



# News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

(March 11 – 16, 2015)



Operatives of the so-called "popular resistance" continue throwing stones at Israeli vehicles and the Israeli security forces. Left: An Israeli Border policeman hit by stones thrown at a riot in front of the Ofer jail (west of Ramallah). Right: An Israeli bus attacked with stones in Jerusalem; a woman was injured in the attack (Photo by Hillel Meir, Tazpit.org.il, March 10, 2015)

## Overview

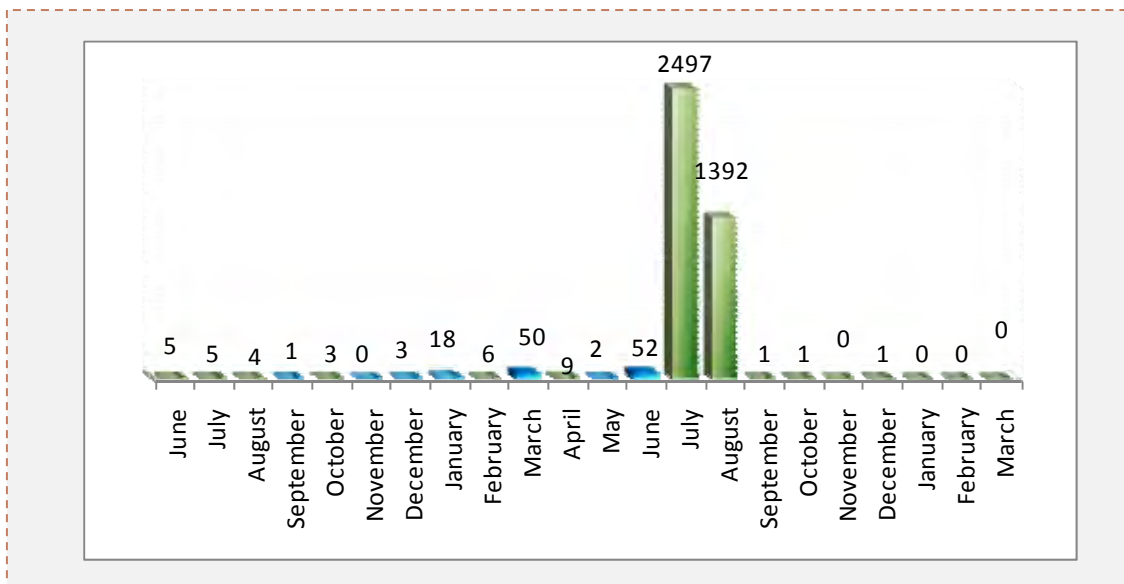
- This past week Israel's south remained quiet. In Judea, Samaria and east Jerusalem violence continued, part of the Palestinians' so-called "popular resistance." Most of the attacks involved the throwing of stones.
- This past week in the Gaza Strip the Hamas-controlled internal security forces held a number of displays exhibiting their military capabilities as well as their ability to impose internal security. A senior figure in the Palestinian police force claimed the security situation in the Gaza Strip was stable and under control.
- The Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military-terrorist wing, claimed responsibility for erecting military posts at a distance of a few hundred meters from the security fence along the border with Israel. One is near the Shejaiya neighborhood and the other was built on the ruins of the former Israeli settlement of Nisanit (near the Erez crossing).

## Israel's South

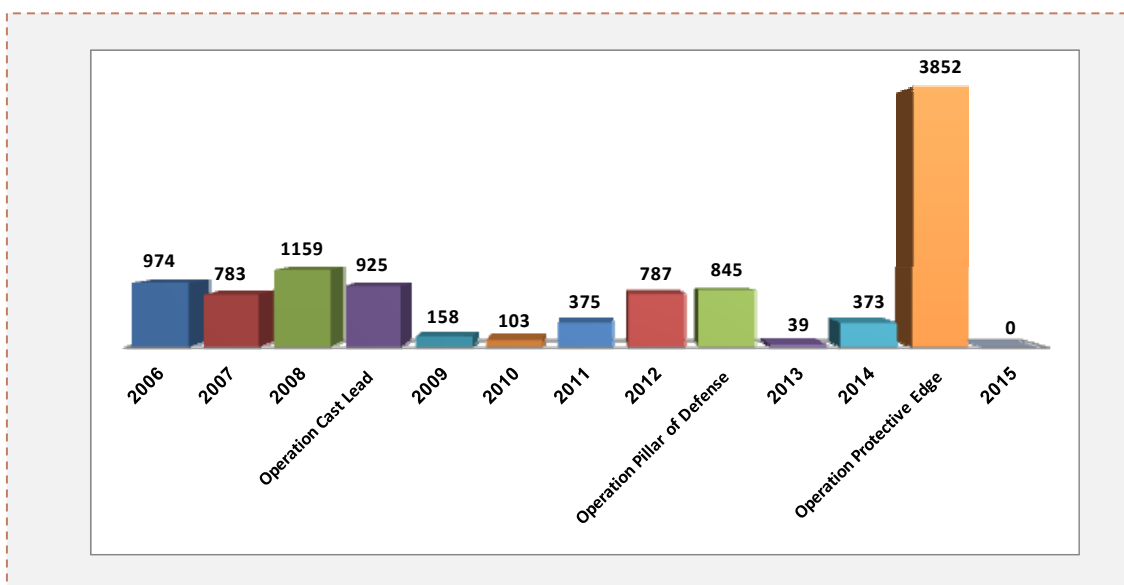
### Rocket Fire Attacking Israel

- This past week no rocket or mortar shell hits were identified in Israeli territory.

### Monthly Distribution of Rocket Fire (2013 – 2015)<sup>1</sup>



### Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire in Israel's South<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> As of March 16, 2015. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire or rockets which misfired and fell inside the Gaza Strip.

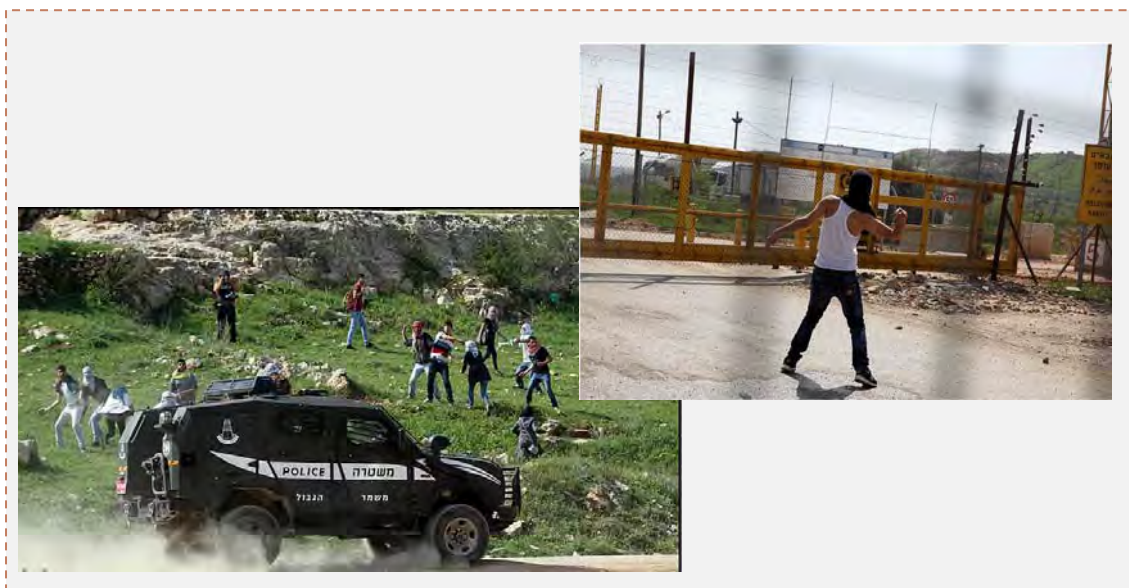
<sup>2</sup> The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.

## Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem

### "Popular Resistance" Terrorism and Violence Continue

■ This past week the wave of violence and rioting continued at the usual locations in Judea, Samaria and east Jerusalem, part of what the Palestinians call the "popular resistance." The violence mainly involved throwing stones, rocks and Molotov cocktails at Israeli security forces and vehicles. Some of the prominent attacks were the following:

- On **March 10, 2015**, stones were thrown at an Israeli bus near the Dung Gate in east Jerusalem. The bus was en route to the Western Wall. One woman passenger incurred minor injuries. According to the police, a 15 year-old Palestinian was detained on suspicion of having thrown the stones (Tazpit.org.il, March 10, 2015).
- On **March 11, 2015**, IDF forces detained four Palestinians on suspicion of throwing stones near Nebi Saleh (southern Samaria) (IDF Spokesman, March 11, 2015).



Beir Zeit University students clash with Israeli security forces in front of the Ofer jail (west of Ramallah) (Wafa.ps, March 10, 2015).

## Developments in the Gaza Strip

### The Crossings – Recent Developments

#### The Rafah Crossing

■ Two days after the Rafah crossing opened it closed again for an unlimited period of time. During the two days it was open 1,008 Palestinians passed through (Youm7.com, March 11, 2015).

■ A "senior Palestinian" who accompanied Mahmoud Abbas to a meeting of the Economic Conference claimed Mahmoud Abbas had met privately with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. According to the source, Mahmoud Abbas asked el-Sisi to speed up the opening of the Rafah crossing to ease the distress of the Gazans. The "senior Palestinian" also claimed that the Egyptian president promised Mahmoud Abbas that the Rafah crossing would be permanently opened in the coming days (Quds.net, March 14, 2015).

■ **Ibrahim al-Ashqar**, a Hamas member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, stressed Hamas' objection to any proposal involving the replacement of employees at the crossings with employees of the Palestinian Authority (PA). He claimed Hamas would not transfer the crossings to the PA until after the Palestinian national consensus government had fulfilled its obligations to the Gaza Strip. The first obligation, he claimed, was paying the salaries of Hamas employees and transferring funds to the various Gazan government ministries (Al-Risala, March 11, 2015).

#### The Kerem Shalom Crossing

■ The Ma'an News Agency issued a report on the export of agricultural produce from the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom crossing to Israel, Judea and Samaria. It was reportedly the first time in eight years that Israel permitted the import of agricultural produce from the Gaza Strip (Maannews.net, March 11, 2015).



Exporting agricultural produce from the Gaza Strip to Israel through the Kerem Shalom crossing. Right: A Hamas policeman directs traffic (Facebook page of PALDF, March 12, 2015).

## Reconstruction of the Gaza Strip

■ **Mohammed al-Emadi**, chairman of the Qatari committee for the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip, held a press conference in the Gaza Strip (on the ruins of Al-Wafaa hospital). He claimed that the committee intended to begin the immediate construction of 1,000 dwelling units for homeless Gazans: Qatar would send four trucks of building materials to the Gaza Strip every day. The committee also intended to provide new sources of electricity. He claimed that Qatar's promised donation of \$1 billion would be given only to Gazans harmed during Operation Protective Edge. **Ismail Haniya**, former head of the de-facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip, said he expected the Palestinian national consensus government to be responsible for implementing the reconstruction programs to enable the Palestinian people to overcome their current humanitarian crisis (Al-Quds TV, March 12, 2015).

■ **Muhammad Kaya**, director of the Gazan branch of the Turkish Islamist organization IHH, reported the organization had distributed 7,000 packages of food to needy families. They included the families of 3,500 Gazan employees who had not yet received salaries and 3,5000 families harmed during Operation Protective Edge. He claimed the aid cost €200,000 (Facebook page of the IHH in the Gaza Strip, March 15, 2015).





IHH activists distribute food packages in the Gaza Strip (Facebook page of the IHH in the Gaza Strip, March 15, 2015)

- **Muhammad Mustafa** (minister of economics in the Palestinian national consensus government) and the economic advisor of the Kuwaiti Fund for Arab Economic Development signed an agreement for Kuwait's planned \$200 million contribution to the reconstruction of the southern Gaza Strip (Wafa.ps, March 12, 2015).

## New Hamas Military Posts Erected near the Israeli Border

- The guidance and training unit of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades (Hamas' military-terrorist wing) **claimed responsibility for the erection of military posts a few hundred meters from Israel's border security fence**. One of them, the "Al-Yarmouk post," was erected near the Shejaiya neighborhood, and the "Palestine post" was erected **on the ruins of the former Israeli settlement of Nisanit** (near the Erez crossing). A senior member of the training unit claimed **the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades would continue erecting posts near the Israeli border** (Qassam.ps, March 14, 2015).



Left: Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades terrorist operatives face the security force. Right: Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades training facility facing the security fence (Qassam.ps, March 14, 2015).

## An Appeal to the Egyptian Court Decision

■ According to reports, **Egyptian authorities are working to appeal the ruling of the Egyptian Court for Urgent Matters which designated the entire Hamas movement as a terrorist organization.** The Administrative Court, headed by **Yahya Dakrouri**, deputy prime minister of Egypt, decided to transfer the appeal to the Civil Service Commission (Almasryalyoum.com, March 11, 2015). An anonymous judicial source said that on March 28, 2015, the Court for Urgent Matters would deliberate the appeal regarding the designation of the Hamas movement as a terrorist organization (Almasryalyoum.com, March 11, 2015).

■ **Hamas expressed satisfaction with the Egyptian government's decision** to appeal the court's ruling. Senior Hamas figure **Sami Abu Zuhri** praised the decision, saying he hoped it would lead to righting the wrong done to Hamas (Safa.ps, March 11, 2015). Senior Hamas figure **Ismail al-Ashqar** also praised the decision, saying it was a step in the right direction. He said Hamas aspired to strategic relations with all Arab countries, including Egypt, to fight the "Zionist entity." He claimed that the Egyptian decision "turned over a new leaf" after the "historic mistake," and that Egypt had learned that the Gaza Strip and Hamas were strategically important and not dangerous (Paltoday.ps, March 11, 2015).

## Khaled Mashaal Meets with Senior Iranian

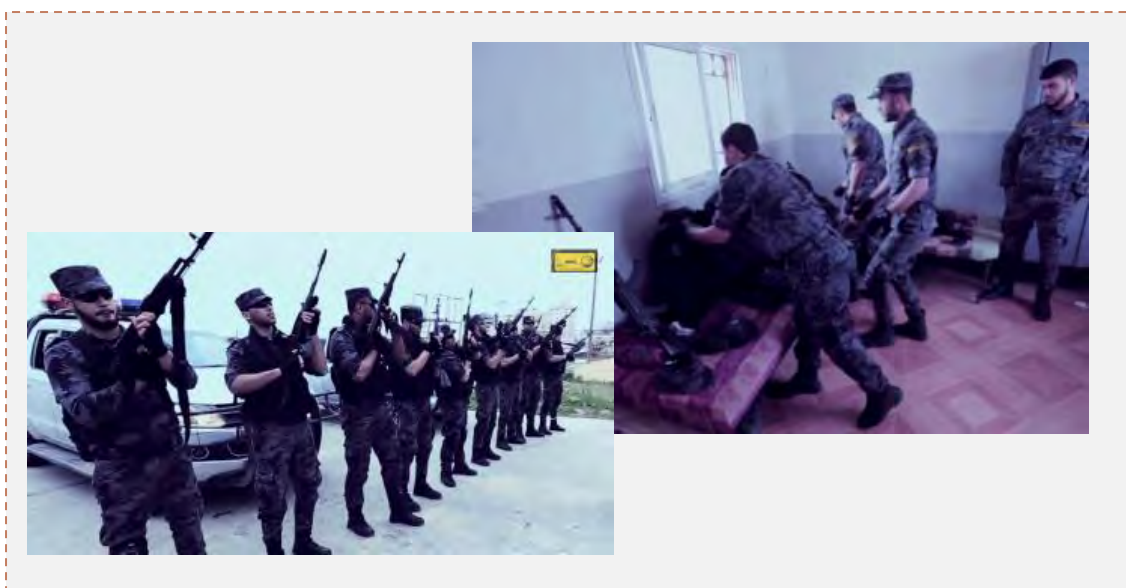
■ **Ali Larijani**, chairman of the Iranian Majlis (Parliament), headed a parliamentary delegation on visits to Kuwait and Qatar. **While in Qatar he met with Khaled Mashaal, head of Hamas' political bureau.** Hamas spokesman **Husam Badran**

claimed they discussed recent developments in the Palestinian cause (Alquds.co.uk, March 11, 2015). Hamas issued a statement claiming the two had discussed the implications of the [so-called] "Israeli threat" to Jerusalem and Al-Aqsa mosque, and the continuing "siege" of the Gaza Strip (Alaraby.co.uk, March 11, 2015).

- Senior Hamas figure **Bassem Naim** claimed that **Larijani assured Mashaal that Iran supported the Palestinian cause in general and the Palestinian organizations and the "resistance"** [i.e., terrorism and violence] in particular. He claimed holding the meeting was an important step and would lead to other visits and to strengthening the relations between Hamas and Iran (AFP.com, March 13, 2015).

## Displays of Force in the Gaza Strip

- Al-Aqsa TV broadcast of program about operatives of **Hamas' "central support force – the special missions unit."** According to the broadcast, its main function is to secure sensitive individuals and guard delegations paying official and unofficial visits to the Gaza Strip. All the operatives are reportedly former security personnel (Al-Aqsa TV, March 12, 2015).



The "special missions unit" in action (YouTube, March 12, 2015).

- On March 12, 2015, **the training unit of the ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip** held a military display of 600 operatives, graduates of the so-called "Course 28" (whose nature is so far unknown). The display began at the so-called "Ashqelon base" in northern Beit Lahia and ended at a training compound in the western Gaza Strip. Participating operatives demonstrated the military skills they learned during the course (Website of the ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip, March 12, 2015).





Graduates of "Course 28" in a military display in the Gaza Strip (Website of the ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip, March 12, 2015)

■ The Palestinian police in the northern Gaza Strip held a display that included police force officers, members of the rapid intervention force, members of the naval police, etc. During the display **Alaa al-Din al-Hindi**, commander of the northern Gaza Strip district, claimed the Palestinian police protected the residents of the Gaza Strip despite all the difficulties they encountered. He claimed **the security situation in the Gaza Strip was stable and that the police controlled all its divisions** (Website of the ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip, March 15, 2015).



Palestinian police display in the northern Gaza Strip (Website of the ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip, March 15, 2015)

## The Palestinian Authority

### Clashes between the PA's Security Forces and Residents of the Balata Refugee Camp

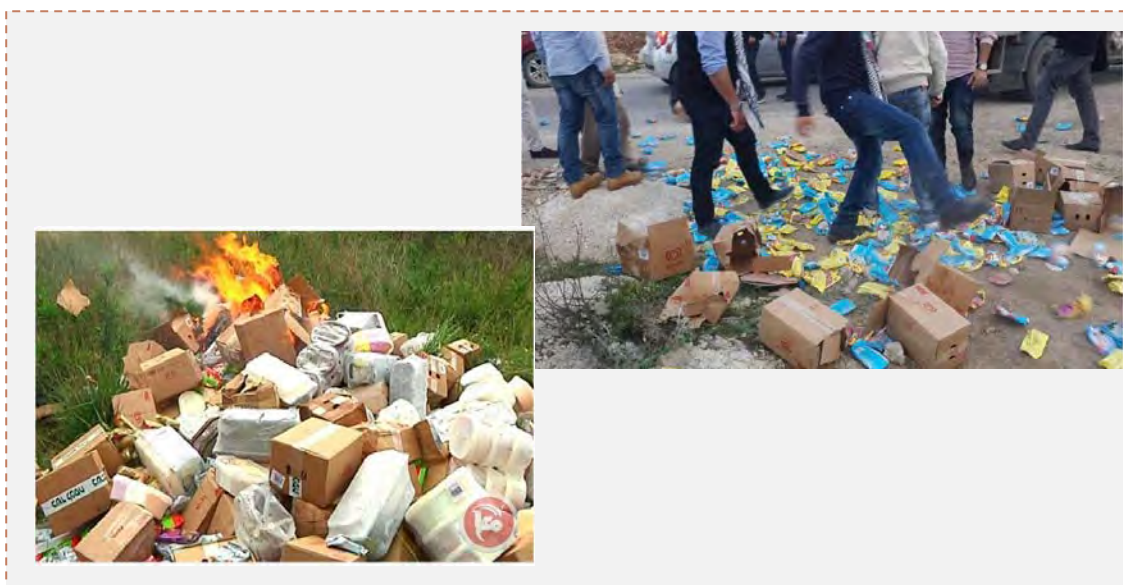
■ This past week **clashes continued between the PA's security forces and residents of the Balata refugee camp** (near Nablus). On March 14, 2015, riots broke out (for the third time in the past two days) when dozens of residents blocked the street running parallel to the refugee camp. They burned tires and threw stones at a Palestinian security force patrol (Paltoday.ps, March 14, 2015). **Akram Rajoub**, governor of the Nablus district, said that certain persons were inciting the residents to riot. He said those persons wanted to undermine security, influence public opinion and force the security forces to give in to their demands (Voice of Palestine Radio, March 15, 2015).



**Rami Hamdallah, prime minister of the Palestinian national consensus government, at the Balata refugee camp after the recent clashes between the security forces and the camp residents (Wafa.ps, March 13, 2015).**

### The Campaign to Boycott Israeli Products Continues

■ In Judea and Samaria the campaign to boycott Israeli products continues. On March 11, 2015, Fatah activists in Nablus confiscated a truck belonging to Strauss, an Israeli dairy company, emptied it of its contents and burned them (Maannews.net, March 11, 2015). On March 10, 2015, activists in Ramallah stopped another Strauss truck, emptied it and destroyed its contents (Facebook page of PALDF, March 10, 2015).



Left: The contents of a Strauss truck burn on the ground (Maannews.net, March 11, 2015). Right: The contents of a Strauss truck destroyed (Facebook page of PALDF, March 10, 2015).

## Glorifying Operatives Who Carried Out Terrorist Attacks

■ Fatah's official Facebook page marked the anniversary of the Coastal Road Massacre (March 11, 1978) by posting a picture of **Dalal al-Magribi** (a female terrorist operative turned into a role model for Palestinian society). The text above her picture read, "Flash: Large-scale attack at Herzliya in Tel Aviv [on the Coastal road where the massacre was carried out]...80 Israelis killed and more than one hundred wounded. The Palestinian flag was flown in the center of the city...It was a most heroic victory" (Official Facebook page of Fatah, March 10, 2015).



Official Facebook page of Fatah dedicated to the memory of terrorist operative Dalal al-Magribi, March 10, 2015.