



Intelligence and Terrorism  
Information Center

## News of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict

June 16-22, 2010



Trucks entering the Gaza Strip (The Palestine Telegraph, June 22, 2010).

### Overview

- Two additional ships are expected to set sail from Lebanon for Cyprus in the coming days, and from there to sail to the Gaza Strip. Two fairly minor Lebanese organizations and several lightweight activists with no particular standing in internal Lebanese affairs are responsible for dispatching the ships. In our assessment, the purchase of the ships and organizing of the flotilla were carried out with the involvement and support of Syria and Hezbollah, neither of which wants its true identity exposed.
- The Israeli government decided on a series of measures to ease the closure of the Gaza Strip. The **United States** welcomed the change in Israeli policy. The **Palestinian Authority** demanded that Israel lift the closure completely, allow merchandise to be transported from the Gaza Strip to Judea and Samaria and implement the Agreement on Movement and Access of 2005, according to which control of the crossings would be in the hands of the Palestinian Authority. **Hamas** disparaged the change in policy and called for a complete end to the closure, for a route to be opened between the Gaza Strip and Judea and Samaria, and for a sea lane to be opened under international supervision.

# Important Events

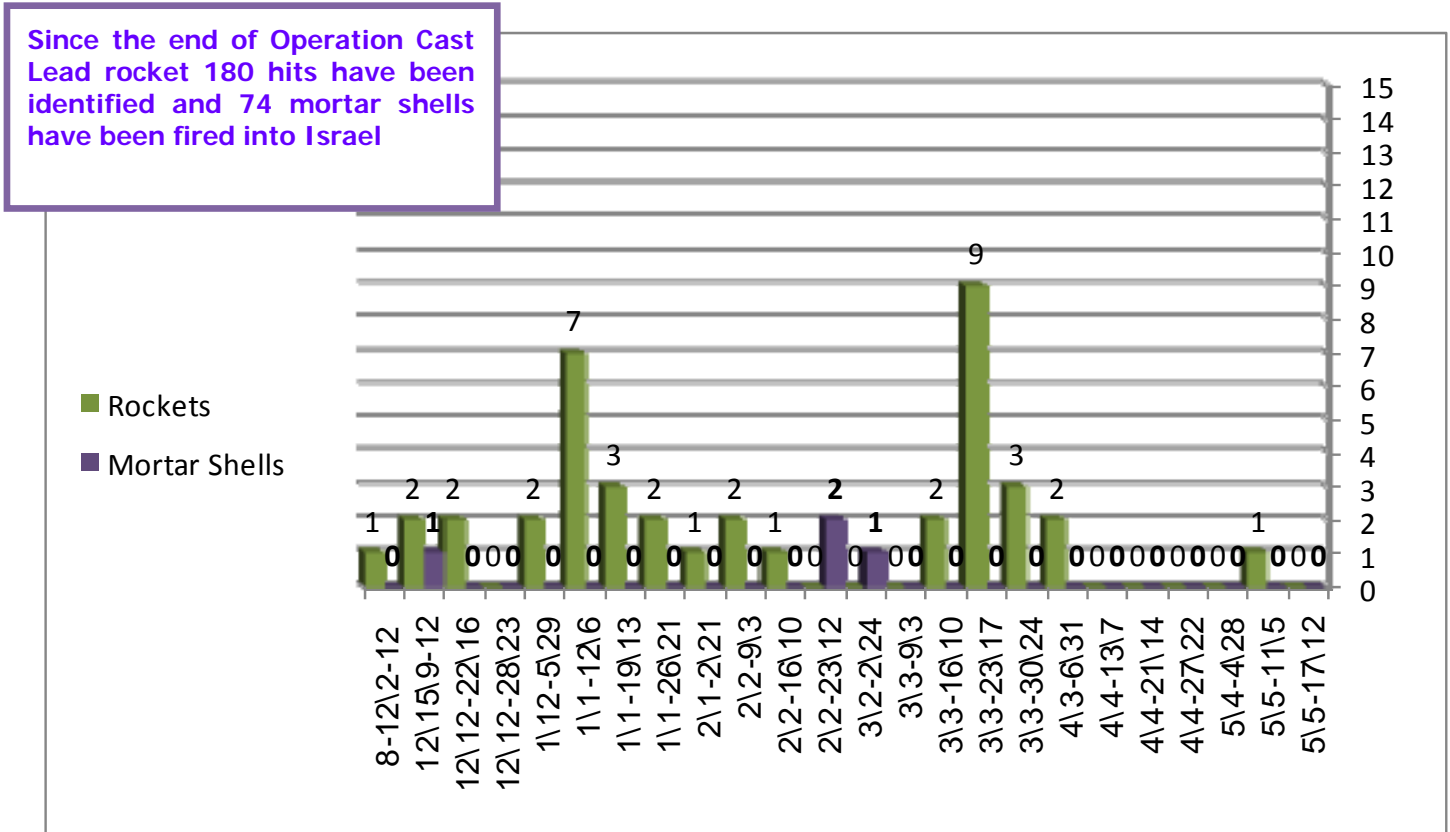
## The Gaza Strip

### Rocket Fire

■ This past week two rocket hits were identified near the security fence in the western Negev. There were no casualties and no damage was done. A number of attempts were made to launch rockets but they fell inside the Gaza Strip.

■ A number of IEDs were detonated and light arms were fired at IDF patrols near the security fence. The military wing of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for the June 18 attack (Suraya al-Quds, June 18, 2010). The military wing of the Popular Resistance Committees claimed responsibility for another shooting attack the same day (PRC website, June 18, date).

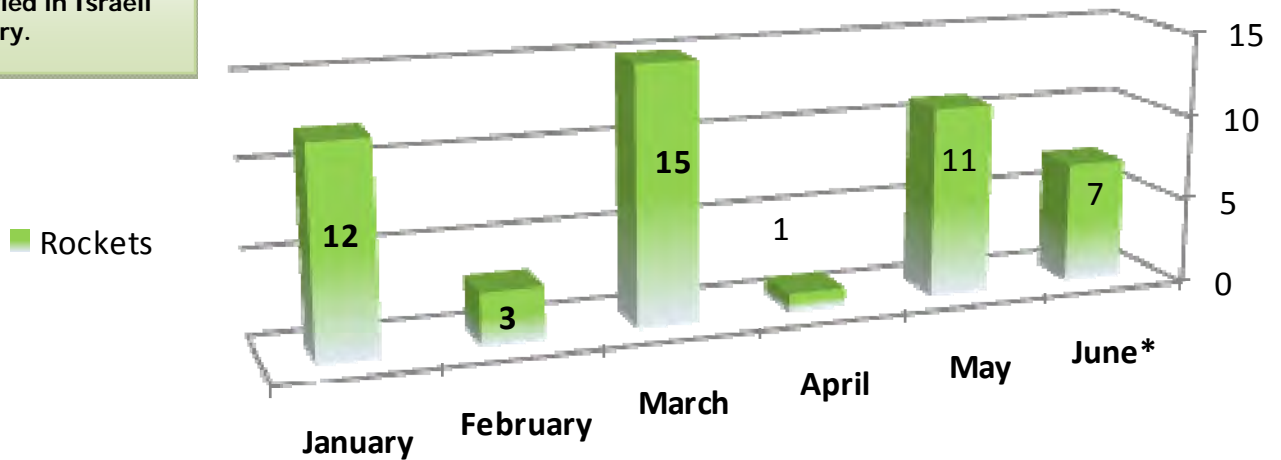
### Rockets and Mortar Shells Fired into Israeli Territory<sup>1</sup>



<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 Fire 2010, Monthly Distribution

Since the beginning of 2010, 50 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory.



\*As of June 22, 2010

## Judea and Samaria

### Counterterrorism Activities

- This past week the Israeli security forces continued their counterterrorism activities, detaining Palestinians suspected of terrorist activities and seizing weapons.
- The Palestinian Authority's security services detained a number of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad operatives in the Hebron district (Hamas' Palestine-info website, June 21, 2010). The detentions may be connected with the PA's efforts to find those responsible for the shooting attack at an Israeli patrol car near Hebron on June 14. One passenger was killed and three were wounded.

## More Flotillas to the Gaza Strip Planned

- The international media circus caused by the last flotilla to the Gaza Strip and the political pressure exerted on Israel following it led **many groups and organizations to declare their intention of dispatching flotillas of their own**. Two are currently on the agenda, one each from **Lebanon and Iran**.
- So far, apparently the Israeli government's announcement that it would ease restrictions on the import of merchandise to the Gaza Strip has not changed the plans of Iran some of the organizations

\* Rocket hits identified in Israeli territory only.

and groups to dispatch flotillas. The Gazans expect the Lebanese ships to arrive within a few days. In their honor the Popular Committee to Break the Siege is preparing a display in the Gaza port (*Filastin al-'Aan*, June 22, 2010).

## Lebanon

■ Two Lebanese ships are expected to set sail for Cyprus in the coming days, and from there to the Gaza Strip. Both of them are currently anchored in the port of Tripoli. Apparently they are planned to set sail separately and then meet on the way and arrive at the Gaza Strip together (*Al-Safir*, NBN, June 22, 2010):

- The cargo ship **Nagi al-Ali**<sup>2</sup> (formerly the Julia) is expected to set sail with 100 passengers, **25 of them European activists** (according to the organizers, some of them parliamentarians) and **about 50 correspondents**. Radio Nur reported that a third ship might join the flotilla with 50 correspondents on board (Radio Nur, June 21, 2010). According to Al-Manar TV, on June 22 the organizers are expected to begin loading equipment.
- The **Maryam** is expected to sail with between **50 and 60 women passengers and a cargo of humanitarian aid**. The organizer is examining the possibility of having more women join the voyage.



The Nagi al-Ali near the port of Tripoli (Al-Manar TV, June 20, 2010).

■ Behind the organizing of the flotilla are low-ranking Lebanese activists **who have no real significance in Lebanon's internal politics**. Some of them belong to the pro-Syrian, pro-Hezbollah March 8 Alliance. The two groups behind the operation are Journalists without Bounds and the Free Palestine Movement, both of them **fairly minor organizations**. **In our assessment, purchasing the**

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<sup>2</sup> Nagi al-Ali, for whom the ship is named, was a Palestinian cartoonist (real name Salim Hussein). He created a character symbolizing for the Palestinians their suffering, the silence of the Arab world and their aspiration for "freedom." Some 40,000 cartoons are attributed to him. He was gunned down by an unknown assassin in London in 1987.

**ships and organizing the flotilla were carried out with Syrian and Hezbollah involvement and support. Neither of them wants to expose its true identity.**

■ In the meantime the flotilla's organizers and Hezbollah have been exploiting the events for a propaganda campaign against Israel filled with hatred and anti-Israel, anti-Semitic motifs. **Yasser Qashlaq**, the main figure organizing the voyage, said that the ships the IDF took over would "take the remainder of the European garbage" which came to Israel back to their homelands. Hezbollah's propaganda network is giving the events thorough coverage to exploit their media effect.<sup>3</sup>

## Iran

■ The **Iranian Red Crescent** said in an announcement that it would send three aid ships to the Gaza Strip. Two would carry cargos of medicine and food and the third would carry Iranian relief workers. In the meantime the organization announced it was postponing the voyage because of the absence international coordination and changes that had to be made in the cargo in accordance with the International Red Cross. The organization's spokesman did not say when the ships would sail (ISNA, June 22, 2010).

## Bahrain

■ **Yusef Rizka**, Ismail Haniya's political advisor and chairman of the board of Hamas' daily *Felesteen*, said that the Association of Islamic Sages and the Association of Ahal al-Sunnah were organizing two ships to bring aid to the Gaza Strip (*Felesteen*, June 17, 2010).

## Europe

■ A ship of women is being organized as part of a "Women for Gaza" campaign within the "**European Campaign to Break the Siege**." The boat is expected to set sail at the end of July. According to the campaign's organizers, in view of the large number of requests to join the voyage, participation will be contingent on a contribution of 5,000 pounds sterling or on raising a contribution of that sum (*Al-Safir* correspondent from Brussels, June 21, 2010).

## Israel Changes Its Policy of Closure of the Gaza Strip

<sup>3</sup> For further information see the June 23 bulletin, "[The aid flotilla planned to set sail from Lebanon is supported by Syria and Hezbollah. Its organizer, Yasser Qashlaq, called for "getting rid of the remainder of the garbage of Europe" \[the Jews in Israel\] and sending them back to their "homelands" which will shortly be available on this site in English.](#)"

■ The government of Israel decided to implement **a series of measures to ease the closure of the Gaza Strip**, in effect redefining the list of merchandise in terms of what cannot be imported into the Gaza Strip rather than what can. Thus any commodity which cannot be used in the manufacture of weapons will be permitted entry, all types of food and equipment with dual uses (such as building materials). That will be done on condition that the materials involved are designated for projects authorized by the Palestinian Authority and carried out and overseen by recognized international groups (such as building projects including schools, health institutions and water and sewage installations).

■ In addition, more land crossings are expected to open and the passage of civilians between the Gaza Strip and Israel will be made easier, especially for those in need of medical treatment in Israel or for workers of relief organizations recognized by Israel. However, for security reasons, Israel will continue to supervise the crossings and examine merchandise in the port of Ashdod before it is transferred to the Gaza Strip.

■ **Responses to the Israeli decision:**

- **The United States:** On June 20 a spokesman for the White House said that the United States welcomed the change in Israeli policy, which met the demands of many members of the international community. He said that it would aid significantly in improving the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip while preventing the entrance of weapons. He added that the United States would work in conjunction with Israel, the Palestinian Authority, the International Quartet and other international groups to ensure that the arrangement be implemented as quickly as possible.



The Gaza Strip crossings (IDF Spokesman, June 21, 2010).

■ **The Palestinian Authority:**

- **Mahmoud Abbas**, PA chairman, sent a message to American envoy George Mitchell stating that Israel had to **completely lift** the siege of the Gaza Strip, according to **Saeb Erekat**, chief Palestinian Authority negotiator. Erekat added that Mahmoud Abbas had demanded goods be

allowed to be transported between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank in both directions, and called on the American administration and the international community to advance the issue (*Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda*, June 19, 2010).

- **Salam Fayyad**, PA prime minister, met with the German minister of economic development, Dirk Niebel at Al-Najar University in Nablus. He told Neibel that there was a need for genuine, effective international intervention which would force Israel to fully lift the closure of the Gaza Strip and to implement the Agreement on Movement and Access of 2005. The agreement includes a clause for safe passage between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, the construction of a port in Gaza and the rebuilding of the Gaza airport (*Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda*, June 20 2010).

- **Members of the PLO Executive Committee**, which met on June 19, called for allowing unlimited amounts of raw materials into the Gaza Strip (including building materials to rebuild structures damaged in Operation Cast Lead). The committee expressed support for the idea of stationing foreign inspectors at the border crossings (with Israel), in accordance with the Agreement on Movement and Access of 2005 (Wafa News Agency, June 19, 2010).

- **Hamas:**

- **Ismail Haniya**, head of the de facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip, said that Hamas rejected Israel's attempt to "prettify the closure and deepen it with a new formula." He said that Hamas sought a complete end to the closure, adding that Gaza was not alone, that public opinion identified with it, and that as a result Israel's position on the closure was at the breaking point (Hamas' Palestine-info website, June 18, 2010).

- **Taher al-Nunu**, Hamas spokesman, said that Israel was trying to fool the work, and called the decision to ease the closure "throwing sand in [everyone's] eyes." He reiterated that Hamas wanted a complete end of the closure, including the import of building materials [ITIC note: which also have military uses], and not an easing of restrictions (Safa News Agency, June 17, 2010).

- **Jamal al-Khudari**, head of Hamas' Popular Committee to End the Siege, criticized the Israeli decision. He claimed that 800 trucks a day were needed, not the 100 Israel customarily allowed in. He said there were four stages to lifting the siege: opening the land crossings, allowing every type of merchandise to be imported, including raw and building materials, opening a route between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank to the passage of individuals and opening sea lanes with international supervision (Popular Committee for Breaking the Siege website, June 20, 2010).