



“Molotov kites” – a new means of causing damage to Israel as part of the violent demonstrations of the “Great Return March”

May 6, 2018

Overview

In recent weeks, during the riots of the “Great Return March,” we are witnessing **a new phenomenon of sending kites toward Israeli territory, with inflammable materials attached to their tails** (hereinafter: “Molotov kites”). The purpose of sending the Molotov kites is to cause damage to Israel by setting fire to fields and Israeli communities adjacent to the border fence between Israel and the Gaza Strip. **Hamas publicly encourages this type of violent activity, which has become a daily routine.**

► In the ITIC's assessment, since the beginning of the marches, **close to 250 kites have been sent, most of them Molotov kites.** In addition, kites with **propaganda messages**, written both in Arabic and Hebrew and addressed to Israeli public opinion (hereinafter: “leaflet kites”) have also been sent. **Among those kites, there were also some with swastikas painted on them**, and there was also a kite **with a GoPro camera** attached to it (an aerial photography kite, intended to document the events of the “return marches”).

Hamas encourages sending the kites



Palestinians making a Molotov kite east of Gaza, with the intention of sending it to Israeli territory (PALINFO Twitter account, May 4, 2018)

► **Hamas's media encourages sending the Molotov kites** and praises the damage caused by these kites. The Facebook page of Quds News network published a report (May 4, 2018) on **a group of youngsters calling itself “the kite unit.”** One of the group members said that this unit had made many kites **which were intended to burn many forests in Israel.** According to him, members of the “kite unit” tie Palestinian flags to the kites in order to

show that their activity is not violent. However, in reality, sending Molotov kites is part of a **large variety of acts of violence carried out as part of the “Great Return March” with Hamas’s encouragement.**



Palestinians making a Molotov kite inside the “Camp of Return,” east of the Gaza Strip camps (PALINFO Twitter account, May 4, 2018)

Damage to property caused by the kites

► **Molotov kites set fire to hundreds of dunams of agricultural areas in western Negev communities and caused damage estimated in the hundreds of thousands of shekels.** The heat wave, strong winds blowing in the region and the harvest season (in which fields are dry and quick to catch fire) **increased the damage caused by the Molotov kites.** Prominent among the fires set by these kites was **a fire in the Be’eri forest and the fields of the community, which swept through hundreds of dunams** (May 2, 2018). Another large fire damaged a barn in Kibbutz Kissufim.

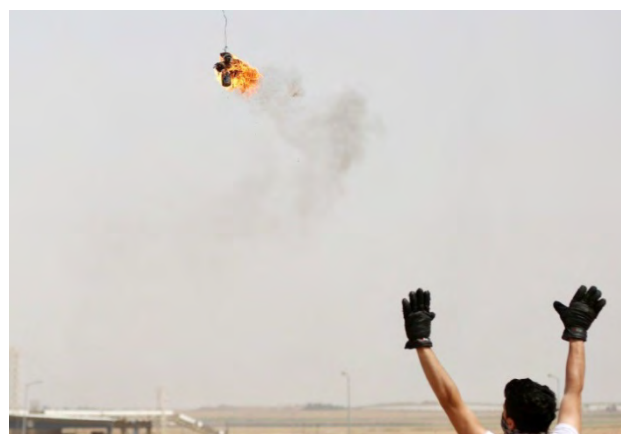
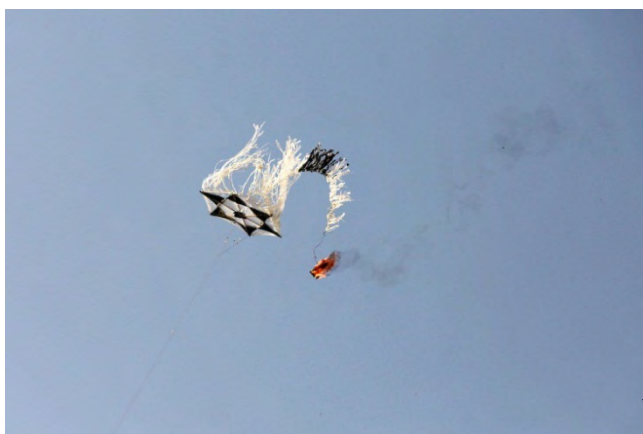
Molotov kites and fires caused



Right: Palestinians flying a Molotov kite from the central Gaza Strip toward Israel (PALINFO Twitter account, April 21, 2018). Left: Fire in a barn at Kibbutz Kissufim caused by a Molotov kite (Shehab Facebook page, April 21, 2018)



**Fire in the fields of Kibbutz Be'eri, caused by a Molotov kite
(Al-Resala Facebook page, May 2, 2018)**



Sending a Molotov kite east of Khan Yunis (PALINFO Twitter account, May 3, 2018)



**Molotov kite with a swastika, flown from the Gaza Strip toward Israeli territory
(IDF Spokesperson's Office, April 20, 2018)**

Aerial photography kite



GoPro camera attached to a kite which was flown from the Gaza Strip and fell this weekend in Israeli territory near the Gaza Strip (PALINFO Twitter account, May 5, 2018)

Appendix

Model of a leaflet kite¹

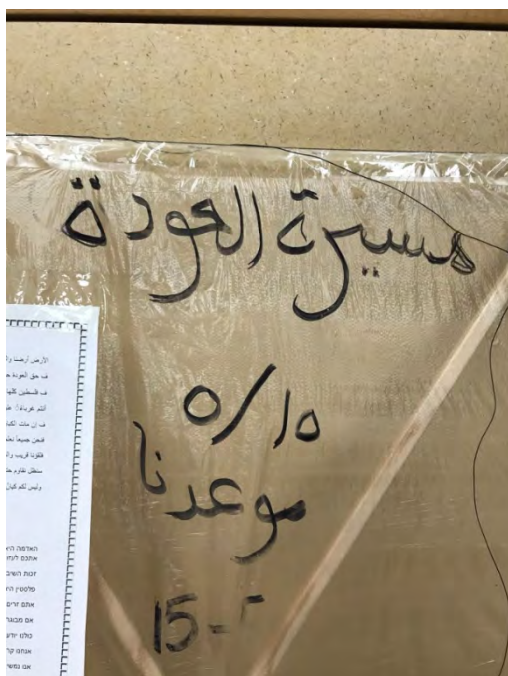
Some of the kites **contain propaganda leaflets** conveying (in Hebrew and Arabic) the following messages: “The Right of Return;” “The Palestinians’ right to every inch of the Land of Israel;” and a threat to execute Israelis living on Palestinian soil. **The messages are written in poor Hebrew and most probably hardly have any impact in terms of propaganda.**

► **The ITIC received a leaflet kite flown from the Gaza Strip toward Israeli territory.** This is a simple, home-made kite. In this case, no inflammable material was found attached to the kite and there were no indications that the kite had been set on fire. It was made of wooden sticks, to which was attached a plastic sheet and a long tail. The plastic sheet was attached to the wooden sticks with string. **Three leaflets (with the same content) and two Palestinian flags (one in the middle and another at the side of the kite) were attached to the body of the kite. The text in black ink on the kite reads: “The Return March, May 15 [i.e., Nakba Day] is our date.” The text at the bottom reads: “The land [i.e., Israel] is ours and Jerusalem is ours.”**



Model of the kite that reached the ITIC. Top: “The Return March, May 15 [i.e., Nakba Day] is our date.” Bottom: “The land [of Israel] is ours and Jerusalem is ours.”

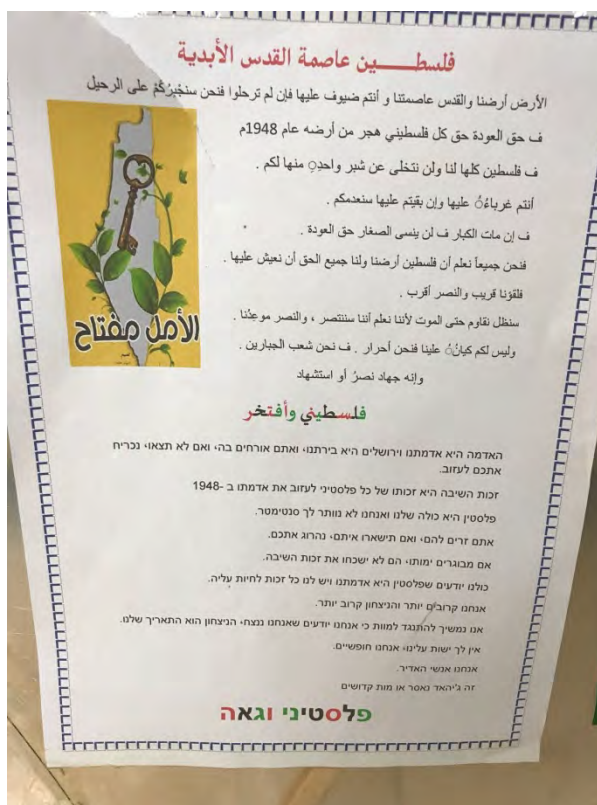
¹ The kite can be seen at the display of seized materials at the ITIC's compound in Gelilot.



Right: Tail of the kite. Left: Text on the kite: “Return March, May 15 is our date.”

Content of the leaflets

- The leaflets attached to the kite are in Arabic and Hebrew. The leaflet features a map of the Land of Israel plus a key (a symbol of the Return), and the words “The Hope Key.” Following is the text of the leaflets in Arabic and in (poor) Hebrew.



One of the leaflets attached to the kite, in Arabic and (poor) Hebrew