



**Intelligence and Terrorism
Information Center Israel Intelligence
Heritage and Commemoration Center**

News of the Israeli-Palestinian Confrontation

May 6-13, 2008

Deliberations about the lull...



Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and head of Egyptian General Intelligence, Omar Suleiman, meet in Jerusalem (Amos Ben-Gershon for the Israeli Government Press Office, May 12).

...and the rocket and mortar shell attacks continue



Evacuating the body of Jimmy Kedoshim, killed by a mortar shell while working in his garden in Kibbutz Kfar Aza (Photo: Zeev Trachtman, May 9).

Overview

- Contacts regarding the Egyptian initiative for a lull in the fighting in the Gaza Strip continued. Omar Suleiman, head of Egyptian General Intelligence came to Israel to discuss it with the Israeli leadership. Israel stressed the fact that the issue of the Gilad Shalit, the Israeli soldier abducted almost two years ago, would be central to any agreement. Hamas has rejected Israel's linking Gilad Shalit to the lull.
- As the contacts continue, so does a high level of rocket and mortar shell fire, which this past week resulted in the deaths of two Israeli civilians. In the meantime, Hamas continues threatening to escalate its attacks if Israel rejects the conditions for the lull and if the blockade of the Gaza Strip is not lifted.

Important Events

A high level of rocket fire continues

■ For the fourth consecutive week there was a relatively **high level** of rocket and mortar shell fire. Thirty-eight rocket hits were identified in Israeli territory, compared with 65 the previous week. Twenty-seven mortar shells were fired at Israeli population centers and IDF soldiers. Hamas and the other Palestinian terrorist organizations claimed responsibility for the rocket fire.

■ Among the events were the following:

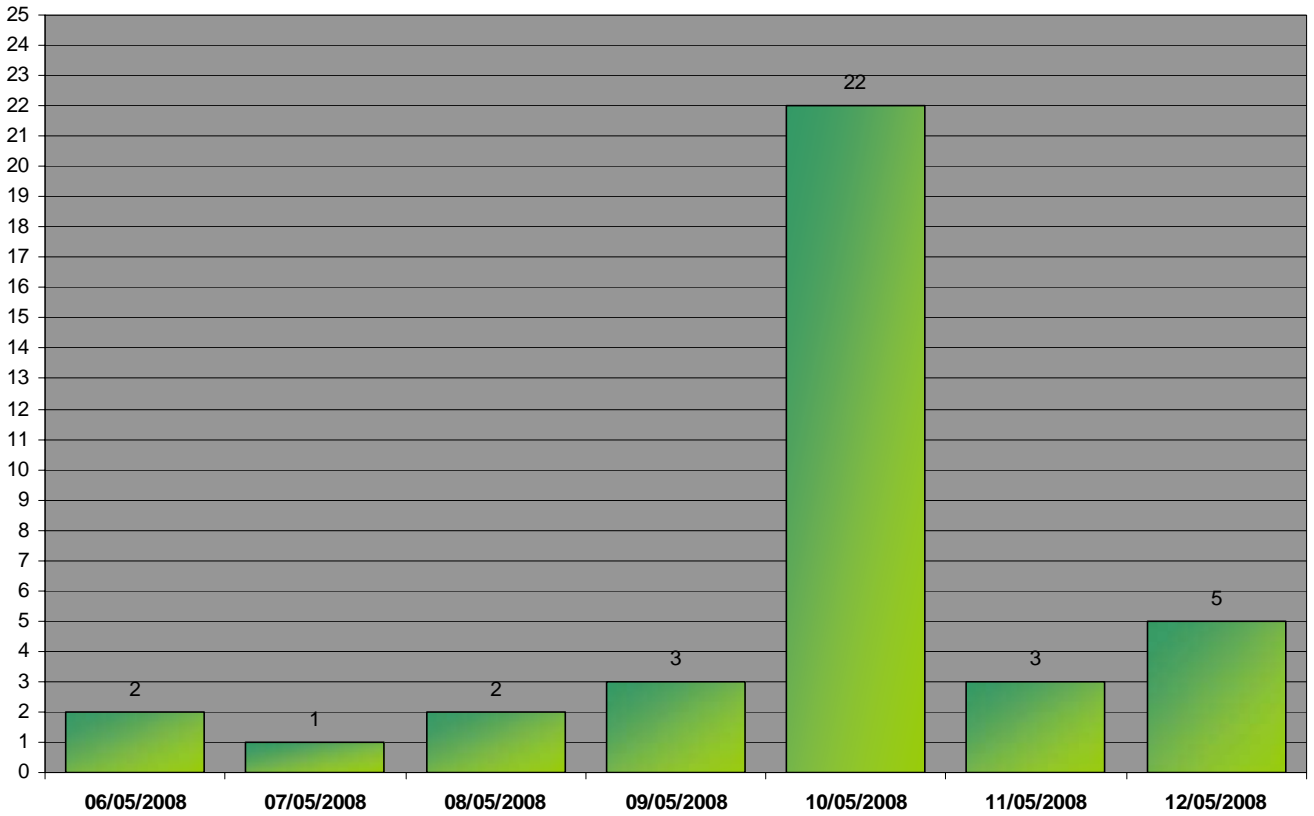
- A heavy barrage of rockets and mortar shells was fired on May 9-10. Twenty-six rockets and 10 mortar shells fell in Israeli territory. On May 9 **Jimmy Kedoshim**, 48, who was in his garden in Kibbutz Kfar Aza, was killed by a **direct mortar shell hit**. Three other civilians were wounded. Hamas claimed responsibility for the attack.
- On May 10 there was a direct rocket hit on a house in Sderot, causing extensive damage; there were no casualties. Later in the day two Sderot residents were slightly wounded when another house was damaged.
- On the morning of May 12, the day Omar Suleiman arrived in Israel, a rocket hit south of the city of Ashqelon, falling near a school. Later in the day a rocket fell in the village of Yesha, killing **Shuli Katz**, 70, from Kibbutz Gevaram.



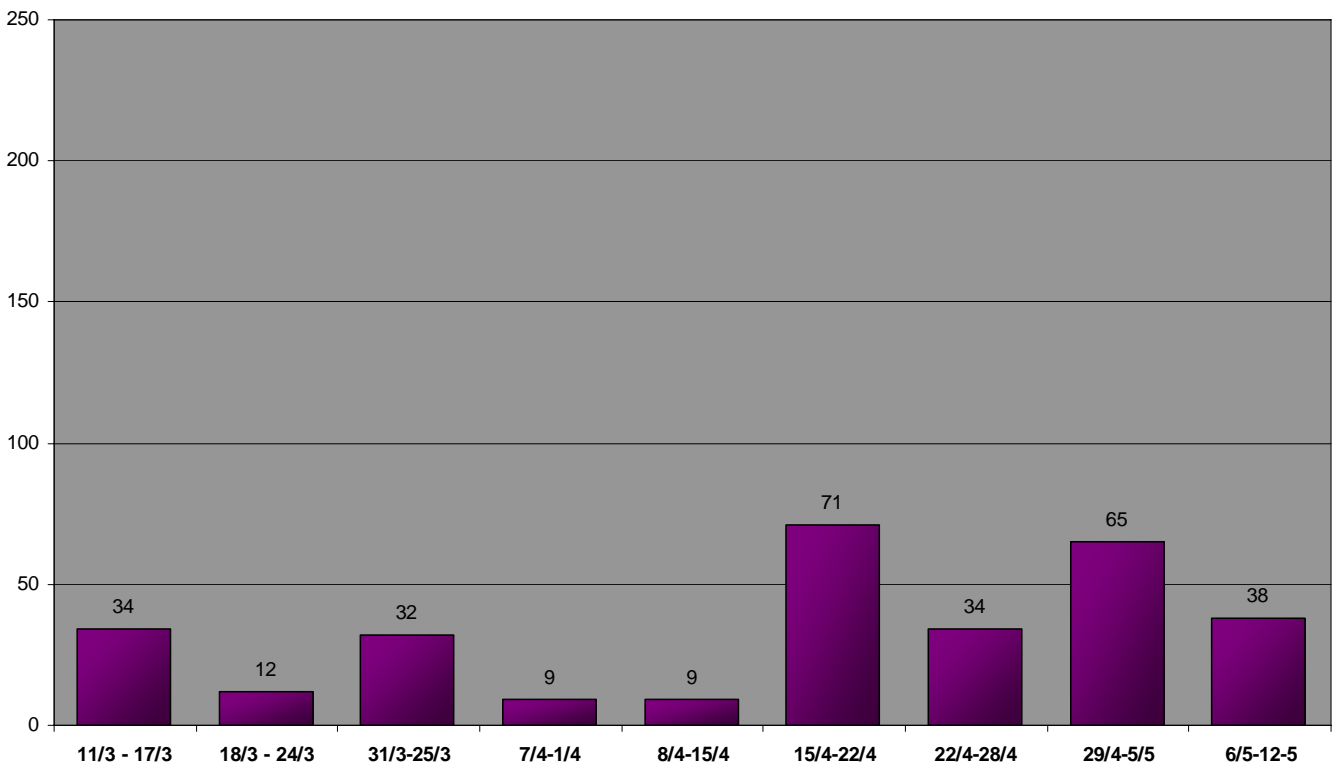
Evacuating the body of Shuli Katz, killed in the village of Yesha by a Qassam rocket (The Israel Project, May 12).

■ Since the beginning of 2008, **25 Israelis have been killed** by various terrorist attacks emanating from the Gaza Strip and in Judea and Samaria (compared with 13 Israelis killed during 2007). That indicates a **sharp increase** after a continual decrease since 2002, when the greatest number of Israelis died in terrorist attacks.

Daily Distribution of Identified Rocket Hits in Israel



Rocket Hits during the Past Week Compared with Previous Weeks



Counterterrorist Activities

The Gaza Strip

■ During the past week IDF forces operated to prevent rocket and mortar shell fire from the Gaza Strip into Israel:

- **May 9:** IDF forces attacked two Hamas posts in the southern Gaza strip after mortar shells were fired at Kibbutz Kfar Aza (which killed an Israeli civilian). During the night IDF forces also attacked a number of armed terrorist operatives observed near the security fence in the southern Gaza strip.
- **May 8:** The IDF attacked a rocket launching squad in the northern Gaza Strip, wounding four Palestinian Islamic Jihad operatives (Hamas's PALDF Forum, May 8).

Judea and Samaria

■ A combined operation of IDF, Border Police and Israel Security Agency forces carried out on May 6 in the village of Qalil south of Nablus led to the detention of PIJ operative Yunis Sabari Suleiman Quni. He had been arrested a number of times in recent years for his PIJ activity (IDF Spokesman's Website, May 12).

Israeli-Egyptian contacts regarding the proposed lull in the fighting

■ On May 12 **Omar Suleiman**, head of Egyptian General Intelligence met with Israeli leadership to discuss the Egyptian initiative for a lull in the fighting in the Gaza Strip. At the meetings the Israeli prime minister, defense minister and foreign minister stressed the fact that a solution for the issue of Gilad Shalit, the Israeli soldier abducted almost two years ago, **would be central to any agreement.**

■ **Defense Minister Ehud Barak** told Suleiman that Israel viewed the release of Gilad Shalit and immediate progress in negotiations for his release as issues central to settling the security situation in the Gaza Strip. He added that Israel would not be able to exercise restraint in continuing its counterterrorist activities in the Gaza Strip and that it would be forced to operate

more extensively if the rocket and mortar shell fire from the Gaza Strip and the terrorist attacks did not stop (Statement from the defense minister's communications advisor, May 12).

■ After meeting with Ehud Barak, **Omar Suleiman** said that he had "high hopes" for achieving an agreement for a lull (Reuters, May 12). As to the issue of Gilad Shalit, he stated that it was not included in the agreement Egypt had reached with Hamas and the other Palestinian organizations. He expressed hope that Egypt would succeed in initiating new talks between Israel and Gilad Shalit's abductors to secure his release and a change in the atmosphere (BBC Arabic Radio, May 12).

■ **Musheir al-Masri**, a Hamas representative to the Palestinian Legislative Council, said that the Israeli attempt to link the issue of Gilad Shalit and the lull was an attempt to sidestep the Egyptian initiative. He added that Shalit was not connected to the lull but rather to the release of prisoners according to the conditions set down by Hamas and the other Palestinian organizations (Filastin al-'An Website, May 12).

Hamas spokesmen threaten escalation

■ **Hamas has repeatedly threatened escalation** if Israel rejects the Egyptian initiative and if the blockade of the Gaza Strip is not lifted:

- **Khaled Mashal**, head of Hamas's political bureau in Damascus, said that "unless there is a positive response to the demand to lift the blockade, the Gaza Strip will be a bullet that will explode in everyone's face..." (PalMedia Website, May 8).
- Senior Hamas activist **Mahmoud al-Zahar** said that "unless Israel agrees to the initiative, **Hamas will lift the blockade [itself] and use every means to explode [the situation]**...Israel will not enjoy security if it does not agree to all the articles in the [lull agreement]. Millions of Israelis will be threatened unless the blockade is fully lifted..." (PalMedia Website, May 8).
- Senior Hamas activist **Musheir al-Masri** said that "the Zionist enemy should know that Gaza is the mouth of a volcano which will erupt in [its] face..." (Al-Biyan Website, May 7).

The Gaza Strip Crossings

The Gaza Strip power plant shuts down

■ At 17:00 (5 p.m.) on May 10 the Palestinians shut down the power plant in the Gaza Strip, claiming there was no more diesel fuel to keep it working (Qudspress News Agency, May 10). That led to widespread power outages in Gaza City and in various locations in the northern Gaza Strip. On May 11 bakery owners announced they could no longer work because of the lack of fuel, cooking gas and electricity (Pal-today Website, May 11).

■ The Nahal Oz Crossing, where diesel and other fuels and cooking gas are delivered from Israel to the Gaza Strip, **was closed around noon on May 5 after a mortar shell was fired at the crossing from the Gaza Strip**. (The crossing, which is vital to the Palestinian population, is a preferred target for the Palestinian terrorist organizations.) On the morning of May 12 it was reopened and the fuel supply was renewed, enabling the Palestinians to renew the operation of the power plant.

■ **The power plant in the Gaza Strip supplies 26% of its electricity**. Egypt provides an additional 7% and the rest comes from Israel. **Israeli electricity continues to power the Gaza Strip**, and the reduction authorized by the Israeli Supreme Court in January 2008 has been implemented in a limited fashion. Thus shutting down the power plant cannot cause a complete power outage and regulating the flow of electricity can prevent vital points in the Gaza Strip from being left in the dark.

■ **Hamas, as usual, works to exaggerate events using its propaganda machine to falsely claim that the power outage in the Gaza Strip “endangers the lives of hundreds of hospital patients”** (Al-Aqsa TV, May 11). Al-Aqsa TV, run by Hamas, keeps an open line to broadcast events in real time.

Sami Abu Zuhri, a Hamas spokesman, used it to hold a press conference in the dark while children stood around him holding candles to send the message that Gaza was without power. Hamas administration spokesman **Taher al-Nunu** said that “Gaza has drowned and life has stopped...The lives of thousands are in danger” (Palestine-info Website, May 10).



Gazan children holding candles to “light the darkness” in the Gaza Strip (Al-Aqsa TV, May 11).

The Rafah Crossing opens for three days

■ On May 10 Egypt opened the Rafah Crossing for three days. It was open to sick and wounded from the Gaza Strip who wanted to go to Egypt, and to Palestinians delayed in Egypt who wanted to cross into the Gaza Strip. An Egyptian source said that during those three days there was no European or Egyptian presidential guard inspection, but that the situation had been coordinated with the Palestinian Authority (Al-Hayat, May 10).

■ According to Palestinian and Egyptian reports, hundreds of Palestinians crossed into Egypt. Hamas spokesman **Ayman Tahe** said that temporarily opening the crossing was not a solution and requested that Egyptian keep it open for all civilians and goods (Filastin al-'An Website, May 10).



Palestinians passing through the Rafah Crossing on their way from the Gaza Strip to Egypt (Egyptian TV, May 12).

The Internal Palestinian Arena

Nakba Day¹ in the PA

■ Events marking Nakba Day in the PA began in early May and are expected to continue throughout the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria until they peak on May 15. The events include closed stores, processions, conferences, symposiums, displays and symbolic events (releasing black balloons, wearing black clothing, etc.). In addition, a “national reconciliation conference” is supposed to be held in Gaza City (which will include all the Palestinian terrorist organizations,

¹ Nakba means “catastrophe” in Arabic. Nakba Day is what the Arabs call Israel’s Independence Day. A separate Bulletin will detail the Nakba Day events.

including Hamas and Fatah), and **civilian processions are planned at points of Israel-Palestinian friction** (crossings, roadblocks and villages near the border).

■ As part of its 60th Nakba Day activity, **Hamas plans “popular” procession to the Erez Crossing** on May 15, integrating Nakba Day and the campaign to “lift the blockade.” **Ashraf Abu Diya**, a Hamas spokesman in charge of Hamas’s popular actions, called upon the Palestinian public to arrive at the main gate of the Erez Crossing on May 15 after the noon prayers to “express the people’s rage to break out of the blockade strangling the Palestinian people.” He called upon local and international media to cover the event and all the other activities organized by Hamas held to protest the “blockade” (Qudsnet Website, May 12).

■ As it has every year for the past decade, the issue of the Palestinian refugees’ **“right to return”** was given a prominent place in Nakba Day activities. A program was put together by various political organizations (as part of the “high council for commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Nakba.”) In Judea and Samaria most of activities are aegis of Fatah and the PA. The Palestinian government has supported the events by declaring May 15 a half-day of work, which will ensure that a large number of students and PA workers attend the planned rallies.

■ Hamas, for its part, has exploited Nakba Day for a propaganda campaign against Israel and the Jewish people. Its television station has broadcast programs glorifying Hamas terrorist operatives, belligerent statements against Israel have been made and anti-Israel, anti-Jewish and anti-Western propaganda programs have been aired. The campaign has invested a special effort in children’s programs, which are rife with hatred for Israel and brainwash them with the message that “the Palestinians will soon return to Jaffa, Acre, Lod, Ramla and Ashdod, and also to Tel al-Rabia [i.e. “Tel Aviv” in Arabic]” (From a children’s program broadcast by Al-Aqsa TV on May 2).



Inculcating “the right of return:” display at a Hamas rally in Gaza City to mark Nakba Day, with the names of Israeli cities to which the Palestinians expect to return (Al-Aqsa TV, May 10)



Children’s demonstration in Gaza to mark Nakba Day (Al-Aqsa TV, May 10).

Palestinian security force action in northern Samaria

■ About 500 members of the Palestinian security forces recently stationed in the Jenin region began enforcing law and order and putting an end to the anarchy in northern Samaria (the operation is nicknamed "Smile and Hope").



Members of the Palestinian security forces in action in the town of Qabatiya, near Jenin (PALDF Forum, May 6).

■ The Palestinian media reported the detention of law breakers, especially related to motor vehicle offenses (driving offenses, removing illegal vehicles from the road, giving traffic tickets). The Jenin police reported that more than 100 illegal vehicles had been taken off the road and that Palestinian civilians had gone to the authorities to arrange the necessary documents. A number of PIJ operatives were also detained.

■ Referring to the actions in northern Samaria, Hamas activist **Musheir al-Masri** said that "all the illusions [held] to eradicate the resistance [i.e., terrorism and violence] failed...Whoever links his future to that of the enemy...will be lost. The resistance will reawaken in the West Bank as it did in Gaza to bravely fight the Zionist enemy" (Palestine-info Website, May 8).