



# News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

(December 23 – 29, 2015)



The current Palestinian terrorist campaign continues. Left: The Christmas spirit at a riot in Bil'in (Facebook page of Bil'in, December 25, 2015). Right: Knives used by Palestinians in the stabbing attack on Jaffa Road in Jerusalem, killing two and wounding another (Facebook page of QudsN, December 23, 2015).

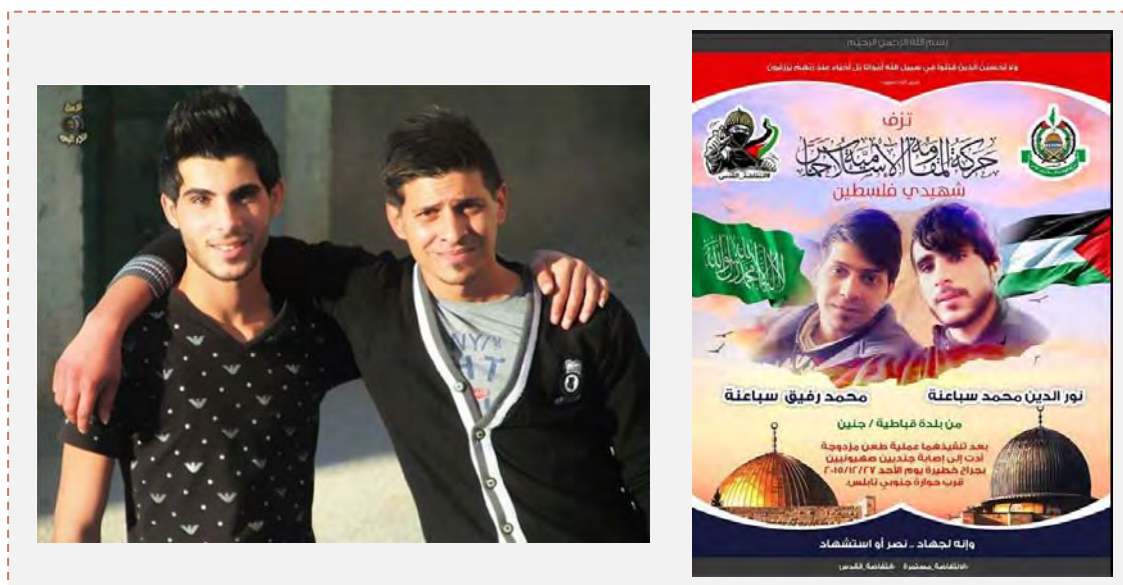
## Overview

- This past week the current Palestinian terrorist campaign continued with stabbing and vehicular attacks in Judea, Samaria and the city of Jerusalem (which remains a focal point for stabbing attacks). Two Israeli civilians were killed in stabbing attacks in Jerusalem, bringing the number of Israelis killed in the current terrorist campaign to 25.
- Notable this past week was the exposure of a large Hamas terrorist network in the region of Abu Dis (near Jerusalem), handled and directed by operatives of Hamas' military-terrorist wing in the Gaza Strip. The network planned terrorist attacks including showcase suicide bombing attacks employing explosive belts and car bombs. One of the operatives maintained ongoing contact with his handlers in the Gaza Strip who trained him in the manufacture of explosive belts and IEDs. In addition a Hamas network was exposed in Bethlehem, whose operatives were enlisted as suicide bombers. Had the plans of the two networks come to fruition, it would have seriously escalated the current terrorist campaign. It would have ended its popular, spontaneous nature and turned it into a "military-type" intifada of the sort Hamas and the other terrorist organizations call for.

## Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem

### Terrorist Attacks and Attempted Attacks

■ **December 27, 2015 – stabbing attack:** Two Palestinian terrorists went to the gas station at the **Huwvara Center** (south of Nablus) and stabbed two IDF soldiers, leaving one of them in serious condition. The terrorists were shot and killed. They were **Muhammad Rafiq Saba'ana**, 17, and **Nour al-Din Muhammad Saba'ana**, 23, both from Qabatiya (south of Jenin).



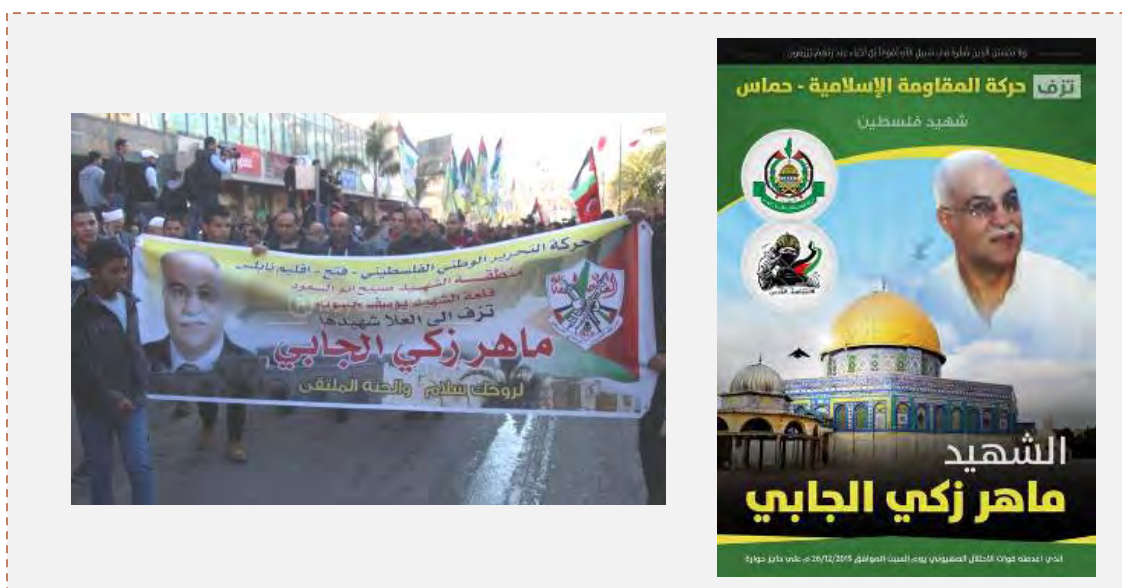
Left: Palestinian terrorists Nour al-Din Muhammad Saba'ana and Muhammad Rafiq Saba'ana (Facebook page of Qabatiya Online, December 27, 2015). Right: The death notice issued by Hamas for Nour al-Din Muhammad Saba'ana and Muhammad Rafiq Saba'ana (Facebook page of PALDF, December 28, 2015).

■ **December 27, 2015 – stabbing attack:** A Palestinian stabbed an IDF soldier in the back **near the central bus station in Jerusalem**. The soldier pushed him away and threw him to the ground. A security guard who saw the attack overcame the stabber. The Palestinian media reported he was **Sayyid Farouq Muhammad Kanbaz**, 30, from Al-Azariya in east Jerusalem (Arab48, December 27, 2015). The terrorist carried an Israeli ID card.

■ **December 26, 2015 – attempted stabbing attack:** A terrorist followed a group of Jewish worshippers walking towards the **"IDF Square" in Jerusalem** (near the walls of the Old City). His actions aroused the suspicion of police, who asked him for identification. He pulled out a knife and struggled with one of the policemen. He was shot and killed. The Palestinian media reported he was **Musab Mahmoud Muhammad al-Ghazali**, 26, from Silwan in Jerusalem. His brother claimed he was

retarded and as a child had gone to the Al-Nour special education school (Al-Quds, Silwanik.net and Al-Fajr, December 26, 2015).

■ **December 26, 2015 – vehicular attack:** A Palestinian terrorist carried out a vehicular attack targeting a group of IDF soldiers checking vehicles in the region of **Huwwara (near Nablus)**. One soldier was wounded. The terrorist was critically wounded and later died. He was **Maher Zaki al-Jabi**, 56, from Nablus. Both Hamas and Fatah issued death notices for him (Facebook page of the Islamic Movement in Nablus and Roya, December 26, 2015).



Left: Fatah banner carried at the funeral held for Palestinian terrorist Maher Zaki al-Jabi (Roya, December 26, 2015). Right: The Hamas death notice for Maher al-Jabi (Facebook page of the Islamic Movement in Nablus, December 26, 2015).

■ **December 25, 2015 – attempted vehicular attack:** A Palestinian woman tried to carry out a vehicular attack at a Border Police post in **Silwad**. A Border Police force shot and killed her. She was **Mahdia Muhammad Ibrahim Hamad (Um Zakaria)**, 40, mother of four from the village of Silwad. Fatah issued a death notice for her, but she apparently did not belong to the movement (Twitter account of the Fatah movement, December 25, 2015; Wafa News Agency and the Facebook page of Quds.net, December 26, 2015).





The death notice issued by Fatah for Mahdia Hamad (Twitter account of the Fatah movement, December 25, 2015).

■ **December 24, 2015 – stabbing attack:** A Palestinian terrorist stabbed two security guards, a man and a woman, at **the entrance of the Ariel industrial park**. The male guard shot and killed him. The Palestinian media reported he was **Muhammad Zahran Abd al-Hamid Zahran**, 22, from Kafr al-Dik in the region of Salfit (Facebook page of PALDF, December 24, 2015). Muhammad Zahran worked in the Ariel industrial park and had an entrance pass (Walla, December 24, 2015). Hamas issued a death notice for him.



The death notice issued for Palestinian terrorist Muhammad Zahran (Facebook page of PALDF, December 26, 2015)

■ **December 24, 2015 – attempted stabbing attack:** A Palestinian terrorist attempted to stab an IDF soldier with a screwdriver at **a junction in the Hebron region**. He was shot and killed. The Palestinian media reported he was **Iyad Jamal**

**Issa Id'is**, 25, from Yatta, south of Hebron (Kinan website, December 24, 2015). Hamas issued a death notice for him (Facebook page of PALDF, December 24, 2015).



Death notice issued by Hamas for Palestinian terrorist Iyad Id'is (Facebook page of PALDF, December 24, 2015)

■ **December 24, 2015 – vehicular attack:** A Palestinian terrorist rammed into IDF soldiers at a checkpoint close to **Adam Square (north of Jerusalem)**, wounding one soldier. The terrorist was shot and killed. The Palestinian media reported he was **Wisam Nasser Abu Ghuwila**, 20, from the Qalandia refugee camp (Dunia al-Watan, December 25, 2015).



Left: Praise on Wisam Nasser Abu Ghuwila's Facebook page for terrorists from the Qalandia refugee camp killed in the current terrorist campaign. The Arabic reads, "Be blessed in the shahadah, lions of Qalandia." Right: Palestinian terrorist Wisam Nasser Abu Ghuwila (Dunia al-Watan, December 25, 2015).

■ **December 23, 2015 – stabbing attack:**

- Two Palestinian terrorists stabbed civilians at **the Jaffa Gate in Jerusalem**. Border Policemen identified the terrorist and killed them. Two of the civilians were critically injured in the terrorist attack and **one of them later died**. Another Israeli civilian was critically injured by Border Police fire and also later died.
- The Palestinian media reported the terrorists were **Issa Yassin Assaf**, 21, from the Qalandia refugee camp, and **Anan Muhammad Abu Habsa**, 21, from the Qalandia refugee camp (Facebook page of PALDF, December 23, 2015).
- Issa Yassin Assaf had been imprisoned in Israel in 2015 because of his involvement in popular terrorism. Hamas claimed both of them were operatives of the movement and issued death notices for them, praising their "heroic attack" (Facebook page of PALDF, December 24, 2015).



Death notices issued by Hamas for the two terrorists. Left: Issa Assaf. Right: Anan Abu Habsa (Facebook page of PALDF, December 24, 2015)

## Hamas Network Exposed in Abu Dis, Handled from the Gaza Strip<sup>1</sup>

The Israeli security forces recently exposed a large Hamas terrorist network operating in the region of Abu Dis, near Jerusalem. It was handled and directed by operatives of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military-terrorist wing, in the Gaza Strip. The network planned to carry out terrorist attacks against Israel, including showcase suicide bombing attacks. **So far 25 terrorist operatives have been detained, most of them students from Abu Dis University.**

- The network was headed by **Jamal Musa Azzam**, 27, from Yasuf (near Qalqiliya). **He was recruited by a Hamas terrorist operative in the Gaza Strip** and instructed to create a Hamas network that would attack Israeli targets. He was in constant contact with his handlers in the Gaza Strip who **trained him in the manufacture of explosive belts and IEDs**. He recruited a number of other students and had them acquire the materials necessary for manufacturing explosives, rent safe houses and enlist suicide bombers.
- **Among those recruited to the network were two Israeli citizens who were students at Abu Dis University, one from east Jerusalem and the other a Bedouin from Hura in the Negev.** During interrogation the Bedouin from Hura said **he had agreed to carry out a suicide bombing attack in Israel, using either an explosive belt or a car bomb.** Both Israeli students said they supported ISIS and belonged to local Salafist networks in their villages. **An explosives laboratory was discovered in an apartment rented by Ahmed Azzam in Abu Dis.** An examination of the materials found in the laboratory indicated **the terrorists were capable of making large quantities of various types of explosives. Some of the materials had been purchased in Israel and Ramallah.**
- **Another Hamas network was exposed in Bethlehem.** Some of its operatives were also students at Abu Dis University and **were recruited as suicide bombers.** At least three recruits said they were willing to carry out attacks against Israel. One of them, **Issa Nasser Issa Shawka**, 19, from Bethlehem, had accepted Ahmed Azzam's offer to carry out a terrorist attack. Another operative from Bethlehem had agreed to carry out an attack with him in Jerusalem.

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<sup>1</sup> Israel Security Agency website, December 23, 2015.

## Riots, Clashes and Popular Terrorism

■ In the meantime, demonstrations, protest marches, riots, and the throwing of stones, Molotov cocktails and pipe bombs continue in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem. In some instances Palestinian Authority (PA) security forces prevented Palestinian protest demonstrations, including a march from Ramallah to nearby Beit El. PA security force operatives detained activists and kept them from reaching the media crews covering the events (Paltoday, December 25, 2015). Senior figures in Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and Fatah's military-terrorist wing condemned the activities of the PA security forces (Ma'an News Agency, and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade official website, December 18, 2015).

■ Some of the more prominent incidents were the following:

- **December 27, 2015** – Palestinians threw three Molotov cocktails at an Israeli bus near **Bayt 'Awwa (Hebron region)**. There were no casualties and no damage was reported (Facebook page of Red Alert, December 27, 2015).
- **December 27, 2015** – Israeli policemen saw a suspicious young Palestinian on a street in **the Old City in Jerusalem**. When they examined him he gave them his documents and took a knife out of his shirt. They overcame and detained him. He was from Al-Bireh and in Israeli illegally (Facebook page of Red Alert, December 27, 2015).
- **December 27, 2015** – At the entrance to **the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron** a Palestinian woman was found to have knife in her possession. She was detained and taken for questioning (Facebook page of Red Alert, date, 2015). The Palestinian media reported she was **Dalal Muhammad Nafez Mahmoud al-Kamiri**, 23, from Hebron (Ma'an News Agency, December 27, 2015).
- **December 27, 2015** – A Palestinian woman approached the Jewish community of **Ma'aleh Shomrom**. When Israeli security forces went towards her she threw a knife on the ground and ran towards the nearby village of Azzun. She was caught and detained (Facebook page of Red Alert, December 27, 2015). She was **Qariman Akram Suweidan**, 15, from the village of Azzun. After she was detained Palestinians rioted in Qalqiliya, demanding her release (Al-Hadaf, December 27, 2015).



- **December 27, 2015** – Palestinians threw stones at an Israeli police be on the **cross-Judea highway**. One of the stones broke a window and hit the arm of a policeman (Facebook page of Red Alert, December 27, 2015).
- **December 26, 2015** – Palestinians threw four pipe bombs at Israeli security forces at a roadblock in Hebron. They bombs exploded near the soldiers. There were no casualties (Facebook page of Red Alert, December 26, 2015).
- **December 25, 2015** – Palestinians threw stones at an Israeli vehicle at the entrance to **Beit El** (Ramallah region), injuring an Israeli woman (Facebook page of Red Alert, December 26, 2015).
- **December 24, 2015** – Palestinians threw stones at Israelis in **Adam Square** (Ramallah region). Two people were injured. IDF forces searched the area for the stone-throwers (Facebook page of Red Alert, December 24, 2015).
- **December 24, 2015** – A Palestinian opened fire on Israeli security forces engaged in operational activities in **the Qalandia refugee camp** (north of Jerusalem). The terrorist was shot and critically wounded (Facebook page of Red Alert, December 24, 2015).

## Palestinian Statements about the Terrorist Campaign

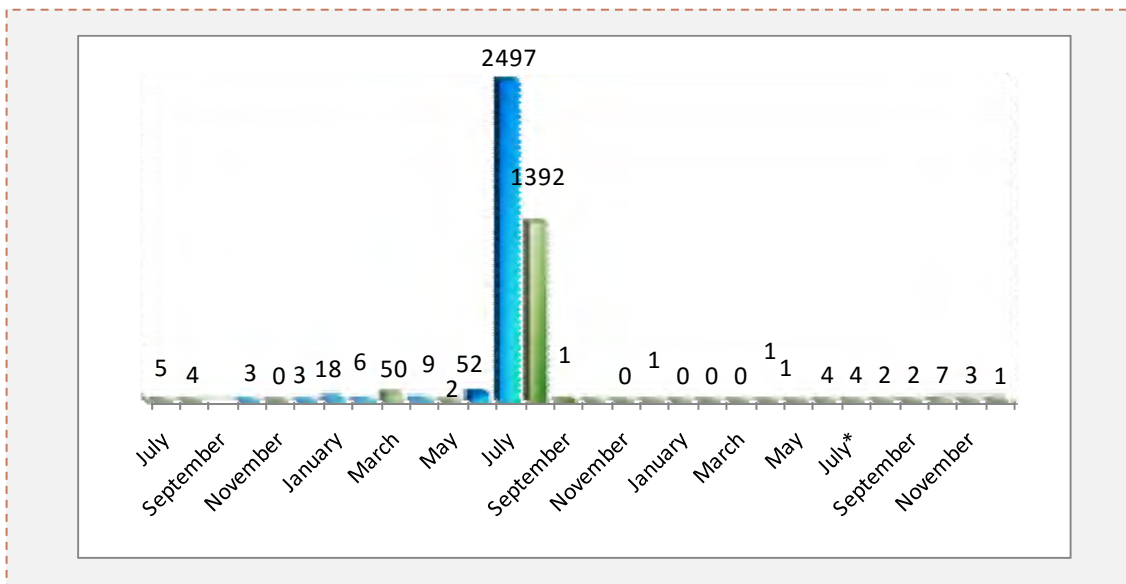
- **PIJ chairman Ramadan Shallah** gave a speech calling on Fatah to stop the PA's activities against the intifada **join it**. He also called on Fatah to stop security coordination with Israel and declare the arrangements and negotiations with Israel as having failed. He said the intifada would continue and any attempt to stop it was a waste of time (Safa News Agency, December 24, 2015). **Khaled Mashaal, chairman of Hamas' political bureau, made a similar appeal to Fatah.**
- In response, Fatah spokesman **Osama al-Qawasmi** called the appeal strange. He asked the heads of Hamas and the PIJ to look closely at the names of Palestinians killed [in terrorist attacks] and to recognize the fact that Fatah operatives headed the list (Dunia al-Watan, December 25, 2015). **Ahmed Majdalani**, a member of the PLO's Executive Committee, called on Hamas to stop enlisting the Palestinian people for terrorist activities. He said the Palestinian people had to know that the only correct path was a non-violent popular struggle (Palestinian TV, December 23, 2015).

## Israel's South

### Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire Attacking Israel

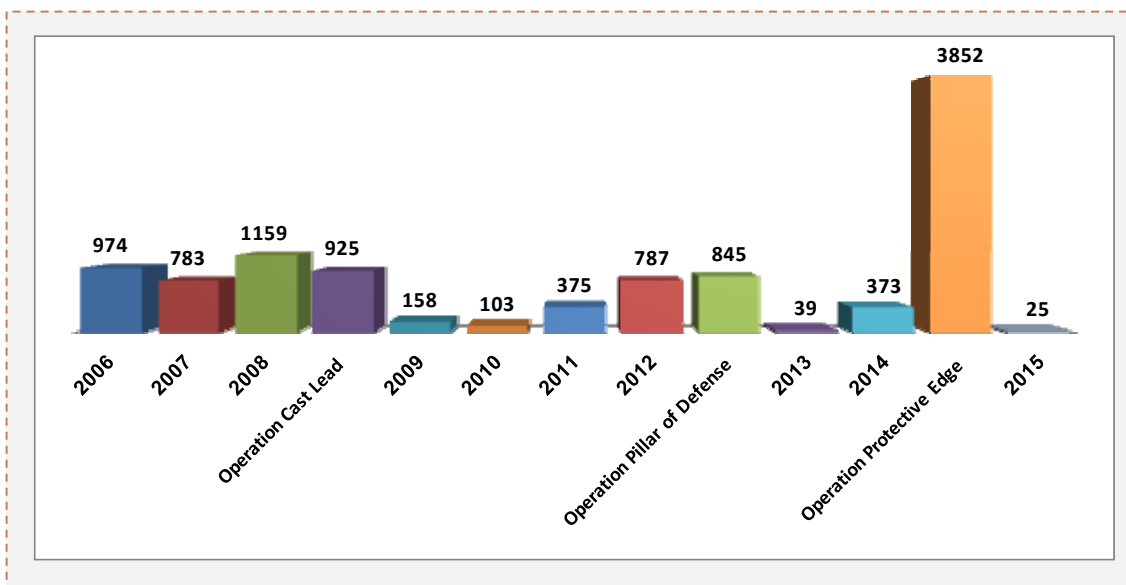
- No rocket or mortar shell hits were identified in Israeli territory this past week.

### Monthly Distribution of Rocket Fire (2014 – 2015)<sup>2</sup>



\*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 South<sup>3</sup>



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

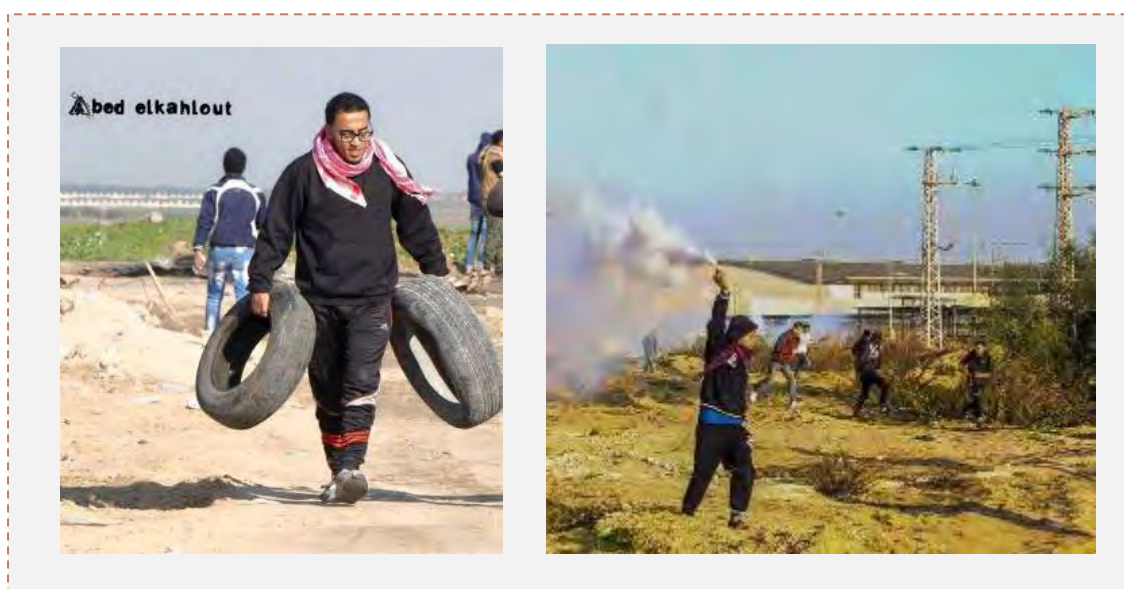
<sup>2</sup> As of December 29, 2015. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire or rockets which misfired and fell inside the Gaza Strip.

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

## Developments in the Gaza Strip

### Riots and Terrorist Attacks near the Border Security Fence

■ This past week Gazans continued rioting near the border security fence to show solidarity with the Palestinians in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem. Hundreds of Gazans participated, most of them young. The riots were held at three main locations: near the Erez crossing, in the region of Shejaiya and in the region of Al-Bureij. The rioters clashed with IDF forces and a number of rioters were reportedly injured. It was also reported that **Hani Wahdan**, 22, from the eastern part of Gaza City, had been killed in a riot in the Shejaiya region (Ma'an News Agency, December 26, 2015).



Left: Hani Wahdan carries tires to set on fire in a riot near the border security fence (Facebook page of Gaza al-A'an, December 26, 2015). Right: Riots near the Erez crossing (Facebook page of Quds.net, December 26, 2015).

### The Rafah Crossing – Recent Developments

■ Despite intensive activity, no permanent arrangement for opening the Rafah crossing has yet been reached. The issue has turned into a sparring match where both sides, the PA and Hamas, accuse each other of responsibility. During an ad hoc meeting of the Palestinian Legislative Council in the Gaza Strip called to discuss the Rafah crossing, **Ahmed Bahar, deputy Council head**, announced the Council would support any national initiative that ended the crisis. He asked Egypt to open the crossing immediately to allow merchandise to enter the Gaza Strip (Anadolu News Agency, December 23, 2015).

■ **Senior Hamas figure Salah al-Bardawil** claimed the "Rafah crossing crisis" was not genuine but rather Egyptian blackmail and an attempt to impose its will on the Palestinian people. He denied the initiatives for resolving the crisis, claiming any initiative attempting to impose conditions on the Palestinian people would be a failure (Dunia al-Watan, December 23, 2015).

## Gazan Killed by the Egyptian Security Forces

■ **Ishaq Khalil Husan**, from the Zeitun neighborhood of Gaza City, who was apparently mentally challenged, was shot and killed by the Egyptian army after he crossed the border by sea and entered Egyptian territory (Al-Aqsa, December 24, 2015). His death was condemned by senior Hamas figures:

- **Iyad al-Bazam, spokesman for the ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip**, claimed Egypt had killed him even though he was helpless and had crossed by border by only a few meters. He called on the Egyptian authorities to open an immediate investigation and prosecute those responsible (Website of the ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip, December 26, 2015).
- **Khalil al-Haya, senior Hamas figure**, claimed he was puzzled the Egyptian security forces had killed an unarmed Palestinian, because they could just as easily have detained and questioned him (Safa News Agency, December 24, 2015).

## Hamas Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades Operative Killed in a Tunnel

■ Hamas' military-terrorist wing announced the death of **Abd al-Rahman Saleh Mubashar**, one of its senior field operatives and the injury of another operative. It occurred in the collapse of an Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades tunnel in the Khan Yunis region (Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades website, December 28, 2015).

## Salafist Organization Activity in the Gaza Strip

■ The **Mujahideen Shura Council in the Environs of Jerusalem** (a Palestinian Salafist-jihadist network operating in the Gaza Strip) issued two videos entitled "From you the money and from us the blood" to launch **a campaign for donations to finance training and terrorist attacks against Israel. In both videos the ISIS flag flew in the background.**



- In the first video an operative announced the beginning of a campaign to collect donations using the slogan, "Equip us." He asked for donations and charity funds to finance the organization and enable it to "prepare missiles that will burn the Jews, bombs that will tear them to pieces and bullets that will pierce their bodies."
  - In the second video the speaker appealed to Muslims around the globe, claiming the operatives train without weapons, and asked for donations to finance the organization's activities.
- Note: In August 2013 the Mujahideen Shura Council in the Environs of Jerusalem claimed responsibility for firing rockets at Eilat, Israel's southernmost city.

## The Palestinian Authority

### Changing PA Documents

- Mahmoud Abbas announced that in 2016 Palestinian passports would be stamped the **"State of Palestine" instead of the current "Palestinian Authority."** He confirmed that all the PA's official documents would now carry the name "State of Palestine" (Almayadeen, December 22, 2015).

## The Battle for Hearts and Minds: Palestinian Media Encouragement for the Current Terrorist Campaign

- The Palestinian social networks and websites continue glorifying the terrorists who carry out the attacks in the current terrorist campaign. They defame Israel, and issue calls and post notices encouraging terrorist attacks, the continuation of the violence and stone throwing. For example:
- The Facebook page of Al-Quds TV, a prominent news website, which has more than four million viewers:



The Facebook page of Al-Quds TV incites Palestinians to continue the current terrorist campaign. The Arabic reads, "the intifada continues" (Facebook page of QudsN, December 28, 2015).



Pictures shown in the background for the song called "Intifada, intifada for the sake of Al-Aqsa and freedom." The song calls for the violence and terrorism to continue, and the pictures show vehicular and stabbing attacks from the current terrorist campaign, clashes with IDF forces and past riots on the Temple Mount (Facebook page of QudsN, December 28, 2015).

- Fatah's information unit, which has an official movement website, posted a cartoon encouraging attacks on IDF soldiers.



Cartoon on a Fatah website. The Arabic reads, "We struggle using a stone from our land" (Website of Fatah's information unit, December 27, 2015).

## The Northern Front

### Additional Reactions to the Killing of Samir Kuntar

- **Hassan Nasrallah**, Hezbollah's secretary general, gave a speech on December 27, 2015, to mark the one-week anniversary of the killing of Samir Kuntar. He said **the campaign against Israel was ongoing, had not ended and would never end.** He claimed **a response [to the killing of Samir Kuntar] was unavoidable** and all options were open. He claimed the response would not be limited to one location but would be everywhere, and therefore Israel should not worry only about defending its borders (Al-Manar, December 27, 2015).



Find the differences. Left: Hassan Nasrallah speaking for the seven-day anniversary of Samir Kuntar's death. Kuntar is pictured next to the PA flag (Al-Ahed website, December 27, 2015). Right: Hassan Nasrallah speaking the day after the death of Samir Kuntar. His picture is framed by a map of "Palestine" on the background of the colors of the Iranian flag (YouTube, December 21, 2015).