



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

(May 25 – 31, 2016)



Left: Attempt to smuggle drones and materials used in the manufacture of weapons through Israel to the Gaza Strip. Right: Attempt to smuggle cylinders used in the manufacture of rockets from the region of Hebron through Israel to the Gaza Strip (The crossings authority of the Israeli defense ministry, May 30, 2016).

Overview

- This past week a Palestinian terrorist, in Israeli illegally, carried out a stabbing attack in Tel Aviv, wounding an IDF soldier. The terrorist was apprehended. Two rockets were launched from the Gaza Strip at Israeli territory. One fell inside the Gaza Strip. A Salafist-jihadi organization claimed responsibility for the rocket fire, saying it was carried out in response to Hamas detentions of Salafist-jihadi operatives. In response Israeli Air Force (IAF) aircraft attacked two Hamas targets in the Gaza Strip.
- At the swearing-in ceremony of newly-appointed Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman, both the prime minister and new defense minister expressed their support for the solution of two states for two peoples to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Israeli prime minister said the Arab initiative had positive aspects which could lead to the rehabilitation of negotiations with the Palestinians. He added that Israel was prepared to negotiate the updating of the initiative. Mahmoud Abbas, however, gave a hardline speech before the Arab League in which he claimed Jerusalem was "under attack" by Israel, said he supported the French initiative based on two states with the 1967 borders, and rejected recognizing the State of Israel as a Jewish state.

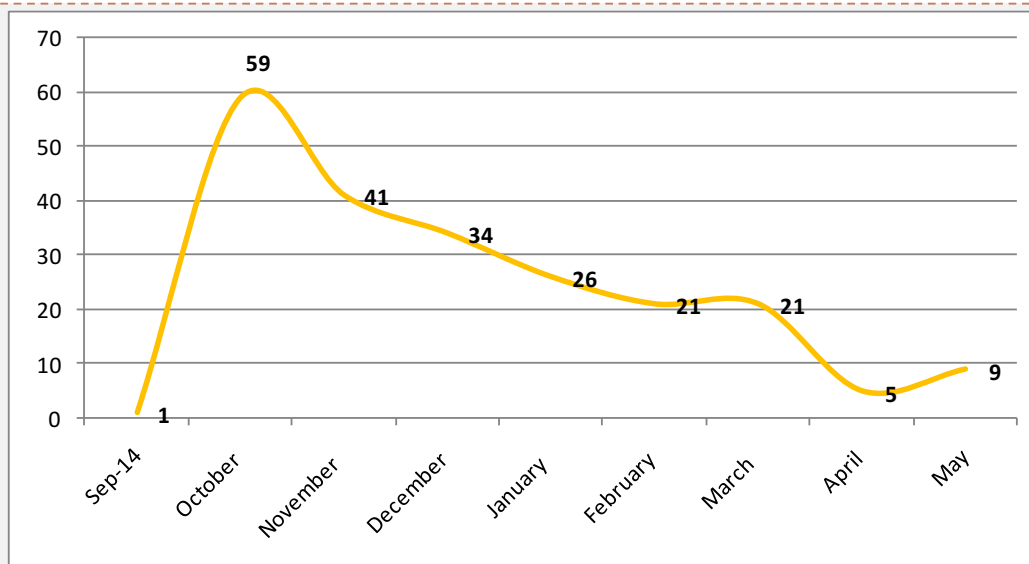
Terrorist Attacks and Attempted Attacks

■ **May 30, 2016 – Stabbing attack in Tel Aviv:** A Palestinian terrorist stabbed an IDF soldier with a screwdriver in the north-central Tel Aviv neighborhood of Nahalat Yitzhak. The Palestinian was apprehended. He was **Omar Samir al-Aboushi**, 17, from the village of Salfit (south of Ariel). He apparently did not belong to any terrorist organization. He had not posted to his Facebook page since June 5, 2015 (Facebook page of Gaza al-A'an, May 30, 2016; Facebook page of Omar Samir al-Aboushi).



Omar al-Aboushi (Facebook page of Gaza al-A'an, May 30, 2016).

Monthly Distribution of Terrorist Attacks in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem since the Beginning of the Current Terrorist Campaign



Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem

Riots, Clashes and Popular Terrorism

■ This past week, demonstrations, protest marches, riots, and the throwing of stones, Molotov cocktails and pipe bombs continue in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem.

■ The more prominent events were the following:

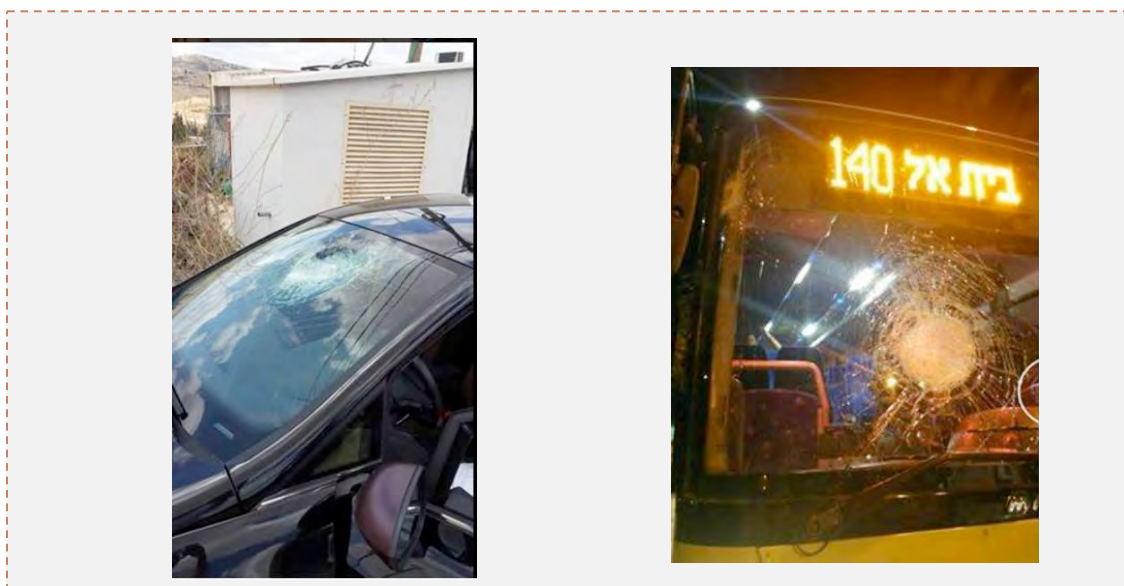
- **May 30, 2016** – During an IDF activity in **the village of al-Fawar (south of Hebron)** the Israeli security forces seized a lathe used in the manufacture of weapons, and spare parts (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, May 30, 2016).



The lathe found in the village of al-Fawar (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, May 30, 2016).

- **May 29, 2016** – Palestinians threw stones at an Israeli bus near **French Hill in east Jerusalem**. A passenger was wounded by broken glass and evacuated to a hospital (Facebook page of Red Alert, May 29, 2016).
- **May 26, 2016** – A Palestinian from Hebron carrying a knife was detained by Border Policemen while en route to carrying out a stabbing attack near **the Cave of the Patriarchs in Bethlehem**. He was taken for interrogation (Facebook page of Red Alert, May 26, 2016).
- **May 25, 2016** – Five IDF soldiers were treated at a hospital for smoke inhalation after a Molotov cocktail caused a fire in the IDF base on **Mt. Scopus in Jerusalem**. A team of firefighters put out the blaze (Facebook page of Red Alert, May 25, 2016).

- **May 24, 2016** – Palestinians threw stones at an Israeli bus **near the village of Hizma (northeast of Jerusalem)**. There were no casualties. The stones damaged the windshield of the bus (Facebook page of Paldf, May 24, 2016).



Left: An Israeli vehicle damaged when Palestinians threw stones at it near the Gush Etzion junction (Twitter account of Palinfo, May 29, 2016). Right: The Israeli bus damaged by stones thrown by Palestinians near the village of Hizma (Facebook page of Paldf, May 24, 2016).

Hamas Terrorist Squad Planned Attacks in Israel

- The investigation of the terrorist attack carried out on a **number 12 bus in Jerusalem** on April 19, 2016, in which 20 people were injured, revealed that **the attack was orchestrated by a Hamas terrorist squad composed of six operatives**. Some of them had been imprisoned in Israel in the past. **They planned to carry out a series of terrorist attacks in and around Jerusalem**, including **suicide bombing attacks, car bombs and shooting attacks**. To carry out the attacks they enlisted operatives, among them the terrorist who blew up the number 12 bus.
- The investigation also revealed that the attack on the number 12 bus **was planned as a suicide bombing attack**. The IED used by the terrorist was assembled by one of the squad operatives from readily available household materials. **A squad operative helped the terrorist write his "living will" and videotaped him before he left for the attack**. The day of the attack he left his home and his family reported him missing to the Palestinian police (Israel Security Agency spokesman's unit, May 29, 2016).

Finding of the Investigation of the Terrorists Who Carried Out a Stabbing Attack on the Armon Hanatziv Promenade

- Three suspects were detained after the stabbing attack carried out on May 10, 2016, in which a number of elderly women were attacked on the promenade in the Armon Hanatziv neighborhood of Jerusalem. The suspects were minors aged 16 and 17 from Jabel Mukaber. Interrogation revealed that they had been planning to attack Jews for a long time and had even spoken about it during school and communicated on the social networks. The mother of one of the suspects was detained a week ago on suspicion of attempting to carry out a stabbing attack at the Zeitim crossing at the entrance to Jerusalem (Israel Security Agency spokesman's unit, May 29, 2016).
- On the day of the stabbing attack the three suspects met in a grocery store in Jabel Mukaber and walked in the direction of the Peace Forest in south Jerusalem. Two of them took a knife and axe from their homes. The third separated from them because **he was afraid carrying out an attack would result in the destruction of his family's house**. When the two reached the Armon Hanatziv promenade they stabbed the women and attacked them with the axe. They then fled to Jabel Mukaber and threw away the weapons. Later, one of them returned, retrieved the weapons and hid them. After the attack they communicated with one another through the social networks and **planned another stabbing attack** following the "success" of the first one. They were detained before they could attack again.

Israel's South

Rocket and Fire Attacking Israel

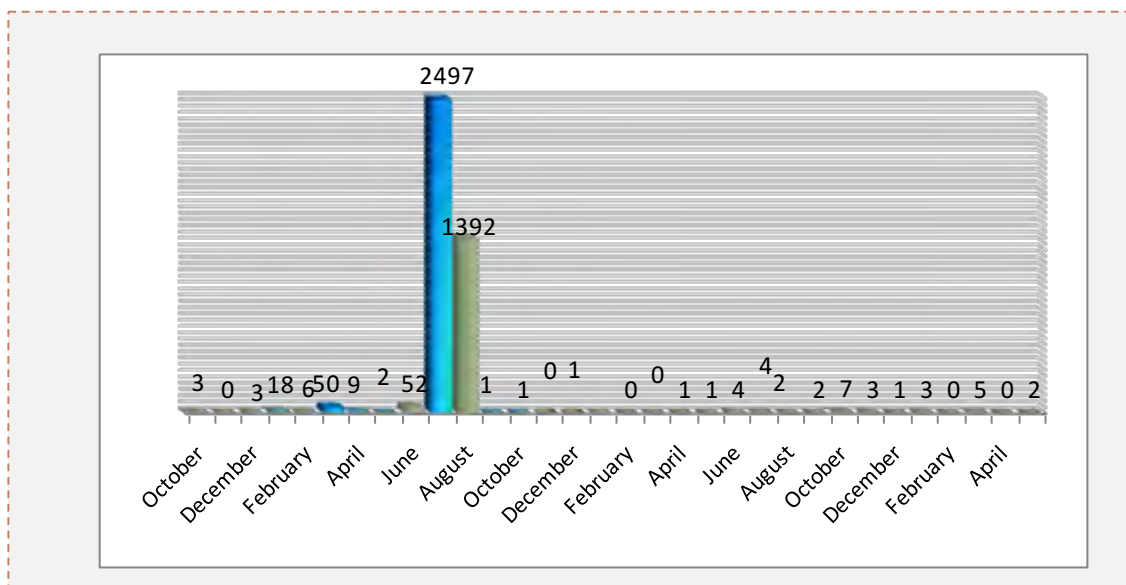
- On the evening of **May 25, 2016**, a rocket was fired into Israeli territory, falling in an open area in the western Negev. There were no casualties and no damage was reported. Another rocket was fired from the central Gaza Strip on **May 27, 2016**, and fell in Gazan territory near Beit Hanoun. In response IAF aircraft attacked two Hamas terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip. There were no casualties.
- A Salafist-jihadi organization operating in the Gaza Strip calling itself **Ajnad Bayt al-Maqdis** claimed responsibility for both rocket attacks. According to the organization, they were in response to Hamas security force detentions of Salafist-jihadist operatives in the Gaza Strip, and to "Israel's attacks on Muslims" (Twitter account of Ajnad Bayt al-Maqdis, May 27, 2016).



Claims of responsibility for the two rockets fired at Israel, issued by Aynad Bayt al-Maqdis (Twitter account of Aynad Bayt al-Maqdis, May 25 and 27, 2016).

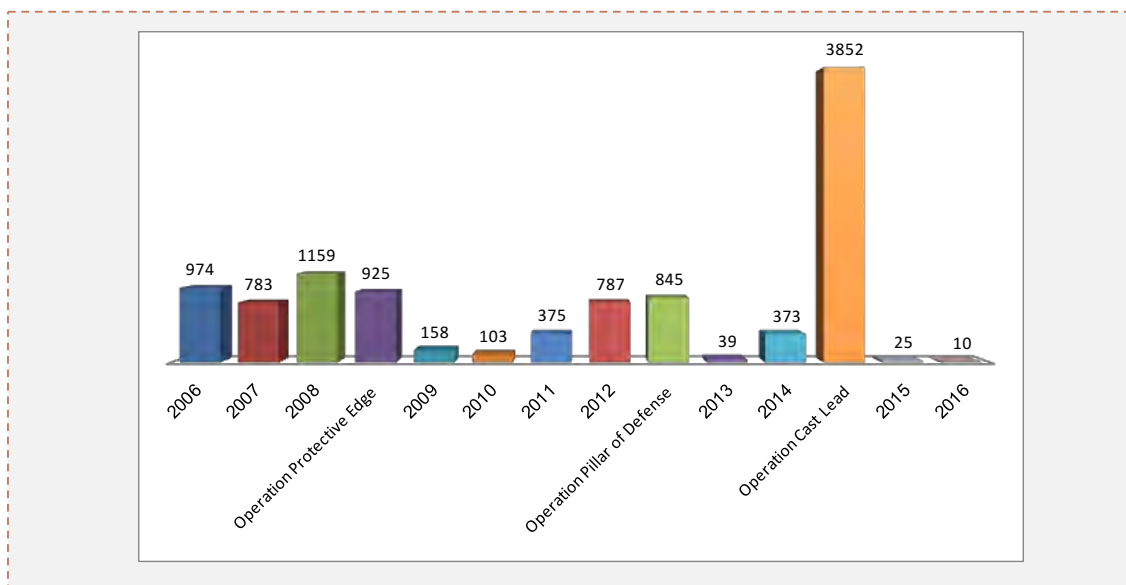
- According to media reports, Hamas collaborated with Israel and reported the detention of the operatives who were responsible for the rocket fire. Hamas spokesman **Sami Abu Zuhri** denied the report and said the conduct of the "resistance" was an internal Palestinian matter and had not connection with Israel (Quds.net, May 29, 2016). Senior Hamas figure **Mahmoud al-Zahar** claimed there were allegations spread by those who collaborated with Israel in security issues and were trying to represent Hamas as protecting and appeasing Israel and they were afraid of the incoming defense minister (Fars, May 28, 2016).

Monthly Distribution of Rocket Fire (2014 – 2016)¹



*The data include the three rockets launched by ISIS's Sinai Province from the Sinai Peninsula in July by ISIS's Sinai Province.

Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire in Israel's South²

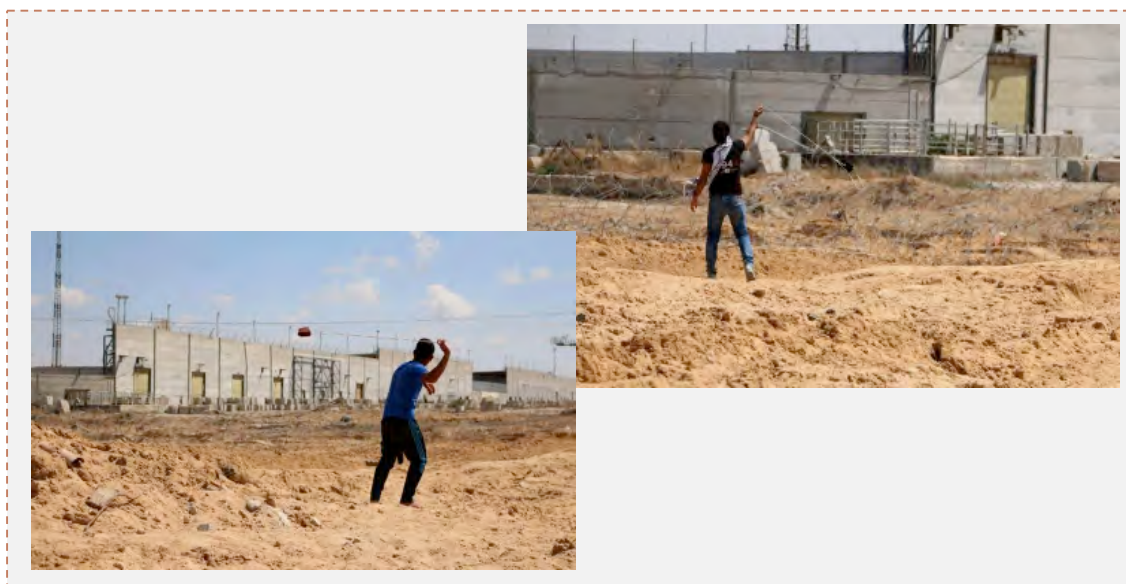


Riots and Terrorist Attacks near the Border Security Fence

- On **May 28, 2016**, a riot broke out when Palestinians clashed IDF forces near the border security fence west of the village of Nahal Oz (Facebook page of Paldf, May 28, 2016).

¹ As of May 31, 2016. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire or rockets which misfired and fell inside the Gaza Strip.

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



Palestinians throw stones at IDF soldiers near the border security fence west of Nahal Oz (Facebook page of Paldf, May 28, 2016).

Smuggling of Weapons into the Gaza Strip Prevented

■ This past week security inspectors of the defense ministry's crossings authority, in collaboration with the Israeli security forces, prevented weapons and materials for manufacturing weapons from being smuggled into the Gaza Strip (Crossings authority of the Israeli ministry of defense, May 30, 2016):

- Inspectors at the **Tarqumia crossing** (between Hebron and Israel) halted a large shipment of weapons suspected of being consigned to terrorists, especially Hamas, in the Gaza Strip. The contraband material was disguised as a shipment of textiles and jewelry. It **included hundreds of cylinders, four inches in diameter with special threading, used in the manufacture of mortars and rockets**. There were also dozens of electric motors. The shipment was supposed to enter the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom crossing.



The cylinders and motors which were captured (Crossings authority of the Israeli ministry of defense, May 30, 2016).

- In recent weeks inspectors at the **Erez crossing** foiled dozens of attempts to smuggle weapons and other military materials **by mail**. Hundreds of motors for drones, rifle scopes, gyroscope stabilizers, accuracy enhancers, range magnifiers and other appliances were found.



Optical and other appliances attempted to be smuggled into the Gaza Strip through the Erez crossing (Crossings authority of the Israeli ministry of defense, May 30, 2016).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

Alleviating the Distress of the Residents of the Gaza Strip

- The Israeli Coordinator for Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) instituted a series of gestures, implemented by Israel at the Erez crossing, for the Muslim religious month of Ramadan (Facebook page of COGAT, May 30, 2016):

- **The transfer of \$250 million** to and from banks in the Gaza Strip, in accordance with the demand of the Palestinian monetary authority in Ramallah.
- **The issue of exit permits for about 1,500 Gazans** to go abroad through the Erez crossing and from there directly to the Allenby Bridge.

Reduction of UNRWA Activity

■ As part of its program to become more efficient, UNRWA decided to reduce its presence in Samaria and the Gaza Strip, and to become more efficient in distributing aid. UNRWA will reportedly close its offices in the Gaza Strip and in the refugee camps in northern Samaria. **UNRWA spokesman Sami Mshasha** denied the reports, claiming the agency was committed to full-scale activities in the Gaza Strip (Paltoday, May 26, 2016). **Yasser Abu Qishq, director of the Palestinian Authority (PA) ministry of refugee affairs**, said that the measures taken by UNRWA were intended for force the population to accept the reduction of the services provided by the agency (Watan, May 30, 2016).

Hamas and the Global Jihad

■ **Hamas security forces continue their preventive activities against ISIS supporters and operatives in the Gaza Strip.** In recent weeks they detained at least twenty suspects, among them those who had tried to enter the Sinai Peninsula through the tunnels. **Abu al-Eina al-Ansari**, a senior Salafist-jihadist operative in the Gaza Strip, accused Hamas of detaining operatives and destroying their houses. He claimed Hamas was detaining operatives to appease Egyptian General Intelligence after promising to fight ISIS activity (Al-Sharq al-Awsat, May 30, 2016).

Palestinian ISIS Operative Killed in Sirte in Libya

■ In the meantime, it was reported that **Humam Musa al-Arjani**, an Palestinian ISIS operative from Rafah, **was killed fighting in the ranks of ISIS in Sirte, Libya** (Akhbar Filistin, May 23, 2016). His picture was made public on May 28, 2016.



The death notice issued for Humam al-Arjani (The Islamic news agency Haq, May 28, 2016).

The Palestinian Authority

■ **Mahmoud Abbas, PA chairman**, gave a hardline speech at an emergency meeting of the Arab League. In it he spoke about the situation on the ground and the chances of promoting the French initiative. He made the following points:

- **Jerusalem is "under attack by Israel:"** The objective of the "attack" is to obscure Jerusalem's identity. "Israeli attacks" on Al-Aqsa mosque and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher continue. Local residents are evicted and their houses are destroyed.
- **The French initiative:** The objective has to be the establishment of two states with the 1967 borders. The capital of Palestine is east Jerusalem. The source of authority for the initiative will be UN resolutions, the Arab peace initiative, the Road Map and agreements already signed.
- **Recognition of Israel:** The Palestinians recognized Israel as far back as 1993, **but will never recognize it as the Jewish state.**

■ **Riyadh al-Maliki, the foreign minister in the Palestinian national consensus government**, said that the political process would be put in motion at the international meeting supposed to be held in Paris on June 3, 2016, with the participation of 26 states. After the meeting methods and the next steps would be determined. He claimed Egypt had an important role in executing the measures decided on by the international meeting, because **there was the option of an Israeli-Palestinian meeting under Egyptian aegis**. He said the activity of the Egyptian president did not

conflict with the French initiative because it showed understanding of the necessity to restart the process (Wafa and quds.net, May 29, 2016).

The Battle for Hearts and Minds

Glorifying Palestinian High School Student Terrorists Killed in the Recent Wave of Palestinian Terrorism

■ With the beginning of matriculation exams in PA high schools, the QudsN Facebook page (considered by Palestinians as one of the most popular social media sites) posted a **video glorifying Palestinian high school student terrorists killed in the recent wave of Palestinian terrorism**. According to the video, "16 students...chose *shahadah* (death as a martyr for the sake of Allah) for Jerusalem instead of a matriculation certificate.³ Make their acquaintance in this video." **The video shows pictures and gives the names of terrorists who were high school students at the time of their death** (Facebook page of QudsN, date, 2016). **As of this writing it has been seen by more than 4.5 million people.**



The video posted to Facebook glorifying high school student terrorists (Facebook page of QudsN, May 30, 2016).

International Activity to Lift the "Siege" of the Gaza Strip

■ **The National Committee to Break the Siege of Gaza** held a press conference in the port of Gaza where it declared "International Week to Break the Siege of the Gaza Strip" (May 30 – June 5, 2016). Thirty Arab-Muslim and European countries will

³ This is a play on words in Arabic. There are different meanings for the word *shahadah*: "martyrdom for the sake of Allah" and "matriculation certificate."

participate. During the week various activities will be held around the globe, including memorials for the *Mavi Marmara* flotilla. A tent will be erected in the port of Gaza where activities will be held (Al-Aqsa, May 30, 2016).



The press conference held in the port of Gaza. In the background at the right is the memorial erected to the Mavi Marmara flotilla (Twitter account of Palinfo, May 30, 2016).