



Intelligence and Terrorism  
Information Center

## News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

May 11-17, 2010



Procession for Nakba Day in Sheikh Jarrah in Jerusalem (Safa News Agency, May 15, 2010).

### Overview

- This past week the western Negev remained quiet. Attacks continued against IDF forces and civilians working near the security fence.
- On May 15, the 62<sup>nd</sup> so-called "Nakba Day" was marked in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip, commemorating what the Palestinians consider the "catastrophe" of the establishment of the State of Israel. Marches and demonstrations were held, whose main theme was the Palestinian refugees' "right of return".
- On May 14 the cargo ship Rachel Corrie left Ireland on its way to the Mediterranean Sea, where it will join the other ships participating the so-called "Freedom Flotilla" to the Gaza Strip. Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan said he supports breaking the "blockade" on the Gaza Strip. He consulted with representatives of the flotilla of aid.

## Important Events

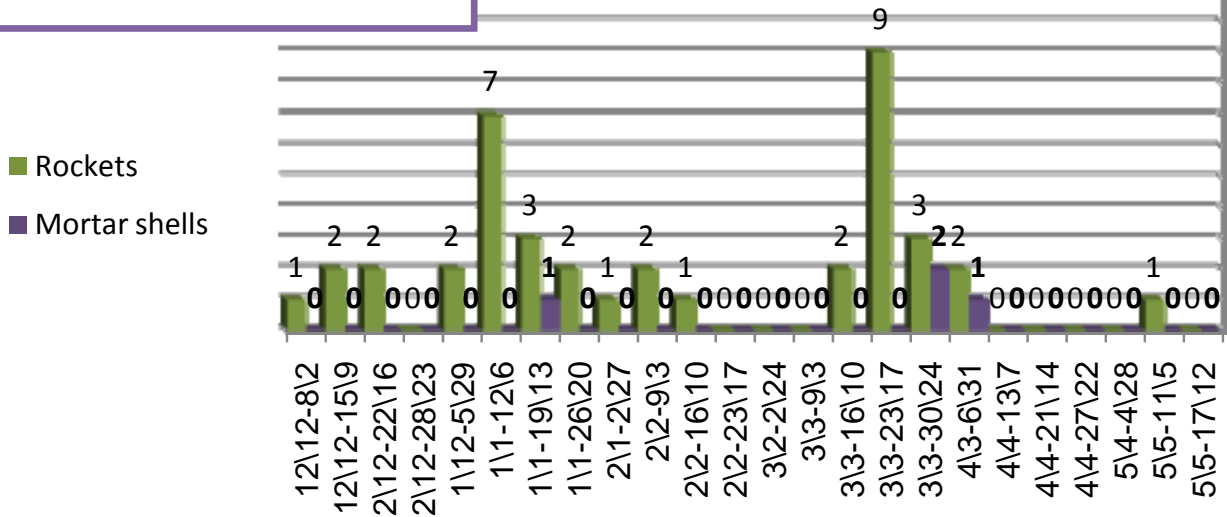
### Gaza Strip

#### Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire

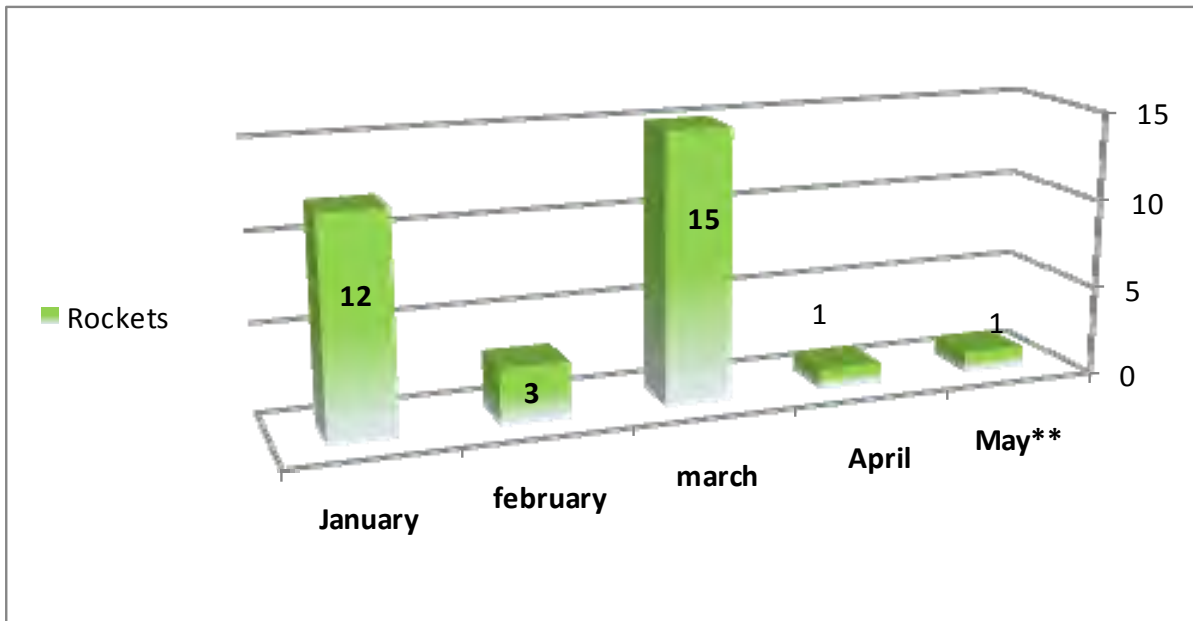
- This past week no rocket or mortar shell hits were identified in Israeli territory.
- There were, however, a number of incidents along the security fence.
  - **May 17** – An IDF force detained two unarmed Palestinians who infiltrated into Israel from the southern Gaza Strip. The IDF is examining the circumstances of their infiltration (IDF Spokesman, May 17, 2010).
  - **May 15** – An IDF force shot and killed a suspicious Palestinian civilian who approached the security fence. Another civilian who approached the fence was wounded.
  - **May 14** – Two IEDs exploded near an IDF force carrying out routine operations at the security fence. There were no casualties; the fence was damaged. Three Palestinians were seen running away.
  - **May 12** – A mortar shell was fired at an IDF force carrying out routine operations near the security fence. A network calling itself the Army of the Nation affiliated with the global jihad claimed responsibility for the attack (Bayt al-Muqaddas forum, May 13, 2010). Civilian engineers working near the security fence were attacked with light arms. The work was halted. An IDF force carrying out routine activities near the Kissufim post was also attacked with light arms. There were no casualties.

## Rockets and Mortar Shells Fired into Israeli Territory<sup>1</sup>

Since the end of Operation Cast Lead 162 hits have been identified and 74 mortar shells have been fired into Israel.



## Rocket Fire 2010, Monthly Distribution\*



Since the beginning of 2010, 32 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory.

<sup>1</sup> The statistics do not include the mortar shells fired at IDF soldiers patrolling the border fence which fell inside the Gaza Strip.

\* Rocket hits identified in Israeli territory.

## Judea and Samaria

### Counterterrorism Activities

- The Israeli security forces continued their preventive counterterrorism activities this past week, detaining Palestinians suspected of terrorist activities and confiscating weapons. Confrontations continued during riots in several locations in Judea and Samaria. An IDF soldier and an Israeli soldier and two civilians sustained minor injuries.
- **May 15** – Palestinians **shot at an Israeli vehicle** north of Ramallah. Two passengers sustained minor injuries.
- **May 14** – A routine security check south of Hebron revealed an axe in a car carrying three Palestinian passengers. Further investigation revealed two knives (IDF Spokesman, May 14 2010).
- **May 11** – Stones were thrown at Israeli civilians northeast of Ramallah. An IDF force arrived to detain the stone-throwers. During the incident an IDF soldier sustained minor injuries.

## Developments in the Gaza Strip

### The “Freedom Flotilla” for the Gaza Strip

- On May 14 the MV Rachel Corrie, a cargo ship, set sail from Ireland on its way to the Mediterranean, where it will join ships from Turkey and Greece and sail to the Gaza Strip (Free Gaza website, May 14, 2010). It is the first ship of the so-called “Freedom Flotilla” planned for the Gaza Strip, and was purchased by the Free Gaza organization from Irish customs. It is expected to reach Greece in approximately ten days (*Al-Ayyam*, May 13, 2010).



Launching the Rachel Corrie at the Irish port  
(Hamas' Palestine-info website, May 15,



(Palestine Telegraph, May 10, 2010).

- **Ziyad al-Aloul**, spokesman for the Turkish organization IHH, said that the flotilla had been joined by an **Algerian cargo ship** whose purchase was funded by the Algerian peace movement, bringing the number of ships sailing to the Gaza Strip to nine (Hamas' Palestine-info website, May 16, 2010). **Rami Abdo**, a member of the European Committee to Lift the Siege headquartered in Brussels, said that the committee would call one of the ships "The Eight Thousand," for the 8,000 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails. It was, he said, part of the committee's campaign to make 2010 "the year of prisoners jailed by the Zionist occupation" (Quds Press, May 16, 2010).
- **Groups involved in the flotilla are examining ways to make it difficult for Israel to prevent the ships from arriving in the Gaza Strip.** Activists from Greece and Turkey requested that the ships and passengers be examined at every port of exit to ensure they were not security risks to Israel (Free Gaza website, May 14, 2010). A spokesman for IHH said that Israel's objection to the flotilla was "aggression and piracy, and that Israel would be responsible for it." He warned that **the ships would be carrying senior figures from the Turkish and European governments, heads of institutions, media personnel, artists and human rights activists.** He also said that activists on the Swedish ship, along with Mehmet Kaplan, a member of the Swedish parliament, had asked to meet with the Swedish foreign minister to discuss steps which could be taken by the Swedish government and the European Union to protect the convoy (Hamas' Palestine-info website, May 15, 2010).
- **Jamal al-Khudari**, chairman of Hamas' "popular committee against the siege," said that reports in the Israeli media about air force and navy training exercises to prevent the ships from arriving in the Gaza Strip were nothing more than "media warfare," and intended to dissuade the pro-Palestinian activists from carrying out their "humanitarian mission." He said that any damage to the ships would mean a confrontation with the forty countries whose activists were on board (*Al-Ayyam*, May 13, 2010).



Poster of the "Freedom Flotilla" ( Hamas' Palestine-info website, May 15, 2010).

- **Hamas has praised the Turks for being in the front line of the struggle against Israel's intention to prevent the ships from reaching the Gazan shore.** Prominent has been the involvement of Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan:
  - **He publicly supported breaking the blockade of the Gaza Strip**, saying that it was Turkey's top priority (Free Gaza website, May 14, 2010). He also met with flotilla's representatives (IHH website, May 15, 2010).
  - **A group of NGO heads from Britain and France recently returned from a visit of Istanbul where they met Erdogan.** The objective of the visit was to give them an opportunity to express their concern over the situation in the Gaza Strip and to ask Turkey to be more active regarding the issue (Website of IHRC, a pro-Iranian group, May 14, 2010).

## The Political Struggle

### Russian President Meets Khaled Mashaal in Damascus

- On May 11, during a visit to Syria, Russian President **Dmitry Medvedev** met with Khaled Mashaal, chairman of Hamas' political bureau. The Russian president said he hoped Palestinian unity could be restored and that Fatah and Hamas could reach an agreement (RIA Novosty Newswire, May 12, 2010).
- Medvedev hinted at Hamas participation in the peace process, saying that **peace would not be achieved unless Hamas joined the negotiations.** He also said that no one should be prohibited from participating in Middle East peace talks and that Hamas should be included, even though it is regarded as a terrorist organization (*Haaretz*, May 12, 2010).
- A "senior Hamas figure" told the Arab paper *Al-Hayat* that the Russian president's meeting with Khaled Mashaal reflected Moscow's decision to upgrade its political dialogue with Hamas and to get a first-hand report on its position. The source said that Khaled Mashaal was urging Moscow to exert pressure on Israel to recognize the so-called "rights of the Palestinians" and to lift the "blockade" of the Gaza Strip (*Al-Hayat*, May 13, 2010).

- **The Israeli Foreign Ministry** protested the meeting and strongly criticized the Russian president's call to include Hamas in the peace process. The Ministry said in a statement that it was deeply disappointed by President Medvedev's meeting with Khaled Mashaal in Damascus. "Hamas," said the statement, "is a terrorist organization in every sense of the word," and "[i]t is totally unacceptable for enlightened nations to divide terrorists into 'good' and 'bad' according to some geographical division" (Israeli Foreign Minister website, May 12, 2010).

### "Nakba Day" Marked in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip

- On May 15 Palestinians in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip marked the 62<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the so-called "Nakba Day," commemorating what they consider the "catastrophe" of the establishment of the State of Israel. There were marches and demonstrations whose main theme was the Palestinian refugees' "right of return" to their houses.

### The Gaza Strip

- The main procession, sponsored by all the Palestinian organizations, including Hamas and Fatah, was held in Gaza City. The marchers called for forcing Israel to stop construction in the settlements and to recognize the so-called "right of return." Senior Hamas figures (including **Ismail Radwan** and **Sami Abu Zuhri**) participated in the rally, as did senior Palestinian Islamic Jihad figures (such as **Khaled al-Batash** and **Muhammad al-Hindi**) and Fatah representatives (**Zakaria al-Agha** and **Fayiz Abu 'Ita**). Hamas also organized a march in the Jabaliya refugee camp, attended by more than 300 movement activists who called for adherence to the "right of return" (*Al-Risala*, May 15, 2010).

### Judea and Samaria

- "Nakba Day" events in Judea and Samaria were more limited than those in the Gaza Strip. The main marches took place in Nablus on May 14 and 15. On May 15 **Majda al-Masri**, minister of welfare in the Salam Fayyad government, participated in the march (Ma'an News Agency, May 15, 2010).

### Press Releases

- Both Fatah and Hamas issued press releases for "Nakba Day," both organizations stressing their adherence to the so-called "right of return."
  - **Hamas said in a statement** that the establishment of the State of Israel on "Palestinian land" was a "great crime against the Palestinian people and the Islamic nation." It said that the struggle "to liberate the land from the occupation" would

continue and that the "right of return" would not be waived (Hamas' Paltoday website, May 15, 2010).

- **Fatah said in a statement** that the movement would **continue its struggle "for the right of return, freedom and independence"** (AFP, May 14, 2010).
- **The PLO Executive Committee said in a statement** that it remained loyal to the national objectives and the "decisions of international institutions as the way to return the refugees to their houses (Safa News Agency, May 15, 2010).