



July 24, 2014

## Operation Protective Edge – Update No. 12 (As of 1200 hours, July 24, 2014)



Major General Benny Gantz, the IDF Chief of Staff, visits the Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman, July 23, 2014)

### Overview

1. The fighting between the IDF and Hamas and the other terrorist organizations continues in the Shejaiya neighborhood and at other friction points in the Gaza Strip. IDF activity continues to focus on exposing and destroying tunnels used for terrorist purposes (31 so far). The extent of rocket fire targeting Israeli territory has not changed significantly. Most of the fire was directed against the population centers in the western Negev, although barrages were also fired at the center of Israel. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) lifted its flight ban on flights to Israel (as of the morning of July 24, 2014). European airlines are expected to follow suit.

2. In the political arena, Arab and international efforts continue in order to reach a ceasefire based on the Egyptian initiative. So far there has not been a breakthrough because Hamas clings to its original intransigent position (as was expressed in a speech given by Khaled Mashaal, see below). Efforts are therefore being made to circumvent Hamas' rejection of a ceasefire by means of a formula for a compromise, for example, the Palestinian Authority's (PA) proposal for a ceasefire, after which negotiations would be held for five days.

## The Ground Operation

### Overview

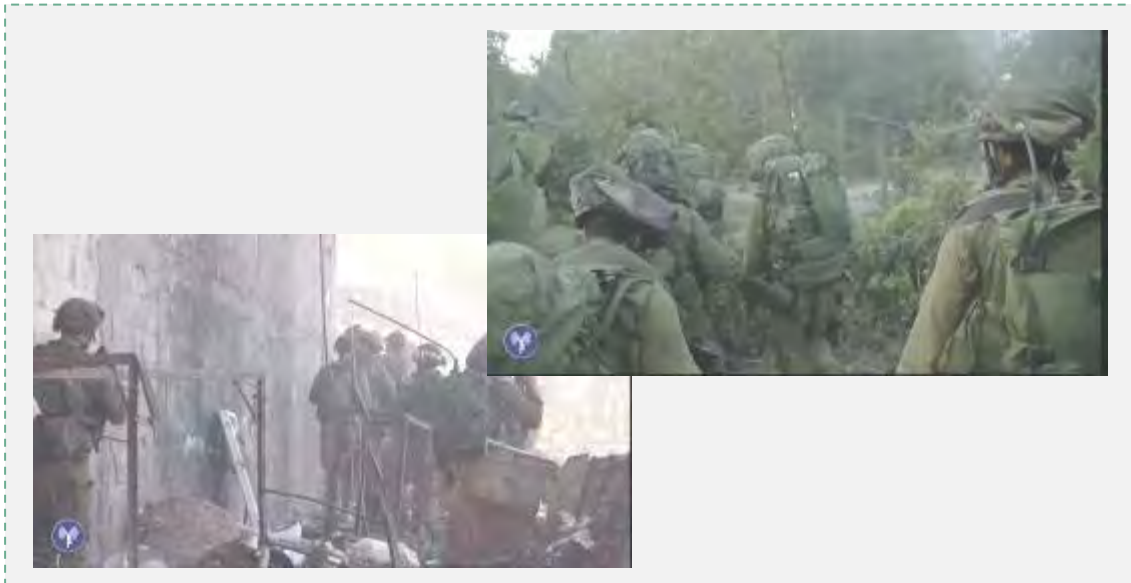
3. During the past 24 hours the IDF's ground activity (with extensive air support) continued in order to hit the terrorist infrastructure. **The exposure and destruction of the terrorist tunnels continues to be the focus of IDF activity.** IDF forces continued operating in Shejaiya and intensified their activities in **the Beit Hanoun region** (northern Gaza Strip). IDF forces took control of many terrorist targets, exposing large quantities of weapons as well as instruction and information manuals about the IDF collected by Hamas over the years. IDF forces continued clashing with terrorist operatives (IDF Spokesman, July 24, 2014).

### IDF Activity

4. During the past 24 hours the IDF forces continued dealing with tunnels already found and exposing new shafts. **In addition 150 Palestinians suspected of terrorist activities were apprehended in the Rafah region and taken for interrogation.** Some of the important events were the following (IDF Spokesman, July 23, 2014):

- 1) On **the night of July 23, 2014**, combat engineering soldiers identified several suspicious figures emerging from a tunnel shaft. Israeli Air Force (IAF) aircraft attacked the suspects. A terrorist operative in a Hamas facility opened fire at a Golani Brigade force. The soldiers returned fire and killed him. Weapons were found in the facility. A Paratroopers Brigade force fired mortars at a number of suspects. Two terrorist operatives were killed.
- 2) In **the early afternoon of July 23, 2014**, an armored force identified fire from armed Palestinians on a motorbike. The force returned fire.
- 3) In **the early afternoon of July 23, 2014**, a terrorist operative wearing an IDF uniform was apprehended in the Gaza Strip.
- 4) On **July 23, 2014** twelve terrorist operatives were identified **who had gone to a building in the southern Gaza Strip in an ambulance.** IAF aircraft attacked three of them outside the building. A short time later the building was attacked.
- 5) In **the early afternoon of July 23, 2014**, an IDF force exposed a tunnel shaft. The tunnel **contained IDF uniforms**, maps and weapons.
- 6) In **the early afternoon of July 23, 2014**, a Givati Brigade force shot at a terrorist squad that had emerged from a tunnel shaft.

7) On **the morning of July 23, 2014**, an armored force shot at two terrorist squads making final preparations for firing anti-tank weapons at IDF forces.



IDF activity in the Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman, July 23, 2014)

### Exposure and Destruction of Terrorist Tunnels

5. According to an IDF report, as of the morning of July 23, 2014, **the IDF had exposed 31 terrorist tunnels**. In IDF assessment, **all the tunnels had been constructed for the purpose of attacking targets inside Israel**. The IDF continues to destroy the tunnels. According to **IDF Spokesman Brigadier General Motti Almoz**, **the IDF has control of many tunnels leading into Israel and is currently engaged in destroying them**. He said it would take several days to destroy them (IDF Spokesman, July 23, 2014).



IDF forces destroy tunnels (IDF Spokesman, date, 2014).

### Air Attacks on Terrorist Targets Continue

6. In addition to the ground operation, the IDF continued attacking terrorist targets from the air. So far, more than 3,400 terrorist targets have been attacked in the Gaza Strip. Since the ground operation began, more than 1,900 terrorist targets have been attacked from the air (IDF Spokesman, July 23, 2014).

7. On July 23, 2014, more than 100 terrorist targets were attacked. Among the targets were concealed rocket launchers, terrorist tunnels and buildings that served as centers for military-terrorist activity. On the night of July 23, 2014 the IDF attacked approximately 35 terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman, July 24, 2014):

1) On **the night of July 23, 2014**, combat engineering soldiers identified several suspicious figures emerging from a tunnel shaft. IAF aircraft attacked the suspects.

2) On **the afternoon of July 23, 2014** IAF aircraft attacked **terrorist operatives shooting at IDF forces from Hamas positions inside Al-Wafa Hospital**, located near the Shejaiya neighborhood (See below).

3) On **the afternoon of July 23, 2014**, IAF aircraft attacked a terrorist facility in the western part of Jabaliya, which had been used as the headquarters of a senior Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) terrorist operative.

4) On **the night of July 23, 2014**, IAF aircraft attacked a terrorist squad preparing to fire an anti-tank weapon at IDF forces.



The PIJ headquarters attacked by the IAF. It was located behind the Al-Shamaa mosque in Gaza City. The sign at the entrance reads "[Palestinian] Islamic Jihad Center." Left: The sign. Right: The headquarters after the attack (Wafa.ps, July 23, 2014).



## IDF Losses

8. **Thirty-two IDF soldiers have been killed in Operation Protective Edge.** One soldier was reported missing in action. During the past 24 hours three soldiers from the Paratroopers Brigade were killed by IEDs in a building where they were operating. The names of the three soldiers released for publication were the following (IDF Spokesman, July 23, 2014):

- 1) **Captain Paz Eliahu**, 20, from Kibbutz Evron. IDF paratrooper, killed in combat in the Gaza Strip.
- 2) **Staff Sergeant Lee Matt**, 19, from Eilat. IDF paratrooper, killed in combat in the Gaza Strip.
- 3) **Staff Sergeant Shahar Dauber**, 20, from Kibbutz Ginegar IDF paratrooper, killed in combat in the Gaza Strip.

9. Several dozen additional soldiers have been wounded during the ground operation, some of them critically. They were evacuated to hospitals in the center of Israel.

## Rocket Fire into Israeli Territory

10. Heavy rocket and mortar shell fire continues to attack Israel. **Since the beginning of the operation approximately 1,985 rockets have fallen in Israeli territory.** The Iron Dome aerial defense system intercepted **more than 420** of them. **Since the beginning of the ground operation more than 675 rocket hits have been identified in Israel.** On July 23, 2014, rocket fire continued targeting the population centers in the western Negev, the Negev, the coastal plain and the center of Israel. On July 23 **115 rocket hits** were identified. Most of the rocket fire has targeted the western Negev, although several barrages were also fired at the center of Israel.

11. A foreign worker from Thailand was killed by mortar shell fire in one of the villages in the western Negev. No siren was sounded before the attack and he did not have time to reach shelter. He was the second civilian killed as a direct result of mortar shell fire since Operation Protective Edge began.

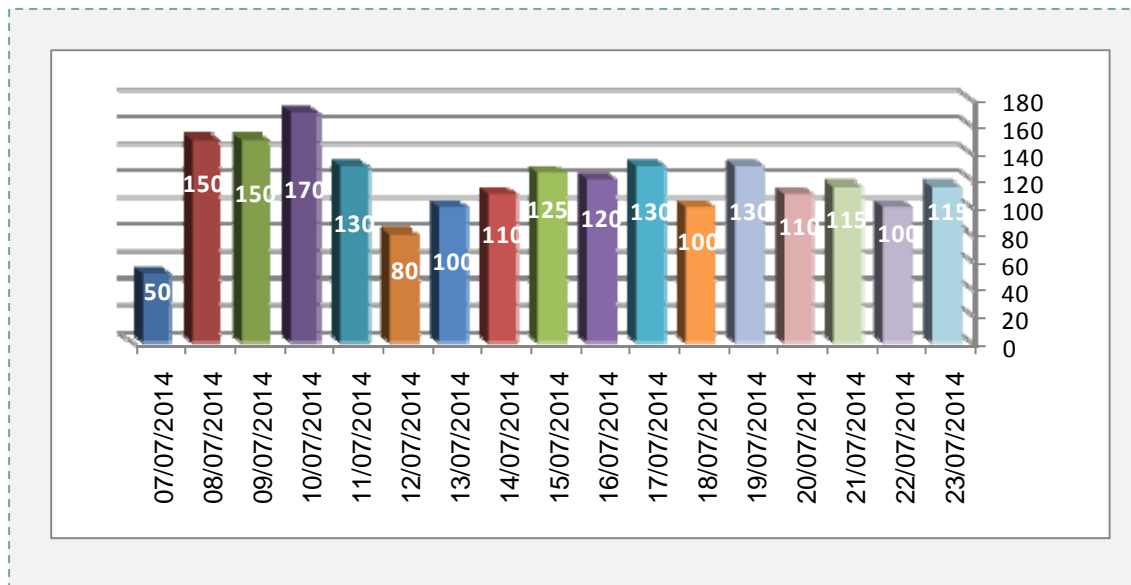
12. The main attacks were the following:

- 1) On the morning of **July 24, 2014**, after a quiet night, a barrage of rockets was fired targeting the center of Israel and the coastal plain. Twenty minutes later another barrage was fired at the center of Israel. At least five rockets were intercepted in the skies over Tel Aviv.

2) On the evening of **July 23, 2014** a barrage of rockets was fired at the center of Israel. The Iron Dome aerial defense system intercepted four of them, but rocket fragments exploded in an open area in the Yavne region. A foreign worker sustained minor injuries and was evacuated to a hospital.

3) In the morning and early afternoon of **July 23, 2014** rockets were fired at Beersheba, Ashdod, Netivot, Ashqelon and the western Negev.

### Daily Distribution of Rocket Fire from the Gaza Strip during Operation Protective Edge<sup>1</sup>



13. The military-terrorist wings of Hamas and the PIJ continue claiming responsibility for most of the rockets and mortar shells fired into Israeli territory and at the IDF forces operating in the Gaza Strip.

### American Ban on Flights to Israel Lifted

14. On the morning of July 24, 2014 the FAA issued a press release stating that following a security assessment, **it had lifted its restrictions on U.S. airline flights into and out of Israel's Ben Gurion Airport it had imposed on July 22, 2014** in response to a rocket strike that landed approximately one mile from the airport. According to the release, the FAA worked with its US government counterparts to assess the security situation in Israel and carefully reviewed both significant new

<sup>1</sup> The graph indicates rocket hits in Israeli territory and does not include the massive mortar shell fire into the western Negev or rocket launches that failed.

information and measures taken by the Government of Israel to mitigate potential risks to civil aviation (FAA website, July 23, 2014).<sup>2</sup>

## The Use Made of Civilian Facilities by Hamas and the Other Terrorist Organizations

### Hamas Shoots at IDF Forces from the Al-Wafa Hospital

15. In the early afternoon hours of July 23, 2014 IAF aircraft attacked terrorist operatives inside the Al-Wafa Hospital, located near the Shejaiya neighborhood. **Hamas used the hospital as a military stronghold.** In the hospital there was a Hamas command and control center from which fighting in the region was directed. There was also a reconnaissance position used to gather intelligence about IDF forces. In addition, there were a number of tunnel shafts in the hospital compound used by Hamas and from which IDF forces were fired on. After attacks from the hospital against IDF forces increased the IDF decided to attack the building (IDF Spokesman, July 23, 2014).

16. **The Coordinator for Government Activities in the Territories sent repeated warnings to international organizations and Palestinians and also conducted a phone conversation with the hospital director. The patients and medical personnel were evacuated as a result of the conversation and only Hamas terrorist operatives remained in the hospital.** After an air attack it was completely destroyed. Photographs taken during the attack clearly show secondary explosions, indicating that large quantities of weapons had been stockpiled in the building (IDF Spokesman, July 23, 2014).<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.faa.gov/news/press\\_releases/news\\_story.cfm?newsId=16734](http://www.faa.gov/news/press_releases/news_story.cfm?newsId=16734)

<sup>3</sup> For further information about the use Hamas makes of hospitals, see the July 23, 2014 bulletin "Hamas and the Other Terrorist Organizations in the Gaza Strip Use Medical Facilities and Ambulances for Military-Terrorist Purposes."



Terrorist operatives attacked in the Al-Wafa Hospital (IDF Spokesman, July 23, 2014)  
Click <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RX1joMdAO2M#t=147> for the video.



Nick Casey, Middle East correspondent for the Washington Post, tweeted a picture of a photographed interview with a Hamas spokesman in the Al-Shifa'a Hospital. The picture behind the spokesman shows ruins. The Al-Shifa'a Hospital is also used as a command post by senior Hamas operatives.

## The Gazan Population

17. According to ITIC information, **775 Gazans have been killed** since the beginning of the operation (July 23). In ITIC assessment, there are scores of bodies of terrorist operatives killed in clashes with IDF forces in various combat areas that have not been included in the overall statistics. That is because their bodies have not yet been evacuated from the combat zones and Hamas and the other terrorist organizations may not necessarily be aware of their deaths.



18. The distribution (not final, as of July 23, 2014) of the 775 Palestinians killed is as follows:

- 1) **229 terrorist operatives:**
  - A. **135 Hamas operatives**
  - B. **60 PIJ operatives**
  - C. **34 operatives** from other terrorist organizations
- 2) **267 non-involved Palestinians**
- 3) **279 Palestinians** whose identity is not yet known

19. **Chris Gunness, UNRWA spokesman** in the Gaza Strip, said that **140,469 Palestinians had vacated their houses** and had taken shelter in 83 UNRWA installations throughout the Gaza Strip (Twitter account of Chris Gunness, July 23, 2014). It was also reported that churches in the Gaza Strip had been turned into shelters for displaced persons after the UNRWA schools had been filled to capacity.

20. **Jowad Awad**, minister of health in the Gaza Strip warned of a health crisis in the Gaza Strip due to the inability of medical personnel to evacuate the bodies of the dead from under the ruins (Felesteen.ps, July 23, 2014).



**Gazans find shelter in UNRWA installation (Wafa.ps, July 23, 2014).**

## The Crossings – Update

### The Erez Crossing

21. On July 23, 2014 nine trucks entered the Gaza Strip through the Erez crossing (usually reserved for the passage of civilians) carrying medical supplies for the Jordanian hospital in the Gaza Strip.



Medical supplies for the Jordanian hospital (Cogat.idf.il, July 24, 2014)..

### The Kerem Shalom Crossing

22. Since the beginning of Operation Protective Edge 864 trucks carrying food, medicine and medical equipment have entered the Gaza Strip through the crossing. Diesel fuel for the Gaza Strip power plant, gasoline and cooking gas have also been delivered. On July 23, 2014 a water pipe providing water for 100,000 Jabaliya residents was repaired (Cogat.idf.il, July 24, 2014).

## Judea and Samaria

23. In Judea and Samaria violent clashes continue between Palestinians and the Israeli security forces. The clashes occur primarily during protest demonstrations and riots in support of the Gaza Strip held in cities in Judea and Samaria. There are also many calls for action to be taken against Israel and the settlers to show solidarity with the Gazans.



**Demonstration in Ramallah in which demonstrators carried coffins wrapped in flags of Palestine (Wafa.ps, July 23, 2014)**

24. The protests can be expected to intensify as the end of the Muslim religious month of Ramadan approaches and *laylat al-qadr* is celebrated (the night on which, according to tradition, the first verses of the Qur'an were revealed to Muhammad). A Facebook page called the Al-Qadr Intifada was begun on July 22, 2014, calling on Palestinians to rise up against the Israeli security forces after the prayers in the mosque, and to march to Jerusalem (Facebook page of the Al-Qadr Intifada).



**Notices posted on Facebook calling for an intifada**

## Contacts for a Ceasefire

25. **In Cairo contacts continue between the Arab and international parties involved in mediating a ceasefire based on the Egyptian initiative.** So far, there has not been a breakthrough because of Hamas' refusal to accept it. **Azzam al-Ahmad**, a member of Fatah's Central Committee, said the Palestinian leadership had offered a new proposal for a ceasefire as part of the Egyptian initiative, according to which as soon as a ceasefire went into effect five days of negotiations would begin. He said Egypt did not object to the proposal (Voice of Palestine, July 23, 2014).

26. The heads of Hamas made their position on the issue clear in a number of statements:

1) **Khaled Mashaal, head of Hamas' political bureau**, gave a speech stating Hamas' intransigent position and reiterated that Hamas would not agree to stop fighting before its conditions were met, particularly before the siege was lifted from the Gaza Strip. However, **he hinted that Hamas might agree to a humanitarian pause** (Al-Aqsa TV, July 23, 2014).

2) **Mahmoud al-Zahar, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, called for the "resistance's victory" in the Gaza Strip to be translated into political achievements. He said Israel would not get a free lull and that any lull had to be based on the principles of deterring Israel and meeting the Palestinian people's demands. Otherwise, he said, the resistance would continue (Aa.com.tr, July 23, 2014).

3) **Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri** said that Hamas was interested in a lull agreement, an end to the aggression and the lifting of the siege, but wanted the price Hamas demanded to be paid (Al-Mayadeen TV, Lebanon, July 23, 2014).

4) **Muhammad Nizal, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, said there would be a ceasefire only if the Palestinians' demands were met and that Khaled Mashaal was not speaking from a position of weakness (Al-Jazeera, July 23, 2014).

27. In addition to political contacts Hamas is trying to get internal support for its intransigence. About 100 public figures, academicians and human rights activists in the Gaza Strip, some of them affiliated with Hamas, signed a petition supporting Hamas' position regarding the Egyptian initiative and Hamas' conditions for a ceasefire – lifting the siege of the Gaza Strip. They also rejected the claims that Hamas was using

Gazans as human shields. They said they were planning to disseminate the petition around the globe (Electricintifada.net, July 22, 2014).

## UN Commission of Inquiry

28. **On July 23, 2014, the UN's Human Rights Council (UNHRC) voted to set up an international commission of inquiry to examine the allegation the Israel committed war crimes during Operation Protective Edge in the Gaza Strip.** Twenty-nine states voted in favor, 17 abstained (the EU countries) and the United States voted against the resolution. Following the vote a process was initiated to determine the commission's mandate, its compositions and schedule.

29. South African **Navi Pillay**, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, said in a speech that the situation in the Gaza Strip was critical for the civilians living there and required immediate attention. Since Israel announced its military operation on July 7, 2014, the Gaza Strip had undergone intensive bombardment from the air, land and sea, resulting in the deaths of more than 600 Palestinians, including at least 147 children and 74 women. She said that according to UN preliminary figures, around 74% of those killed so far were civilians. She added that hundreds of homes had been destroyed or severely damaged. However, she condemned rockets and mortar shells fired indiscriminately by Hamas and "other armed groups" at Israel which endangered the lives of civilians. She said there was a strong possibility that in certain incidents international humanitarian law had been violated in a manner that could amount to war crimes, and she called for them to be investigated (Ohchr.org, July 23, 2014).<sup>4</sup>

### Initial Reactions

30. **The office of the Israeli prime minister issued the following statement: "The decision today by the UNHRC is a travesty and should be rejected by decent people everywhere.** Rather than investigate Hamas, which is committing a double war crime by firing rockets at Israeli civilians while hiding behind Palestinian civilians, the UNHRC calls for an investigation of Israel, which has gone to unprecedented lengths to keep Palestinian civilians out of harm's way...The UNHRC should be launching an investigation into Hamas's decision to turn hospitals into military command centers, use schools as weapons depots and place missile batteries next to playgrounds, private homes and mosques. By failing to condemn Hamas's systematic use of human shields and by blaming Israel for the deaths that are caused by this grotesque human shields policy, the UNHRC is sending a message ...that using civilians as human

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/Media.aspx>



shields is an effective strategy. Like the investigation that led to the infamous Goldstone report...this investigation by a kangaroo court is a foregone conclusion. The predictable result will be the libeling of Israel and even greater use of human shields in the future by Hamas..." (Israeli Prime Minister's website, July 23, 2014).<sup>5</sup>

31. **Keith Harper, the United States Ambassador to the UNHRC**, called the resolution "destructive," noting it lacked "any semblance of balance" because made no mention of Hamas attacks. He said it would undermine efforts to reach a ceasefire. Speaking for the European Union, Italian Ambassador Maurizio Serra also criticized the failure to mention Hamas or recognize Israel's right to self-defense (AFP.com, July 23, 2014).

---

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Spokesman/Pages/spokerespon230714.aspx>