



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

(June 28 – July 4, 2017)



Palestinians demonstrate on the Gazan side of the Erez crossing for permission to leave the Gaza Strip for medical treatment abroad. They hold pictures of PA chairman Mahmoud Abbas, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Hussein al-Sheikh, a member of Fatah's Central Committee who is also minister of civilian affairs (Palinfo Twitter account, July 3, 2017). A spokesman for the Hamas-controlled ministry of health in the Gaza Strip blamed the PA and Israel for causing harm to patients.

Overview

- On July 4, 2017, a terrorist attack in Jerusalem was probably prevented. A vehicle with six Palestinian passengers (who were not carrying identification) was halted at the entrance to Jerusalem. A search of the vehicle found shock grenades, Molotov cocktails and knives. According to the Israel Police Force, an initial interrogation revealed the Palestinians were planning to carry out a terrorist attack in Jerusalem.
- The Palestinian media reported that the Palestinian Authority (PA) announced it would stop guaranteeing payments for patients leaving the Gaza Strip for medical treatment abroad. A spokesman for the Hamas-controlled ministry of health in the Gaza Strip accused the PA of refusing to fund medical treatment outside the Gaza Strip, while Israel prevented patients from leaving it. **The PA ministry of health rejected the claims, emphasizing there had been no change in payment for medical treatment.**
- This past week construction began on a **buffer zone between the Gaza Strip and Egypt**. It is being built to increase security enforcement along the border and prevent smuggling and infiltration. According to a Hamas organ, the buffer zone will be 100 to 150 meters wide (110 to 160 yards) and the embankment will be overlaid with barbed wire. **Apparently its construction is the result of an understanding reached during the recent visit of a Hamas delegation to Egypt.**

Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem

Attempted Terrorists Attacks

■ Israeli security forces stationed at a **roadblock south of Jerusalem** (on the Tekoa-Har Homa road) stopped a Palestinian vehicle planning to enter Israeli territory. The vehicle's front and rear license plates were different. The vehicle was ordered to park at the side of the road and the passengers were told to get out for inspection. Six Palestinians got out of the vehicle; none of them had identification. A search of the vehicle revealed **a bag containing shock grenades, Molotov cocktails and knives**. **Initial interrogation revealed the Palestinians were planning a terrorist attack in Jerusalem** (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, July 4, 2017).



The bag found in the car containing shock grenades, Molotov cocktails and knives (Israel Police Force spokesman, July 4, 2017).

Riots, Clashes and Popular Terrorism

■ This past week demonstrations, clashes and riots continued throughout Judea and Samaria, primarily involving the throwing of stones and Molotov cocktails. The Israeli security forces detained a number of Palestinians suspected of terrorist activity. The more prominent occurrences were the following:

- **July 2, 2017** – Palestinians threw a pipe bomb at the compound of **the Tomb of Rachel in Bethlehem**. There were no casualties (Facebook page of Red Alert, July 2, 2017).
- **July 2, 2017** – Palestinians clashed with Israeli police forces in **east Jerusalem** during the funeral of a young Palestinian who drowned in the Sea of

Galilee. A number of Palestinians were wounded by rubber bullets, one of the mortally (Facebook page of Red Alert, July 2, 2017).

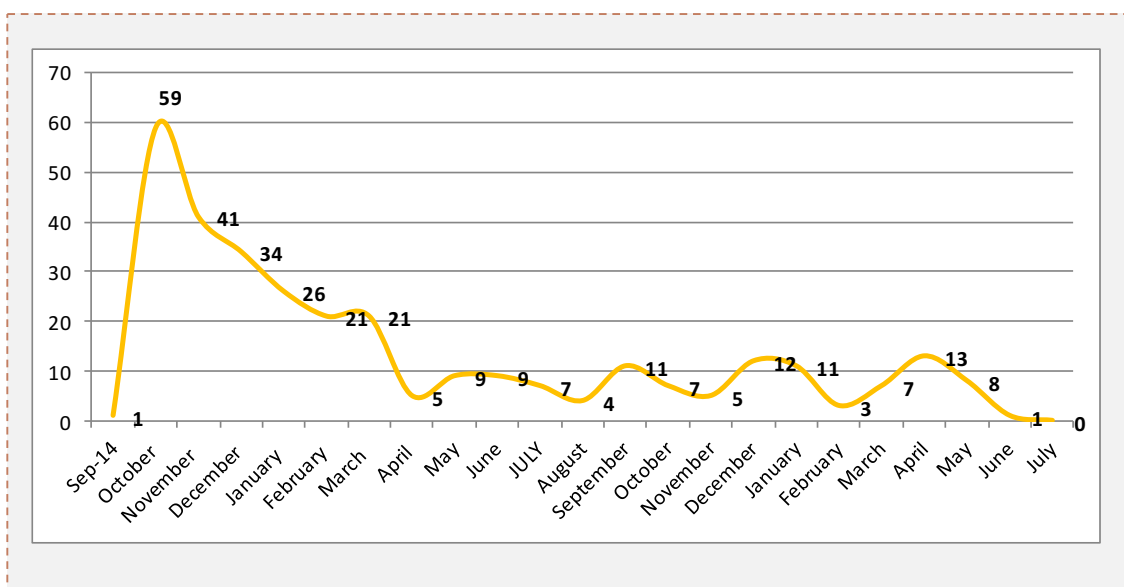
- **July 2, 2017** – Palestinians threw stones at an Israeli vehicle on **the Gush Etzion-Hebron road near Bayt Ummar**. A woman incurred minor injuries; the vehicle was damaged (Facebook page of Red Alert, July 2, 2017).
- **June 30, 2017** – Palestinians threw stones at Israeli police forces called to deal with a case of domestic abuse **in Silwan (east Jerusalem)**. Two Palestinians were detained. A patrol car was damaged (Facebook page of Red Alert, June 30, 2017).
- **June 30, 2017** – A Palestinian terrorist shot at Israeli security forces during an action in **Jenin**. The shooter escaped and discarded his weapon. There were no casualties (Facebook page of Red Alert, June 30, 2017).
- **June 29, 2017** – The Israeli security forces detained a 20 year-old Palestinian at one of the checkpoints near **the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron**. A knife was found in his possession (Facebook page of Red Alert, June 30, 2017).
- **June 28, 2017** – A Palestinian was killed by Israeli security force fire during the detention of an arms dealer in the **Jabel Juhar neighborhood of Hebron**. The Palestinian shot at the forces with an improvised submachine gun. The Palestinian media reported he was **Iyad Munir Arafat Ghais**, 23, from Hebron (Dunia al-Watan, June 29; Ma'an and QudsN, June 28, 2017).



Left: Improvised gun used to shoot at Israeli security forces. Right: Iyad Munir Arafat Ghais, 23, from Hebron, killed during an Israeli security force activity in Hebron (Ma'an, June 28, 2017).

- **June 28, 2017** – An IDF force detained a Palestinian woman carrying a knife at the Rachel crossing south of **Jerusalem**. She was 36, came from the village of Yatta and was planning to carry out a stabbing attack (Facebook page of Red Alert, June 28, 2017).
- **June 28, 2017** – A fire broke out in an olive grove **near Burin in Samaria**. Palestinians claimed the fire had been set deliberately by two Israelis from the community of Yizhar. About 400 olive trees were damaged.

Significant Terrorist Attacks in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem since September 2015¹



Detention of Two Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) Activists

- The Israeli security forces detained **Khalda Jarrar** and **Khitam Khatib**, two female senior PFLP activists. Khalda Jarrar is a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council and the PFLP's political bureau. The IDF spokesman reported that "Jarrar was detained because of her involvement in promoting PFLP terrorist activity."
- In June 2016 **Khalda Jarrar** was released from an Israeli jail after having served a term of a year and a half. A short time later **she returned to PFLP activity**. According to the IDF spokesman, she directed the organization's activities and was one of its senior figures in Judea and Samaria, primarily in the Ramallah area. According to security sources, her detention was not connected to her membership in the Legislative

¹ A significant attack is defined by the ITIC as involving shooting, stabbing, a vehicle, the use of IEDs, or a combination of the above. Stones and Molotov cocktails thrown by Palestinians are not included.

Council. **Khitam Khatib**, among other roles, chairs the Palestinian women's union (Haaretz, July 2, 2017).



Khalda Jarrar, senior PFLP activist (Wafa, December 15, 2012).

■ There was wide Palestinian condemnation for the detention of Khalda Jarrar, who chairs the prisoners' committee in the Legislative Council and is on the board of directors of the al-Dameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association. The PFLP strongly stated that detaining its senior figures and activists, especially the leader Khalda Jarrar, would not dissuade the organization from continuing its "resistance to the occupation." The PFLP called on the Palestinians to escalate their popular and national activities in support of the Palestinian prisoners, especially Khalda Jarrar, and hunger-striking **Muhammad 'Alan** (PFLP website, July 2, 2017).

■ **Saeb Erekat, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee**, said Israel had sole responsibility for the lives and safety of the two women prisoners. He said they had been detained as part of a "deliberate, ongoing, systematic Israeli offensive." He added that the detention of the two women was a direct assault on the Palestinian people and its leadership (Wafa, July 2, 2017).

■ **Hamas also condemned the detention. Senior Hamas figure Sami Abu Zuhri** said the detentions were a result of the "policy of security cooperation [between Israel and the PA]" and their objective was to prevent opposition to Mahmoud Abbas (Filastin al-Yawm, July 2, 2017). **Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum** said in an announcement that Israel's campaign of detaining "symbols of the resistance in the West Bank" was a desperate attempt to silence the voices opposed to Israel and its plans. He claimed the detentions would not dissuade the Palestinians from continuing

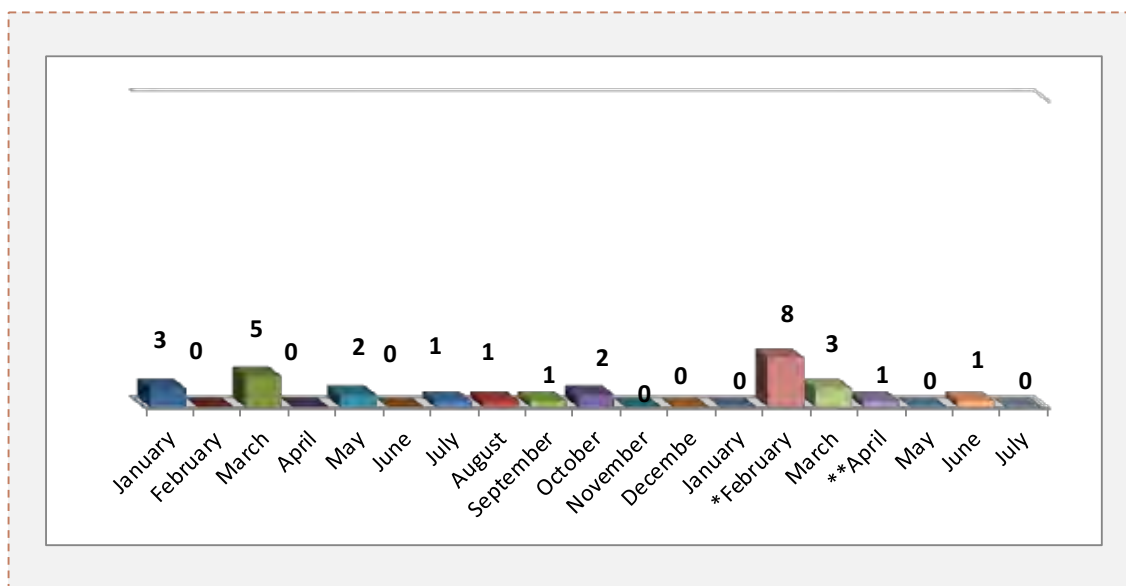
the Jerusalem intifada and the "resistance" [i.e., terrorist activities] (Hamas website, July 2, 2017).

Israel's South

Rocket Fire Attacking Israel

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

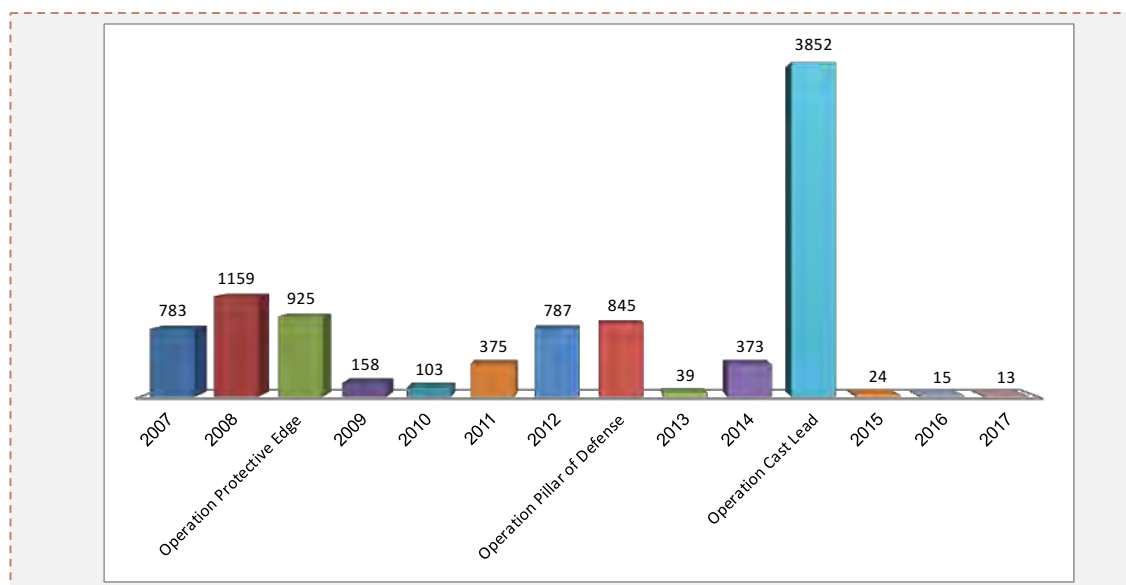
Monthly Distribution of Rocket Hits in Israel since January 2016



*Six of the rockets fired in February 2017 were launched from the Sinai Peninsula at Israeli territory, apparently by ISIS's Sinai Province.

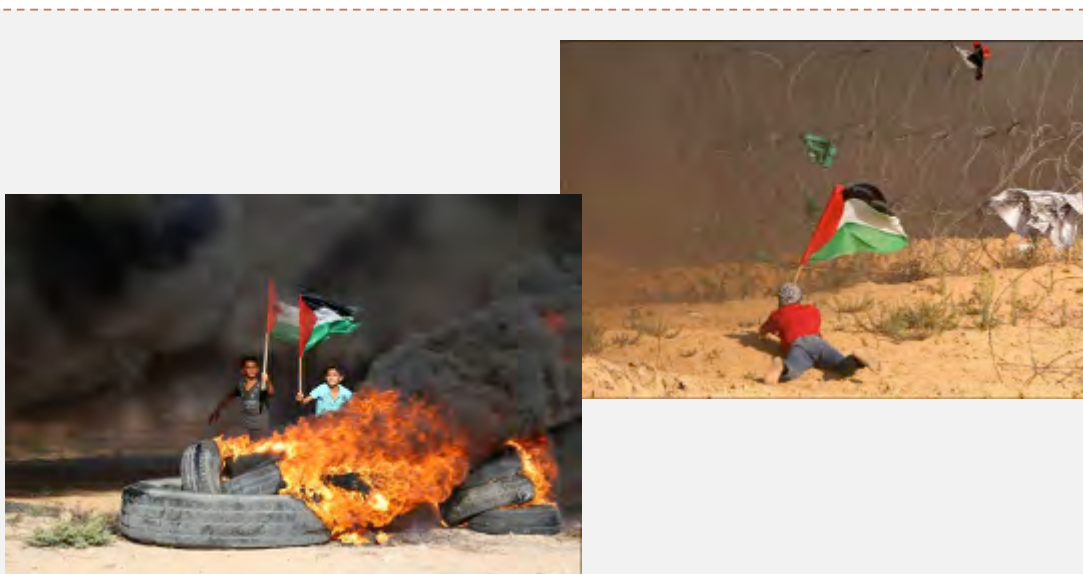
** The rocket fired in April was launched from the Sinai Peninsula by ISIS's Sinai Province.

Annual Distribution of Rocket Hits in Israel's South²



Hamas-Instigated Violence along the Israeli Border

■ This past week there was a **decline** in the demonstrations and riots instigated by Hamas along the border with Israel to protest the conditions in the Gaza Strip. Because of the decline Hamas held a press conference near the Erez crossing **to call for their renewal**. At the so-called "Warning of Rage" demonstrations held at five locations on July 2, 2017 about 300 Palestinians participated. The IDF responded by employing riot control measures. According to the Palestinian media, a number of demonstrators sustained minor injuries (Ajel from Palestine, July 2, 2017).



Riots along the Israel-Gaza Strip border (Shehab website, July 2, 2017).

² The statistics do not include mortar shell fire or rockets which misfired and fell inside the Gaza Strip.

Developments in the Gaza Strip

The Humanitarian Crisis

■ The Palestinian media reported that besides the electricity crisis in the Gaza Strip (Gazans have electricity about four hours a day), **there is a serious shortage of drugs**. In addition, the **PA announced it would stop paying for patients from the Gaza Strip going abroad for medical treatment**. The Hamas-controlled ministry of health in the Gaza Strip reported that three babies had died as a result (Majal Press, June 27, 2017).

■ **Ashraf al-Qidra, spokesman for the Hamas-controlled ministry of health**, said that 1,700 patients were waiting for a guarantee of payment from the PA, and only 10% of the requests had been granted. **He accused the PA and Israel of joint responsibility**: the PA refused to send drugs to the hospitals in the Gaza Strip and delayed granting requests for payment for medical treatment outside the Gaza Strip, while Israel allegedly prevented patients from leaving. He also called for pressure to be exerted on the PA to immediately renew supplying the Gaza Strip with drugs and provide guarantees of payment for treatment. He also called on Egypt to open the Rafah crossing as soon as possible to allow hundreds of patients to leave the Gaza Strip. He called on international institutions to exert pressure on Israel to honor the Fourth Geneva Convention³ (aljazeera.net, June 29; al-Hayat, July 1, 2017).

■ **The PA ministry of health rejected the claims, saying there had been no change in providing payment guarantees for Gazan patients** and that in urgent cases they were provided quickly. According to the ministry, Israel was one of the main causes of harm to patients in the Gaza Strip because it had not issued the authorization necessary for patients to leave the Gaza Strip since the beginning of the year (Wafa, June 28, 2017). **Faiz Abu 'Ita, Fatah spokesman in the Gaza Strip**, said responsibility for patients in the Gaza Strip was collective and neither side could avoid it. He said all those involved, including Israel, had to act to save lives and allow patients to be treated (Dunia al-Watan, June 30, 2017).

³ Adopted in August 1949, it defines humanitarian protections for civilians in a war zone.



Left: "[Mahmoud] Abbas' anti-Gaza Strip policy." Right: Hamas cartoons condemn the measures taken by Mahmoud Abbas' against the Gaza Strip, blaming him for the deaths of three infants (Palinfo Twitter account, June 29, 2017).

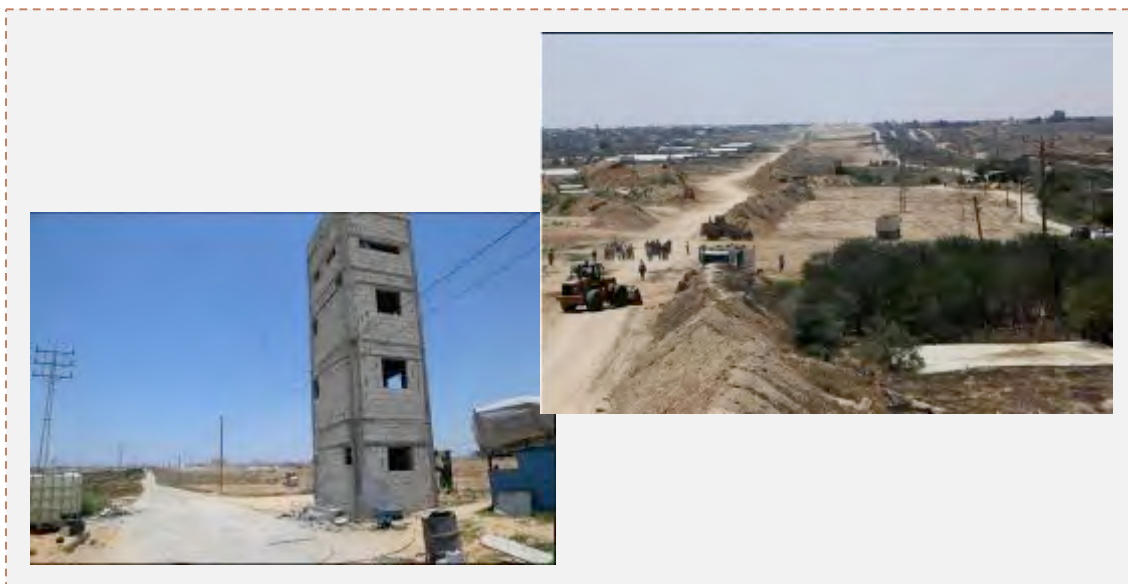
■ The shortage of drugs and limiting patient departures led to a wave of rage and accusations against Mahmoud Abbas and Israel:

- **Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri** Tweeted that Mahmoud Abbas' conduct regarding the shortage of drugs in the Gaza Strip and his decision to stop sending drugs to the Gazan hospitals had led to the deaths of babies and many other patients. He called Mahmoud Abbas' actions "crimes against humanity" (June 27, 2017).
- **Ahmed al-Mudallal, senior Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) figure**, said Israel was responsible for the patients in the Gaza Strip because it did not permit them to leave for medical treatment. The government in Ramallah, he said, was responsible for the shortage of drugs that had led to the deaths of 12 people, four of them babies. He said the "Palestinian resistance" [i.e., terrorist organizations] would continue its war on Israel, and called on the Egyptian authorities to open the Rafah crossing so patients could receive medical treatment and humanitarian organizations could help them (Filastin al-Yawm, June 29, 2017).
- **The PFLP** claimed the Palestinian national consensus government was responsible for the shortage of drugs. It said the PA's decision endangered the residents of the Gaza Strip and had led to the deaths of babies suffering from various diseases. The PFLP called on the PA to end its collective punishment of the Gaza Strip (alresalah.net, June 29, 2017).

Constructing a Buffer Zone between the Gaza Strip and Egypt

■ As part of its activities to secure the border between the Gaza Strip and Egypt, on June 28, 2017 the ministry of the interior and national security in the Gaza Strip began the **construction of a buffer zone**. It will be a closed military area about **100 meters wide inside the Gaza Strip**, and will help strengthen security enforcement along the border to prevent smuggling and infiltration. **Tawfiq Abu Na'im, deputy minister of the interior in the Gaza Strip**, said the zone being constructed **following understandings reached with the Egyptian authorities during a recent Hamas delegation visit to Egypt** (Dunia al-Watan, June 28, 2017).

■ **A correspondent for al-Risalah** (a Hamas organ) in Rafah reported that the buffer zone would run **along the border west of Kerem Shalom in the east to the sea in the west**, and **would lie in Palestinian territory at a width of between 100 and 150 meters** (110 and 160 yards). Senior Palestinian security figures reported that the construction included levelling the ground, which was full of pits because of the collapse of tunnels, cutting down fruit trees planted in the region, and repairing the embankment. **Its entire length will be overlaid with barbed wire. An asphalt road 25 meters wide will paved to allow the national security forces to patrol day and night**. In addition, there will be **a network of lights and cameras** controlled from a national security force operations room under the direct supervision of the headquarters of the ministry of the interior in Gaza City, and tall observation towers will also be constructed.



**Construction along the Gaza Strip-Egypt border
(Facebook page of the ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip, June 28, 2017).**



Tawfiq Abu Na'im, deputy minister of the interior in the Gaza Strip, oversees the construction work on the ground (Facebook page of the ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip, June 28, 2017).

■ On July 2, 2017, a delegation headed by **Rawhi Mushtaha** and the **secretary general of Hamas' ministry of the interior** left the Gaza Strip for Egypt via the Rafah crossing. The members of the delegation came from various sectors: security, health, the economy and the treasury. According to **Wael Abu Mohsen, head of the information department at the Rafah crossing**, the delegation will discuss ways of implementing the understandings recently reached with Egypt (Dunia al-Watan, July 2, 2017). One of the main issues to be dealt with is the construction of the buffer zone (al-Ghad, July 1, 2017). **Iyad al-Bazam, spokesman for the ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip**, said the delegation would give the Egyptians a list of the equipment necessary for protecting the border (Filastin al-Yawm, July 1, 2017).

Opening the Rafah Crossing

■ This past week dozens of fuel tankers continued bringing diesel fuel for the Gaza Strip power plant from Egypt, entering through the Rafah crossing. **Mahmoud al-Zahar, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, said in an interview that Hamas had recently been meeting with Egyptian representatives and that a number of agreements had been signed to lessen the siege of the Gaza Strip. According to the agreements **Egypt will transfer equipment, drugs into the Gaza Strip, and merchandise into the Gaza Strip. The sum involved is \$7,000,000,000**, spread out over a number of years. Mahmoud al-Zahar claimed Egypt needs the agreement to improve its economy (al-Jazeera, June 27, 2017).

■ According to Palestinian sources, **General Khaled Fawzi, minister of Egyptian intelligence**, ordered the renovations of the Rafah crossing to be speeded up. The sources also reported that **the end of August 2017 had been set as the final date for the renovations on the Egyptian side of the crossing**. The Egyptians, according to the Palestinian sources, were impressed by Hamas' construction work along the border and wanted the Rafah crossing to be opened quickly to show their esteem for Hamas' efforts. (Samaa News, June 29, 2017).⁴

Interview with Mahmoud al-Zahar

■ In an interview with al-Jazeera, **Mahmoud al-Zahar, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, related to accusations made against Hamas in the Arab world about its collaboration with terrorist organizations. He denied the accusations and said Hamas was **"a resistance organization operating under a regime of occupation."** He added that Israel would pay a high price for any attempt at "aggression" against the Gaza Strip, claiming Hamas had the means to defend itself. He claimed Hamas kept [other] terrorist organizations from attempting to grow in the Gaza Strip by means of **religious messages delivered in the mosques, in the media and especially in prisons, to terrorists planning attacks**. He warned Mahmoud Abbas and the PA not to negotiate with Israel. He said any attempt to normalize relations with Israel was attempted political-societal-cultural-religious suicide (al-Jazeera, June 27, 2017).

⁴ According to the London-based newspaper al-Hayat, the Rafah crossing is supposed to open about a week before Eid al-Adha (September 1, 2017), and operate 12 hours a day. In the future it is expected to be open 24 hours a day. Hamas is supposed to increase its security enforcement along the border, prevent the infiltration of terrorist operatives from the Sinai Peninsula into the Gaza Strip and end logistic and/or military support to terrorist operatives in the Sinai Peninsula.

Another Palestinian Dies Fighting in the Ranks of ISIS in Syria

■ The Palestinian media reported the death of **Izz al-Din Abu Hamam** from the al-Shati refugee camp in the Gaza Strip, while fighting in the ranks of ISIS in al-Raqqah, Syria. He died in an American-led coalition airstrike. According to the reports, he was a senior Hamas military-terrorist operative. He was wounded in an Israeli targeted attack during Operation Pillar of Defense in 2012 (Facebook pages of Siham and the city of Rafah, July 2, 2017).



Izz al-Din Abu Hamam (Facebook page of Rafah, July 2, 2017).

The Palestinian Authority

Speech Given by Mahmoud Abbas

■ In a speech at the 29th African Union summit conference in Addis Ababa, Mahmoud Abbas called on African leaders **to condition any progress in political relations with Israel on Israel's commitment to end the occupation**. He claimed every Israeli participation in a regional conference (a reference to the conference of West African states in which Israeli recently participated) encouraged it to continue the occupation. He said that in view of the "ongoing occupation" he hoped the African Union would support the Palestinians, diplomatically and through international institutions (Wafa, July 3, 2017).

■ Mahmoud Abbas also claimed the **Palestinians were working to build bridges with Israel in accordance with resolutions made by international institutions instead of building "a racist wall of separation"** (a reference to Israel's border

security fence). He praised **the appearance of "a glimmer of new hope for making peace," thanks to the move of the American president and the involvement of the United States in promoting a peace process.** He said the Palestinians had made it clear to the American president that they were prepared to work with the Americans to achieve a historic peace agreement based on the two-state solution. They also said that the Palestinians were a full partner in the struggle against global terrorism⁵ (Wafa, July 3, 2017).



Mahmoud Abbas speaks at the 28th African Union summit conference in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia (Facebook page of Mahmoud Abbas, July 3, 2017).

⁵ At a State Department press briefing, spokesperson Heather Nauert was asked if the administration was going to pull out of any ongoing process or potential process. She said that was "...just false. The President has made Israeli-Palestinian peace one of his top priorities...We understand and recognize that this is... not going to be handled in one meeting or one trip. It is no surprise also that some meetings and conversations may be a little bit more difficult than others" (<https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2017/06/272215.htm>).