



June 29, 2006

Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center
at the Center for Special Studies (C.S.S)

Broadening the scope of the IDF military action, Operation Summer Rains

(Update No. 3, June 29, 1 p.m.)



Left: Arrest of senior Hamas members in Ramallah (Palestinian TV, June 29). Right: IDF forces deployed on the Gaza Strip border to continue Operation Summer Rains (Photo: Magen Cohen for Reuters, June 29).

Overview

✦ On the second day of Operation Summer Rains operational activities went beyond the borders of the Gaza Strip.

✦ Two prominent actions were taken, sending a political message:

✓ **Approximately 80 Hamas figures were arrested in the West Bank, among them members of the Palestinian government and parliament, in application of the Israeli laws pertaining to the prevention of terrorism. The arrests sent the message that members of the Hamas government do not have**

immunity and that Israel has abandoned its previous policy of restraint regarding the Hamas government, which supports and encourages terrorist activity, including Qassam rocket attacks and the abduction of the soldier Gilad Shalit.

✓ Israeli Air Force planes flew over Bashar Assad's palace in Latakia in northern Syria to send a threatening message to the Syrian régime, which supports Hamas and the other terrorist organizations in Damascus directing terrorist activity in the PA (including the soldier's abduction).¹

✓ On June 29, Israeli Minister of Defense Amir Peretz, told a commentator on the Israeli radio news station, Reshet Bet, that **the two main purposes** of **Operation Summer Rains** were to release Gilad Shalit, the abducted soldier, and to deliver a blow the terrorist organizations' ability to attack Israel with Qassam rockets.

IDF activity in the Gaza Strip

✦ On the second day of the operation, the IDF established its hold on the airport at Dahaniya in the southern Gaza Strip. Air strikes continued from Israel and from the sea to make it difficult to move the abducted soldier northward from the southern Gaza Strip and to hamper attempts to attack Israel with Qassam rockets.

✦ The following actions were taken:

✓ A Hamas storehouse at Khan Yunis and a Fatah/Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades facility where weapons were manufactured and stored were attacked in an air strike.

✓ Access roads in the southern and central Gaza Strip were bombarded from the air, as was an open area in the northern Gaza Strip where Qassam rockets are fired. Open areas in the southern and northern Gaza Strip were also hit by artillery fire.

¹ For the direction by the Hamas leadership in Damascus of the attack at Kerem Shalom, see Update No. 1, June 27, at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/kerem_shalom_be.pdf.

✓ An Israeli Navy missile boat attacked Qassam launching areas in the northern Gaza Strip.

✦ Infantry and armored forces deployed along the border of the northern Gaza Strip. According to media reports, the IDF may enter the northern Gaza Strip within the next 24 hours (Haaretz, June 29).² In preparation for a possible incursion, the IDF dropped leaflets from the air into the Beit Lahia and Beit Hanoun regions. They called upon the local residents to obey IDF orders and to keep away from sites where IDF forces were operating.



The leaflet dropped into the Gaza Strip by the Israeli Air Force (Al-Arabiya TV, June 29).

Translation

To the residents of the area

The IDF is active throughout the Gaza Strip, including within your area, for as long as it takes. The reason for the activity is to find and release the abducted soldier, Gilad Shalit, and to protect the citizens of the State of Israel.

For your own safety, and in view of our desire to avoid harming civilians who are not connected with the activities against our forces, keep away from wherever the IDF is operating and obey its orders.

Anyone who interferes with the Israeli military activities will be exposing himself to danger. The IDF forces are operating to complete the mission of safely returning the abducted soldier.

IDF Headquarters

² As of June 30, the incursion has been postponed.

Preparations in Gaza for continued IDF action

✦ Palestinian terrorist organization operatives continue their media-covered preparations to face the incursion of IDF forces into additional areas of the Gaza Strip. They have placed improvised charges and rigged car bombs, barricaded the main roads and captured positions at roadblocks and in alleys. A Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) spokesman reported that a joint operations room had been set up by all the terrorist organizations. The civilian population is hoarding food and water and preparing for possible battles between the IDF and the terrorist organizations.



Qassam rocket attacks continue against communities in the western Negev

✦ During the past 24 hours, despite Operation Summer Rains, **Qassam rocket fire continues**, and four more rockets attacked western Negev communities.

The West Bank

The body of Eliahu Pinchas Asheri found in Ramallah

✦ In Ramallah on the night of June 28, IDF forces found the body of Eliahu Pinchas Asheri in Ramallah. Information obtained in the interrogation of one of the members of the squad (who had been arrested by Israeli security forces) led to the discovery of the body. Eliahu Asheri was apparently murdered **shortly after his abduction** on June 25; he was shot in the head at close range.

✦ Eliahu Asheri was murdered by a Fatah/Tanzim squad linked to the PRC in the Ramallah region which receives orders from the Gaza Strip. The false statements by PRC spokesman Abu 'Abir, whose organization claimed responsibility for the abduction, and displaying Eliahu Asheri's ID card, were made to the media on June 27 and 28 **after Asheri had already been murdered**. In our assessment, they were **propaganda and psychological warfare ploys, cold-blooded, cynical attempts to manipulate Israeli public opinion**.

Senior Hamas figures arrested in the West Bank

✦ On the morning of June 29 IDF forces arrested about **80 Hamas activists** in West Bank cities (including Ramallah, Nablus, Jenin and Qalqilya) and in Jerusalem. Among them were **high-ranking members of the Hamas government and of the Palestinian Legislative Council**. They were arrested for terrorist activity and for violating laws pertaining to the prevention of terrorism.³ All those in custody were remanded for interrogation and in the near future will be brought before a judge to extend their detentions (IDF spokesman, June 29). **The arrests were made in accordance with Israeli and international law** and are subject to Israeli judicial review.



Arrests made in Al-Bireh (Al-Manar TV, June 29)

✦ The following are some of the senior figures arrested (according to the initial report, based on the IDF Spokesman):

✓ **Dr. Nasser al-Din Muhammad Ahmad al-Sha'ir**,
Minister of Education and Deputy Prime Minister, from
Sebastia (near Nablus) Arrested by Israel in the past (the last
time in 2005).



³ They were all suspected of criminal offenses connected to the activity of a terrorist organization, participating in the direction of terrorism and other offenses which constitute a violation according to the Israeli Ordinance for the Prevention of Terrorism.

✓ **Muhammad Ibrahim Musa al-Barghouti**, Minister of Labor, resident of Kouber (near Ramallah). In the past he was wanted by the IDF and was arrested six times. **He was arrested after new information showed he had connections with Hamas’s terrorist-operative wing in Ramallah.**



✓ **Khaled Abu ‘Arafa**, Minister without Portfolio in Charge of Jerusalem Affairs, resident of Ras al-Amoud, East Jerusalem. A senior Hamas figure in East Jerusalem. Arrested in the past a number of times for Hamas activity.



✓ **Sheikh Dr. Naif al-Rajoub**, Minister of the Waqf (Endowments) and Religious Affairs, resident of Dura, south of Hebron. Arrested a number of times in the past for Hamas activity. Brother of Jibril Rajoub, an important figure in the Fatah’s “middle generation” and Abu Mazen’s national security advisor.



✓ **Hamas members of the Palestinian Legislative Council**, among them: **Muhammad Abu Tir** and **Muhammad ‘Atwan**, both from the Jerusalem district; and **‘Abd al-Jaber Fuqaha**, who has a long history with Hamas’s terrorist-operative wing in the West Bank and who in 1996 aided and abetted a squad of terrorists.

✓ **‘Adnan ‘Ahed Sayid ‘Asfur**, a resident of Nablus, prominent Hamas operative in the city. Involved in determining Hamas policies in the West Bank. Arrested a number of times in the past, he returned to full terrorist activity after each arrest. Is in direct contact with Khaled Mashal in Damascus.

✓ **Wajeh ‘Abd al-Rahim ‘Abdallah Kawas Nizal**, prominent Hamas activist in the West Bank, **mayor of Qalqilya**. Formerly belonged to the Hamas terrorist-operative infrastructure in Qalqilya which carried out, among other attacks, the suicide bombing at the Dolphinarium in Tel Aviv, June 2001.

✦ According to Al-Jazeera TV’s Website and the Palestinian News Agency (June 29), other members of the Hamas government were arrested as well: **Omar ‘Abd al-Razzeq** (Minister of Finance), **Samir Abu ‘Eisha** (Minister of Planning), **Wasfi Kabaha** (Minister of Prisoners’ and Released Prisoners’ Affairs), **Fakhri al-Turkemen** (Minister of Social Affairs) **‘Isa al-Ja’abari** (Minister of Local Governance). **The report has not yet been confirmed.**

The northern arena

✦ In the morning of June 28, Israeli Air Force planes flew over Syrian president Bashar Assad’s palace near the city of Latakia in northern Syria. According to Israeli security sources, the Assad was there at the time (Yediot Aharonot, June 29). The flyover was intended to send a threatening message to Assad and his régime, which sponsor and support Hamas and the other terrorist organizations, which use Damascus as a base from which to direct terrorist activity in the PA-administered territories (including the abduction of Gilad Shalit and the attack at Kerem Shalom).

✦ A source in the Syrian ministry of information confirmed the flyover in Syrian airspace and described it as “hostile and provocative.” The source claimed that Syrian anti-aircraft guns were fired at the Israeli planes, forcing them to flee (Al-Jazeera Website, June 29).

Palestinian reactions to Operation Summer Rains

✦ The following were the principle Palestinian reactions to Operation Summer Rains:

✓ **Abu Mazen** condemned activities taken against the civilian infrastructure, calling them “collective punishment” and “crimes against humanity.” He

appealed to the president of the United States and to the Quartet, asking them to intervene to prevent the situation from deteriorating (Palestinian News Agency, June 29). The **Palestinian ministry of foreign affairs** called for an emergency UN Security Council meeting in view of the “deteriorating situation” (Ramattan News Agency, June 28).

✓ . **Nasser al-Din al-Sha’ir**, Palestinian deputy prime minister, called the IDF operation in the Gaza Strip “a Nazi invasion” and “an organized crime against civilians.” He called upon the Palestinian government to keep the abducted Israeli soldier alive and to find a solution by means of dialogue (Al-Jazeera TV, June 29). **The Hamas government** issued a statement calling upon Israel “to act logically” and to trade Palestinian terrorist prisoners as it had done in the past with the PLO and Hezbollah.

✓ Hamas spokesman **Musheir al-Masri** told Al-Jazeera TV that arresting Hamas members of parliament and ministers was a “very serious precedent” and an “international crime.” He appealed to the Arab states to sever diplomatic and economic ties with Israel, adding that escalation would not provide a solution for the problem of the abducted soldier (Ynet, June 29).

The main international reactions

✦ The main international reactions were as follows:

✓ A White House spokesman stated that Israel had the right to defend itself, but urged it to avoid harming innocent civilians and doing unnecessary damage to property and infrastructures. He said that the abduction of the Israeli soldier and the Hamas attack last week accelerated the events in the Gaza Strip and stated that Hamas should release the soldier immediately.

✓ **Austria**, currently holding the presidency of the European Union, called upon the Palestinian leadership to release the abducted soldier immediately and unconditionally. **Benita Ferrero-Waldner**, EU commissioner for external relations, demanded that the abductors release the abducted soldier immediately, expressed hope that his condition did not deteriorate and appealed to Israel and the Palestinians to act with restraint.