



Intelligence and Terrorism
Information Center

News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

May 18-25, 2010



The passenger ship Mavi Marmaris, one of the vessels in the flotilla, departed from Istanbul en route to the Gaza Strip on May 22 (IHH website, May 23, 2010).

Overview

- This past week two rockets fell in open areas in the western Negev. Clashes continued between IDF soldiers and squads of terrorist operatives near the security fence. In response to the rocket fire Israeli Air Force planes struck offensive tunnels in the northern Gaza Strip.
- The aid flotilla of nine ships to the Gaza Strip is scheduled to arrive between May 26 and 28 (no exact date available). The ships are carrying large quantities of aid and currency. Among the passengers are pro-Palestinian political and radical-Islamic activists from various countries. Prominent are the many foreign correspondents whose objective is to create pressure on Israel through the media. According to reports there are also Israeli Arabs on board, including sheikh Ra'ed Salah, who participated in launching the flotilla in the Istanbul port.

Important Events

Gaza Strip

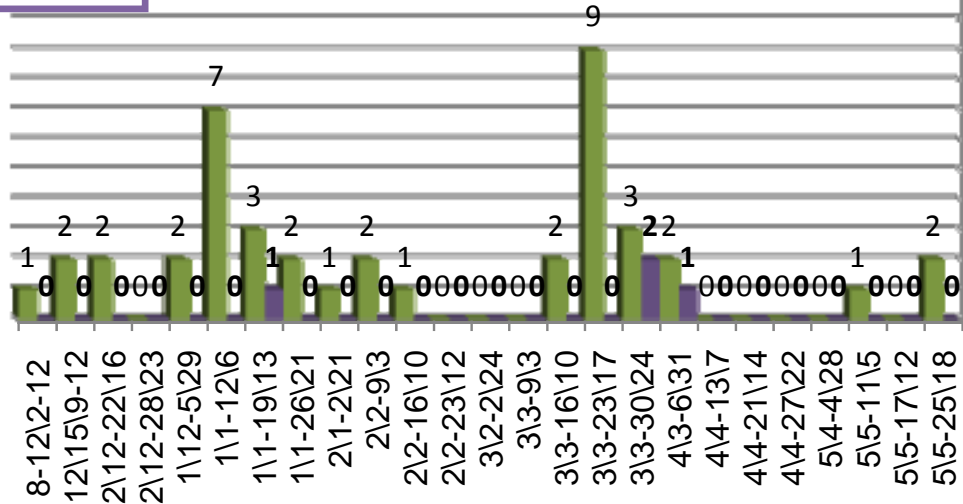
Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire

- This past week two rockets fell in Israeli territory (May 19 and 20). They exploded in open areas. There were no casualties and no damage was done.
- There were also a number of incidents between IDF soldiers and squads of terrorist operatives along the security fence. The most important occurred on May 21, when two terrorist operatives infiltrated into Israeli territory near the village of Nirim in the western Negev. IDF forces opened fire on the terrorists. They returned fire and the soldiers shot and killed them. Two assault weapons and magazines were found near the bodies (IDF Spokesman, May 21, 2010). The two may have planned to attack IDF soldiers operating near the security fence.
- The military-terrorist wing of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for the confrontation with the IDF forces (Palestinian Islamic Jihad website, May 21, 2010). The Palestinian media reported that the two terrorists were 17 years old (Ma'an News Agency, May 21, 2010).
- On the evening of May 21, during a routine patrol in the southern Gaza Strip, an IDF scout was seriously wounded by sniper fire. The Salah al-Din Brigade of the Popular Resistance Committees claimed responsibility for the attack (PRC website, May 21, 2010).

Rockets and Mortar Shells Fired into Israeli Territory¹

Since the end of Operation Cast Lead 164 hits have been identified and 74 mortar shells have been fired into Israel.

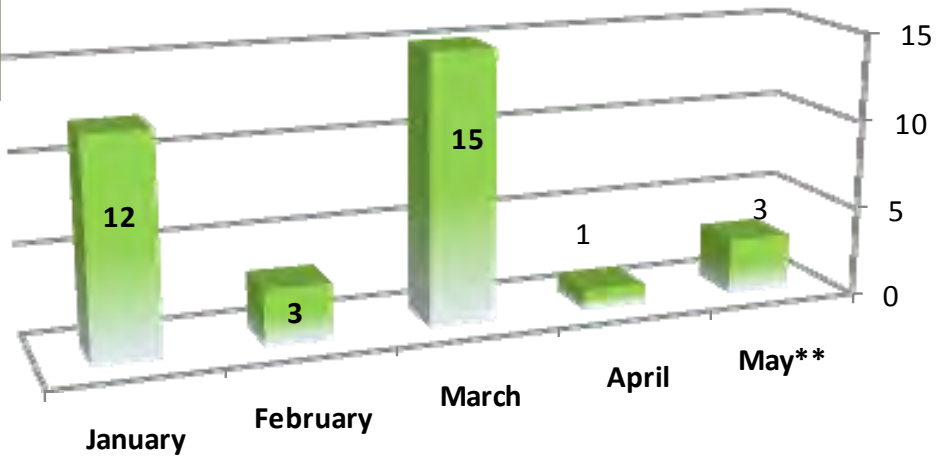
■ Rockets
■ Mortar shells



Rocket Fire 2010, Monthly Distribution*

Since the beginning of 2010, 34 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory.

■ Rockets



¹ 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. A similar number misfired and landed inside the Gaza Strip.

Israeli Air Force Response

■ In response to the rocket fire, on the night of May 21 Israeli Air Force planes attacked tunnels in the northern Gaza Strip. The tunnels were located one kilometer from the security fence and intended to be used to infiltrate terrorist squads into Israeli territory to carry out attacks. Exact hits on the targets were identified (IDF Spokesman, May 21, 2010). The Palestinian media reported three wounded (Ma'an News Agency, May 21, 2010).

Judea and Samaria

Counterterrorism Activities

■ The Israeli security forces continued their counterterrorism activities this past week, while riots broke out in various locations in Judea and Samaria. A Border Policeman sustained minor wounds.

■ The important events were the following:

● **May 19** – Molotov cocktails and stones were thrown at an Israeli vehicle northeast of Ramallah. There were no casualties and no damage was done (IDF Spokesman, May 19, 2010).

● **May 18** – Three bombs ready for throwing and a knife were found in the tools of a Palestinian at a checkpoint in the Jordan Valley east of Nablus (IDF Spokesman, May 18, 2010).

● **May 17** – Stones were thrown at an Israeli vehicle east of Qalqiliya. There were no casualties but the vehicle was damaged (IDF Spokesman, May 17, 2010).

Money Delivered from Terrorist Organizations to Palestinian Prisoners

■ In a joint Israel Security Agency-Police-Tax Authority operation several residents of East Jerusalem, one a lawyer, were detained during April and May 2010. **They were involved in delivering money from the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip to security prisoners incarcerated in Israel, among them terrorist operatives who had carried out murderous terrorist attacks.**

■ The affair began with the arrest of Shirin Isawi, a lawyer who was found to be carrying large sums of money meant to be deposited in the accounts of security prisoners. She also

had many documents from the Hamas leadership in jail. Following her detention others were also detained, who admitted to having given prisoners tens of thousands of dollars a week. **The arrests exposed an extensive network for transferring millions of shekels from the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip to prisoners in Israeli jails.** All those involved in the affair have been indicted (Israel Security Agency website, May 25, 2010).

Easing Security Restrictions in Judea and Samaria

■ On May 23 a meeting was held, attended by the head of the IDF Central Command, the head of the Civilian Authority and the heads of the Palestinian Authority. During the meeting, which was held to coordinate security issues, the head of the Central Command announced that **a series of steps would be taken to ease security restrictions in Judea and Samaria.** Among them were the following (according to the IDF Spokesman, May 23, 2010):

- The removal of 60 roadblocks.
- Allowing tourists to enter Bethlehem through all the crossings (including the entrance into Bethlehem of fifty Israeli tourist guides).
- Opening the Dahariya roadblock (southwest of Hebron) to the free passage of Palestinian civilians.
- Easing the issuance of transit papers for senior Palestinian businessmen.
- Opening a road near the Israeli settlement of Maaleh Adumim to Palestinian vehicles.
- Allowing Israeli Arabs to use the crossings into Judea and Samaria

The Northern Front

■ On May 24, the tenth anniversary of the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, **Hezbollah held a massive military exercise in Baalbek in the Bekaa Valley. The forces simulated an attack on an Israeli post, the abduction of two Israeli soldiers and their removal from the arena.** The exercise was attended by Hussein Hajj Hassan, the Lebanese minister of agriculture and a senior Hezbollah figure. He delivered a speech stating that the government, the army and the people were united behind the “resistance” (Al-Manar TV, May 24, 2010).



Pictures from the Hezbollah military exercise in Baalbek (Al-Manar TV, May 24, 2010).



The Lebanese agriculture minister, whose presence at the exercise was part of the legitimization Hezbollah's military activities receive from the Lebanese government (Al-Manar TV, May 24, 2010).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

The Aid Flotilla to the Gaza Strip – Update

- On May 14 the Rachel Corrie set sail from the port of Dundalk in Ireland, the first ship of the aid flotilla for the Gaza Strip organized by a coalition of pro-Palestinian organizations in Europe and Turkey. On May 22 the Mavi Marmaris set sail from the Sarayburnu (Seraglio Point) port in Istanbul. It is the first of three Turkish ships planning to sail to the Gaza Strip (the other two are cargo ships). The ships will meet off the coast of Cyprus and from there sail to the Gaza Strip, arriving between May 26 and 28, where they will anchor in the Gaza harbor which has been deepened by the de facto Hamas administration to be able to receive them.



Launching the Rachel Corrie at the Irish port of Dundalk (Hamas' Palestine-info website, May 15, 2010).

■ **The ships and passengers:** A total of nine ships are expected to arrive off the Gaza shore, carrying between 800 and 1000 passengers from 40 countries (according to some reports more than nine ships may arrive). The Turkish ship is expected to carry 600 passengers, most of whom boarded in Antalya. They include members of parliament, human rights activists and media correspondents. There is also a group of Israeli Arabs, one of whom, sheikh **Ra'ed Salah**, participated in the launching ceremony at the port in Istanbul (Ma'an News Agency, IHH website, May 20, 2010).

■ **Media coverage:**

● According to reports, the places vacated by activists who canceled their participation will be taken by foreign correspondents and media personnel in order to broaden coverage of the event. The media covering the event from the decks of the ships include Al-Jazeera TV, Reuters, BBC Radio, Euro News, representatives from Bulgarian and Czech TV and a large number of correspondents from international newspapers and news agencies (Ma'an News Agency, May 20, 2010).

● Jamal al-Khudari, head of Hamas' "Popular Committee for the Struggle against the Siege," said that it planned to send 100 small Palestinian boats to receive the flotilla when it arrived off the coast of the Gaza Strip, part of the media pressure Hamas intends to exert on Israel. The boats will fly Palestinian flags and those of the countries participating in the flotilla, and their passengers will include the heads of the Committee, jurists and groups of observers. Some of the boats will be allocated to journalists, media representatives and photographers.



Propaganda accompanying the flotilla: “Israel threatens to oppose the ships planning to break the siege” (Hamas-affiliated Pal-On-Line website, May 20, 2010).

Arson at an UNRWA Summer Camp

■ At 2:30 in the morning on May 23 a group of 30 armed masked men broke into the construction site of an UNRWA summer camp on the seashore near Sheikh Ajlin in the western part of Gaza City. They set fire to the camp and burned everything in it. The location is one of 35 beach facilities currently under construction, which will form part of UNRWA’s annual Summer Games program.²

■ The arsonists left a letter with the night guard addressed to John Ging, UNRWA head in the Gaza Strip, threatening his life. Four bullets were attached to the letter. Ayman al-Batinji, spokesman for the police in the Gaza Strip, said that the police also found a flysheet warning UNRWA not to continue “its aberrant activities which damage children’s morals” (Russia Today TV, May 23, 2010).



The summer camp after the fire (Russia Today TV, May 23, 2010)

² <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=691>, May 24, 2010.

- John Ging criticized the event and called it “vandalism linked to extremism and an attack on the happiness of children.” He also said “UNRWA will not be intimidated by such acts and will quickly rebuild the location in good time to host the Summer Games.”³



John Ging, UNRWA director in the Gaza Strip, responds to the arson at the summer camp (Russia Today TV, May 23, 2010).

- **Sources within Hamas deplored the fire but tried to minimize its importance.** The interior ministry of the de facto Hamas administration said in an announcement that it had begun an official investigation of “the partial burning of the summer camp roof” and that it would make efforts to locate those behind the event, despite the fact that there were no eye-witnesses. **In addition, sources within Hamas’ interior ministry “advised” UNRWA to examine its curriculum and make it suitable for Palestinian society, hinting that was the cause of the attack** (Alrisala.net, May 23, 2010).

- **It was not the first time pressure had been exerted on UNRWA because of its summer camps.** Last year as well Hamas conducted a vigorous smear campaign against UNRWA and its director, John Ging, **representing them as using their summer camps to corrupt the morals of Palestinian youth** (meaning primarily that the camps were coeducational). Hamas has a broad network of its own summer camps where the youth undergo indoctrination and semi-military training. UNRWA, which runs the summer camps, is regarded by Hamas as “competition” for influence on Gazan youth.

Hamas-Egypt Tension Increases

- In recent weeks there were a number of clashes leading to mutual accusations and an increase in the tension between the de facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip and Egypt:

³ Ibid.

- **On May 24, 2010, Hamas' interior minister revealed that its internal security services had recently detained a senior Egyptian officer** who had infiltrated into the Gaza Strip to collect information about its residents and the administration, and to carry out "other missions." According to the report the officer was returned to Egypt and the minister called for a joint security coordinating committee to be appointed (Ynet, May 24, 2010).
- **Sami Abu Zuhri**, Hamas spokesman in the Gaza Strip, accused Egypt of torturing 30 Palestinian detainees held by the security services, one of whom, he said, was tortured to death. Hamas also said that a Palestinian fisherman who came upon an Egyptian naval vessel was beaten to death by the sailors (Hamas' Palestine-Info website, May 24, 2010).
- According to a report, the Egyptian authorities will currently reject all requests to authorize entrance visas for Hamas heads (Ynet, May 24, 2010).

Hamis Responses to the Expulsion from Jerusalem of Senior Hamas Activist Abu Tir

- Senior Hamas figures criticized Israel for expelling **Muhammad Abu Tir**, Hamas' Jerusalem representative in the Palestinian Legislative Council, from Jerusalem:
 - **Musheir al-Masri**, Hamas member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, claimed that Israel was "playing with fire and has crossed every red line." He also said that it was part of an Israeli plan "to expel all the Arab residents of Jerusalem" and threatened that "the consequences will be serious and Israel will be responsible for them" (Hamas' Palestine-Info website, May 20, 2010).
 - **The Hamas faction in the Palestinian Legislative Council** condemned the decision and said that it was completely void because of the "occupation" and the result of "useless negotiations between the Palestinian Authority and Israel and their security coordination" (Safa News Agency, May 20, 2010).

Hamis Responses to the Law Aggravating the Conditions of Hamas Prisoners in Israel

- The minister's committee of the government of Israel passed a law which will aggravate the conditions of Hamas prisoners in Israeli jails. **Hamas spokesmen condemned the decision, saying that it would not influence Hamas' position in the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal:**
 - Hamas spokesman **Sami Abu Zuhri** said that Israel had made the decision to blackmail Hamas and exert pressure on it to release Gilad Shalit without receiving

anything in return. He said Hamas would insist on its conditions and would not back down (Hamas' Paltoday website, May 24, 2010).

- Senior Hamas figure **Ismail Radwan** criticized the Israeli decision, saying that "the Zionist enemy knows that all these attempts will lead to failure and that it must accede to Hamas' demands if it wants the release of Gilad Shalit" (Al-Aqsa TV, May 24, 2010).

The Peace Process

The Proximity Talks

■ Palestinian Authority Chairman **Mahmoud Abbas** said that so far there have been two rounds of talks: the first dealt with borders and security and the second with professional and legal issues which had been raised by American envoy George Mitchell. Palestinian sources added before the meeting that Mahmoud Abbas planned to tell Mitchell the Palestinians would agree to the presence of NATO forces in the Palestinian territories, and would demand that the United States and the members of NATO protect them from an Israeli invasion. He said that the Palestinians accepted the principle of territorial exchange but had not yet reached an agreement on it (Wafa News Agency, May 22, 2010).

■ Chief PLO negotiator **Saeb Erekat** said, after Mahmoud Abbas' meeting with Mitchell, that "the Palestinian leadership wanted Mitchell's efforts to succeed and that they would focus on the permanent status agreement." He added that he hoped the United States would force Israel to stop its "provocative actions," and said that the proximity talks with the United States were proceeding according to the agreed time table (Wafa News Agency, May 19, 2010). He said that the recent media leaks about the proximity talks were "irresponsible and harmful" and that an official statement would be issued by Mitchell when the talks were over (Wafa News Agency, May 21, 2010).

The Political-Economic Struggle

The Palestinian Authority Takes Steps to Enforce the Boycott of Israel Goods

■ Palestinian inspectors in Judea and Samaria raided shops (200 of them in Ramallah alone) looking for and confiscating merchandise produced in the settlements, and issued warning to merchants in whose shops such goods had been found, although apparently there were no large quantities. Mahmoud Abbas called on Palestinians to empty their houses of such products as part of a campaign called "From House to House" (Wafa News Agency, May 22, 2010). He

claimed that the international community recognized the illegality of the settlements, but said that the campaign was not aimed against Israel and was not meant to incite the Palestinians against it. When he finished talking he hung up a notice stating that his house was entirely free of products made in the settlements (Ynet, May 23, 2010).

■ **Silvan Shalom**, Deputy Israeli Prime Minister, said that if the boycott continued Israel would have to “make the right decisions.” He proposed retaliatory steps, among them to impose high customs duties on goods manufactured in the PA and to make it difficult for goods to be transported from Israel to the PA. He also said that the possibility of compensating Israeli factories at the expense of funds transferred to the Palestinians was being examined (Ynet, May 25, 2010).