



Intelligence and Terrorism  
Information Center  
Israel Intelligence Heritage  
and Commemoration Center

## News of the Israeli-Palestinian Confrontation

July 8-15, 2008

Fatah violates the lull arrangement...



Fatah's Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade fires rockets  
(Al-Jazeera TV, July 10).

...and a Red Alert sounds in Sderot.



Sderot resident entering a protected  
area (Zeev Trachtman, July 10).

### Overview

- In general the lull arrangement is being maintained although there are still sporadic violations, especially from Fatah networks. This past week three rockets and six mortar shells were fired at western Negev population centers on four separate occasions. In response Israel closed the Gaza Strip crossings for short periods of time. There was a shooting attack in Jerusalem near the Lions' Gate in which two Border Policemen were wounded. It was the third terrorist attack in Jerusalem in recent months.
- On July 15 a large majority of the Israeli government voted in favor of the prisoner exchange deal, despite the fact that Hezbollah's report about the fate of Israeli navigator Ron Arad was characterized by the Israeli prime minister as completely unsatisfactory. The deal is expected to be carried out at Rosh Hanikra, on the Israeli-Lebanese border, on July 16, when Eldad Regev and Ehud Goldwasser will be exchanged for the Lebanese terrorist murderer Samir Kuntar, four Hezbollah operatives captured during the second Lebanon war and the remains of 199 terrorists, some of them Hezbollah operatives and some of them belonging to Palestinian

terrorist organizations. Hezbollah is planning a celebration, during which the exchange deal will be represented as a great achievement for the organization and Lebanon, and as a defeat for Israel.

## Important Events

### The Gaza Strip

#### Violations of the lull arrangement continue

■ This past week there were additional violations of the lull arrangement, mostly by Fatah networks. Three rockets and six mortar shells were fired on four separate occasions:

- **July 8:** A mortar shell fell in an open area in the Eshkol regional council district in the northwestern Negev. No organization claimed responsibility for the attack.
- **July 10:** Two rocket hits were identified in an open field near Kibbutz Gevim. Two mortar shell hits were identified about three kilometers (1.9 miles) southwest of the Sufa crossing and another west of the village of Holit. The Imad Moughnieh Squad of Fatah/Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade claimed responsibility for the attacks, saying that they were in retaliation for the death of a Squad operative near the Kissufim crossing earlier that morning (Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades website, July 10).
- **July 12:** A rocket hit was identified in an open area in the Sha'ar Hanegev regional council district in the northwestern Negev. There were no injuries and no property damage was reported.
- **July 13:** Two mortar shell hits were identified near the security fence (on the Gazan side) in the region of the village of Nahal Oz.



Fatah/Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade firing rockets (Al-Jazeera TV, July 10).

■ Fatah in Judea and Samaria refused to accept any responsibility for the rocket and mortar shell attacks carried out by local Fatah networks in the Gaza Strip. Fatah spokesman Abd al-Rahman said that the organization supported the lull arrangement and condemned any violation of it. He said that the Fatah/Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade claim of responsibility was completely untrue and that "it was a false, fabricated announcement issued by unreliable sources" (Wafa News Agency, July 14).

## Shooting attack in Jerusalem

■ Close to midnight on July 11 a terrorist went to the Lions' Gate of the Old City of Jerusalem and opened fire on two Border Policemen, seriously wounding both of them. The terrorist escaped through the nearby cemetery after the policemen returned fire. A search of the area did not reveal the terrorist. **Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum** praised the attack, calling it "a heroic action" and saying that it was "the natural response to the occupation's oppression of the Palestinian people..." (PalMedia website, July 12).

■ It was the third terrorist attack in recent months in Jerusalem (the first two were the mass-casualty attacks at Merkaz Harav Yeshiva and along Jaffa Road). In Responsibility was claimed by a group calling itself the Brigades of the Free Sons of the Galilee (Ma'an News Agency, July 12). In our assessment in this case, as in the other two, the Free Sons' claim of responsibility is false.

## Judea and Samaria

### IDF officer wounded near Qalqilya

■ On the night of July 10 an IDF officer was seriously wounded by gunfire during a search near the village of Deir Istiya west of Qalqilya. The search was conducted following the wounding of an Israeli civilian in a shooting attack earlier the same evening. After being shot the officer identified their assailant and shot and killed him. A gun was found on the terrorist's body (IDF Spokesman, July 11). According to the Palestinian media, the terrorist was Hamas/Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operative, however Hamas has not yet issued an official confirmation.

## Counterterrorism Activities

### The Gaza Strip

■ Since the lull arrangement went into effect the IDF has refrained from conducting counterterrorism activities in the Gaza Strip, and carries out defensive activities near the security fence to prevent attacks against Israel. On July 10 a Palestinian, a Fatah operative was killed by IDF fire after he crossed the security fence in the central Gaza Strip near a number of

Israeli villages. IDF forces, who suspected it was an attempted terrorist attack, fired warning shots in the air. The suspect continued running and the IDF forces shot at him, fearing he was wearing an explosive belt. An examination of the body showed him to be unarmed (IDF Spokesman's website, July 10).

- It should be noted that in the past various terrorist attacks were carried out in the area of the central Gaza Strip (Kissufim), among them the planting of IEDs along the security fence and shooting attacks targeting IDF forces. Since the lull arrangement went into effect the IDF has used various channels to appeal to the Gazans not to approach or cross the security fence. The IDF has stated that "any individual who ignores this warning endangers his life" (IDF Spokesman's website, July 10).

## Judea and Samaria

- In Judea and Samaria, where the lull arrangement is not in force, IDF forces continue countering attacks attempted by the terrorist organizations, most of them involving Molotov cocktails and stones thrown at Israeli civilians and IDF forces. This past week there were 12 such attacks.

- On July 10 a rifle was found hidden in a Palestinian vehicle during a routine security check at a roadblock south of Ramallah. It was confiscated and the Palestinian was taken for interrogation by the Israeli security forces (IDF Spokesman's website, July 10).

- During the past week almost daily confrontations continued between the security forces and Palestinian rioters near the village of Ni'lin west of Ramallah. Local residents, reinforced by self-styled anarchists and extreme left-wing radicals from Israel and abroad, protested the erection of the security fence, while IDF forces secured its continuing construction.

## Reactions to security force actions against Hamas institutions

- Senior Palestinian Authority and Hamas figures responded strongly to the actions recently taken by the Israeli security forces against institutions belonging to Hamas's civilian influence (the *da'wah*) in Nablus:

- **PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad** claimed that the IDF's actions in Nablus were "destroying the PA's efforts to bring security to the city, and are a threat to the PA, its status and its credibility among the Palestinians" (Al-Hayat, July 12).

- **Hamas** rushed to denounce the events and blame the PA, claiming that it had begun the actions against Hamas's institutions by persecuting its charitable societies and that the PA was now "wrapping itself in silence" as a response to the IDF's activities (Palestine-info website, July 8).

- The PA, despite Salam Fayyad's harsh reaction, is fully aware of the dangers posed by Hamas's *da'wah* and in recent months has also reinforced its oversight of Hamas's institutions in Judea and Samaria, especially the "charitable societies" and mosques.

## The Lull Arrangement, Updated to July 15

### The Gaza Strip crossings

- This past week as well, as noted above, the lull arrangement was sporadically violated, mostly by Fatah networks. In response Israel closed the crossings for short periods (a number of hours). However, foodstuffs, general merchandise and fuels were delivered through the Sufa and Nahal Oz crossings at the rate of about 70 truckloads a day. More types of merchandise were delivered, including five truckloads of cement a day and large quantities of iron

construction beams. Hamas and residents of the Gaza Strip have expressed disappointment over the amount of merchandise delivered, complaining of a lack of building materials and of the small quantity of cement, which they claimed was less than what they needed. (Al-Risala, July 10' Al-Ayyam, July 12).

- Because of the occasional closing of the crossings in response to violations of the lull arrangement, Hamas has accused Israel of not meeting the conditions of the arrangement. **Hamas spokesman Ayman Taha** said that if Israel did not meet the conditions the arrangement was liable to collapse (PalMedia website, July 13). **Musa Abu Marzuq** said that Israel was not adhering to its commitments (Al-Aqsa TV, July 13). In Damascus, **Khaled Mashal** said that Hamas was committed to the lull but added that he was not optimistic because of the way Israel related to it (Yemenite News Agency, July 13).



Truck carrying sacks of cement through the Sufa crossing (Information Center, July 10).

## Hamas imposes the lull arrangement

■ Hamas continues to express support for the lull arrangement and is careful to maintain its own ceasefire. At the same time, it attempts to impose the arrangement's conditions of the other Palestinian terrorist organizations and prevent them from violating them, but it **does not engage them in direct confrontations**, and therefore the efforts are not sufficiently effective. This past week Hamas detained a number of Fatah operatives who were released a short time later (Wafa News Agency, July 11).

## Terrorist organization military buildup

■ Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad exploit the lull arrangement to continue their military buildup, reinforcing their ranks and preparing for a possible IDF incursion into the Gaza Strip, and even do so publicly. The Hamas weekly Al-Risala reported that Hamas's operative and security forces were fortifying positions, digging trenches and erecting earthworks (Al-Risala, July 14). Hamas's website reported that the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades had increased training programs (Palestine-info website, July 14). It was also reported that the manufacturing units were exploiting the lull to develop and manufacture weapons and improve communications (NTV Lebanon, July 9; Al-Risala, July 10). At the same time, smuggling into the Gaza Strip continues. This week Egypt reportedly destroyed a large number of tunnels and uncovered 250 kilograms (550 lbs) of explosives in Sinai on their way to the Gaza Strip (Agence France Presse, July 11).



TV shots showing PIJ operatives undergoing military training during the lull (NTV, July 8).

## The Rafah crossing

■ Regarding the opening of the Rafah crossing, a very important issue for Hamas, no significant progress has been made. The crossing is occasionally open and the Egyptians allow a limited number of Palestinian civilians to pass through. On July 12 Hamas delegations from the Gaza Strip and Syria visited Cairo and met with Omar Suleiman, head of general intelligence, but so far there is no progress. Senior Hamas figures expressed disappointment with the results of the visit, saying that a breakthrough had not been made. Ayman Taha blamed the PA, saying that its stubbornness regarding a return to the crossings agreement of 2005, to which it is a party, was preventing the opening of the Rafah crossing (PalMedia website, July 13).



Hamas delegation headed by Mahmoud al-Zahar leaving the Gaza Strip for the meeting in Cairo (Egyptian TV, July 8).

■ The editorials in Hamas's newspapers have been critical of the Egyptian position and warn that the Palestinian people's patience is wearing thin. Mustafa al-Sawaf, editor of Felesteen, attacked Egypt for not opening the Rafah crossing, acquiescing to Israel and exerting pressure on the Palestinians (Felesteen, July 14). Surfers on the Hamas Internet forum called for Gazans to storm the Rafah crossing (PALDF Forum, July 13). Egypt, for its part, sent 400 policemen to reinforce the Rafah crossing and prevent a possible Palestinian attempt to use force to breach the crossing (Agence France Presse, July 10).

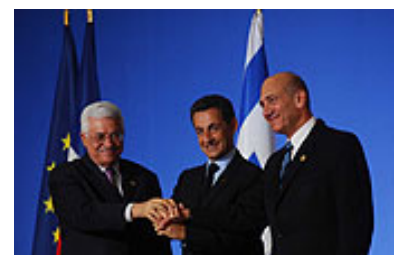
## The release of Gilad Shalit

■ This past week as well no progress was made in the matter of abducted IDF soldier Gilad Shalit. The issue was raised when the Hamas delegation visited Egypt but there is still nothing new in the contacts for his release.

## The Annapolis Process

### Olmert and Abu Mazen meet

■ On July 13 a meeting was held between French President Nicolas Sarkozy, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and PA Chairman Abu Mazen at the Union for the Mediterranean summit held in Paris. During the day Olmert and Abu Mazen met privately and with the negotiating teams, and the teams also met.



The tripartite meeting in Paris (Government Press Office, July 13).

■ The Israeli newspaper Haaretz reported that Abu Mazen asked Olmert to release Palestinians imprisoned in Israel before the Oslo accord was signed. An Israeli political source said that Olmert promised to review the request favorably, adding that such a release would not be part of a deal with Hamas or Hezbollah but would be undertaken as a goodwill gesture to the PA (Haaretz, July 14). Saeb Erekat, the PLO's chief negotiator, mentioned the Palestinian requests and subjects raised at the meeting, among them the release of prisoners and the return of bodies to the PA. The Palestinians noted the importance of fully establishing the lull in the Gaza Strip and of opening the crossings (Al-Ayyam, July 14).

## The Internal Palestinian Arena

### The Quartet's emissary to the Middle East visits the Gaza Strip.

■ On July 15 Tony Blair, former British prime minister and the Quartet's emissary to the Middle East, is expected in the Gaza Strip, the first visit of its kind since Hamas took over the Gaza Strip in June 2006. Blair is expected to visit UNWRA facilities, to take part in launching a sewage-disposal project, and to meet important "independent" figures in the Gaza Strip. His visit was described as "humanitarian" (Ramattan News Agency, July 14), however, in our assessment, it is also liable to have a political context, in that it is the first visit made by a senior European figure to the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip. Hamas is expected to make political capital from the event, and has issued an announcement stating that it has already taken the necessary security measures .

## The Lebanese Arena

### The prisoner exchange deal with Hezbollah

■ On Wednesday, July 16, at 9:00 in the morning, the prisoners exchange deal with Hezbollah is expected to be carried out. On the morning of July 15 a large majority of the Israeli government voted to authorize the deal. A number of days ago Israel received a detailed report prepared by Hezbollah about its efforts to find information about the fate of Ron Arad, missing since 1986. In addition, two new pictures of Arad were sent, a letter and sections from his diary (Haaretz, July 14). The Hezbollah report did not shed new light on the circumstances under which Ron Arad disappeared and contains no new information. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert characterized it as completely unsatisfactory (Haaretz, July 15).



■ The exchange is supposed to take place on July 16 at the Rosh Hanikra border crossing between Lebanon and Israel.

- At 9:00 the abducted soldiers Eldad Regev and Ehud Goldwasser will be handed over to Israel, and if they are not alive, forensic and if necessary DNA tests will be performed to ensure that the bodies are in fact theirs.
- In return Israel will deliver terrorist murderer Samir Kuntar to Hezbollah, along with four Hezbollah terrorist operatives captured during the second Lebanon war. In addition, the remains of 199 terrorists, some of them Hezbollah operatives and some belonging to Palestinian terrorist organizations operating in Lebanon will also be delivered to Hezbollah.

■ Hezbollah is planning a massive celebration in which the prisoner exchange deal will be represented as a great achievement for the organization and the Lebanese people and a defeat for Israel. The village of Al-Naqura near the border is planning a ceremony with the participation of Hezbollah figures. After the ceremony the five prisoners will be flown to Beirut's international airport where there will be an official ceremony attended by Lebanese president Michel Suleiman, prime minister Fuad Siniora, and parliament chairman Nabih Berri. From there the prisoners will go to the Hezbollah stronghold in the southern suburb of Beirut, where the organization will hold a rally. Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah will give a speech, projected on a giant screen (Al Safir, July 14).