



June 11, 2007

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

**A Fatah-Palestinian Islamic Jihad
terrorist squad infiltrated Israel near
the Kissufim Crossing to attack an IDF
force. The terrorists, who used a jeep
camouflaged as a TV vehicle, may have
planned to abduct an IDF soldier, if the
opportunity arose.**



**Jeep bearing TV and Press signs used by the squad in the attack (Photo courtesy
of Yediot HaAharonot and Meir Azoulai)**

At the time the pillbox was unmanned. When the terrorists realized that, they returned toward the fence. At that point an IDF force, which had been sent to the site, arrived. During the ensuing exchange of fire the terrorists used their light arms and lobbed hand grenades at the IDF soldiers.



**IDF pillbox near the Kissufim Crossing
(Photo courtesy of Yediot HaAharonot and Meir Azoulai)**

4. As the firing continued the terrorists retreated to the south. Three of them succeeded in returning to the Gaza Strip. The fourth ran toward a large water pipe north of the crossing gate and was killed in the exchange of fire with the IDF soldiers. He was **Muhammad Khalil Ja'bari**, 19, from the Sajaiya neighborhood in Gaza City.



The water pipe where the fourth terrorist hid (Photo courtesy of Yediot HaAharonot and Meir Azoulai)

5. During the incident, PIJ and Fatah operatives (who gave the terrorists covering fire) launched mortars from the Gaza Strip at the IDF forces in the Kissufim area. There were no casualties.



The jeep as it appeared in a clip broadcast by Al-Jazeera TV and originating with Fatah and the PIJ (Al-Jazeera TV, June 10). The jeep was apparently photographed before the Press and TV signs were added, and thus do not appear in the picture.



The jeep used by the terrorists to reach the Kissufim Crossing. The signs are clearly visible. Left: an IDF attack dog running toward the jeep. (Photo courtesy of Yediot HaAharonot and Meir Azoulai)

Palestinian comments

6. During and after the attack Fatah and PIJ spokesmen boasted of the achievements gained by the incident, **citing events which had never happened.**

7. The announcements' main points were the following:

A. **Abu Ahmad**, PIJ spokesman, said that the operation had been prepared well in advance and that the organization was waiting for the right moment to carry it out. He called it a "superior," complex **suicide operation** (*'amaliyyah istishhadiyyah*). The PIJ even distributed a picture of Muhammad Khalil Ja'bari, the terrorist who was killed, reading his "will" before he left for the attack, as is customary before suicide bombing attacks (Pal-media Website, June 9).



Muhammad Khalil Ja'bari reading his "will." (June 9)

B. Abu Ahmad also reported that the three terrorists retreated when they ran out of ammunition and that the fourth terrorist remained in the IDF post with an Israeli soldier as prisoner and body of another soldier who had been killed in the attack. Abu Ahmad later reported that the order had been given to kill the captive soldier (Paltoday Website, June 9). **The reports are utter fabrications with no basis in fact.**



PIJ spokesman Abu Ahmad describes the jeep used in the attack. "The infiltration was carried out with an armored jeep, similar to the white ones the Zionist command uses." He did not mention the sign reading TV. (Al-Jazeera TV, June 9)

C. Abu Thaer, Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades spokesman, claimed that the four operatives had received support from 12 others. He said that the attack was the beginning of a series of operations which would also include Israeli cities (Al-Jazeera TV, June 9).



“The attack at Kissufim is the beginning of a military operation against all the cities in Israel,” Fatah spokesman Abu Thaar (Egyptian TV, June 9)

The IDF’s response

8. In response to the attack, on the night of June 9 the Israeli Air force struck two buildings used by terrorist-operatives: an office in Gaza City belonging to the PIJ and a Fatah structure in the Sheikh Radwan neighborhood which was suspected of housing a lathe for the manufacture of weapons. On June 10 IDF ground forces entered the southern Gaza Strip to take pinpoint action against terrorist infrastructures.



Results of the IDF attack in Gaza (Al-Aqsa TV, June 9)

Use of press passes and vehicles to carry out terrorist attacks

9. The purpose of press passes and vehicles is to grant protection to correspondents working in areas where there is fighting and to enable them do their jobs. The use of press passes and vehicles to carry out terrorist attacks is liable to endanger correspondents' safety. For that reason the Israeli Foreign Press Association and the Association of Palestinian Journalists issued statements condemning the use made by the terrorists of a vehicle with media markings in their attack at the Kissufim Crossing (June 9).

10. The June 9 attack was not the first time the Palestinian terrorist organizations had used press documents and vehicles:

A. On November 1, 2004, a Popular Front of the Liberation of Palestine suicide bomber blew himself up in the Carmel market in central Tel Aviv. He had been escorted to the site by a student from the media department of Al-Najah University in Nablus, who used the **press pass** given to him as part of his studies to sail through the military roadblocks.

B. On May 22, 2002, the Israeli security forces in the central Gaza Strip detained a terrorist named **Khader Abu Sakran**, who was riding in a **press vehicle** with other terrorists. He had planned to use a grenade in his possession to carry out an attack.

Conclusion

11. In our assessment, the terrorists planned a grandiose attack which failed because of faulty intelligence and because the IDF soldiers reached the site of the attack quickly. The terrorists managed to reach the IDF pillbox because their jeep was camouflaged as a TV vehicle, but they were surprised to discover that the post was unmanned. In our assessment, their objective was

to attack the soldiers at the post and/or a patrol, but they may also have planned to abduct an IDF soldier should the opportunity present itself.

12. The attack serves to illustrate the competition between the various Palestinian terrorist organizations regarding grandiose attacks from the Gaza Strip. The PIJ and Fatah tried to carry out such an attack at a time when Hamas had stopped its rocket attacks, and to show that they were in the front line of the armed campaign against Israel. The **abduction of IDF soldiers** is especially important in the competition between the organizations, even if it is a byproduct of infiltration and killing attacks.

13. In that context, two previous attacks should be noted:

A. On April 24, 2007, Israel's Independence Day, the IDF foiled a Hamas attack (possibly an attempted abduction) against a military target in the southern Gaza Strip; the attack was accompanied by massive mortar and rocket fire.¹

B. On June 25, 2006, a group of seven terrorists attacked an IDF force near the settlement of Kerem Shalom. During the attack IDF Corporal Gilad Shalit was abducted and removed to the Gaza Strip. The attack was a combined effort of Hamas, the Popular Resistance Committees, and the Army of Islam.²

¹ For further information see our April 26, 2007 Bulletin entitled "On Israel's Independence Day, the IDF thwarted a terrorist attack (possibly an abduction attempt) by Hamas against a military target in the southern Gaza Strip, under the cover of massive mortar and rocket fire" at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/hamas_ct0407e.pdf.

² For further information see our June 27, 2006 Bulletin entitled "IDF force attacked and soldier abducted near Kibbutz Kerem Shalom." at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/kerem_shalom_e.pdf.