



**Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center
at the Center for Special Studies (C.S.S)**

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Five years of violent confrontation between Israel and the Palestinians: data and characteristics

Overview

☑ September 29, 2005 **marked five years since the outbreak of the current violent confrontation** with the Palestinians. **Throughout the course of the confrontation, 26,159 terrorist attacks have been perpetrated** against Israeli targets, leaving **1,060 Israelis dead and 6,089 wounded**.¹

☑ **The dynamics of the conflict changed time and again during its five years.** The fifth year brought about a **significant change** in the wake of Yasser Arafat's death and the election of Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) for Chairman of the Palestinian Authority. With the beginning of Abu Mazen's era, the

¹ According to an investigation conducted by Israeli daily Haaretz, the number of fatalities on the Palestinian side caused by Israeli security forces or Israeli civilians after five years of confrontation stands at 3,333, including ten foreigners. According to Haaretz, official Palestinian Authority figures put the number of killed at 3,861, which includes suicide bombers, terrorist operatives killed in "work accidents" and foreign nationals killed in the Palestinian Authority administered territories, as well as Israeli Arabs. **The differences in the number of Palestinian casualties reflect different counting methods** based on diverging definitions of casualties resulting from the confrontation (Haaretz, September 29, 2005).

Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian terrorist organizations reached an internal agreement on a **lull in the fighting**. This was manifested in a **decrease in the number and severity of the terrorist attacks, an outcome of which was a drop in the number of Israeli casualties**.

☑ The present document, **based on a report made by the Israel Security Agency**, indicates a number of characteristics of Palestinian terrorism during the lull in the fighting and data (an interim summary of sorts) on Palestinian terrorism in the five years that have passed since the beginning of the confrontation.

Primary characteristics of Palestinian terrorism during the lull in the fighting

☑ On January 22, 2005, a lull in the fighting (*tahdia*) was declared, within the context of which Abu Mazen attempted to **diminish the extent of terrorism and improve the security situation** by means of an **internal Palestinian agreement** achieved between the Palestinian Authority and the terrorist organizations. In the Palestinians' view, **the lull in the fighting does not imply a complete halt in terrorist activities** and, indeed, they have not stopped. **However, during the fifth year, there was a decrease in the number and severity of terrorist attacks compared to the previous years of the confrontation**.

☑ **The decrease in the severity of terrorist attacks resulted in a drop in the number of casualties**: in the fifth year of the confrontation, from September 29, 2004 to September 2005, **3,530** terrorist attacks were

perpetrated in which **57** Israelis were killed and **516** were wounded. In the fourth year, in comparison, **3,877** terrorist attacks were perpetrated in which **135** Israelis were killed and **567** were wounded.

☑ In practice, the agreement on the lull in the fighting that was achieved with the Palestinian Authority was not upheld by the terrorist organizations. **Adamant in its opposition to the lull in the fighting was the Palestinian Islamic Jihad.** This terrorist organization, whose activities are guided from Damascus, publicly announced it was willing to **accept the lull in the fighting**; in practice, however, it **sought to undermine it.** A central instrument in the organization's attempt to implement this policy was its **operative infrastructures in Samaria**, which perpetrated **two deadly suicide bombing attacks in Israel** (February 2005, Tel-Aviv; July, Netanya) and other severe terrorist attacks. These attacks were particularly prominent **against the backdrop of the sharp decrease** in suicide bombing attacks during the lull (statistics follow).

☑ **The Hamas movement**, which **seemingly** adhered to the understandings of the lull in the fighting, embraced a policy striving to **undermine** them by **interpreting** the lull **in its own terms.** Within this context, Israeli counter-activities, perceived by Hamas as illegitimate, such as counter-measures against wanted terrorists in the West Bank, prompted a military response, primarily **Qassam rocket and mortar fire from the Gaza Strip on Israeli targets (including on the town of Sderot and Western Negev settlements).** In addition, Hamas continued to initiate terrorist activities in the West Bank, such as the abduction and murder of Sasson Nuriel (see below).

☑ To avoid the impression it was violating the lull, **Hamas also covertly assisted other Palestinian terrorist organizations to perpetrate “quality” terrorist attacks.** Thus, for example, Hamas was involved in **manufacturing the explosive charge** for Fatah’s Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades that was meant to be used by **Wafa Bass in a suicide bombing attack** planned to be perpetrated at an Israeli hospital and thwarted upon her detention at the Erez crossing in June 2005.²

Escalation of anarchy in the Gaza Strip after the disengagement

☑ In the post-disengagement period, the characteristics of the violent confrontation during the lull in the fighting were joined by an additional element: **a significant escalation of anarchy.** During the course of the disengagement, the Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip were evacuated; the IDF withdrew its forces outside the Gaza Strip and cleared the Philadelphi Route between the Gaza Strip and Egypt. The completion of the disengagement heralded the outbreak of violent power struggles between Hamas (and the other terrorist organizations) and the Palestinian Authority, accompanied by an escalation of anarchy that spun out of the Palestinian Authority’s control.

☑ One of the manifestations of anarchy was the **massive illegal crossings of the Philadelphi Route** following the IDF’s withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

² See Information Bulletin titled “A suicide bombing attack planned to be carried out in Israel by a Palestinian female suicide bomber was thwarted at the Erez crossing in the Gaza Strip. The terrorist infrastructure of Fatah’s Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades in the northern Gaza Strip stood behind the terrorist attack, which was probably meant to take place in an Israeli hospital. The incident is yet another link in a long chain of Palestinian terrorist attacks thwarted since the lull in the fighting began” (June 24, 2005).

Despite the Israeli-Egyptian agreement, **the Philadelphi Route was used by Hamas and other terrorist organizations to smuggle massive amounts of arms and ammunition as well as return several operatives who had fled from the Gaza Strip.** In just several days, some 3,000 rifles, dozens of guns, close to 1.5 million bullets, over 150 RPG launchers and hundreds of pounds of explosives were smuggled to the Gaza Strip.

☑ **Another manifestation of anarchy can be seen in the escalation of violent struggles between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority,** set against the backdrop of the Legislative Council elections due to be held in January 2006. The Hamas movement, poising itself as the Palestinian Authority's equal in the Gaza Strip, once again demonstrated **it was not willing to accept the Palestinian Authority's rule.** Upon the completion of the disengagement, with Hamas' confidence growing ever stronger, the movement engaged in frequent power displays on the ground through its efficient, well-oiled machine of obedient operatives. The Palestinian Authority, on the contrary, lacks efficient means of enforcement capable of controlling the Fatah, and is unable to impose its authority on the other terrorist organizations.

☑ A noteworthy example of the power struggles in the Gaza Strip and the part played in them by Hamas can be seen in the elimination of **Moussa Arafat,** who headed the Military Intelligence. The action was carried out by the **Popular Resistance Committees,** headed by **Mumtaz Muhammad Jum'ah Daghmash;** however, it was **Hamas that actually stood behind the murder, having turned the Popular Resistance Committees into its own operative instrument.** The Palestinian Authority, it should be noted, did not take action against those involved in the murder, despite the harsh criticism it triggered and

despite statements by Palestinian Authority seniors that they would take measures against the perpetrators.

☑ Since the IDF's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, Hamas has frequently held rallies and processions, accompanied by military power displays. In one of the rallies, held in the Jebaliya refugee camp on September 23, 2005, a "work accident" occurred when a vehicle carrying Qassam rockets exploded during a military parade, leaving 19 Palestinians dead and over 80 wounded.³

☑ **Despite Hamas' direct accountability for the event, the organization characteristically issued a false statement** laying the blame at Israel's door. **Hamas even went as far as to respond** (to an event Israel had had nothing to do with) **by firing some 40 rockets on Western Negev towns** during a single night. The Qassam rocket attack was the **opening shot of Operation First Rain**, in which the Israeli security forces attacked Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad targets in the Gaza Strip and carried out targeted killings of senior figures in those terrorist organizations.

☑ **Hamas, on its part, moved the terrorist activity to the West Bank:** on September 26, 2005, the body of Sasson Nuriel was found west of Ramallah. Nuriel, a resident of the Jerusalem neighborhood of Pisgat Zeev, was kidnapped and slain by Hamas operatives from Ramallah on September 21. On September 27, the Hamas movement publicly claimed responsibility for the

³ See Information Bulletin titled "Escalation of Palestinian terrorism after the disengagement: a Hamas "work accident" during a routine arms display and preventive measures taken by the Israeli security forces in the Tulkarm area led to a massive Qassam rocket attack on Sderot and other West Negev settlements. The IDF responded with a targeted killing and air strikes on terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip, arrests of wanted terrorists, and a closure of the West Bank" (September 26, 2005).

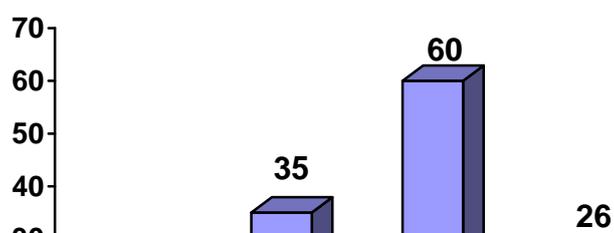
murder and even presented a video tape containing footage of Nuriel bound prior his murder (similarly to tapes produced by Al-Qaeda operatives in Iraq).

Israel Security Agency data on terrorism during the five years of the confrontation

Suicide bombing attacks

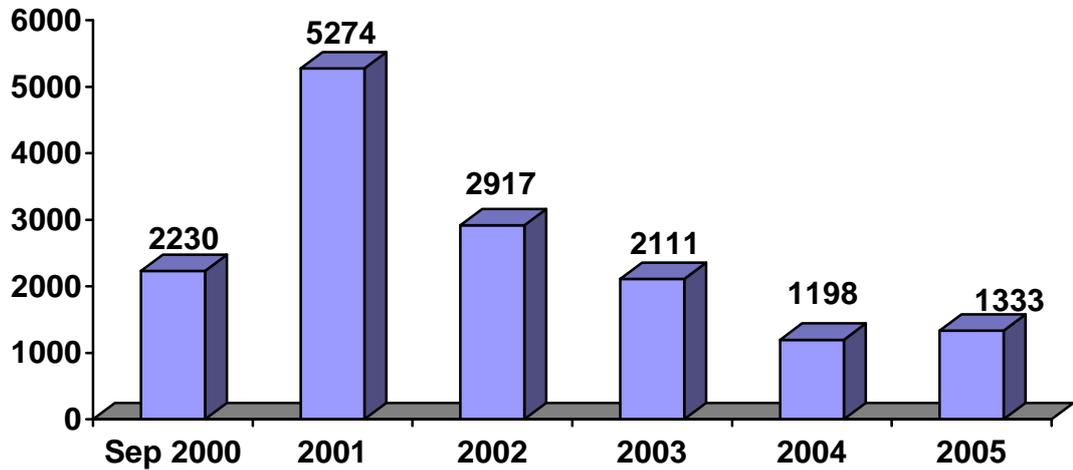
☑ In the course of the five years of the confrontation, 144 suicide bombing attacks were perpetrated by 161 male and female suicide bombers against Israeli targets. 515 Israelis were killed and 3,428 were wounded in the suicide bombing attacks. **In the fifth year of the confrontation, there was a significant drop in the number of suicide bombing attacks compared to the previous year.**

Suicide bombing attacks during the confrontation



Until the month of September
September 2004-September 2005

Shooting attacks during the confrontation



Until the month of September
September 2004-September 2005

Rocket fire during the confrontation: a significant increase during the lull in the fighting



Until the month of September
September 2004-September 2005

Note: the statistical data refers to the number of firing incidents rather than the number of hits.

Mortar shells fire and setting explosive charges during the fifth year of the confrontation (compared to the previous year)

