



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

(May 27 – June 2, 2015)



After the PA fails to have Israel suspended from FIFA, Palestinian children wave red cards¹ in the face of an IDF soldier at one of the weekly Friday riots (Wafa.ps, May 29, 2015).

Overview

■ This past week terrorist events focused on rocket fire from the Gaza Strip. A rocket hit was identified in Israeli territory near Gan Yavne, a village east of Ashdod. There were no casualties and no damage was reported. It was the third rocket fired since the beginning of 2015 and the first rocket with such a long range since Operation Protective Edge. According to the Palestinian and Israeli media, it was fired because of disputes within the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ). The Palestinian media reported that following the rocket fire Hamas' security forces detained three PIJ operatives.

■ Israel responded to the rocket fire from the Gaza Strip with air strikes on four terrorist targets in the southern Gaza Strip. No casualties were reported. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Moshe Yaalon said Israel held Hamas responsible for all fire from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory.

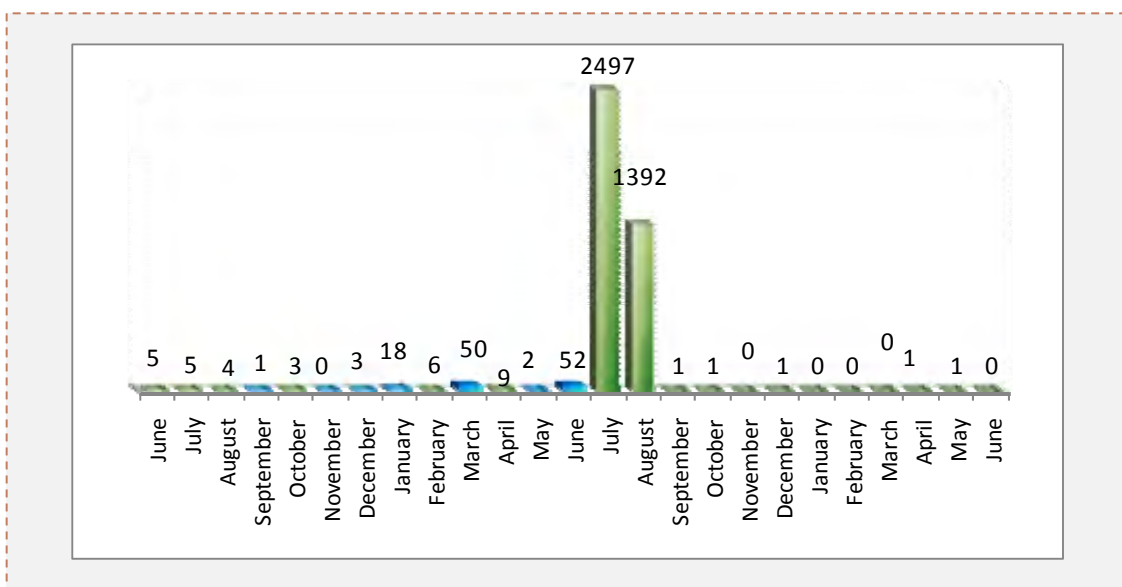
■ The Palestinian bid to suspend Israel from the Federation of the International Football Association (FIFA) was unsuccessful. At the last minute the Palestinians retracted their proposal, apparently caving under pressure and realizing it would be voted down by the FIFA Congress. Hamas spokesmen strongly condemned the retraction. Groups of Palestinian activists launched a campaign in the media calling for Jibril Rajoub to be removed as president of the Palestinian Football Association.

Israel's South

Rocket Fire Attacking Israel

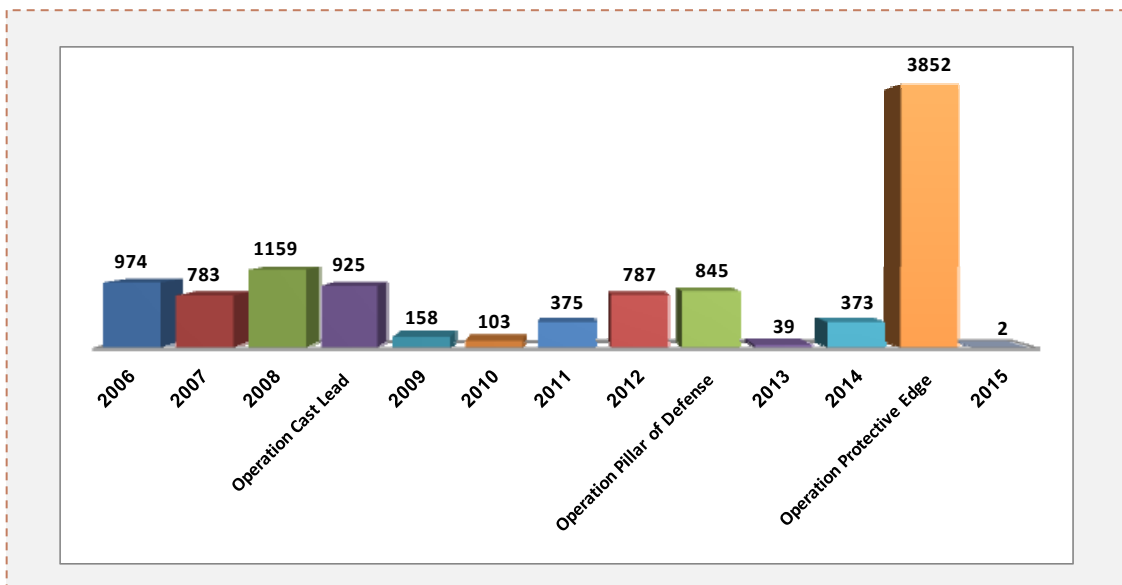
- T At 21:45 on the night of May 26, 2015, a rocket was fired at Israel from the Gaza Strip. **The remains of the rocket were located near Gan Yavne, a village east of Ashdod.** It was the third rocket fired from the Gaza Strip since the beginning of 2015 and the first rocket fired with such a long range since Operation Protective Edge. The Palestinian and Israeli media reported that the PIJ had fired the rocket, the result of disputes within the organization's upper echelons over the appointment of a new commander to the military-terrorist wing in the northern Gaza Strip.
- Following the rocket fire **the Hamas security forces detained three PIJ operatives.** The detentions were carried out in coordination with the PIJ's security forces (Alqudsnews.net, May 27, 2015). However, Hamas spokesman **Sami Abu Zuhri** claimed Israel was exclusively responsible for the escalation, and warned Israel not to continue it (Official Facebook page of Hamas, May 27, 2015). **Iyad al-Bazam**, spokesman for Hamas' ministry of the interior, claimed the ministry and security forces were following developments and preparing for an Israeli escalation (Facebook page of the ministry of the interior, May 27, 2015).

Monthly Distribution of Rocket Fire (2013 – 2015)²



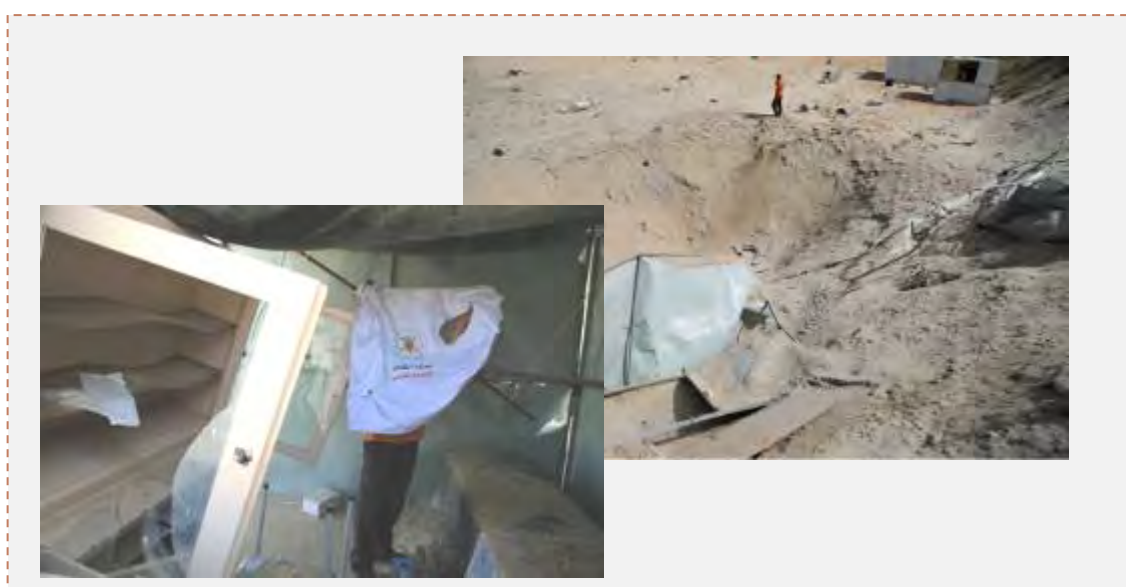
² As of June 2, 2015. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire or rockets which misfired and fell inside the Gaza Strip.

Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire in Israel's South³



Israel's Response to the Rocket Fire

- In response to the rocket fire from the Gaza Strip **the Israel Air Force struck four terrorist targets in the southern Gaza Strip** (IDF Spokesman, May 27, 2015). The Palestinian media reported that IAF aircraft hit a number of PIJ posts in Rafah, Beit Lahia and Khan Yunis, and one post belonging to Hamas' military wing. No casualties were reported but the posts were damaged (Alresala.net, May 27, 2015).



The results of the IAF air strikes. Left: A vest stamped "Jerusalem Brigades, military paramedic," left on a training field. Right: A crater in the ground at the location of one of the strikes (Paltoday.tv, May 27, 2015).

³ The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.

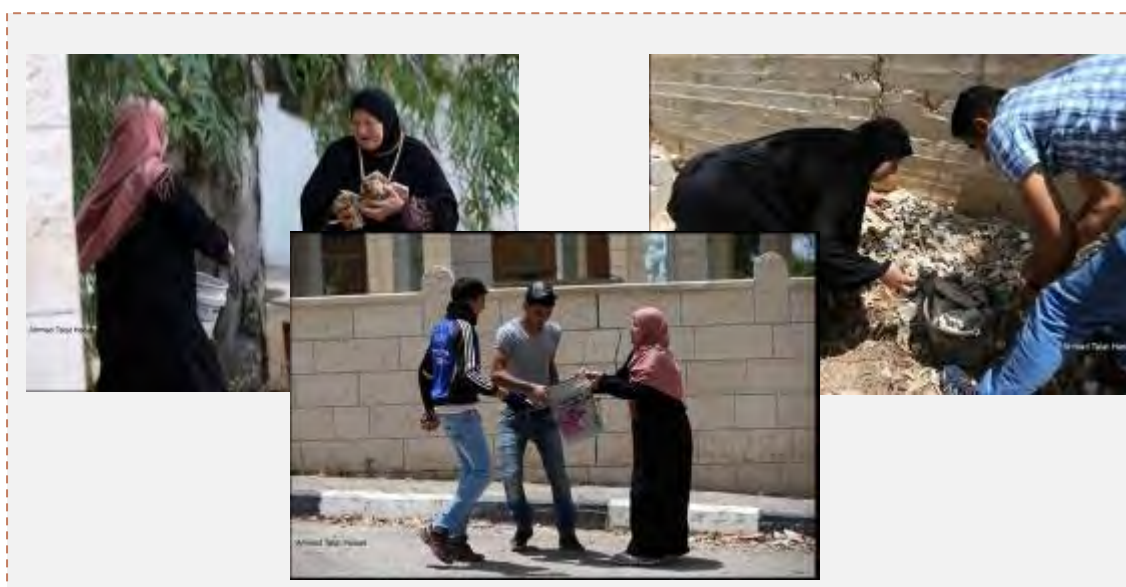
■ **Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu** said Israel **regarded Hamas as responsible for all fire from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory**. He said the IDF had immediately responded with a counterattack. He added that the State of Israel would do everything necessary to preserve the quiet resulting from Operation Protective Edge (Website of the Israeli prime minister's office, May 27, 2015). **Defense Minister Moshe Yaalon** also placed responsibility for all fire from the Gaza Strip on Hamas. He warned of a serious reprisal if the attacks continued.

Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem

"Popular Resistance" Terrorism and Violence Continue

■ **This** past week the 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 centered on throwing stones, rocks and Molotov cocktails at the Israeli security forces.

■ The Hamas-affiliated Paltimes.net website posted pictures of Palestinian women helping young Palestinians collect stones to sling at the Israeli security forces during the riot in Kafr Qaddum (Paltimes.net, May 29, 2015).



Palestinian women help young Palestinians collect stones (Paltimes.net, May 29, 2015).

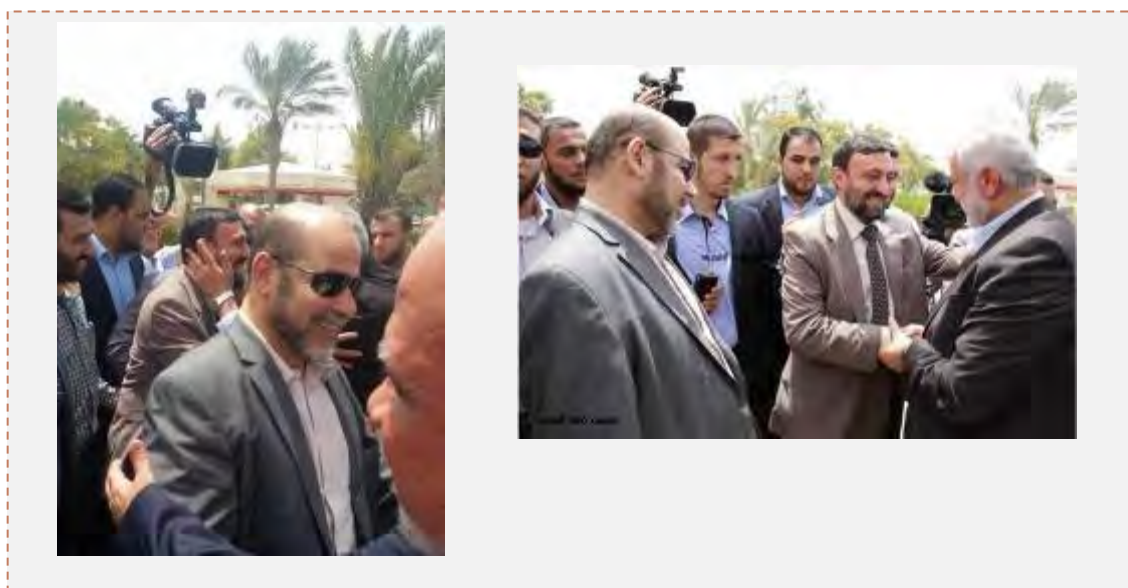
Developments in the Gaza Strip

The Rafah Crossing

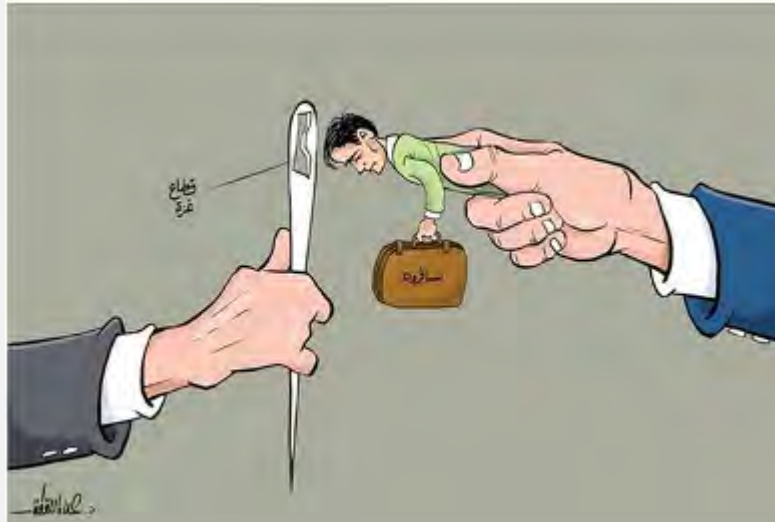
■ According to sources in the Gaza Strip, during the three days the Rafah crossing was open to passage from Egypt, **1,500 Palestinians** entered Gaza. In addition,

2,500 tons of building materials and one hundred wheelchairs were imported (Almasryalyoum.com, May 28, 2015). Since the beginning of the year the Rafah crossing has been open for only eight days. **Mahmoud Abbas** and various Palestinian Authority (PA) representatives in Cairo are trying to secure the opening of the Rafah crossing before the Muslim religious month of Ramadan, which begins on June 18 this year (Wafa.ps, May 26, 2015; Quds.net, May 31, 2015).

■ When the Rafah crossing opened **Musa Abu Marzouq** and **Imad al-Alami**, both members of Hamas' political bureau, were among those entering the Gaza Strip. Musa Abu Marzouq came from Qatar, where he had undergone heart surgery, and Imad al-Alami came from Turkey, where he had been treated for injuries sustained during Operation Protective Edge. Hamas organized a reception for them at the Rafah crossing, where **Ismail Haniya**, deputy head of Hamas' political bureau, gave a speech. He said the issue of the Rafah crossing not related to security but was rather political and humanitarian. He claimed Egyptian security was Palestinian security, and that Hamas would not treat Egypt's security lightly. He called on Egypt to keep the Rafah crossing open in both directions at all times and to end the siege on the Gaza Strip (Al-Aqsa TV, May 27, 2015).



Senior Hamas figures **Musa Abu Marzouq** and **Imad al-Alami** enter the Gaza Strip through the Rafah crossing (Facebook page of PALDF, May 27, 2015).



Cartoon from PALDF: the Rafah crossing is like the eye of a needle
(Facebook page of PALDF, May 27, 2015).

The German Foreign Minister Visits the Gaza Strip

■ On June 1, 2015, the German foreign minister, **Frank-Walter Steinmeier**, on a visit to Israel and the PA and accompanied by a retinue of about 60, entered the Gaza Strip. Hamas issued a formal statement welcoming him and calling the visit "an important step." Arriving in the Gaza Strip, the German minister said the situation there was difficult and he would work, along with all the relevant agencies, to change it. He held a press conference in the Gaza port where he said the delays in reconstruction had turned the Gaza Strip into a "powder keg" which had to be kept from exploding. He said Germany intended to continue aiding the Gaza Strip (Sawa.ps, June 1, 2015).

Amnesty Report Criticizes Hamas

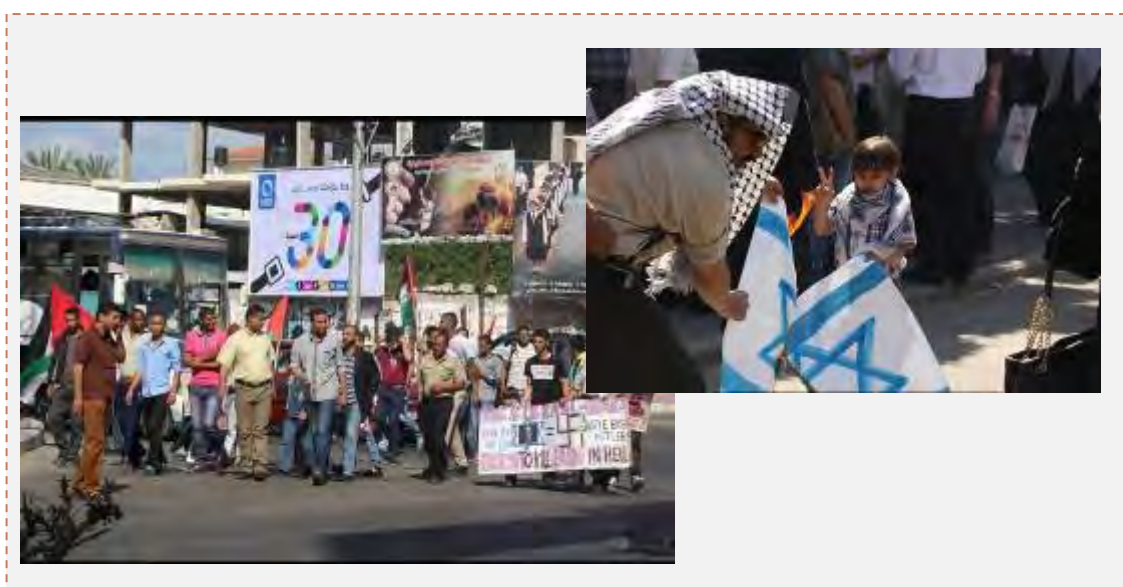
■ On May 27, 2015, Amnesty issued a new report, according to which during Operation Protective Edge Hamas conducted a brutal campaign of abductions, torture and summary killings against Palestinians accused of collaborating with Israel. **According to the report Hamas executed at least 23 Palestinians at the time, and several more were incarcerated and tortured** (Amnesty.org, May 27, 2015).

■ In response, senior Hamas figure **Salah al-Bardawil** denied Hamas had any connection to people killed on suspicion of collaborating with Israel. He claimed the report was political rather than legal because it accused Hamas of responsibility and said those who were killed had belonged to Fatah. **He claimed some of those who**

died were victims of Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip (Alaaby.co.uk, May 27, 2015).⁴

Anti-Israeli Incitement at the Weekly Rally Held in Gaza by Relatives of Prisoners

■ On June 1, 2015, relatives of Palestinian terrorist operatives held in Israeli prisons held their weekly demonstration in front of Red Cross headquarters in Gaza City. They burned Israeli flags and held up a sign comparing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to Hitler. The sign read, in English, "This is the end of Israel. Bye-bye. Bibi = [a swastika], bye-bye Hitler. Born to kill, burn in hell" (Facebook page of Shihab, June 1, 2015). **Note:** Israel recently renewed visits of relatives to terrorist operatives from the Gaza Strip imprisoned in Israel.



Left: Demonstrators hold a sign equating Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu with Hitler. Right: Burning the Israeli flag (Facebook page of Shihab, June 1, 2015)

The Road Being Paved along the Israeli-Gaza Strip Border

■ Official sources in Hamas made public reference to the road being paved along the Israeli-Gaza Strip border. **Fathi Hamad**, a senior figure in the Hamas leadership, claimed Hamas' military wing was paving a road parallel to the border with Israel at a

⁴ An examination carried out by the ITIC of the names appearing in the Amnesty Report showed that with one exception, they do not appear on the Hamas list of Palestinians killed during Operation Protective Edge. Ayman Tahe, whose name appears on Hamas lists of Palestinians killed, was a senior Hamas terrorist and one of the organization's spokesmen. On August 7, 2014, at the height of Operation Protective Edge, Palestinian sources reported he had been killed near the Shifa hospital. Hamas denied it, claiming he had been killed in an Israeli attack a number of days previously.

distance of 250-300 meters (about 275-330 yards) from the border security fence **"to create a suitable opportunity to assault the enemy"** (Samanews.com, May 30, 2015).

■ **Mustafa Sawaf**, a Hamas-affiliated political commentator from the Gaza Strip, claimed the "right" of the "resistance" [i.e., the terrorist organizations] to construct posts and pave roads in the Gaza Strip as part of their **deployment for the next military campaign**, and to serve Palestinian interests. Those interests included preventing Israel from entering the Gaza Strip and preventing young Palestinians from the Gaza Strip from infiltrating into Israeli territory. He hid to think Israel would respond to the new road (Alaaby.co.uk, May 31, 2015).

■ In ITIC assessment the statements may have been **motivated by internal criticism leveled at Hamas**. In response, Hamas activists and media personnel affiliated with the movement stressed the offensive, defensive and security advantages gained by Hamas in paving the road.

Tensions Continue between Hamas and Salafi-Jihadists

Alleged Attempt to Assassinate Senior Hamas Security-Force Figure

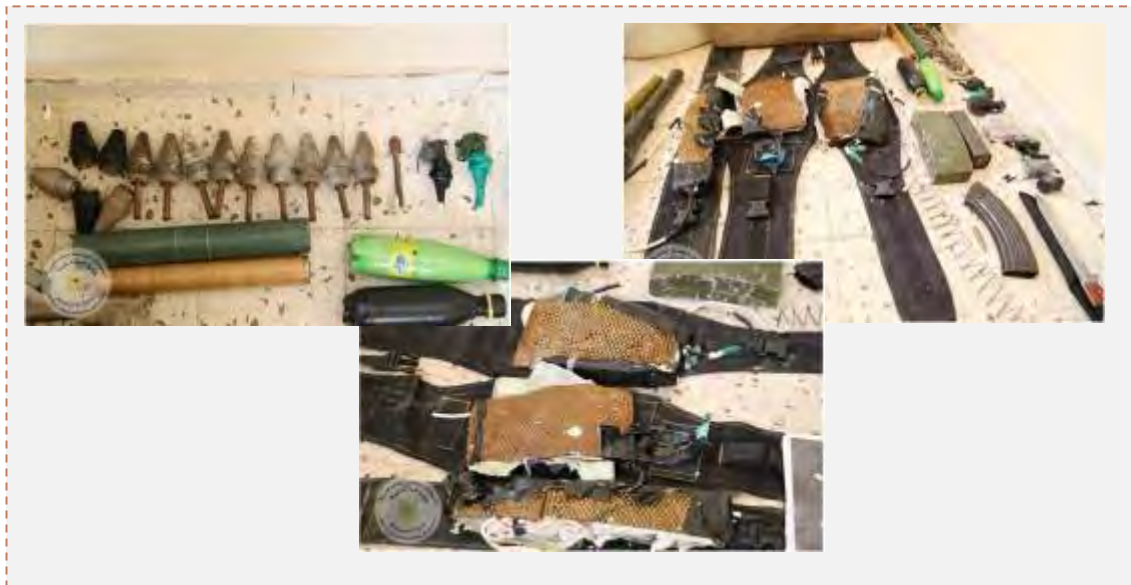
■ A network calling itself the Supporters of the Islamic State in Jerusalem issued a statement claiming responsibility for killing **Saber Siyam**, a senior operative in one of Hamas' security forces. The statement claimed he had been killed by an IED placed near a store he owned. The statement also contained a warning to all operatives of the Hamas security forces participating in activities against the network (Muqawama Twitter account, May 31, 2015). **Hamas denied** the death of Saber Siyam but confirmed the bombing near his store (Alquds.co.uk, May 31, 2015). **Abu al-Inaa' al-Ansari**, a senior Salafi-jihadist figure in the Gaza Strip, also denied the statement. He claimed a firecracker, not an IED, had exploded at the entrance to the store. However, he also accused Hamas' security forces of detaining Salafist-jihadi operatives. **He claimed that so far 90 operatives had been detained and were being tortured in Hamas prisons** (Alqudsnews.net, June 1, 2015).

Salafi-Jihadist Killed during Detention Attempt

■ On June 2, 2015, the Palestinian media reported that a Salafist-jihadi operative named **Yahya Hanar**, 27, from the Sheikh Radwan neighborhood of Gaza City, had been killed during an attempt to detain him. According to reports Hamas police killed

him in an exchange of fire after he refused to turn himself in. Many weapons were found in his possession, among them explosive belts, IEDs and RPG launchers (Facebook page of QudsN, June 2, 2015).

■ According to a security source in the Gaza Strip, Yahya Hanar had been involved in a series of recent bombings in Gaza and was being followed by the security forces (Paltimes.net, June 2, 2015). According to a Facebook follower, he planned to use an explosive belt to blow himself up in an Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades facility in the Sheikh Radwan neighborhood of Gaza City (Facebook page of QudsN, June 2, 2015).



The weapons, including explosive belts with ball bearings, found in the house of Yahya Hanar in Gaza (Website of the ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip, June 2, 2015).

Marking the Anniversary of the Mavi Marmara Flotilla

■ To mark the fifth anniversary of the *Mavi Marmara* flotilla, the Turkish Islamist organization IHH held a memorial rally at the monument in the port of Gaza commemorating those who died. The rally was attended by representatives of the organizations in the Gaza Strip, headed by representatives from Hamas and the PIJ. During it there was a simulation of the IDF takeover of the boat, speeches were made by **Muhammad Kaya**, IHH representative in the Gaza Strip, and senior Palestinian activists (Palestine-info.info, May 30, 2015).



The IHH memorial ceremony in Gaza, featuring a simulation of the IDF takeover of the Mavi Marmara (Paltoday.ps, May 30, 2015).

■ In addition to the rally, on May 31, 2015, a mass wedding of 4,000 brides and grooms was held in the Yarmouk Stadium in Gaza City. The wedding, which cost \$4 million, was paid for by the Turkish government. **Ismail Haniya**, deputy head of Hamas' political bureau, who was in attendance, blessed the couples and thanked Turkey for its help and support. He also claimed the event helped complete the joy of the victory of the "resistance" [i.e., the Palestinian terrorist organizations] for their achievements in the last war, which was the longest one ever fought. Haniya also claimed there were charitable associations that wanted to transfer funds to central Palestinian banks to pay for the wedding, but that some of the banks did not cooperate because they refused to work with TIKA (the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency)⁵ (Al-Aqsa TV, May 31, 2015).

⁵ Ismail Haniya was referring to the freezing of charitable association accounts by the Bank of Palestine.



The weddings paid for by Turkey. Left: Ismail Haniya delivers his speech (Paltoday.tv, May 31, 2015).

- To mark the anniversary of the *Mavi Marmara* flotilla the IHH held a mass march in Istanbul, which began at the Al-Fateh Mosque and proceeded to the cemetery where those who died in the flotilla were buried. From there they marched to the Bosphorus for a ceremony and speeches (Aljazeera.net, May 31, 2015).



The mass IHH march in Istanbul to mark the fifth anniversary of the Mavi Marmara flotilla (Facebook page of IHH, May 31, 2015).

DFLP Military-Terrorist Wing Graduation Exercises for Terrorist Operative Course

- On May 29, 2015, the National Resistance Battalions, the military-terrorist wing of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) held graduation exercises for the "Rafah elite course," attended by dozens of operatives. The exercises were

held at a DFLP training camp in the Rafah area. Senior members of the organization were present and watched as the graduates carried out various exercises, **including storming IDF posts and abducting soldiers**, firing mortar shells, detonating IEDs, etc. (National Resistance Battalions website, May 29, 2015; Facebook page of the National Resistance Battalions, May 29, 2015).



Left: Simulation of blowing up an Israeli tank. Right: Simulation of the abduction of an IDF soldier from an Israeli post (marked with an Israeli flag) (Facebook page of the National Resistance Battalions, May 29, 2015).

The Palestinian Authority

Criticism of Statement Made by Benjamin Netanyahu

- On May 16, 2015, speaking to Federica Mogherini, the foreign minister of the EU, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that he wanted to renew the negotiations with the Palestinians to reach understandings regarding the borders of the blocks of settlements that would be annexed by Israel in a future peace agreement (Haaretz.co.il, May 26, 2015). The PA was quick to criticize and in effect to reject the prime minister's statements:
- **Nabil Abu Rudeina**, spokesman for Mahmoud Abbas, claimed the foundation for all negotiations had to be the recognition of the 1967 borders and Jerusalem as the capital of an independent Palestinian state. He claimed the need for an absolute cessation of construction in the settlements and the fourth phase of the release of the Palestinian prisoners incarcerated before the Oslo Accords.
- **Saeb Erekat**, a member of the PLO's Executive Committee, claimed Netanyahu's statement was unacceptable and an attempt to gain Palestinian and international

legitimacy for the settlements. He claimed the borders of the state of Palestine had to be determined by the 1967 lines and international recognition, and not by the borders of the settlements (Alhayat-j.com, May 27, 2015).

■ **Nabil Shaath**, a member of Fatah's Central Committee, claimed Netanyahu's statement was unacceptable and reflected the extremism of the new Israeli government. He claimed the Palestinians strongly opposed the settlements as a matter of principle (Alwatanvoice.com, May 26, 2015). He also claimed that in the coming days Mahmoud Abbas would convene a meeting of the Palestinian leadership to examine the developments of the measures taken by the Palestinians in the international arena, especially after the statement made by the Israeli prime minister. He claimed that at the present time it would be impossible for the two sides to find common ground. That was because the Netanyahu government refused to negotiate seriously and stubbornly adhered to the settlements, the continuing occupation, and destroying the Gaza Strip every two years (Alaraby.co.uk, May 26, 2015).

The Anti-Israeli Propaganda Campaign

The Palestinian Campaign to Suspend Israel from FIFA

■ On May 29, 2015, the Congress of the Federation of the International Football Association (FIFA) was supposed to vote on the Palestinian proposal to suspend Israel from the federation. Following intensive negotiations a solution was found at the last minute when the Palestinians caved in to pressures exerted on them and **retracted their proposal to suspend Israel**. Instead, they proposed appointing an international committee to examine their claims against Israel.



Left: A cartoon criticizing Jibril Rajoub, who retracted the Palestinian proposal to suspend Israel from FIFA. Right: Jibril Rajoub hold a red card⁶ for Israel during his speech at the FIFA Congress in Zurich (Facebook page of PALINFO, May 9, 2015).

■ **Jibril Rajoub**, president of the Palestinian Football Association, claimed he decided to retract after consultations and deliberations, and that the proposal to suspend Israel had not been abandoned but rather **postponed to a later date**. He claimed FIFA would appoint an international committee to investigate "Israel's crimes against Palestinian sports" (Wafa.ps, date, 2015). Retracting the proposal was met with criticism from the Palestinians of both Jibril Rajoub and the PA.

- Hamas spokesman **Husam Badran** condemned the retraction, claiming it reflected the PA's attitude toward Israel. He expressed surprise, and said that after such a retreat in the realm of sports it would be impossible to believe the PA's promises of bringing Israel to trial in the International Criminal Court or its threats to end security coordination with Israel (Alresala.net, May 29, 2015).
- **The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)** said in a statement that the official Palestinian institution [the Palestinian Football Association] was responsible for retracting the proposal presented to FIFA, claiming the decision negated the ideology of the Palestinian people and its efforts to expose the crimes of Israel and oust it from international institutions. The statement called on the PLO's Executive Committee to convene an emergency meeting to bring those responsible for the retraction to justice, including Jibril Rajoub (PFLP website, May 30, 2015).

⁶ In soccer games a red card is shown to a player who has committed a serious offence, and he is then removed from the game.

- The Palestinian media reported that a group of Palestinian activists had launched a campaign calling for the removal of Jibril Rajoub as president of the Palestinian Football Association. They asked the Palestinians to sign a petition demanding his removal. The petition noted that Jibril Rajoub's retraction of the proposal had seriously damaged the Palestinian cause and disappointed many Palestinians.

The Palestinian Return Centre (PRC) Receives Observer Status in a UN Agency

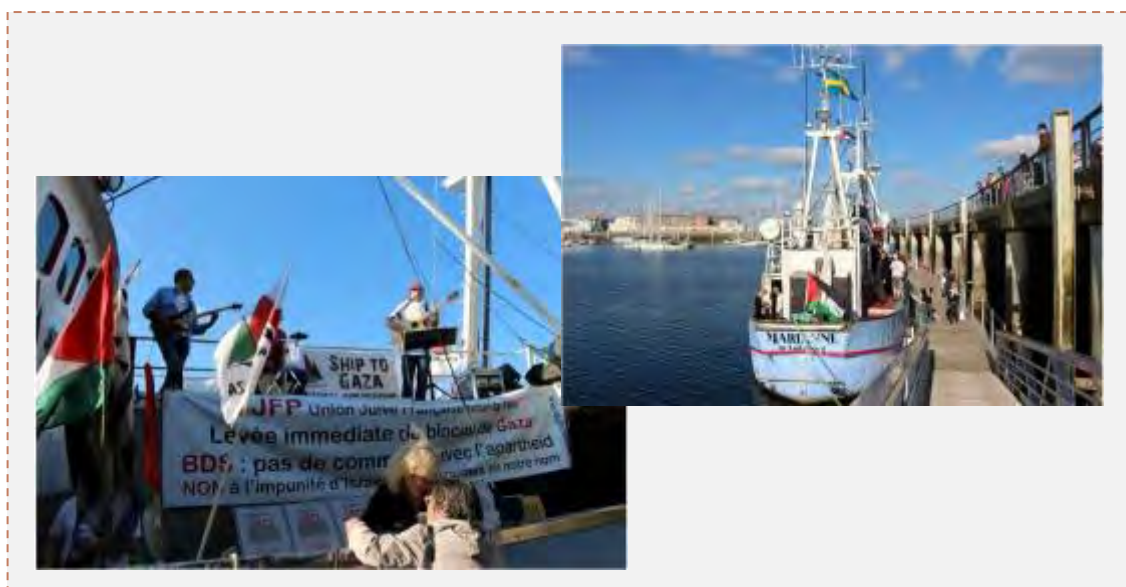
- The UN Committee on NGOs has given the Palestinian Return Centre (PRC) NGO observer status. The decision is not final and has to be confirmed by the UN's United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The PRC said in a statement that 12 countries voted in favor (including China, Iran, South Africa, Turkey, Pakistan, Cuba, Azerbaijan, Venezuela, Mauritania and Kenya) and three against (Israel, the United States and Uruguay); there were three abstentions (Russia, Nicaragua and Greece) and Burundi was absent. According to the announcement, the PRC's request was authorized after a process that lasted five years. The PRC rejected Israel's accusations of terrorism, claiming to be an independent, non-political institution (Palestine-info.info, June 2, 2015).
- The Palestinian Return Centre is a center for Palestinian anti-Israeli propaganda, established in London in 1996. It is affiliated with Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood, and some of its senior figures have been Hamas activists who sought refuge in Britain. It was founded on the basis of its rejection of the Oslo Accords, its determined strong denial of the State of Israel's right to exist and its concept of the "right" of the Palestinian refugees and their descendants to return the places they abandoned in 1948, all used as tools for the campaign against Israel and against any possible peace process. The PRC holds intensive anti-Israeli propaganda activities in Britain, Europe and other countries around the globe and is an important factor in the network of organizations participating in the international campaign to delegitimize Israel.
- On December 27, 2010, the Israel Security Agency said in a statement that on December 5, 2010 Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak had signed an order outlawing the PRC as an unlawful association because it was affiliated with the Hamas movement. The statement also noted that the PRC was a coordinating organizational arm of the Hamas movement in Europe, and that its activists, who were senior Hamas figures, were working to promote the movement's objectives in

Europe and were in direct contact with Hamas senior figures, including movement heads in Damascus.⁷

Flotillas to the Gaza Strip

■ **Zaher al-Birawi**, coordinator for the International Committee for Breaking the Siege of Gaza, reported he had returned from Greece where he attended a meeting of the steering committee of Freedom Flotilla 3. According to Birawi the number of activists aboard the ships will be smaller than on previous flotillas, and only three small ships will participate. He said that was the result of financial difficulties. He refused to say from which country the activists would come. He claimed the objectives of the flotilla were mainly political and directed at the media, although there would be a small quantity of humanitarian aid on board. He called on the government of Israel to allow the ships free passage (Alhiwar.tv, May 26, 2015).

■ **Anouar al-Gharbi**, a human rights activist and former advisor to the president of Tunisia, said the flotilla was expected to reach the shores of Gaza around the beginning of Eid al-Fitr (June 17, 2015). He said he expected **dozens of activists from dozens of countries as passengers, headed by Moncef Marzouki, former Tunisian president** (Alresala.net, May 25, 2015).



In the meantime, the ship *Marianne* is en route the Gaza Strip, anchored in a Spanish port from where it will sail to Lisbon. Before it reaches the Gaza Strip it will stop at several other ports in Europe. According to reports, there are currently nine passengers aboard (Paltimes.net, May 31, 2015).

⁷ Israel Security Agency website, December 29, 2010, IDF Spokesman's website, December 27, 2010). For further information see the March 30, 2011 bulletin, "[The Palestinian Return Centre: London-based center for anti-Israeli propaganda, affiliated with Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood, outlawed in Israel. It promotes the demand of the Palestinian refugees to return as a way of destroying Israel. Senior PRC figures send flotillas and convoys to the Gaza Strip and transfer funds to Hamas.](#)"