



Center for Special Studies  
Intelligence and Terrorism  
Information Center

## News of the Israeli-Palestinian Confrontation

February 16-28, 2007

### The IDF fights terrorism...



**IDF counterterrorist activities in Nablus**  
(Photo courtesy of the IDF  
spokesperson, February 25)

### ...and the Palestinian Authority tries to market the Mecca accord.



**Khaled Mashaal and Russian foreign  
minister Lavrov (Palestine-info,  
February 27, 2007)**

## Contents

Overview

Important  
Events

Statistical  
Data

Internal  
Palestinian  
Arena

## Overview

■ The Palestinian terrorist organizations continue their efforts to carry out attacks: A resident of the settlement of Bat Ayin (north of Hebron) was stabbed to death by two Palestinians, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) failed in its attempts to carry out a suicide bombing attack in Tel Aviv (apparently) and at vacation sites in Sinai, and rockets continue to be launched at Israeli settlements in the western Negev (48 hits in February). The Israeli security forces carried out a large-scale operation against terrorist infrastructures in Nablus, and killed two senior PIJ terrorist organizations in northern Samaria who were central figures in dispatching suicide bombers to Israel.

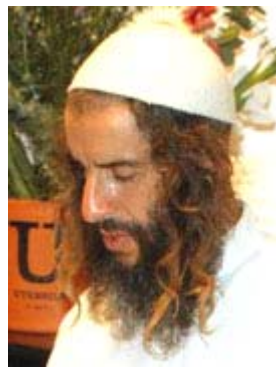
■ As part of the Palestinian Authority's (PA) campaign to market the Mecca accord, Abu Mazen toured European states, while Khaled Mashaal visited Russia. The two tried to convince their hosts to support the Palestinian national unity government and to lift the political and economic embargo, even though Hamas consistently makes it clear that it does not intend to recognize Israel and abandon terrorism as demanded by the Quartet. The promises the two received from their hosts would seem to have raised Palestinian expectations of receiving what they requested.

# Important Events

## Judea and Samaria

### Resident of Bat Ayin stabbed to death

■ Erez Levanon, 42, father of three, a resident of the settlement of Bat Ayin north of Hebron, was stabbed to death on February 25. His body was found in a gully near Beit Ummar (between Bethlehem and Hebron) by the Palestinian security forces.



Erez Levanon (Israeli Foreign Ministry Website)

■ The day after the murder the Israeli security forces detained two Palestinians suspected of committing the murder. The two, Mudeir Musa Ahmad Abu Daya and Musa Adam Salem al-Khalil, both 18 and both residents of the village of Khirbet Safa (near Beit Ummar), hid in a house in the village after the murder.

■ During interrogation they revealed that the murder had been premeditated and that they had even considered the times and routes of local patrols in their plans. On the day of the murder they left the village armed with knives and murdered Erez Levanon when they came upon him. Although the PIJ claimed responsibility, it was apparently their initiative.



**Musa al-Khalil**



**Mudeir Abu Daya**

## **PIJ suicide bombing attack prevented**

■ On February 20 a suicide bombing attack planned for a city in the center of Israel, apparently Tel Aviv, was prevented. The Israeli security forces received information that a suicide bomber from Jalaboun (east of Jenin) had left that morning on his way to the central region of Israel. In his possession was a bag with a large quantity of explosives which he planned to detonate in a crowded area. The suicide bomber and a number of additional suspects were found hiding in an apartment in Bat Yam (south of Tel Aviv). The explosive device was later found in a dumpster in Rishon Letzion.<sup>1</sup>

## **The Gaza Strip**

### **Rocket fire from the Gaza Strip continues**

■ The Palestinians continue not to honor the cease fire in the Gaza Strip. During the second two weeks of February 26 rocket hits were identified on Israeli territory (similar to the first two weeks). A total of 48 rockets hit, compared with 30 in January. After a relative decline in rocket fire in January (the month with the worst internal Palestinian clashes) the level has returned to 40-50 rockets a month. The PIJ was responsible for most of the attacks, with Fatah responsible for most of the others. Hamas was not involved.

---

<sup>1</sup> For further information see our February 23 Bulletin entitled "Prevention of Palestinian Islamic Jihad suicide bombing attack in Tel Aviv," at [http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam\\_multimedia/English/eng\\_n/pdf/ct\\_e22feb07.pdf](http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/ct_e22feb07.pdf).

## Counterterrorist activities

### The large-scale counterterrorist operations in Nablus

■ Between February 25 and March 1 the IDF undertook a large-scale operation in Nablus to locate terrorist-operatives and laboratories manufacturing explosives. As part of the operation a closure was imposed on the Nablus Kasbah (old city) and the roads leading out of the city were blocked. The operation was carried out because Nablus is a focal point for terrorist infrastructures and activities. According to the IDF spokesman, most of the warnings received by the security forces relate to the terrorist infrastructure there.

■ The IDF operation uncovered three laboratories in which were found pipe charges, gas balloons, materials for the manufacture of explosive devices and improvised weapons. In addition, a large quantity of audio-video equipment for the filming of the “wills” and “farewell movies” of suicide bombers. In some instances the IDF soldiers participating in the operation were shot at or had Molotov cocktails and rocks thrown at them. Three soldiers were slightly wounded.



**Left: The contents of one of the three explosives laboratories. Right: Audio-video equipment used to tape suicide bombers' wills and movies (Both photos courtesy of the IDF spokesperson)**

## **Senior PIJ terrorist-operatives killed**

■ On February 21 the Israeli security forces operating in the Jenin refugee camp killed Mahmoud Ibrahim Qassem Ubeid (Abu Jahim), one of the most-wanted PIJ operatives in northern Samaria and the terrorist who dispatched the suicide bomber on his mission to Tel Aviv. Ubeid recruited potential suicide bombers for attacks in Israel, manufactured explosive devices and was involved in dozens of side charge attacks against IDF forces in the Jenin region.



**Muhammad Ibrahim Qassem Ubeid (Abu Jahim), senior operative on the wanted list of Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorists in Judea and Samaria, who dispatched the suicide bomber to Israel (from the PIJ Website, February 22).**

■ On February 28 two senior PIJ terrorist-operatives and an accomplice were killed by IDF fire in Jenin. The most important operative was Ashraf Mahmoud Nafi' al-Sa'adi, who was head of the PIJ terrorist-operative wing in Jenin. He was involved in planning the suicide bombing attacks the PIJ carried out in 2005-2006 and responsible for shooting and side charge attacks. Muhammad Ibrahim Mahmoud Ahmad (Abu Na'isah) belonged to the PIJ headquarters in the Jenin refugee camp. During the operation the terrorists opened fire on the IDF and one soldier was slightly wounded.



Ashraf al-Sa'adi and Muhammad Abu Na'isah at a demonstration. The yellow triangle is apparently the corner of a Hezbollah flag (Forum, Hamas Website, February 28)

## **Counterterrorist activities in the Sinai peninsula**

### **Palestinian terrorists detained by the Egyptian security forces**

■ On February 22 hundreds of Egyptian security personnel deployed in northern Sinai to apprehend Palestinian terrorist-operatives who apparently belonged to the PIJ. The terrorists apparently planned to attack tourist sites, especially those frequented by Israelis.

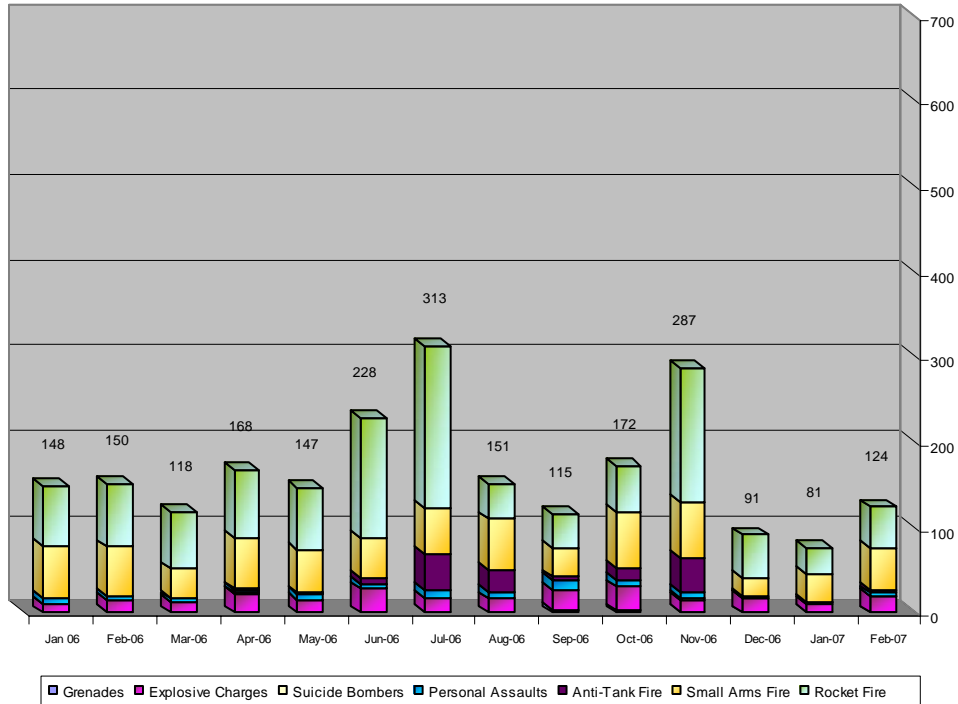
■ On the night of February 22, according to the media and based on Egyptian sources, 20 Palestinian were detained. They had infiltrated into Sinai from the Gaza Strip, apparently through tunnels, and had weapons in their possession. One of them also had an explosive belt. That detainee, according to reports, belonged to the PIJ and claimed he was planned to carry out a suicide bombing attack against Israeli tourists in southern Sinai (Al-Hayat, February 21). Senior PIJ operatives denied planning to attack tourist sites in Sinai (Qudspress Website, February 25).

### **Explosives storehouse uncovered**

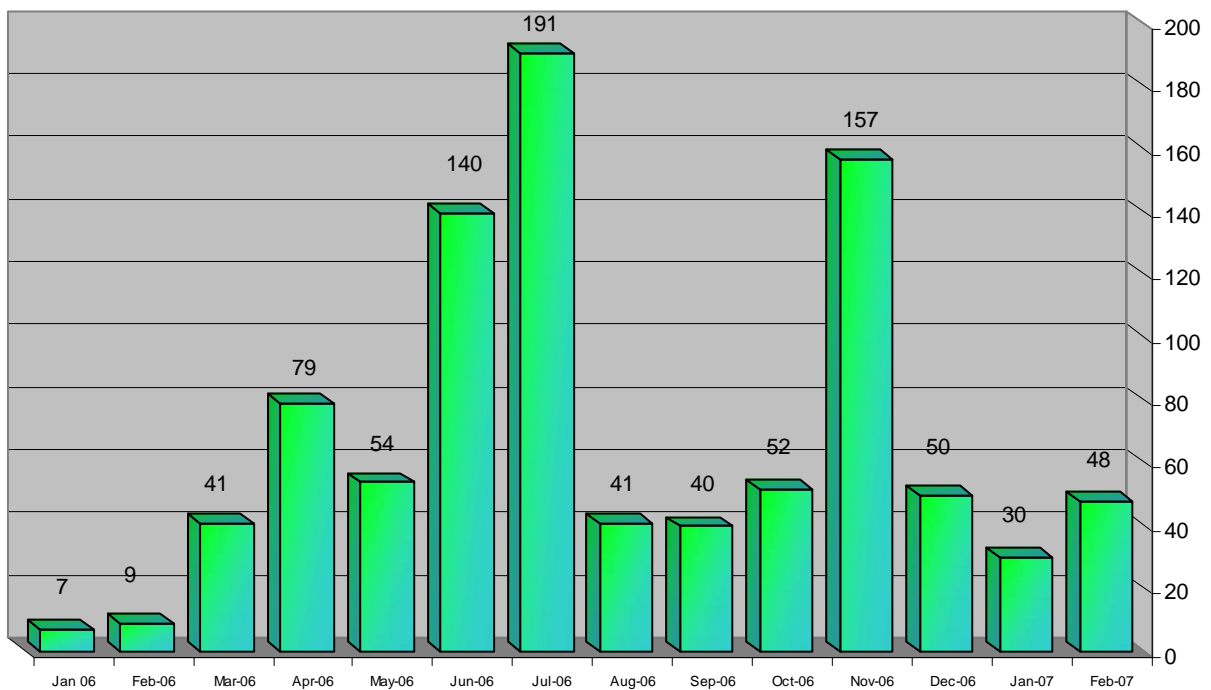
■ The Egyptian security forces operating in northern Sinai uncovered a storehouse containing about a ton of explosives near the Kerem Shalom crossing. The explosives were apparently supposed to be smuggled into the Gaza Strip.

# Statistical Data

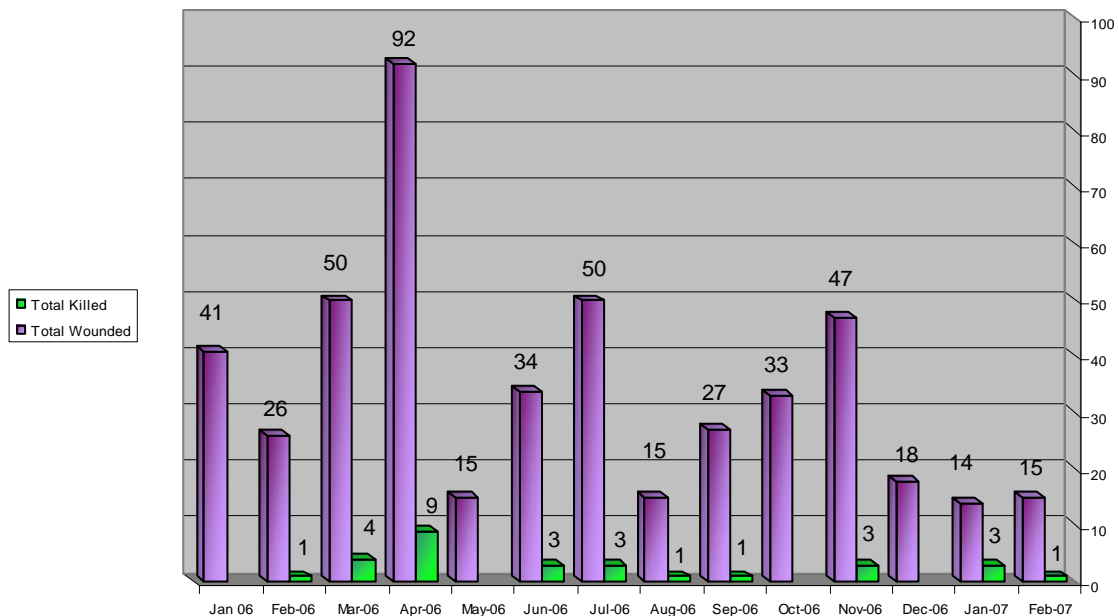
## Monthly distribution of attacks



## Monthly distribution of rocket hits



## Monthly distribution of Israeli casualties



## The Internal Palestinian Arena

### Palestinian campaign to market the Mecca accord

■ Approximately two weeks after the signing of the Mecca accord, Hamas spokesmen continue to congratulate themselves and to stress their commitment to adhere to it “in word and spirit.” However, they also stress that the accord does not include recognition of the State of Israel and that the movement has no intention of changing its ideological position or to fulfilling the demands of the Quartet.

■ Although the accord does not fulfill the Quartet’s basic demands, both Fatah and Hamas expect that their extensive propaganda campaign will enable them to market the accord to the international community.<sup>2</sup> The promises Abu Mazen

---

<sup>2</sup> For further information see our February 13 Bulletin entitled “Hamas spokesmen stress that the Mecca Agreement does not recognize Israel,” at [http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam\\_multimedia/English/eng\\_n/pdf/mecca\\_b\\_e.pdf](http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/pdf/mecca_b_e.pdf).



and Khaled Mashaal received during their marketing campaign would seem to have raised Palestinian expectations of receiving what they requested.

■ The campaign to market the Mecca accord has been divided between PA chairman Abu Mazen and Damascus-based Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal. Abu Mazen visited Britain, Germany, France, Egypt and Jordan, while Khaled Mashaal went to Russia, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Sudan.

■ The following is Abu Mazen's itinerary:

- ✿ On February 20 he arrived in **Jordan** and met with King Abdullah.
- ✿ On February 22 he arrived in **Britain** and spoke with prime minister Tony Blair, who expressed his support for the Palestinian national unity government and the furthering of the peace process. During the visit Abu Mazen repeatedly stated the Palestinians' commitment to the peace process according to the vision of two states for two peoples, their commitment to the agreements signed by the PLO and to abandoning terrorism (Al-Jazeera TV, February 21).
- ✿ On February 22 Abu Mazen met with Chancellor Angela Merkel of **Germany**. After the meeting Abu Mazen stated he was of the opinion that the economic and diplomatic limitations placed on the Palestinian government would be lifted.
- ✿ On February 23 Abu Mazen met with **French** president Jacques Chirac, who said he supported a national unity government formed on the basis of the Mecca accord. He also said France would collaborate with it once it had been established.
- ✿ On February 26, on his return from Europe, Abu Mazen went to **Egypt** and met with Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak, and from there to Abu Dhabi.

■ On February 20 the Hamas delegation visited **Saudi Arabia** and on February 21 **Egypt**, and from there it continued to the **Sudan**. From the Sudan it went to **Russia** and met with Sergei Lavrov, the Russian foreign minister. The

Russian media reported that Lavrov promised to act to lift the economic boycott of the PA and to have the national unity government recognized (Russian news agency RIA Novosti, February 26).

■ During their visits Abu Mazen and Khaled Mashaal tried to represent the Mecca accord as capable of promoting the peace process and asked their interlocutors to lift the political and economic boycott imposed on the Palestinians. For example:

- ❁ In a television interview in Egypt, Khaled Mashaal appealed to the international community to exploit the Palestinian agreement achieved by the Mecca accord to promote a political program including the establishment of a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders with Jerusalem as its capital (Al-Jazeera TV, February 23).
- ❁ After meeting with Khaled Mashaal, the Russian foreign minister held a press conference at which he stated that Khaled Mashaal promised he would work to stop the violence, including the launching of rockets into Israeli territory (AP, February 27). Khaled Mashaal avoided making such statements to the media in Russia and all the other countries he visited.
- ❁ At a press conference after the meeting with Lavrov, Khaled Mashaal stated that if a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders whose capital was Jerusalem were established and if the right to return were assured, and if the settlements were evacuated and the prisoners were released, it would be an “important step” towards stability. (OSC TV, Russia, February 27).



**Khaled Mashaal after meeting with the Russian foreign minister (Al-Jazeera TV, February 27).**

### **Forming the new Palestinian government**

■ On February 15 Hamas government prime minister Ismail Haniya handed in his resignation to Abu Mazen. Abu Mazen then charged him with forming the national unity government. So far, contacts to establish the government have been sluggish. Fatah and Hamas have deliberated within their factions to choose representatives for the new government.

### **Tension between Fatah and Hamas continues**

■ Despite the efforts made by both sides to restore calm, and despite the reduction in the mutual propaganda and mud-slinging campaigns, tension still exists and occasional clashes still break out between the two sides. The worst clash occurred when five Palestinians were killed and approximately 40 wounded during exchanges of fire in Khan Yunis between two rival clans, one affiliated with Hamas and the other with Fatah. (Ma'an News Agency, February 24).

### **The meeting between the American Secretary of State, the Israeli Prime Minister and Abu Mazen ended without significant results**

■ On February 19 Condoleezza Rice, the American Secretary of State, conferred with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Abu Mazen in Jerusalem. The meeting, which had been arranged before the signing of the Mecca accord, was part of American president George Bush's promise to increase American involvement in the peace process. Israel and the United States presented a forceful position regarding the Quartet's conditions for the lifting of the sanctions placed on the PA. The meeting ended without significant results.



**The United States (represented by Condoleezza Rice) opposing the Palestinian national unity government (Cartoon by Omayya Joha, Hamas Website, March 1).**