



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

June 26, 2008

Implementing the lull arrangement¹ (Updated to June 26, 4 p.m.)



Violations of the calm: Police and demolitions experts examining the damage caused by the rocket attack on Sderot (Hamutal Ben-Shitrit for www.sderotmedia.com, June 24).

¹ Follow-up of our June 22 Bulletin, “Implementing the arrangement for a lull in the fighting (Updated to June 22, 4 p.m.) at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/lull_220608e.pdf.

Overview

1. During the first week of the lull there was a significant decrease in the amount of rocket and mortar fire from the Gaza Strip targeting western Negev population centers, but the terrorist organizations **abided by the arrangement only partially**. The lull was violated several times. Notable was the barrage of three rockets fired at Sderot by the Palestinian Islamic Jihad in retaliation for the killing of one of its operatives in Nablus, **despite the fact that Judea and Samaria are not included in the lull arrangement**. In response, on June 25 Israel temporarily closed the crossings into the Gaza Strip, with the exception of the Erez crossing.

2. The rockets, fired on June 24 by the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, a terrorist organization with close links to Iran which sabotaged the previous lull (arranged in Cairo on January 22, 2005), was the first test of Hamas's ability to enforce the Egyptian-brokered lull. Hamas called upon the PIJ and other organizations to abide by the lull, although at this time it is unclear if and to what extent Hamas will be willing to confront the rogue organizations on this fundamental issue.

The situation on the ground

3. The arrangement, which went into effect on June 19, was violated after five days of calm. On June 24 at 4 p.m. three rocket hits were identified in and around Sderot. One rocket directly hit a home and two women were treated for shock. In response, on June 25 Israel closed the crossings into the Gaza Strip, with the exception of the Erez crossing, kept open for the passage of Palestinians with humanitarian problems. A little after midnight on June 24 a mortar shell was fired into Israeli territory, landing in an open field. No organization has yet claimed responsibility for that attack.

4. The **PIJ**, which made efforts to sabotage the previous lull in the fighting by carrying out suicide bombing attacks, claimed responsibility for the rocket fire. The PIJ announced that it had fired the rockets in retaliation for the killing of two of its operatives in Nablus on June 24 while they were resisting arrest in an Israel counterterrorist action.²

5. On the morning of June 25 an IDF force observed three suspicious figures near the security fence in the southern Gaza strip. Shots were fired in the air to drive them away.

² In an Israeli security force counterterrorist operation in the Rafidia neighborhood in Nablus, Tareq Juma'a Abu Ghali, a Jenin resident and senior PIJ operative, was killed, along with another terrorist operative with him at the time.

Palestinian sources reported that two farmers had been wounded, one seriously. Hamas spokesmen claimed that the shooting was an Israeli violation of the lull arrangement (Palestine-info website, PalMedia website, June 25).

6. On the afternoon of June 26 a rocket hit was identified in an open area in Sderot's industrial zone. There were no casualties and no damage was reported.

Responses to the rocket fire on Sderot

The Palestinian Islamic Jihad



A PIJ placard: "The covenant...[is] the resistance [i.e., terrorism and violence]" (Qudsway website, June 26).

7. Even though Judea and Samaria are not included in the lull arrangement, the PIJ fired three rockets at Sderot in retaliation for the killing of two of its operatives in Nablus by Israeli security forces. PIJ spokesmen were at a loss to explain the contradiction between their stated commitment to the lull arrangement, which does not include Judea and Samaria, and the rockets they fired at Sderot. They took refuge in double talk and obfuscation, saying that despite having attacked Sderot, the organization regarded itself as committed to the lull arrangement even though it had reservations regarding the fact that the West Bank had not been included in it:

- i) **Ahmad al-'Uri**, a senior PIJ activist, called the rocket fire a "special response," noting that it had not violated the lull arrangement. He reiterated the fact that his organization still regarded itself as committed to the lull although it would have preferred the arrangement to have included the West Bank. He said that the rocket fire was "a natural reaction to Israel's crimes in the West Bank," and that the

residents of Israel's south would not live quiet lives as long as Israel continued its operations against the Palestinians (Al-Arabiya TV, Al-Alam TV, June 24).

ii) **Daoud Shihab**, a senior PIJ activist, said that the rocket fire had not been a violation of the lull arrangement, but rather a “special message” the organization wanted to send to Israel. He called upon all the Palestinian organizations who had agreed to the lull arrangement to take a united stand toward “the Israeli aggression in Nablus” (BBC, June 24).

iii) **Nafez Azzam**, a senior PIJ activist, said that the organization recognized the fact that the lull included only the Gaza Strip, but that the rocket fire had not violated it, but was “in response to a crime” (BBC Radio, June 25).

iv) **Muhammad al-Hindi**, a senior PIJ activist, said that the Israeli activity in the West Bank led to an atmosphere for the collapse of the lull and not to extending it to the West Bank. He also said that the PIJ was committed to the lull (Al-Jazeera TV, June 25).

Hamas

8. In response to the violation of the lull, Hamas spokesmen said that **the movement was still committed to the arrangement**, was acting to ensure its success and continuation, and would work with the other Palestinian factions to make sure it was implemented:

i) **Sami Abu Zuhri**, a Hamas spokesman, said that the movement wanted to make it clear that it was **adhering to the lull** (Palestine-info website, June 24). According to the website run by the interior ministry of the Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip, the ministry condemned the killing of two members of the “resistance” [in Nablus] but called upon the Palestinian organizations to show restraint and honor national agreements regarding the lull (Hamas administration interior ministry website, June 24).

ii) **Khalil al-Hayya**, one of the Hamas leaders in the Gaza Strip, said that the movement would implement the lull as part of a national consensus and under Egyptian auspices. However, **he noted that Hamas had no intention of using force to impose the lull on all the organizations**, even if they did violate it, saying that it would not be a border-patrolling police force (Palestine-info website, June 25).

iii) **Fawzi Barhoum**, a Hamas spokesman, called upon Egypt and all the other parties involved to exert pressure on Israel to stop its counterterrorist activities in the West Bank (Agence France Presse, June 24).

9. Hamas publicly appealed to the Palestinian terrorist organizations to adhere to the lull while its spokesmen were proclaiming that the “resistance” (i.e., terrorist organizations) had the right to react to IDF activities in the **West Bank** (Palestine-info website, June 24). **In practical terms**, the Hamas administration announced that it was holding regular meetings with the various organizations to monitor the implementation of the lull. A Hamas delegation headed by Sayyid Siam met with PFLP and DFLP delegations, and was expected to meet with a PIJ delegation as well. In the meetings Hamas stressed the importance of adhering to the arrangement and the importance of “self control” (BBC Radio, June 25).

Israel

10. Israel has stated that it regards the June 24 rocket fire at Sderot as a gross and unequivocal violation of the lull arrangement which cannot be overlooked. The IDF refrained from taking direct action, but security sources made it clear that there was nothing preventing the IDF from taking action in real time against the squads firing rockets.

11. In response to the rocket attack on June 24, Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni said: “I do not care which organization fired the rockets. Israel must respond militarily and immediately” (Communicated by the foreign minister’s bureau).

Egypt

12. In a statement concerning the violation of the lull arrangement, **Hossam Zaki**, Egyptian foreign minister, said that the Gaza Strip was part of the lull arrangement between the sides but that at the present time the **West Bank was not included in it**. As for the possibility of deploying Arab forces in the Gaza Strip, he claimed that at the present time Egypt did not regard it as practicable in the near future. He denied that Egypt had promised Israel that it would not open the Rafah crossing before Gilad Shalit was released (Al-Arabiya TV, June 24).

The crossings

13. On June 25, in response to the rocket attack on Sderot, the Israeli defense minister instructed the closing of all the Gaza Strip crossings. An exception was the Erez crossing, left open to Gazans in need of medical attention, through which 40 individuals passed. On June 26 the crossings remained closed. So far it is not clear when they will be reopened.

14. Hamas announced that Israel's decision to close the crossings was a violation of the lull arrangement. Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri called upon all the parties involved to exert pressure on Israel to ensure the implementation of the arrangement (Palestine-info website, June 25). **Dr. Marwan Abu Ras**, a Hamas member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, said that opening the crossings would test Israel's implementation of the arrangement. He also threatened that if the crossings were not opened within ten days, the lull would end (Palestine-info website, June 25).

15. Before the crossings were closed, there were disagreements in the Gaza Strip regarding the passage of goods. Some individuals were of the opinion that since the lull began the quantity of goods found in the marketplace had grown, while others were disappointed by the amount of goods delivered through the crossings:

i) **Ihab al-Ghussin**, interior ministry spokesman, said that during the last three days there had been a slight increase in the amount of goods delivered and that they were the **same** as those delivered every day. He said that the June 25 closing of the crossings was a violation of the lull arrangement. He demanded that all sides, especially Egypt, exert pressure on Israel in the matter (Filastin al-'An website, June 25).

ii) Another Palestinian source said that there had been an increase in the quantity of goods delivered into the Gaza Strip but that it was still too early to judge to what extent Israel had met its commitments. He said that goods delivered into the Gaza Strip were itemized only once a week, and until then it would not be clear if the amount had grown (Pal-today website, June 24).

iii) **Ziyyad al-Zaza**, Hamas administration finance minister, said that there had been no increase in the amount of merchandise delivered into the Gaza Strip and that Israel was supplying the usual amounts. He said he hoped that in the coming days the amount would grow, in accordance with the provisions of the lull arrangement (Qudsnet website, June 23).

The issue of abducted Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit

16. Ofer Dekel, the prime minister's representative for the issue of the captive soldiers, is scheduled to leave for Cairo on June 26 to renew contacts and negotiations with Hamas regarding Gilad Shalit. An Egyptian source said that the two delegations would discuss the issue until they reached an agreement.

17. June 25 marked the second anniversary of Gilad Shalit's abduction. In Israel there was a rally in his village (Mitzpe Hila in the Galilee), while Hamas's military-terrorist wing posted the letter he sent to his parents on its website. Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades spokesman Abu Obeida said that if Israel did not adhere to the lull, "that would be the end of the Gilad Shalit issue."



Gilad Shalit, his father and the letter (Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades website, June 26).