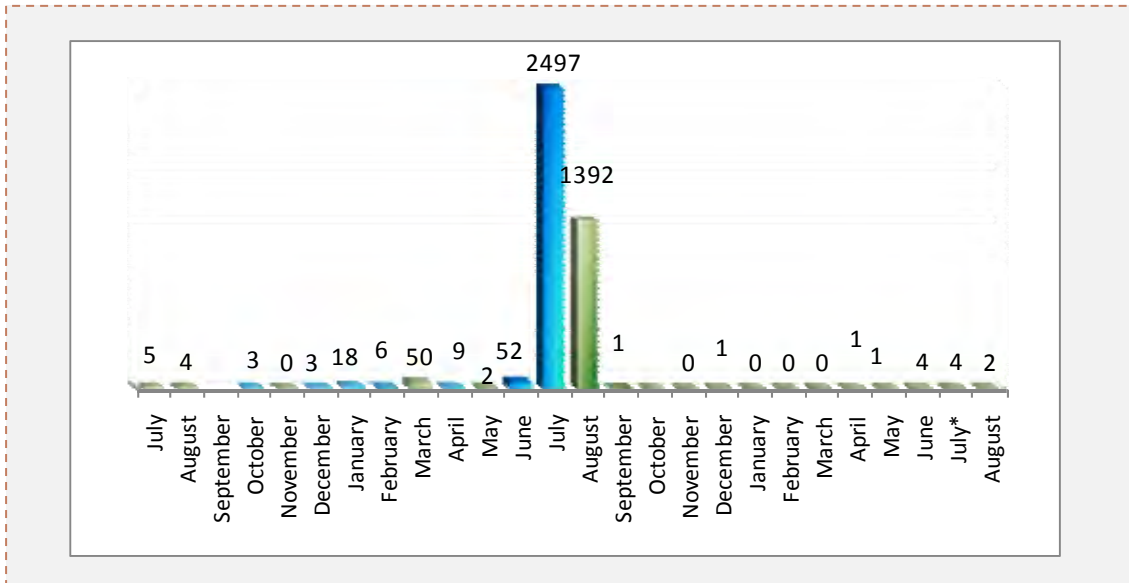
Two Bullets Fired at Israeli Community North of the Gaza Strip

- On September 2, 2015, two bullets fired from the Gaza Strip hit houses in the Israeli community of Netiv HaAsara, north of the Gaza Strip. Minor property damage was reported. It is unclear whether the bullets were deliberately fired at the houses or whether they were strays from military training conducted in the Gaza Strip near the border.
- In response IAF aircraft struck the Hamas military installation in the northern Gaza Strip the shots were fired from (IDF Spokesman, September 3, 2015). The Palestinian media reported that in the early morning hours of September 3, 2015, the IAF struck the Hamas Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades "Palestine" post in the northern Gaza Strip. There were no casualties; damage to the post was reported (Quds.net, September 3, 2015).



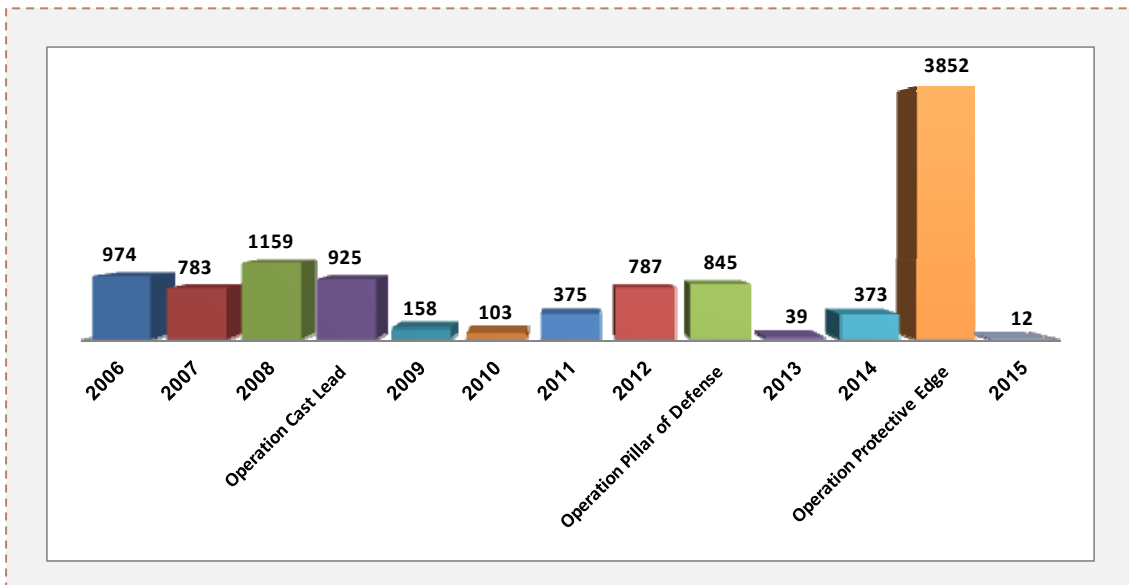
One of two houses in Netiv HaAsara damaged by gunfire (Facebook page of QudsN, September 3, 2015).

Monthly Distribution of Rocket Fire (2013 – 2015)¹



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

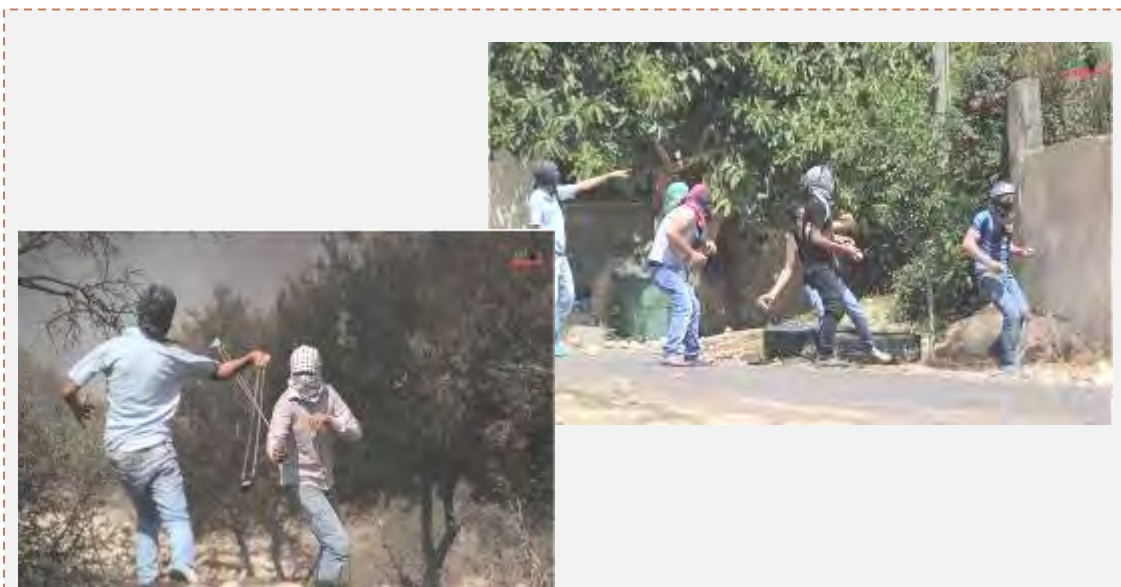
¹ As of September 8, 2015. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire or rockets which misfired and fell inside the Gaza Strip.

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 Palestinians throwing stones, rocks and Molotov cocktails at Israeli security forces and civilians.



Palestinians throw stones at Israeli security forces during the weekly riot in Kafr Qaddum protesting the settlements (Facebook page of Kafr Qaddum, September 3, 2015)

- Some of the prominent attacks were the following:
 - On **September 6, 2015**, Palestinians threw Molotov cocktails at the community of Beit El. There were no casualties and no damage was reported (Facebook page of Red Alert, September 6, 2015).
 - On **September 4, 2015**, Israeli Border Policemen stationed at the Tapuah Junction (south of Nablus) halted a suspicious vehicle for a security check. A search of the vehicle revealed an M-16 assault rifle hidden under a seat. Two days previously a rifle and ammunition magazines were found in a vehicle at the same roadblock (Facebook page of the Israel Police Force, September 4, 2015).
 - On **September 3, 2015**, five yeshiva students, all of them American tourists, drove to the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron. They got lost on the way and entered the Jabel Johar neighborhood in the southern part of the city. Palestinians stoned their car. A local resident took them to his house until IDF forces came and removed them from the region. Two of the tourists suffered minor injuries. The car was torched and burned to the ground.

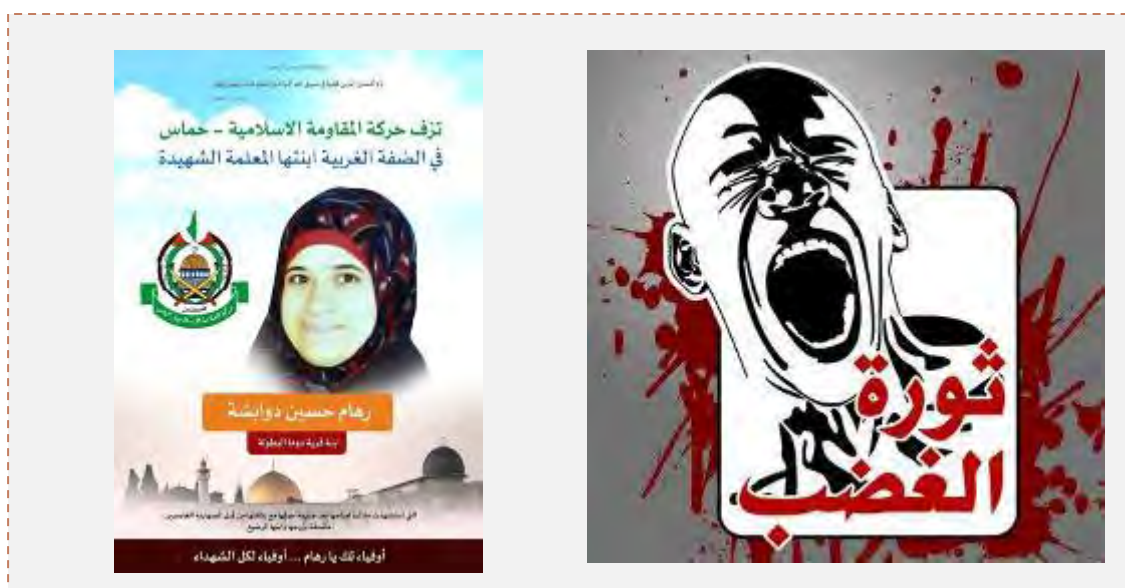
- On **September 3, 2015**, a vehicle broke through the police checkpoint at the entrance to the village of Azaria in east Jerusalem and drove directly at the policemen manning the site. The police shot at the car, it overturned and caught fire (Facebook page of the Israel Police Force, September 3, 2015). An improvised weapon was found in the possession of a Palestinian woman who roused the suspicions of the police stationed at the checkpoint (Facebook page of Red Alert, September 3, 2015).
- On **September 2, 2015**, during a Border Police activity in the al-Aida refugee camp (near the Tomb of Rachel in Bethlehem), the policemen identified a Palestinian about to throw a pipe bomb at them. They shot and wounded him; he was taken to a hospital. The bomb was neutralized (Facebook page of the Israel Police Force, September 2, 2015).

The Woman Wounded in the Terrorist Attack in Duma Dies

- **Riham Dawabshe**, whose house in the village of Duma was firebombed by Jewish terrorists on July 31, 2015, died in the hospital. Her younger son was burned to death in the attack and a few days later her husband also died. The arsonists have not yet been caught.
- The death of Riham Dawabshe prompted a wave of blame against Israel, **accompanied by incitement to violence**. Thousands of people attended her funeral. After it ended riots broke out and masked Palestinians attacked Israeli security forces (Wafa News Agency, September 7, 2015). **Nabil Abu Rudeina**, spokesman for Mahmoud Abbas' office, said Mahmoud Abbas had declared a three-day mourning period (Wafa News Agency, September 7, 2015). **Hamas** issued a notice blaming the Palestinian Authority (PA) for "not responding to the terrorism backed by the government of Israel." **Hamas called for strong Palestinian reactions against Israel**. There was also a call for Palestinians to **hold "a day of rage" on Friday, September 11, 2015** (Facebook pages of the Islamic Bloc at Al-Najah University, Shihab and PALDAF; and a Hamas website, September 7, 2015).



Notices appearing on various Palestinian Facebook pages calling for an "uprising" in the wake of the death of Riham Dawabshe. Left: The Arabic reads, "They burn our women and children and defile Al-Aqsa mosque, what are we waiting for? This [coming] Friday is the day of our uprising" (Facebook page of PALDF, September 7, 2015). Right: The Arabic reads, "Rise up and resist...ignite the [West] Bank and do not compromise (Facebook page of the Islamic Bloc at Al-Najah University, September 7, 2015).



Left: Notice mourning the death of Riham Dawabshe issued by Hamas (Facebook page of PALDF, September 7, 2015). Right: Notice calling for a "day of rage" in response to the death of Riham Dawabshe and the "defilement of Al-Aqsa mosque." The Arabic reads, "The revolution of rage" (Facebook page of Shihab, September 6, 2015).

Israeli Government Response to the Increase in Popular Terrorism

■ In the wake of the increase in popular terrorism (the "popular resistance") Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu convened a discussion on the security situation. He said he could not accept a situation in which stones and firebombs were thrown along a main route to – and within – Jerusalem and that "The policy is zero tolerance for stone-throwing and zero tolerance for terrorism." He ordered the reinforcement of

units along Route 443, increased intelligence, observation efforts and an examination of the possibility of adding cameras and lighting along the entire length of the highway. He also ordered that two additional Border Police companies and approximately 400 Israel Police personnel be stationed in Jerusalem. In addition, he ordered that an examination be conducted to change the orders regarding opening fire on Palestinians throwing stones and Molotov cocktails (Website of the Israeli prime minister, September 2, 2015).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

The Crossings – Recent Developments

The Rafah Crossing

- On September 5, 2015, the Egyptian authorities opened the Rafah crossing for three days for pilgrims going to Mecca from the Gaza Strip (Website of the ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip, September 5, 2015). The crossing opened in one direction only, for Gazans leaving the Strip. The Egyptians said they would not allow Palestinians in Egyptian territory to enter the Gaza Strip during the three days the crossing was open (Ma'an News Agency, September 6, 2015).

- **Ramadan Shallah, secretary general of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)**, and his deputy **Ziyad al-Nakhaleh** paid a visit to Egypt to meet with senior members of the Egyptian security forces and discuss the lull and the Rafah crossing (Ma'an News Agency, September 2, 2015).



Gazan pilgrims en route to Mecca exit the Strip through the Rafah crossing (Facebook page of Quds.net, September 7, 2015).

Hamas Operatives Seize Building Materials Meant for the Reconstruction of the Gaza Strip

■ Major General Yoav Mordechai, the Israeli Coordinator for Government Activities in the Territories, issued a press release stating that **Hamas operatives had forcibly taken over a warehouse in the Gaza Strip and removed building materials sent by Israel for the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip**. He said they seized the materials to rebuild their offensive tunnels. He added that since the end of Operation Protective Edge the Israeli government had authorized the delivery of 1.7 million tons of building materials to Gaza Strip for civilian reconstruction. Hamas' theft of the materials, he said, was responsible for the delay in reconstruction of the Gaza Strip (Walla, September 1, 2015).

Iranian Charity Distributes School Bags to Children in the Gaza Strip

■ An Iranian charity for "the defense of the Palestinian people" in association with a Palestinian charity distributed 1,700 school bags, textbooks and writing materials to school children of needy families in the Gaza Strip. It was part of a so-called "schoolbag program" (Fars News Agency, September 5, 2015).



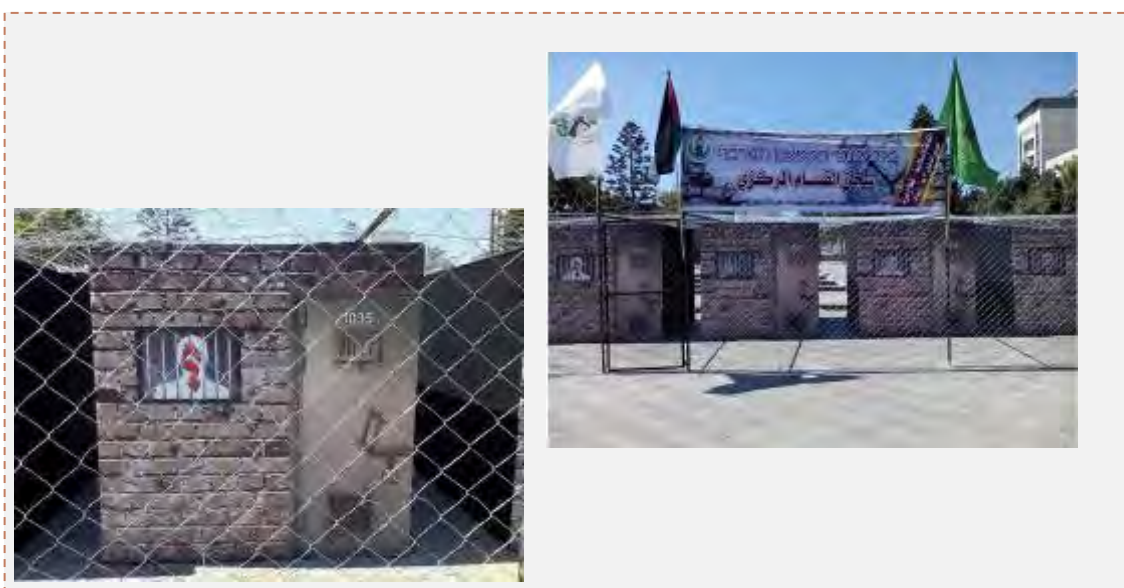
Distribution of Iranian charity in the Gaza Strip (Fars News Agency, September 5, 2015).

Hamas' Propaganda Exploitation of Israeli MIAs

■ The Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military-terrorist wing, in collaboration with the Islamic Bloc, held a display in the Square of the Unknown Soldier in Gaza City. It was directed at Israel and called "Count your soldiers," and was held on the occasion of the first anniversary of Operation Protective Edge. It had a "prison" made of

cardboard with a sign reading, "The central al-Qassam prison." There were six cells, three of which had the names of Israeli MIAs, and three of which had question marks. There was also a sign reading, "the military wing is the one that will decide when you visit your children in prison."

■ During the opening ceremony, held under the aegis of Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades commander **Muhammad Deif**, senior Hamas figure **Fathi Hamad** called on the Arabs **to send Hamas weapons and money** for the next campaign against Israel (Al-Quds, September 2, 2015).



The Hamas display in Gaza City of the "al-Qassam prison" (Facebook page of PALDF, September 2, 2015).

In ITIC assessment the display is a Hamas propaganda ploy to inflate the importance of what Hamas perceives as the organization's "assets" and exert pressure on Israel.

National Security Force Holds Military Exercise

■ A national security force unit in Rafah held a military exercise as part of a course. **It simulated a night attack on a military base in Israel and used live ammunition.** Present at the exercise were **Naim al-Ghoul**, commander of the national security forces and his deputy. Naim al-Ghoul gave a speech in which he said that the exercises were intended to prepare and train the soldiers of the Palestinian army, both physically and mentally (Website of the ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip, September 7, 2015).

It was not the first time since the end of Operation Protective Edge that the national security forces had held such simulation exercises. On December 23, 2014, they held a similar exercise to simulate raiding and taking control of an Israeli post.³

■ The national security force, like the other security forces in the Gaza Strip, have as members **Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades terrorist operatives with double identities**. That was clearly shown by an examination of the names of operatives killed in Operation Protective Edge and other events. Their double identities make it possible for Hamas to employ terrorist operatives in the security forces, to give their activities administrative cover and to pay them the same salaries as security force operatives. **The training of the national security force shows it is a fighting military force in every respect and not only entrusted with internal security missions.**

Terrorists Apparently Killed in Naval Training Accidents

■ Hamas' military-terrorist wing said in a statement that **Khader Nabil Sayyid al-Bahri**, 27, from Beit Lahia (northern Gaza Strip), an operative in its naval unit, drowned in a "chance mishap." It occurred on the shore near Beit Lahia (Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades website, September 6, 2015). It may have been a training accident.

■ The PIJ's military-terrorist wing announced the drowning of **Muhammad Jaafar Shahin**, 24. He belonged to the al-Daraj battalion of the Gaza brigade (Facebook page of the Jerusalem Brigades, September 3, 2015). He was apparently killed in an accident during training carried out by the Jerusalem Brigades' naval commando unit.

In ITIC assessment, the deaths of the two terrorist operatives indicate the emphasis the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip have placed on **naval commando training** since Operation Protective Edge.

³ For further information see the December 29, 2014 bulletin, "[Hamas' Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades and National Security Forces Exercises Simulate Takeover of IDF Posts near Gaza Strip and Abduction of Soldiers.](#)"



Left: Muhammad Shahin, PIJ terrorist operative (Facebook page of the Jerusalem Brigades, September 3, 2015). Right: Hamas naval unit operative Khader al-Bahri (Hamas website, September 6, 2015).

PIJ Terrorist Operative from the Gaza Strip Detained in Israel⁴

- At the end of July 2015 the Israeli security forces **detained Ihab Sayyid Abd al-Rahman Abu Nakhel a PIJ operative from the Gaza Strip who had been involved in terrorist attacks against IDF forces during Operation Protective Edge**. He had also been involved in other terrorist activities. Abu Nakhel was born in Gaza City in 1988. **He belonged to a network calling itself the Unity of Allah Brigade, affiliated with ISIS. He was detained when he tried to leave for Qatar to work in an employment initiative for teachers from the Gaza Strip.**
- Initially Ihab Abu Nakhel was an operative in Hamas military-terrorist wing where he acquired military capabilities. He then moved to the **Popular Resistance Committees (PRC)**. During 2010 he was chosen by PRC commanders to carry out a suicide bombing attack against an Israeli target near the Gaza Strip-Egypt border. To that end he underwent ad hoc training. He left the Gaza Strip for the Sinai Peninsula through one of the tunnels to carry out an attack on an Israeli bus near Eilat. For various reasons the plan was not put into action.
- **In 2014 Ihab Abu Nakhel enlisted in the Unity of Allah Brigade**, an ISIS-affiliated Salafist-jihadi network, and continued his terrorist activities against Israel. During Operation Protective Edge, despite being affiliated with Salafist-jihadi elements in the Gaza Strip, Hamas enlisted him in its special forces (the elite *nukhba* unit) to

⁴ Israel Security Agency website, September 6, 2015.

fight against Israel. He participated in an attack in which he detonated IEDs against IDF soldiers.

Another Salafi-Jihadist Operative from the Gaza Strip Killed in Iraq

- The Palestinian media websites reported the death of **Muhammad Salim Muhammad Abu Dabusa**, aka **Abu al-Abd the Gazan**. He was a Salafi-jihadist operative, 26, from the Khan Yunis refugee camp. He was killed fighting in the ranks of ISIS in the Kirkuk Province in northern Iraq. The first announcement of his death appeared on a Hamas Internet forum on August 17, 2015.
- Muhammad Abu Dabusa was a teacher before he left to join ISIS. According to Palestinian sources, he left the Gaza Strip approximately a year and a half ago and had been detained in the past by Hamas for belonging to the Salafi-jihadists (Quds.net, September 3, 2015).



Muhammad Abu Dabusa, killed fighting in the ranks of ISIS in northern Iraq (Twitter account of Watheqpress, September 3, 2015).

The Palestinian Authority

Palestinian National Council Meeting Apparently Postponed

- Hamas and other terrorist organizations have apparently succeeded in preventing the Palestinian National Council (PNC) from convening. Hamas issued a statement calling on all the Palestinian organizations and Council members to boycott the

meeting. Hamas stressed the dire implications of the meeting for the internal Palestinian reconciliation (Al-Ayyam, September 3, 2015). In addition, according to reports, Hamas examined the possibility of preventing PNC members from leaving the Gaza Strip to make it more difficult to raise the two-thirds quorum required for the meeting.

- **Saeb Erekat**, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee, went to Qatar to meet with **Khaled Mashaal**, head of Hamas' political bureau. They discussed the participation of Hamas members in the PNC meeting (Quds.net, September 3, 2015). Khaled Mashaal reportedly gave Saeb Erekat a communiqué for Mahmoud Abbas expressing Hamas' unequivocal opposition to any decision the Council might make (Rai al-Youm, September 5, 2015).

- **Ramadan Abdullah Shallah, PIJ secretary general**, met in Cairo with **Azzam al-Ahmed**, a member of Fatah's Central Committee, and asked him to postpone the PNC meeting (Anadolu News Agency, September 6, 2015). Muhammad al-Hunaid, a senior PIJ figure, claimed that holding a PNC meeting would only widen the internal Palestinian schism (Ma'an News Agency, September 5, 2015).

- On September 7, 2015, **the Palestinian media reported that in light of objections raised by various organizations to holding a PNC meeting, it was likely that it would be postponed.**

Flying the Palestinian Flag in Front of the UN

- Before the opening of UN General Assembly session a twenty Arab UN members signed document demanding that the flag of "Palestine" be flown in front of the UN building in New York. According to **Riyadh Mansour**, PA representative to the UN, the chairman of the General Assembly had decided to put it to a vote. He claimed that if the demand was accepted, then they would demand it be flown at a festive ceremony attended by Mahmoud Abbas, the PA chairman, who is supposed to arrive in New York for the General Assembly's 70th session (Wafa News Agency, September 1, 2015).

Mahmoud Abbas Meets with the al-Tamimi Family from Nebi Saleh

- **Mahmoud Abbas met in his office in Ramallah with the al-Tamimi family from Nebi Saleh, whose members had confronted IDF soldiers.** He praised the family for its "courage and adherence to the struggle against IDF soldiers." He claimed the so-called "peaceful resistance" was an effective weapon in the hands of the Palestinian

people in their fight against the "Israeli occupation" because it exposed the true face of Israel (Quds.net, September 3, 2015).

■ Various Facebook pages posted a notice mocking Mahmoud Abbas for his remarks about "peaceful resistance." It shows him holding a machine gun firing olives, lemons and apples (Facebook page of Gaza al-A'an, September 2, 2015).



Left: A notice mocking Mahmoud Abbas for his statement about the "peaceful resistance" (Facebook page of Gaza al-A'an, September 2, 2015). Right: Mahmoud Abbas meets with the al-Tamimi family from Nebi Saleh (Facebook page of Mahmoud Abbas, September 2, 2015).

Mahmoud Abbas Meets with the Family of Terrorist Muhammad al-Atrash

■ Mahmoud Abbas met in his office with the family of terrorist **Muhammad al-Atrash**, who was killed at the Tapuah Junction (south of Nablus). He was killed on August 17, 2015, when he tried to stab an Israeli Border Policeman. Mahmoud Abbas expressed his condolences to the family and claimed the PA had given the details of the killing to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague for review (Facebook page of Mahmoud Abbas, September 2, 2015).



Mahmoud Abbas meets in his office with the family of terrorist Muhammad al-Atrash (Facebook page of Mahmoud Abbas, September 2, 2015)

Palestinian News Agency Ma'an Hosts Khader Adnan, PIJ Operative Released from Administrative Detention

■ On September 1, 2015, the Ma'an News Agency held a reception for **Khader Adnan** at its offices in Bethlehem. Khader Adnan was a senior PIJ terrorist operative recently released from administrative detention in Israel following a long hunger strike. He was received by **Nasser Laham**, Ma'an's editor-in-chief, and **Muhammad Faraj**, the manager of Ma'an's satellite TV channel. Nasser Laham congratulated Khader Adnan and praised his "firm stance and struggle in the Israeli jail." Khader Adnan thanked him for the media support Ma'an had given him (Ma'an News Agency, September 1, 2015).



From right to left: Nasser Laham, editor-in-chief of the Ma'an News Agency, Khader Adnan, and Muhammad Faraj, manager of Ma'an's satellite TV channel (Ma'an News Agency, September 1, 2015).

The Issue of the Prisoners

■ **Issa Qaraqe**, head of the Palestinian Prisoners Commission, met with **Nabil al-Arabi**, secretary general of the Arab League, and updated him on the situation of the Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails (Safa News Agency, September 4, 2015). He claimed that on September 16 and 17, 2015, Jordan would host an international conference dedicated to the Palestinian prisoners and attended by international legal experts. He claimed the conference would support the PA in its appeal to the ICC to bring senior Israelis to trial for "crimes" against the Palestinian people, and especially against the prisoners (Paltoday, September 4, 2015).