



Intelligence and Terrorism
Information Center
Israel Intelligence Heritage and
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News of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict

October 12-19, 2008

The lull arrangement in action, Sderot...



The Sderot Food Festival, which attracted tens of thousands of visitors from around the country (Photo: Zeev Trachtman, October 14).

...and the military buildup in action, Gaza Strip



Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operatives training to attack and abduct Israeli soldiers (Al-Aqsa TV, October 17).

Overview

- The lull arrangement continued this past week as well. While Sderot residents celebrated a food festival, Hamas operatives continued training and holding military displays. Making statements to their members intended for Israeli ears as well, terrorist organization spokesmen said that they were exploiting the lull to raise their preparedness for a new military round against Israel. However, movement activists said that they had not yet decided if the lull would be extended beyond its official expiry date of December 19, 2008.
- Conspicuous in Judea and Samaria this past week was the number of Molotov cocktails thrown at the Israeli security forces. The IDF returned fire and three Palestinians youngsters were killed. Two attempted IED attacks were prevented.

Important Events

The Gaza Strip

- This week as well the lull arrangement in the Gaza Strip was maintained

Judea and Samaria

- This past week there were a number of confrontations between Molotov cocktail-throwing Palestinians and the Israeli security forces, mainly in the Ramallah area. During the confrontations three Palestinians were killed:

- **October 15** – Three Palestinians threw Molotov cocktails at the Israeli security forces near the village of Malik (west of Ramallah). IDF forces shot at them, killing one.
- **October 15** – A young Palestinian was killed during a confrontation with IDF forces in the region of the Jelazoun refugee camp, near Beit El.
- **October 14** – A young Palestinian was killed by IDF fire near the Jelazoun refugee camp. He was one of a group of youths throwing Molotov cocktails at IDF soldiers.

- Palestinian Authority and Hamas spokesmen strongly condemned the IDF's counterterrorism activities, calling them "escalation." They expressed their resentment with Israel for exploiting the Palestinians' commitment to the lull arrangement to continue Israeli "aggression" (Wafa News Agency, Ramattan News Agency, October 16). Senior Hamas figure **Ismail Radwan** called upon the PA to stop collaborating with Israel, saying that the IDF action would not be without Palestinian retaliation (Qudspress website, October 16).

Violent Incident in Hebron between Settlers and Palestinian

- On October 19 there was a violent incident in the Tel Rumeida section of Hebron when a Palestinian family picking olives was attacked by Israeli settlers. Leftist Israeli activists were helping the family. During the incident the settlers beat and injured a Reuters cameraman. IDF and police forces separated the two sides.

Counterterrorism Activities

Judea and Samaria

■ In Judea and Samaria Israel security force counterterrorism activities continued this past week and a number of Palestinian suspected of terrorist activities were detained. In addition, two attempted terrorist attacks were prevented:

- **October 16** – During an activity in Qabatiya (south of Jenin) security forces found two IEDs, each weighing about 20 kilograms (44 lbs). The IEDs, which were apparently going to be used in terrorist attacks, were detonated in controlled explosions. Four Palestinian Islamic Jihad operatives were detained for interrogation.
- **October 13** – A 20-year old Palestinian arrived at a roadblock in the Nablus region, and when he was examined he was found to have three improvised IEDs on his person. He tried to flee and was shot by the IDF forces and slightly wounded. The IEDs were detonated in controlled explosions.

The Lull Arrangement – Update

The Gaza Strip Crossings

■ During the Jewish holidays the Gaza Strip crossings opened intermittently, resulting in a less-than-average amount of merchandise delivered into the Gaza Strip.

Opening the Rafah Crossing

■ On October 16 the Rafah crossing was opened to allow sick individuals treated in Egypt and pilgrims returning from pilgrimages to Mecca to enter the Gaza Strip. Before it was opened dozens of Palestinians delayed in Egypt held a demonstration in El-Arish. Egyptian security forces dispersed the demonstrators after promising that the crossing would be opened (Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, October 16).

Regulating the Activities of the Gaza Strip Tunnels

■ Hamas continues to **regulate the activities** of the vast network of smuggling tunnels under the Egypt-Gaza border, while the Egyptian security services continue trying to close them. This past week the Egyptians announced they had closed the openings of 19 tunnels used to smuggle merchandise and fuel from Egyptian Rafah into Palestinian Rafah (Al-Hayat, October 16).

■ Gazan businessmen and residents have noted a definite improvement in their economic situation because many varieties of cheap merchandise have been smuggled into the Gaza Strip in a steady flow through the tunnels. That has enabled them to acquire items which were previously difficult to obtain. The tunnels also solved the problem of the lack of cooking fuel after some of them were fitted with special pipes for the transfer of Egyptian gas into the Gaza Strip. At the same time, many young unemployed Gazans have found work as smugglers (Al-Risala, October 16).

Gilad Shalit, the Abducted Israeli Soldier

■ At the end of a military display held by the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas spokesman **Yussuf Farhat** said that the issue of Gilad Shalit would be frozen until the release of **Ayman Nufal**, a senior military operative detained in Egypt¹ (Palestine-info website, October 17). Hamas activist **Musheir al-Masri** responded that there was no connection between the release of Nufal from jail in Egypt, and the release of Gilad Shalit. He said that the prisoner exchange deal related to the 11,000 Palestinians in Israeli jails. He also said that after Hamas had made its position clear regarding Gilad Shalit, “the ball is now in the Israeli court” and that what he called Israel’s “foot-dragging” was liable to “raise the price for Shalit” (Sawt al-Quds Radio, October 18).

■ Egyptian foreign minister **Ahmed Abu al-Ghait** said in an interview that Egyptian mediation would not be beneficial because **Hamas did not want to release Gilad Shalit** and that he was a “bargaining chip” which would be used to make capital (BBC, October 16). Hamas spokesman **Sami Abu Zuhri** responded that the remarks made by the Egyptian foreign minister were in contradiction to Hamas’s position. He said that if Israel acceded to Hamas’s demands, Hamas would have no objection to renewing the negotiations for Gilad Shalit’s release (Palestine-info website, October 16).

The Future of the Lull Arrangement

■ Hamas spokesmen continue making references to the lull arrangement, which is set to expire on December 19, 2008:

- **Fawzi Barhoum** said that the movement **had not yet decided** if it would continue or end the lull arrangement. He said that when the lull arrangement ended Hamas and the other organizations would make their decision in accordance with the best interests of the [Palestinian] people. He claimed that Israel had seriously violated the lull arrangement and had not met even one of its conditions (Al-Ayyam, Al-Alam TV, October 17).

¹ Nufal is a senior Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operative who had been held by Egypt for a number of months.

- Hamas operative **Musheir al-Masri** said that ending or continuing the lull arrangement necessitated the agreement of the Palestinian organizations. He claimed that the attempts of the “Zionist enemy” to avoid meeting the arrangement’s conditions might spur the organizations into not agreeing to prolong it. He also said that the remaining two months would decide if the lull arrangement had accomplished its objectives, especially regarding the opening of the crossings and the delivery of goods into the Gaza Strip (Sawt al-Quds Website Radio website, October 18).
- **Musheir al-Masri** also noted that in the Hamas lexicon, “lull” referred to “the resting period of a jihad fighter,” which he exploited to train himself and prepare for the “coming battles.” He added that in principle, the policy guiding the Palestinian people and the “resistance” (i.e., the terrorist organizations) was “the option of jihad and resistance,” while the lull was temporary and exceptional.

The Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades Hold a Military Display

- The Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas’s military-terrorist wing, held a military display in the Nuseirat refugee camp in the Gaza Strip. During the display Brigade operatives simulated taking over a house, attacks and abducting soldiers. Afterwards a press conference was held in front of the house of Ayman Nufal, a senior Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operative held by the Egyptians (Palestine-info website, October 17).



Pictures from the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades’ military display in the Al-Nuseirat refugee camp (PALDF Forum, October 17).

- Hamas and the other Palestinian terrorist organizations continue making remarks, also intended for Israeli ears, about the benefits they receive from the lull arrangement. Their spokesmen said that they exploited the lull for training, acquiring equipment and developing their offensive capabilities, and that they were now ready to end the lull and renew battle with Israel (Al-Risala, October 13). In a report broadcast about preparations made by the Palestinian terrorist

organizations for “the morning after,” a young Palestinian woman was interviewed. She and others had trained as future suicide bombers. She showed the interviewer her explosive belt and said that being a suicide bomber was her “dream from childhood” and that she hoped that “soldiers or civilians” would die with her (BBC TV, October 14).²

The Internal Palestinian Arena

The National Hamas-Fatah Dialogue

■ PA Chairman **Mahmoud Abbas** told **Omar Suleiman**, head of Egyptian general intelligence, that he refused to hold the bilateral talks with Hamas proposed for Cairo on October 25. According to a “reliable Egyptian source,” the Fatah-Hamas meeting would take place on margins of the internal Palestinian dialogue in Egypt in November, and would include all the Palestinian organizations (Al-Hayat, October 16). Senior Hamas figure **Mahmoud al-Zahar** said that on November 7 and 8 Hamas would hold meetings with Fatah in Egypt, adding that Hamas would make every effort to ensure their (Agence France Presse, October 18).

■ In the meantime, Hamas continues exhibiting satisfaction with its delegation’s talks in Cairo with Omar Suleiman, head of Egyptian general intelligence, while at the same time it continues its media attacks on Fatah and the PA. **Ismail Haniya**, head of the Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip, again condemned the increased activity of the Palestinian security services in the West Bank, claiming that Hamas was being attacked by an “anarchist fringe” in Fatah which was not interested in national reconciliation (Al-Aqsa TV, October 17). Haniya’s administration issued a statement condemning the detention of Hamas operatives and closing “charitable societies” in the West Bank, claiming the actions had been agreed to by Egypt with American and Israeli intervention (Palestine-info website, October 15).

Confrontations between Hamas and Fatah Supporters at Al-Azhar University in Gaza

■ A demonstration held by Islamic Faction activists belonging to Hamas at Al-Azhar University in Gaza City turned into a violent confrontation between Hamas and Fatah supporters. Hamas policemen arrived and dispersed the students; the university administration announced it was closing the campus (Ma’an News Agency, Filastin al-’An website, Wafa News Agency, October 16). It was another manifestation of the difficulties encountered by the educational system in the Gaza

² For further information see our September 7, 2008 Bulletin entitled “As part of the Gaza Strip military buildup, women are trained for combat and for suicide bombing attacks” at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/hamas_e005.pdf.

Strip after the Hamas takeover last year and its efforts to enforce its control and worldview on all Gazans.



Confrontations at Al-Azhar University (Al-Aqsa TV, October 16).

The PA Security Services Expose a Tunnel in Hebron

■ The activities of the Palestinian security forces against Hamas in Judea and Samaria continued this past week. A tunnel was exposed in a Hebron neighborhood. It had been dug under the house of the Qawasmeh family and was part of a network of tunnels linking the neighborhood to the Tarqumya roadblock (Ma'an News Agency, October 14).



The tunnel exposed in Hebron (PALDF Forum October 14).





Weapons and chemicals for manufacturing weapons seized by the Palestinian security services during their activities in Judea and Samaria (Al-Jazeera TV, October 12).