



**Intelligence and Terrorism
Information Center
Israel Intelligence Heritage
and Commemoration Center**

News of the Israeli-Palestinian Confrontation

July 1-8, 2008

In the Gaza Strip...



Gaza Strip children enjoying the lull (Palestine-info website).

And in Sderot...



**Sderot residents leaving the city on vacation
(Zeev Trachtman, July 8).**

Overview

- This past week the Palestinian terrorist organizations violated the lull arrangement four times by firing rockets, mortar shells and light weapons. In response, Israel reclosed the Gaza Strip crossings. Hamas continues showing interest in maintaining the arrangement while Fatah networks and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad are responsible for violating it. Hamas detained a number of those firing rockets and mortar shells but avoids directly confronting them.
- Hamas exploits the lull arrangement to continue its military buildup, including a significant increase in training operatives and smuggling weapons into the Gaza Strip (with the Egyptians taking no exceptional actions taken to stop them). The negotiations for the release of Gilad Shalit and the opening of the Rafah crossing are still on the back burner.

Important Events

The Gaza Strip

■ This week the Palestinian terrorist organizations **violated the lull arrangement four times**. In three instances (July 3, 7 and 8) rockets and mortar shells were fired, and in one instance (July 6) a sniper shot at farmers working in the fields of Kibbutz Nahal Oz. No terrorist organization claimed responsibility for the attacks, but in our assessment some of them were carried out by **Fatah networks**. In response to the attacks Israel reclosed the Gaza Strip crossings.

Violations of the lull arrangement since it went into effect

Date	Type of violation	Organization	Israeli Response	Comments
June 24	Mortar shell fire	Unknown		
June 24	Three rocket hits identified in Sderot	PIJ	Gaza Strip crossings closed by order of the Defense Minister after having been opened for two days.	The organization claimed the rocket fire was in retaliation for the killing of one of its senior operatives in Nablus. Note: Judea and Samaria are not included in the lull arrangement.
June 26	Rocket hit identified in an open field near Kibbutz Gevim.	Fatah's Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade	Gaza Strip crossings closed	A spokesman for the organization said its objective was to warn Israel and demand the lull be extended to the West Bank.
June 27	Two mortar shells fired at the Karni crossing.	Unknown	Gaza Strip crossings closed	
June 28	A mortar shell fired at the Karni crossing.	Unknown	Gaza Strip crossings closed	In our assessment, some of the

				unclaimed rocket fire was carried out by Fatah networks.
June 30	Rocket hit identified near Kibbutz Mefalsim	Unknown	Gaza Strip crossings closed by order of the Defense Minister after having been opened on June 29.	According to FIRAS website the rocket was fired by a PIJ operative later detained by the police (FIRAS, July 2).
July 3	Rocket hit identified in an open field north of Sderot	A hitherto unknown network calling itself "The Bader Forces"	Gaza Strip crossings closed on July 4	
July 6	Sniper opened fire on farmers working in the fields of Kibbutz Nahal Oz	Unknown		
July 7	Mortar shell fired near the Karni crossing	Unknown	Gaza Strip crossings closed by order of the Defense Minister on July 8; partially reopened on July 9	
July 8	Mortar shell landed in an open field in the Eshkol regional council district (northwestern Negev)	Unknown		

Mass-casualty attack in Jerusalem and Palestinian responses

■ At around noon on July 2 a terrorist from East Jerusalem used a front loader to carry out a mass-casualty attack in a crowded area of Jerusalem. He began his rampage from a construction site on Sarei Israel Boulevard, racing along the street and ramming everyone and everything in his path. He turned left at the corner of Jaffa Road and continued his attack. After a short time a policeman, security guard and off-duty soldier climbed onto the loader and killed him. Three civilians were killed and more than 40 wounded, most of them not seriously.¹



The scene of the attack in Jerusalem (The Jerusalem Project, July 2)

■ On July 4 Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak instructed the IDF to initiate processes for the razing of the houses of the terrorist who carried out the aforementioned terrorist attack and one at the Mercaz Harav Yeshiva in March. That was done after the government's legal counsel declared that in principle there were no grounds to prevent the action (announced by the Defense Ministry, July 4).

■ Hamas praised the attack, expressing its satisfaction with such an attack's being carried out in the West Bank (where the lull arrangement is not in force):

- **Muhammad Nizal, of Hamas's political bureau**, praised the attack against civilians, calling it "heroic." He added that it proved there were other choices of attack besides rockets (Syrian TV, July 3).
- According to an announcement on the **Hamas website**, the movement praised the heroic action and called upon the factions of the resistance (i.e., the terrorist organizations) "to aim more blows at the soldiers of the occupation and the flocks of settlers" (Palestine-info website, July 3).
- **Mustafa al-Sawaf, editor of Hamas's newspaper Felesteen** said that the attack was a reaction to Israeli activities in the West Bank and Jerusalem. He added that he was pleased that the lull arrangement was in force only in the Gaza Strip, because "the resistance [i.e., the terrorist organizations] will move from the Strip...to the West Bank" (Felesteen, July 3).

¹ For further information see our July 3, 2008 Bulletin entitled "Mass-casualty terrorist attack on Jaffa Road in Jerusalem" at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/ct_030708e.pdf.

- Spokesmen affiliated with the Palestinian Authority refrained from denouncing the attack:
 - **Nimr Hamad**, advisor to Abu Mazen, said that Israel would have to take responsibility for the attack because it “was stubbornly determined to be responsible for security in Jerusalem” (Al-Alam TV, July 3).
 - **Hatim Abd al-Qadr**, advisor to Salam Fayyad for matters concerning Jerusalem, said that “the Palestinian Authority would not stand by idly in the face of a humanitarian catastrophe [a reference to Israel’s intention to destroy the terrorists’ houses],” adding that the PA would appeal the razing orders in the Israeli Supreme Court (Wafa News Agency, July 5).

Counterterrorism Activities

The Gaza Strip

- Since the lull arrangement went into effect, IDF forces have not undertaken counterterrorism activities in the Gaza Strip, focusing instead of defensive activity around the security fence.

Judea and Samaria

Security force activities taken against Hamas institutions in Jerusalem

- This week the Israeli security forces continued activities against Hamas’s civilian network (the *da’wah*). On July 7 IDF forces acted against institutions belonging to Islamic “charitable societies” in Nablus after similar activities were carried out in recent months in Hebron, Ramallah, Qalqilya and Jenin. The Palestinian media reported that the IDF closed the “charitable societies” in Nablus for three years. Hamas severely criticized the IDF’s actions in Nablus.

Foundations operating within the “Union of Good” outlawed

- Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak recently signed an order outlawing 36 funds and foundations operating throughout the world as part of the “Union of Good” and making it illegal for them to operate in Israel. That was done because they are part of a money-raising worldwide system which supports **Hamas**. It was the most important and comprehensive order ever issued in Israel against a global system for raising money for Hamas.
- The “Union of Good” is composed of dozens of Islamic funds and foundations which operate around the globe, some of them specific for Hamas which are illegal in Israel (such as

the Palestinian Relief and Development Fund, the British Interpal, the Palestinian Aid and Solidarity Committee, the French CBSP, branches of the Al-Aqsa Fund in Europe, etc.). The money raised by the Union is transferred to Hamas-affiliated institutions in the PA-administered territories. Some of it is used to finance Hamas's terrorism support system by providing cash and material aid to the families of terrorists who were killed, wounded or imprisoned in the terrorist campaign against Israel.²

The lull arrangement (updated to July 8, 4 p.m.)

Overview

- In the three weeks since the lull arrangement went into effect, Hamas has continued to express support for it and avoids attacking Israel. At the same time, it attempts to impose the arrangement's conditions on the other Palestinian terrorist organizations, although it does not directly confront them. On the ground, the extent of rocket and mortar shell fire into Israeli territory has declined significantly, although there are **continual violations**, carried out by organizations which oppose the arrangement, mainly Fatah's Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade network and the PIJ (**10 violations to date**).

- Hamas has exploited the lull to **continue its military buildup**. It **continues smuggling weapons** into the Gaza Strip, including mines, IEDs and the equipment for manufacturing rockets. Senior Hamas figure **Khalil al-Hayah** said that Hamas would not take steps to stop the smuggling (Saudi Arabian newspaper Okaz, July 3). The Egyptians continue anti-smuggling activities but their influence is **limited**. Hamas is also exploiting the lull for increased military training and exercises throughout the Gaza Strip.

The Gaza Strip crossings

- During the past week there has been **on-and-off passage** through the crossings. In accordance with political decisions, they were closed after various attacks violated the arrangement and later reopened. On July 8 Israel partially reopened them.

The Rafah crossing

² For further information see our February 2005 Bulletin entitled [“The Union of Good: an umbrella organization comprised of more than 50 Islamic charitable funds and foundations worldwide”](#)

- On July 1 the Rafah crossing was partially opened for three days to allow Gazans in need of medical treatment to enter Egypt and to enable Gazans delayed in Egypt to return to the Strip. Hamas issued a list of a few dozen Palestinians and their companions who would be permitted to leave, but beginning in the early morning hours hundreds of Palestinians flocked to the Rafah crossing to enter Egypt (Ma'an News Agency, July 1).

- On July 2, in protest, **hundreds of Palestinians tried to break through to the Egyptian side**. They called upon Egypt to open the crossing and enable Palestinians to leave the Gaza Strip to seek medical care in Egypt. Clashes broke out between Palestinians and the Egyptian forces, which used riot control equipment to disperse the demonstrators. Hamas also sent forces to help disperse them. Several Palestinians were wounded, but not seriously (Agence France Presse, Hamas administration's interior ministry website, PalMedia website, July 2).

- Following the riots, Egypt increased border security and announced it was closing the crossing. **Ahmed abu al-Ghait, Egyptian foreign minister**, called the incident "stupid and irresponsible," adding that Egypt would not accept any forceful breaching of its borders. He also criticized the Palestinians for using children in such demonstrations (Middle East News Agency, July 3). According to the Egyptian daily Al-Ahram, "the actions of low-life individuals who motivate our brothers to break through the Palestinian-Egyptian border are childish, and they play dangerous games in an attempt to test Egypt and see how it will react if someone tries to breach its border" (Al-Ahram, July 3).

- **Hamas spokesmen**, embarrassed by the incident, responded by calling it "a spontaneous action." The Hamas interior ministry said that it would not allow anyone not on the list to pass through the Rafah crossing, and called upon Egypt to provide greater numbers of exit permits (Hamas interior ministry website, July 2). Hamas prime minister Ismail Haniya also said the attempted breaching was "not planned," adding that it was the result of the blockade of the Gaza Strip (Al-Aqsa TV, July 3). Hamas administration spokesman Taher al-Nunu said that to prevent a recurrence of the riots at the Rafah crossing, the Hamas government had taken administrative steps to facilitate the passage of those authorized to leave for Egypt in coordination with the Egyptians (Al-Jazeera TV, July 3).

- On July 3 Egypt decided to reopen the Rafah crossing. Initially it was reported that 300 Palestinians who had been delayed in Egypt returned to the Gaza Strip, but the number was later amended to 580 (Palestinian media, July 3).

The release of Gilad Shalit

■ This past week the Egyptian-mediated contacts for the release of Gilad Shalit were not renewed. High-level Hamas figures again said that the decision not to renew the negotiations was the result of Israel's failure to abide by the lull agreement and that Hamas would not negotiate the Shalit issue until Israel opened the crossings and completely lifted the blockade of the Gaza Strip. They also said that Hamas would not waive its demand for the release of 450 Palestinians prisoners in return for Gilad Shalit (Palestine-info website, July 6). The following are comments made by Hamas figures:

- Hamas official **Osama al-Muzaini** said several times that the issue of the prisoners was of supreme importance for Hamas and that the movement was investing great efforts to conclude it. **He added that the negotiations would only be renewed after Israel honored the lull.** He said that Israel's commitment to the lull was minimal and that it was not doing what was required (Al-Aqsa TV, July 3; Agence France Presse, Al-Jazeera TV, BBC Radio, July 4).
- **Izat al-Rishq**, of Hamas's political bureau, said that the gap between Hamas and Israel regarding the prisoner exchange deal was large and that Hamas's position of suspending the negotiations was a manifestation of it. He said that the negotiations would not be renewed until the Israelis adhered to the lull arrangement and showed they were serious about concluding the deal (Qudspress News Agency, July 6).
- **Abu Obeida**, spokesman for the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, said that Hamas would not show flexibility regarding the list of prisoners it had given Israel and that flexibility in the matter would be "a concession to the occupation." He said that no progress was being made because Israel, from the first, has not adhered to the articles of the lull (Al-Quds Al Arabi, July 3).
- **Musa Abu Marzuq**, deputy head of Hamas's political bureau, said that the movement had suspended the negotiations because of **Israel's lack of commitment to the lull arrangement and its decision to close the crossings.** He said that the issue would be postponed until Egypt convinced Israel to adhere to the arrangement and open the crossing (Al-Hayat, July 4).
- Hamas spokesman **Fawzi Barhoum** said that from the beginning his movement had stated that the issue of the abducted soldier was separate from the lull arrangement because every issue "involved different commitments." He also said that **as long as Israel did not implement the articles of the arrangement**, decided things on its own, closed the crossings and prevented agreed-upon merchandise from entering the Gaza Strip, **it would be impossible to reopen the issue** (Ma'an News Agency, July 4).

Hamas spokesmen threaten Israel against a military response to lull violations carried out by Palestinian terrorist organizations

■ Following items appearing in the Israeli media, Hamas spokesmen threatened Israel against a military response to lull violations:

- **Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri** said that Israel was “playing with fire” and that it should think twice before undertaking a military response. He claimed that Israel had no genuine commitment to the lull arrangement and that Israeli violations continued (Palestine-info website, July 6).
- **The Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades**, Hamas’s military-terrorist wing, announced that the lull arrangement was a matter of national consensus and that the rockets fired from the Gaza Strip were on a personal basis. The Brigades threatened that if Israel employed a military response the quiet in the Israeli settlements would disappear and the rockets and “actions” would be renewed to a greater extent than in the past (Palestine-info website, July 6).

The Internal Palestinian Arena

Abu Mazen in Damascus

■ PA Chairman Abu Mazen arrived in Damascus for a visit on July 6. He met with President Bashar Assad to discuss various topics, among them the peace process and the “national reconciliation” with Hamas.

■ On July 7 Abu Mazen met with PIJ secretary general Ramadan Shalah to discuss the internal Palestinian dialogue. After the meeting Shalah said that “all the factions, including Fatah and Hamas, are willing to join a serious dialogue to resolve the crisis.” Abu Mazen did not, however, meet with Khaled Mashal, head of Hamas’s political bureau, possibly because of increased tensions with Hamas.



PA Chairman Abu Mazen and Syrian President Bashar Assad (Tishrin July 7).

The Lebanese Arena

■ The prisoner exchange deal with Hezbollah authorized last week by the Israeli government has entered its **final phases**. Bodies of terrorists to be turned over to Hezbollah as part of the agreement are being exhumed from their Israeli graves. According to a Lebanese newspaper, on July 5 Israel received a report about the circumstances surrounding the Israeli navigator Ron Arad, who disappeared in 1986 (Al-Safir, July 7). The newspaper also stated that Israel would provide a report about the four Iranian diplomats who, according to a fictitious Iranian claim, are in Israeli hands.