



May 25, 2007

**Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center
at the Israel Intelligence Heritage
& Commemoration Center (IICC)**

**The rocket attacks on Sderot and the western
Negev settlements, although fewer, continue; the
 Hamas-Fatah ceasefire is maintained; the IDF
 continues intensive counterterrorist activities in
 the Gaza Strip, widening their scope to Judea and
 Samaria.**

(Updated to May 24, 2007, 4 p.m.)¹



**Medics evacuating Shirel Friedman, victim of a
rocket hit in Sderot (Yonathan Weitzman for
Reuters, May 21).**



**Shirel Friedman, who died of
her injuries (Israeli Foreign
Ministry Website, May 24).²**

¹ Update of the May 21, 2007 Bulletin.

² <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa>.

Data

1. **Rocket attacks on the western Negev settlements have entered their tenth consecutive day. During the Shavuot holiday the rocket fire continued, although it diminished significantly, to 8-9 identified hits a day.** Since May 15 there have been **170 identified hits.** The attacks focused on **Sderot** and nearby settlements; however two rockets fell south of Ashqelon. Responsibility for most of the attacks in recent days was claimed by **Hamas** and **the Palestinian Islamic Jihad.**



Hamas rocket fire into Israel (Al-Aqsa TV, May 24)

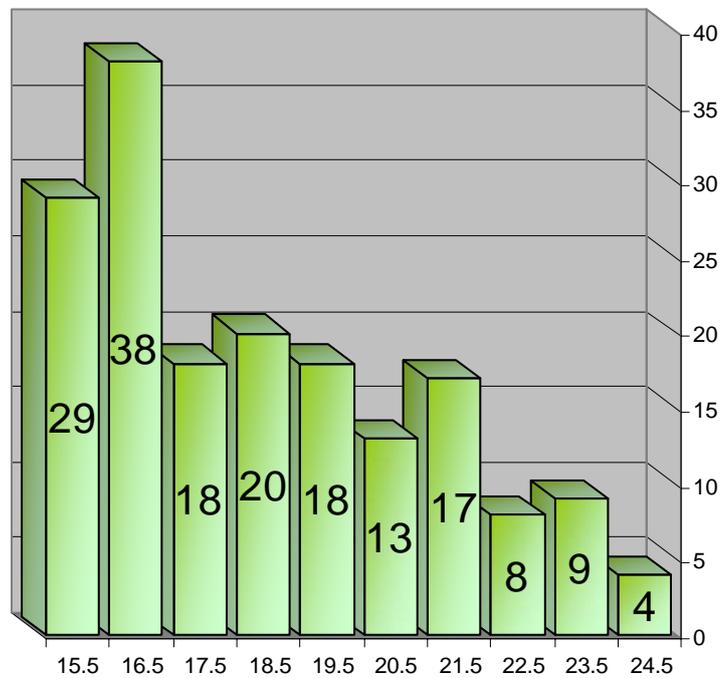
2. The rockets fired on the evening of May 21 caused the death of Shirel Friedman and injured several civilians (one seriously). Hamas claimed responsibility for Shirel Friedman's death, and, echoing Hassan Nasrallah during the second Lebanon war, also threatened to attack Ashqelon and even **"beyond Ashqelon"** (Palestine-info Website, May 21). The PIJ also claimed responsibility for Friedman's death (Paltoday Website, May 21).

3. As the same time, the terrorist organizations continued their efforts to attack IDF forces in the northern Gaza Strip. Two IDF soldiers were slightly wounded on May 23 near the former Israeli settlement of Dugit in the northern Gaza Strip. Two other soldiers were slightly wounded by an anti-tank missile fired at an IDF bulldozer working near the fence.



**Scenes from a Hamas film about a sniper attack on IDF forces
(Al-Aqsa TV, May 23)**

The rocket attack: daily distribution of identified hits³



³ According to IDF data as of 4 p.m., May 24, 2007.

IDF and security forces actions

4. In recent days the IDF has continued intensive counterterrorist activities in the Gaza Strip, including the following:

A. The Israeli Air Force continued striking terrorist targets: among them were vehicles used by terrorist squads, rocket launching sites, lathes for the manufacture of weapons, weapons stores and Hamas Executive Force post in the Rafah area.



**A vehicle used by a terrorist squad, struck by the Israeli Air Force
(Al-Aqsa TV, May 24)**

B. Attacks on targets linked to terrorist funding: on May 23 the Air Force attacked a number of offices and business belonging to money changers transferring funds from Iran, Syria and Lebanon to terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip, especially Hamas.



**The offices of one of the moneychangers after an attack
(Al-Aqsa TV, May 24)**

C. IDF ground forces carried out actions to foil rocket launching: the actions were conducted at Khan Yunis and near the former Israeli settlement of Dugit in the northern Gaza Strip. IDF forces fired on rocket launching sites.

5. At the same time, the IDF and the Israeli security forces expanded their activities to **Judea and Samaria**. On May 23 and 24 their actions included the detentions of several dozen Palestinians, about half of them Hamas **activists**, including high-ranking ones. Among them were **Nasir al-Din Muhammad Ahmad al-Sha'er** (education minister in the Palestinian national unity government), members of the Palestinian Legislative Council, the mayors of Qalqilya, Nablus, Beita and Bidia, and others (IDF Spokesperson, May 24).

The internal Palestinian arena

The cease fire between Hamas and Fatah is maintained

6. **The relative calm in the Gaza Strip between Hamas and Fatah has been maintained.** An exceptional event occurred on May 21 when a group of armed men broke into a building of the College of Science and Technology in Khan Yunis. They fired wildly, critically injuring two students. Hamas accused Fatah of being responsible for the attack. Fatah denied any connection to the event and stressed its obligation to preserve the cease fire agreement.

Abu Mazen confers in the Gaza Strip

7. On May 22 Abu Mazen arrived in the Gaza Strip and conferred with Palestinian prime minister Ismail Haniya and representatives of the Palestinian terrorist organizations. They discussed ways to reinforce the internal Palestinian cease fire through Hamas-Fatah dialogues and by ending

the media war. They also discussed a proposal for a “general calm” with Israel (i.e., including Judea and Samaria as well as the Gaza Strip). The leaders of the terrorist organizations whose representatives attended the meetings are expected to give Abu Mazen their answers within 48 hours (Palestinian News Agency, May 24; Al-Arabiya TV, May 23).

Dispute regarding the benefits derived from rocket fire

8. **Abu Alaa'**, responsible for Fatah mobilization and organization, and former Palestinian prime minister, claimed in an interview with Voice of Palestine Radio that firing rockets from the Gaza Strip did not serve Palestinian interests. He added that experience showed that rocket fire pushed Israel into taking actions which increased the suffering of the Palestinian people (Palestinian News Agency, May 22).

9. **Fatah's central committee** called for the Hamas leadership to stop the “internal war” and **to stop launching rockets**, which pushed “Israel to respond by killing Palestinians and destroying Palestinian institutions” (Palestinian News Agency, May 21). Palestinian leftists, among them Yasser Abd Rabbo and Hanan Ashrawi, and other figures identified with Fatah, held a press conference “to rescue the Gaza Strip.” **Yasser Abd Rabbo** said that Israel should not be provided with excuses to attack the Gaza Strip, noting that “what is known as rocket fire, we all know how it is stopped and renewed according to the interests of specific groups or factions” (Palestinian News Agency, May 21).

10. Spokesmen for the Palestinian terrorist organizations deplored the statements made by Abu Alaa' and Yasser Abd Rabbo, **rejected** the call to stop the rocket fire, **lauded** its results and threatened **to escalate**. For example:

- A. **Abu Obeida**, a Hamas/Izzedine al-Qassam Brigades spokesman, rejected the claim that rocket fire did not bring results. He gave Sderot as an example of “positive” results, saying its residents had fled and its mayor had threatened to resign. Abu Obeida promised to increase the scope of the rocket fire and to reach more distant areas.
- B. **Abu Ahmad**, a PIJ/Jerusalem Battalions spokesman, threatened to fire more powerful rockets, which would force the residents of Ashqelon to leave “the way those of Sderot did.”
- C. **Abu Mujahid** and **Abu Abir**, spokesmen for the Popular Resistance Committees, noted that the rockets had succeeded in creating a “balance of terror” with Israel and called upon the Israeli government to “set up an office for the Zionist displaced persons” to deal with those who would flee other Israeli settlements (“Sderot is only the beginning..”)