

Operation 'Protective Edge': A Detailed Summary of Events

Overview

On July 8, following relentless rocket fire that targeted Israeli civilians (according to the IDF, 450 rockets were fired at Israel since the beginning of 2014) and the discovery by Israel's security forces of Hamas' vast underground tunnel network leading out of Gaza, the IDF initiated Operation 'Protective Edge'. According to the IDF, terrorists in Gaza held approximately 10,000 rockets prior to Operation 'Protective Edge', one-third of which were fired at Israel during the operation, and an additional one-third of which were destroyed by IDF forces.¹ The military campaign, which lasted 50 days, had the dual aim of restoring security to Israeli civilians and dismantling the Hamas tunnel network used by Hamas militants to infiltrate Israel.² On July 18, the tenth day of the operation, and continued terrorist assaults on Israel from land, air and sea, the IDF commenced the ground phase of the operation with the aim of locating and destroying the underground tunnel network. IDF forces neutralized 32 terror tunnels during this phase of the operation. The IDF excavation of the tunnels, which took place during phase two of Operation 'Protective Edge', resulted in the seizure of tons of Hamas supplies as well as the discovery of plans for future attacks, including a massive plot to attack southern Israel on the Jewish New Year in September 2014.³ The Israeli government said that Hamas planned to send terrorists through the more than 30 tunnels uncovered by Israeli troops and into six southern Israeli communities.⁴ The plan was to kill and kidnap as many Israelis as possible.⁵

In the three weeks leading up to July 8, according to the official IDF figures, militants fired 250 rockets capable of reaching Israel's largest cities and population centers and endangering 3.5 million Israeli

¹ See: <http://www.idfblog.com/blog/2014/08/05/operation-protective-edge-numbers/>

² The Hamas tunnel network is a vast underground city with dozens of access points located throughout Gaza. Hamas uses these tunnels as weapons caches, bunkers, command centers and a concealed transportation artery for terrorists and weapons, including rocket launchers. For more details see the IDF blog: <http://www.idfblog.com/blog/2014/07/31/everything-need-know-hamas-underground-city-terror/>

³ Jerusalem Post, "Bennett: Ground invasion stopped mega-attack", July 20, 2014.

⁴ JTA, "Report: Hamas planned Rosh Hashanah attack through Gaza tunnels", July 28, 2014.

⁵ Breitbart, "Reports: Massive New Year's Terrorist Invasion of Israel Thwarted by Security Forces".

lives.⁶ The rockets fired were composed of M-302 (Range 160 km), M75 (Range 75 km), Grad (48 km) and Qassam (up to 17.7 km).⁷ According to the IDF, over 4,382 rockets were fired at Israel by Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist groups in Gaza. More than 70% of Israelis live within range of Hamas' rockets. During Operation 'Protective Edge', the IDF targeted more than 5,085 terror sites in the Gaza Strip. According to the IDF, 3,659 rocket and mortar impact sites were discovered, including rockets that were fired on IDF soldiers in Gaza. Of those that struck inside Israel, 224 hit built-up areas. The Iron Dome missile defense system successfully intercepted 735 rockets and mortars (86% of the rockets fired). Each rocket intercepted by the Iron Dome would have hit a populated area. The IDF also claimed that there were 197 "failed launchings", projectiles that never left the Gaza Strip or that did not launch at all.⁸

According to the IDF, 2,622 rockets and mortars were fired against Israel since the beginning of the operation until late July. The majority of them reached the area surrounding the Gaza Strip and reached a medium range of up to 50km. Less than 10% of all the launchings were long range: 181 rockets with a range of up to 80km reached the Tel Aviv metropolitan area, Jerusalem, the Negev, Hadera and northern Israel, and 32 rockets with a range of more than 80km. The Israel Security Agency (Shin Bet) also said that 24 rockets were launched from the Sinai against Israel. In addition to the rocket attacks, six attempted terrorists infiltrations into Israel were recorded in July, as well as one explosive tunnel attack, three suicide attacks, and dozens of sniper, AT, IED and hand grenade attacks.⁹

On the tenth day of the Operation 'Protective Edge', the IDF commenced the ground phase of the operation in response to continued terrorist assaults on Israel by Hamas militants from land (including up to 80 rockets fired per day on Israeli civilian cities);=, air (including attempts to launch an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) from the Gaza Strip that was intercepted by the IAF as it

⁶ <http://www.idfblog.com/blog/2014/08/05/operation-protective-edge-numbers/>

⁷ Mfa, 'Israel Under Fire', July 2014 <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Terrorism/Pages/Israel-under-fire-July-2014-A-Diary.aspx>

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ <http://www.shabak.gov.il/English/EnTerrorData/Reports/Pages/Monthlysummary%E2%80%93July2014.aspx>

penetrated Israeli airspace over the coast near Ashdod¹⁰), and sea (including the attempted infiltration by Hamas at Zikim Beach, just north of the Gaza Strip).¹¹ According to the IDF, Hamas terrorists infiltrated Israel through tunnels four times during the operation, with the intention of carrying out attacks. The IDF destroyed 32 Hamas terror tunnels in Gaza, 14 of which had openings into Israeli territory.¹² During the campaign, rockets were discovered in three separate incidents in United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNWRA) schools.¹³ According to an official IDF report, throughout Operation 'Protective Edge', Hamas used UN facilities, schools, graveyards, mosques and power plants, among other civilian areas, to launch over 1,600 rockets at Israel. Among these civilian sites was Wafa Hospital, which Hamas used as a command center and rocket-launching site (see July 21/23 below). The IDF said that Hamas repeatedly opened fire from hospital windows and used anti-tank missiles from the premises. In response to threat that this posed to IDF forces, the IDF repeatedly conveyed warnings to hospital staff, Palestinian officials and international aid organizations, including the World Health Organization, requesting that they act in order to stop the hospital from being used for military purposes, and warning that the IDF will be forced to act if these activities continue.

Throughout Operation 'Protective Edge', as in previous IDF campaigns, the IDF made great efforts to minimize harm to the civilian population in the Gaza Strip. The IDF warned civilians prior to IAF strikes. The largest effort took place on July 17, when approximately 100,000 leaflets containing a warning message were dropped over Gaza and hundreds of thousands of citizens receive messages telling them to vacate their villages.¹⁴ During the operation, the IDF also facilitated the provision of medical services through the Civil Liaison Administration, as well as the transfer of medical supplies in the Gaza Strip through the land crossings. In some cases, the IDF even permitted people with

¹⁰ Ynet, "Hamas claims multiple UAVs launched into Israel", July 14, 2014.

¹¹ Jerusalem Post, "IDF kills 5 Hamas terrorists attempting to infiltrate from the sea", July 8, 2014.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ MFA, "IDF report: Hamas illegally used civilian infrastructure during Operation Protective Edge", August 21, 2014.

¹⁴ Jpost, "IDF warns citizens of Gaza to evacuate to populated city centers", July 17, 2014.

medical emergencies to enter Israel in order to receive care.¹⁵ On July 23, after Hamas continued firing rockets from inside a hospital, the IDF made an additional warning call; audio from the call confirms that the hospital was closed and that no medical staff or patients were in the building. After confirming that no civilians were present, the IDF attacked the compound and the terrorists within the hospital grounds in order to remove the threat posed to IDF forces.¹⁶ The IDF official report regarding how Hamas exploits civilian infrastructure stated that: “Hamas' tactics deliberately violate international law and the most basic of moral precepts. Given these tactics, the ultimate responsibility for the damage done to civilians as well as the civilian infrastructure of Gaza lies with Hamas.”¹⁷

During Operation ‘Protective Edge’, a total of 82,201 IDF reservists were called up throughout the campaign. According to the IDF, 64 soldiers were killed and 469 others were wounded. Four Israeli civilians were killed by rocket or mortar strikes, including a 4-year-old child, and 36 others were wounded by shrapnel.¹⁸ Gaza health officials said more than 2,100 people were killed in the Gaza Strip in the fighting and many thousands more were wounded. More than 1,000 Hamas militants were killed.¹⁹

[Throughout Operation ‘Protective Edge’](#) Hamas violated 11 ceasefire agreements by firing at Israeli civilians and forces during ceasefires and UN-declared humanitarian windows.

Summary of each proposed ceasefire:²⁰

- **July 15:** Israel accepted a ceasefire initiated by Egypt and stopped all fire at 09:00. However, terrorists continued to fire more than 50 rockets at Israeli communities. Only after six hours of continuous rocket attacks did the IDF respond.

¹⁵ For further details see: <http://www.idfblog.com/blog/2014/07/28/hamas-uses-hospitals-ambulances-military-purposes/>

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ For the full report see: <http://www.idfblog.com/blog/2014/08/20/new-declassified-report-exposes-hamas-human-shield-policy/>

¹⁸ Jerusalem Post, “50 days of Israel's Gaza operation, Protective Edge – by the numbers”, August 28, 2014.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ For further details see MFA: <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Terrorism/Pages/Protective-Edge-Hamas-violations-of-ceasefires-chronology.aspx>

- **July 16:** Hamas offered a ten-year truce if Israel met the following conditions:
 - Withdrawal of Israeli tanks from the Gaza border.
 - Freeing all the prisoners that were arrested after the murder of the three Israeli youths.
 - Lifting the siege and opening the border crossings to commerce and people.
 - Establishing an international seaport and airport which would be under U.N. supervision.
 - Increasing the permitted fishing zone to 10 kilometers.
 - Internationalizing the Rafah Crossing and placing it under the supervision of the U.N. and some Arab nations.
 - Placing international forces on the borders.
 - Easing conditions for permits to pray at the Al Aqsa Mosque.
 - Prohibiting Israeli interference in the reconciliation agreement.
 - Re-establishing an industrial zone and improvements in further economic development in the Gaza Strip.²¹

Israel rejected these conditions.²²

- **July 17:** Israel agreed to a five-hour humanitarian ceasefire. Hamas and other terrorist groups in Gaza rejected it, and rockets were fired from the Gaza Strip into southern Israel.
- **July 20:** Israel approved a two-hour humanitarian window in the area of Shejaiya, following an International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) request. Forty minutes after the ceasefire began, Hamas violated it. Nevertheless, Israel implemented the ceasefire and extended it for two more hours.

²¹ <http://www.nrg.co.il/online/1/ART2/597/047.html?hp=1&cat=666&loc=2;>

Haaretz, "What does Hamas really want?", July 20, 2014;

<http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/middle-east-unrest/how-realistic-are-hamas-cease-fire-terms-n157516>

²² Jpost, "Report: Hamas proposes 10-year cease-fire in return for conditions being met", July 16, 2014.

- **July 26-27:** Israel respected a UN-requested humanitarian ceasefire from 08:00-20:00 on July 26. Israel announced its readiness to prolong the ceasefire until midnight, but a few minutes after 20:00 Hamas renewed firing rockets at Israeli civilians. Hamas announced a 24-hour humanitarian ceasefire at 14:00 but violated its own ceasefire a short time later. Despite Hamas' continuous fire, Israel decided to extend the humanitarian ceasefire a second time, from midnight Saturday until midnight Sunday.
- **July 28:** Israel accepted Hamas' request for a ceasefire in honor of the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Fitr. The IDF was instructed to cease military attacks but Hamas continued to launch rockets at Israel.
- **July 30:** Israel announced a temporary humanitarian ceasefire between 15:00-19:00. A few minutes after the ceasefire began, Hamas fired rockets at the southern cities of Ashdod and Ashkelon as well as other Israeli communities.
- **August 1:** Israel accepted the UN/US proposal for a 72-hour humanitarian ceasefire beginning at 08:00. Approximately 90 minutes later, Hamas terrorists, including a suicide attacker, fired at IDF forces, violating the ceasefire. During the attack, two IDF soldiers were killed by Hamas fire and Israel suspects that Second Lt. Hadar Goldin was kidnapped during the exchange of fire and dragged into a tunnel (he was declared dead on August 3 based on forensic evidence found in the tunnel).
- **August 4:** Israel authorized a 7-hour humanitarian window in Gaza, from 10:00-17:00. Hamas kept firing rockets throughout the lull.
- **August 5-8:** Israel accepted the Egyptian proposed 72-hour ceasefire, beginning on August 5 at 08:00. Israel had already pulled out all its forces from the Gaza Strip. Prior to the expiration of the ceasefire on August 8, Israel notified Egypt that it would accept a 72-hour extension but the Palestinian delegation was not willing to renew the ceasefire. At approximately 04:30 on August 8, two rockets fired from Gaza hit southern Israel, in violation of the ceasefire that was set to expire at 08:00. Terrorists increased the rocket fire immediately after 08:00, injuring a number of Israelis.

- **August 10-13:** A 72-hour ceasefire began at midnight between August 10-11. Despite the firing of several rockets towards the end of the 72-hour ceasefire at midnight on August 13, the ceasefire was extended for five days until midnight on August 18.
- **August 19:** Although the ceasefire was extended for an additional 24 hours, three rockets fired from Gaza hit Beersheva and Netivot at approximately 15:30 pm, in violation of the ceasefire. In response, the IDF struck terrorist targets in Gaza. Throughout the rest of the day, a total of 50 rockets were fired from Gaza, striking southern Israel, including a shopping center in the Ashkelon coast region, as well as Tel Aviv and, shortly before midnight, the Jerusalem area.
- **August 26,** a ceasefire deal was met, brokered by the Egyptian government with the support of Qatar and the US,²³ but without a fixed long-term agreement and without Hamas's ten original conditions (see above July 16) being met.²⁴

Phase 1: Air strikes

On July 8, Israel commenced the first phase of Operation 'Protective Edge' in an aerial offensive in Gaza. On the first night, the IAF hit 50 Hamas targets, including the homes of four senior Hamas officials. Hamas's vast underground tunnel network in Gaza enabled the terrorist group to infiltrate Israel and ambush civilians and IDF soldiers. Eliminating this threat was a primary objective of the military campaign. On July 8, Israeli forces thwarted five armed Palestinian militants who attempted to infiltrate Israel from the sea at Zikim Beach, just north of the Gaza Strip. A senior security official said that an IDF detachment was dispatched to Zikim Beach after the military detected suspicious movements in the area. The unit engaged the terrorists, and shot and killed five of them. One soldier was lightly wounded in the exchange of fire.²⁵

²³ Guardian, "Gaza ceasefire: Israel and Palestinians agree to halt weeks of fighting", August 27, 2014.

²⁴ <http://www.shabak.gov.il/English/EnTerrorData/Reports/Pages/Monthlysummary%E2%80%93July2014.aspx>

²⁵ Jerusalem Post, "IDF kills 5 Hamas terrorists attempting to infiltrate from the sea", July 8, 2014.

Rocket sirens sounded across central Israel, including Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. The IDF said that 146 rockets were launched from Gaza. Of these, 117 struck Israel and 29 were intercepted by the Iron Dome system. The IDF confirmed that three rockets hit the Jerusalem hills and one hit the city of Hadera, which is 100 km away from the Gaza Strip. Damage was caused to property, including from fires caused by rockets and shrapnel. Due to Israel's extensive civil defense preparations, only minor injuries were reported.²⁶ Authorities said that the distance between Hadera and the Gaza Strip demonstrated that Hamas militants were able to smuggle into Gaza long-range rockets similar to those seized by the IDF aboard the Iranian vessel, Klos C, in March 2014.²⁷ The Iron Dome intercepted rockets fired toward central Israel.²⁸

On July 8, Hamas rockets also reached Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Air raid sirens were heard in the greater Tel Aviv area, Jerusalem, Kfar Saba and the Binyamina area. This demonstrated an increase in the range of the rocket fire²⁹. An Iron Dome battery intercepted the incoming rocket over Tel Aviv. Hamas announced it had fired four M-75 rockets at the capital.³⁰

On July 9, intensified Israeli air strikes targeted Gaza.³¹ Authorities said that 82 rockets hit Israel, including one that landed in Zichron Ya'akov. They also stated that an additional 21 rockets were intercepted by the Iron Dome, including over the Tel Aviv metropolitan area (Gush Dan), one over the town of Kiryat Gat and three over Ashdod. In the evening, a rocket hit a building near a kindergarten in the Sha'ar HaNegev regional council.³²

On July 10, Palestinian militants in Gaza fired 192 rockets at Israel; 141 of them hit Israel and an additional 44 were intercepted by the Iron Dome. Despite continuous missile fire, the border crossings into Gaza remained open all day. During the night an alarm was sounded for the first time

²⁶ MFA, "Israel under Fire", July 2014, <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Terrorism/Pages/Israel-under-fire-July-2014-A-Diary.aspx>

²⁷ See March ICT database for more details of the incident also see: <http://www.jpost.com/Defense/Iranian-arms-vessel-captured-by-IDF-to-dock-in-Eilat-344702>

²⁸ <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/1.603677>

²⁹ Reuters, "Hamas rockets land deep in Israel as it bombards Gaza Strip", July 8, 2014.

³⁰ Jerusalem Post, "Hamas rockets reach Jerusalem and Tel Aviv", July 8, 2014.

³¹ Times of Israel, "Hamas rockets reach the north, Abbas charges Israel with genocide", July 9, 2014.

³² MFA, "Israel under Fire", July 2014, <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Terrorism/Pages/Israel-under-fire-July-2014-A-Diary.aspx>

in Haifa. In a separate incident, a rocket was fired into Israel from Lebanon but no casualties or damage were reported.³³

On July 11, the IDF said that more than 140 rockets were fired from Gaza towards Israel, of which at least 107 struck Israel and 27 were intercepted by the Iron Dome missile defense system. The IDF hit 235 terror targets in the Gaza Strip. A missile hit a fuel truck in a gas station in Ashdod, seriously wounding one person and lightly wounding two others. In Be'er Sheva, a woman, 80, sustained moderate injuries when a Grad rocket hit her home during the night, detonating the gas cylinders there. Her home was destroyed and two others houses were damaged.³⁴

On July 12, 129 rockets were fired from Gaza towards Israel, of which at least 117 rockets struck Israel and nine were intercepted by the Iron Dome missile defense system.³⁵ The IDF hit 120 terror targets in the Gaza Strip. Sirens were sounded during the day in Ashdod, Ashkelon, the Eshkol Regional Council and Kiryat Gat in the south, and Nes Tziona Yavne, Rehovot, Be'er Sheva, Dimona and Yeruham. At around 14:00, a rocket struck the road leading to a house in the southern community of Netivot. Two teenagers were injured.³⁶ In the evening, rocket alert sirens were sounded in Rishon Lezion, Ashdod, Nes Ziona, Yavne, Rehovot, Ramle, Lod, Gan Yavne, Jerusalem, Beit Shemesh and the Dead Sea area, as well as in various communities near the Gaza border. Bethlehem and Hebron were hit by rockets fired from the Gaza Strip. After 21:00, ten rockets were fired at central Israel in two volleys. Rocket alert sirens were sounded in Tel Aviv, Ramat Gan, Bnei Brak, Petah Tikva, Herzliya, Rehovot, Yavne, Nes Tziona, Lod and Ramle, among others.³⁷

On July 13, the IDF said that 102 rockets struck Israel and 22 were intercepted by the Iron Dome missile defense system. In the early morning, Code Red sirens sounded across central Israel, including at Ben Gurion International Airport and southern Israel. A 16-year-old boy was seriously

³³ MFA, 'Israel under Fire', July 2014, <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Terrorism/Pages/Israel-under-fire-July-2014-A-Diary.aspx>

³⁴ Times of Israel, "Israeli, 61, badly injured by rocket hit in Ashdod", July 11, 2014.

³⁵ MFA, "Israel Under Fire", July 2014.

³⁶ Jerusalem Post, "Two Israelis injured as rocket strikes a home in Netivot", July 12, 2014.

³⁷ Ynet, "Over 600 rockets fell inside Israel, over 140 intercepted so far", July 13, 2014.

wounded and a man, 50, sustained light injuries from a rocket explosion in Ashkelon, which was targeted by rocket fire along with Ashdod and Be'er Sheva. Code red alerts were also sounded throughout the Tel Aviv metropolitan area and in Haifa. In the evening, three rockets fired from Gaza were intercepted by the Iron Dome over the Ashdod area,³⁸ and a rocket fired from Gaza hit electricity infrastructure in Israel that supplied power to Gaza, cutting power to about 70,000 people in in Khan Younis and Deir al-Balah in the northern Gaza Strip. Israel supplies 127 megawatts of electricity to the Gaza Strip on a daily basis through ten transmission lines. However it was decided not to fix the damage at this stage as it was too dangerous for workers due to ongoing rocket fire.³⁹ On the afternoon of July 13, IAF aircraft attacked two rocket launchers used to fire rockets into southern cities of Ashdod and Beersheba. A rocket launcher in the northern Gaza Strip was also attacked. The IDF also attacked the house of a senior Hamas operative responsible for rocket fire from the region of the Jabaliya refugee camp.⁴⁰

On July 14, Hamas used psychological warfare as a new tactic to target Israeli civilians. False text messages, written in English, were transmitted to Israeli civilians' phones during the operation. Though police do not yet know if the text messages originated from abroad or within Israel, they are perceived to have been sent as part of a psychological war waged by Hamas or its supporters, akin to the cyberattacks on Israeli Web sites that have proliferated in recent years. A message from "SMSQASSAM" and signed Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas's military wing, vowed to keep firing on Israelis until its "legitimate demands" were met. Authorities also said that civilians reported to have received a text message claiming to be from "SHABAK," the Shin Bet (Israel Security Agency), stating that a suicide bomber was on the loose and waiting to blow up civilians hiding in bomb shelters. "Beware of strangers in shelters," it warned. The message proved to be false.⁴¹

On July 14, a cease-fire proposal was announced by the Egyptian government, backed by PA President Mahmoud Abbas. The Israeli government accepted the proposal but Hamas rejected it

³⁸ MFA, 'Israel under Fire', July 2014.

³⁹ MFA, "High voltage line to northern Gaza hit by Hamas rocket", July 13, 2014.

⁴⁰ <http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/article/20673>

⁴¹ Jpost, "'Terror texts' bring cyber warfare to mobile phones", July 14, 2014.

and continued to fire rockets at Israeli civilians.⁴² The death toll in Gaza at this stage reached 200,⁴³ and Israel suffered its first civilian casualty.⁴⁴

On July 14, Israeli authorities said that 115 rockets were fired from Gaza towards Israel, of which at least 92 rockets struck Israel and 15 were intercepted by the Iron Dome missile defense system. The IDF hit 163 terror targets in the Gaza Strip. In the early morning hours, a UAV was identified entering Israel's territory and was shot down by an IAF Patriot surface-to-air-missile near the Ashdod coastline. Army Radio reported that the UAV was likely carrying explosives in another Hamas attempt to stage an attack on Israel. Code Red sirens were sounded in Ashdod, Netivot, Ashkelon, Hof Ashkelon, Sdot Negev Regional Council, Kiryat Malakhi and Be'er Tuvia. Code Red sirens sounded were also sounded in Ashdod, Eshkol, Gav Yavne and Kiryat Malakhi. One rocket exploded in a residential area in Ashdod, lightly injuring an eight-year-old boy. In addition, a rocket fired from Syria fell in an open area in the Golan Heights. A rocket fired from Gaza hit the Bedouin village of Lakiya, near Be'er Sheva, wounding two girls aged 11 and 13, one severely and one moderately. A rocket fired from Lebanon struck near the northern Israeli city of Nahariya.⁴⁵

On July 15, at least 155 rockets were fired from Gaza towards Israel, of which at least 122 rockets struck Israel and 26 were intercepted by the Iron Dome missile defense system. The IDF hit 96 terror targets in the Gaza Strip.⁴⁶ At 09:00, Israel accepted an Egyptian ceasefire proposal. However, by the early afternoon, Hamas militants broke the ceasefire and fired nearly 40 rockets towards Ashdod, Ashkelon, Netivot, Kiryat Malachi, Rishon Lezion, Rehovot, Nes Ziona and the Haifa area. Israeli authorities said that by 15:00, over 80 rockets had been fired at cities throughout Israel. In the evening, a school for special needs children was hit in Rishon Lezion.

On July 16, the IDF said that 132 rockets were fired from Gaza towards Israel, of which at least 82 rockets struck Israel and 33 were intercepted by the Iron Dome missile defense system. The IDF hit 176 terror targets in the Gaza Strip. Hamas and Islamic Jihad offered the Israeli government a 10-

⁴² AP, "July 14, 2014.

⁴³ IBT, "Timeline of Events In Gaza and Israel Shows Sudden, Rapid Escalation", July 23, 2014.

⁴⁴ Ynet, "Israeli volunteer killed by Gaza mortar fire", July 16, 2014.

⁴⁵ MFA, 'Israel Under Fire', July 2014.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

year truce with ten conditions centered on the lifting of the blockade and the release of prisoners who were released in the Gilad Shalit prisoner swap and then re-arrested. However, the Israeli government rejected these condition. On the same day a five-hour cease-fire was agreed to on both sides to allow humanitarian aid into Gaza. IDF forces also dropped leaflets and delivered warnings by phone and text that residents in the Zeitoun and Shujai'iyah areas of Gaza City should evacuate ahead of planned strikes. This was with the intent to minimize civilian casualties as Hamas is known to exploit civilians and use them as Human shields. The area is densely populated.⁴⁷ According to the IDF, a vicious rivalry between Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) has developed in Shuja'iyah since the internal turmoil in Gaza of 2007. Both terrorist organizations have spent the past seven years actively trying to increase their influence in the neighborhood. The rivalry has created an arena in which each organization strives to be regarded as the leader in the fight against Israel, thus changing the area from a residential neighborhood into a terrorist stronghold.⁴⁸

On July 17, a five-hour humanitarian ceasefire proposed by the UN was implemented.⁴⁹ Approximately five and a half hours prior to the ceasefire, the IDF identified 13 armed Hamas militants emerging from a Gazan tunnel on the Israeli side of the Gaza border, near Kibbutz Sufa. IDF forces said the militants were attempting to infiltrate Israel via a terror tunnel and carry out a large-scale terror attack against civilians in the kibbutz. The IDF destroyed the tunnel's exit, ending the incursion.⁵⁰ When the militants exited the tunnel onto Israeli territory, IAF planes were clearly visible above them, and the militants attempted to turn back to Gaza. The IAF bombed the opening of the tunnel on Israeli territory on the eastern side of the fence. The Shin Bet said that it warned the army of intelligence indicating a potential infiltration attempt, and that soldiers were prepared and on high alert, with increased troops in the area. In this way, a significant terrorist infiltration

⁴⁷ IDF, "Shuja'iyah: Hamas' Terror Fortress in Gaza", July 20, 2014.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ynet, "Israel, Hamas agree to UN request for humanitarian ceasefire", July 17, 2014.

⁵⁰ Times of Israel, "IDF opens fire on 13 Palestinians infiltrating Israel via Gaza tunnel", July 17, 2014.

TOI, "Tunnel infiltration thwarted near Kibbutz Sufa", July 17, 2014.

was foiled.⁵¹ The attempted infiltration was followed by massive rocket fire directed at the Sharon region as well as at southern Israel. At 15:00, when the humanitarian cease-fire ended, Hamas resumed firing rockets into Israel and the IAF resumed its bombing in the Gaza Strip. During the course of the day, the Israeli authorities said that at least 158 rockets were fired from Gaza towards Israel, of which at least 118 rockets struck Israel and 34 were intercepted by the Iron Dome missile defense system.⁵² Also on July 17, weapons were found in a UNRWA facility in Gaza. Israel had previously claimed that militants hide weapons in UNRWA facilities in Gaza but this was the first time that it was proven.⁵³ Authorities said that 20 rockets were discovered during a regular inspection by UNWRA of its facilities.⁵⁴ At this stage of Operation 'Protective Edge', diplomatic efforts were being made in Cairo to resolve the conflict. Qatar and Turkey also attempted to broker a resolution and the US was also involved in ceasefire attempts. However, at this stage, both Hamas and Israel rejected the attempts.⁵⁵

Phase 2: Ground invasion

In a statement released on July 18, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that Phase 2 of the operation, a ground invasion, had begun., The purpose of the ground operation was to destroy the underground tunnels built for carrying out attacks in Israel, and the operation would continue until the goals of "restoring quiet for the long term while inflicting significant damage on Hamas and the terror organizations" was met. In the first 48 hours of the ground operation, the IDF uncovered more than 30 tunnels, including both defensive and storage tunnels as well as offensive terror tunnels leading into Israel. The soldiers uncovered a labyrinth of tunnels dug 20 meters deep

⁵¹ Haaretz, "IDF begins naming 13 soldiers killed in Gaza on Sunday", July 21, 2014.

⁵² MFA, "Israel Under Fire", July 17, 2014.

⁵³ Throughout the Operation Protective Edge three incidents took place in which weapons were discovered in UNWRA facilities - see entries for July 22 and July 30. This was a clear demonstration of how Hamas exploits civilians and violates international law.

⁵⁴ Jerusalem Post, "UNRWA investigating 20 rockets found in one of its vacant schools", July 17, 2014.

⁵⁵ A ceasefire was announced on August 26. For more details see: August 2014 ICT database Report (to be published!) and <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/26/gaza-ceasefire-israel-palestinians-halt-fighting>

and running 2 kilometers towards Israeli territory with multiple exits. The IDF Corps of Engineers detonated and demolished the discovered tunnels.⁵⁶

On July 18, the IDF said that at least 111 rockets were fired from Gaza towards Israel, of which at least 88 rockets struck Israel and 18 were intercepted by the Iron Dome missile defense system. In the early morning hours, four rockets were intercepted over Ashdod and a fifth exploded in a residential area, causing massive damage. The IDF also thwarted a major attack on Israeli civilians near Ein Hashlosha on the Gaza border.⁵⁷ A large amount of weaponry was discovered by troops at the scene of the clash near Ein Hashlosha on the Gaza border between IDF troops and the terrorists who infiltrated Israel from the central Gaza Strip. Hamas terrorists attempted to infiltrate Israel through an underground tunnel and massacre civilians in an Israeli community. IDF forces opened fire at the infiltrators. One militant was killed; the others escaped back into Gaza. Two soldiers were wounded.⁵⁸

On the night between July 19-20, a battle began in Shuja'iya, a Hamas stronghold close to the Israel-Gaza border.⁵⁹ According to the IDF, Hamas turned the Gaza City neighborhood of Shuja'iya into a fortress for its weapons, rockets, tunnels and command centers. Hamas exploited the neighborhood's residents as human shields for its terrorist activity by using Wafa Hospital and its immediate surroundings as a command center, rocket launching site and position from which they fired at IDF soldiers.⁶⁰ Thirteen soldiers from the Golani Brigade were killed in clashes, as well as 60 Palestinians, half of whom were reportedly civilians.⁶¹ This was the highest one-day death toll since the 2006 Second Lebanon War.⁶² In the early hours of July 20, a 1970s-model IDF armored personnel carrier stalled in one of the neighborhood's narrow streets, and a soldier and an officer exited the vehicle to try and fix the problem. Shortly thereafter, Hamas gunmen fired an anti-tank

⁵⁶ <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/PressRoom/2014/Pages/Statement-by-PM-Netanyahu-20-Jul-2014.aspx>

⁵⁷ Jpost, "WATCH: IDF thwarts Gaza terrorists from attempted tunnel infiltration into Israel", July 17, 2014.

⁵⁸ MFA, "Israel under Fire", July 2014.

⁵⁹ Times of Israel, "13 soldiers killed in Gaza; PM says Hamas tunnels could have caused 'catastrophe'", July 20, 2014.

⁶⁰ <http://www.idfblog.com/operationgaza2014/#Shujaiya>

⁶¹ Haaretz, "As casualties mount, the Gaza operation threatens to become a war", July 21, 2014.

⁶² Ynet, "IDF begins naming 13 soldiers killed in Gaza on Sunday", July 21, 2014.

missile at the APC. The vehicle exploded, causing extensive damage and presumably killing all seven soldiers inside within seconds. The soldier and officer who had exited the vehicle survived the attack. After careful forensic work, the IDF was able to identify the remains of six of the seven soldiers who were killed in the APC explosion but no traces of the seventh soldier were found. Nonetheless, on July 25, a special IDF ethics committee ruled that sufficient evidence existed to determine that seven soldiers were killed in this incident.⁶³

On July 21, the IDF arrested a Hamas cell commander in Khan Yunis who was a part of the group's regional battalion.⁶⁴ During the interrogation, the suspect told Shin Bet officers he had trained in powered parachute attacks, as well as in how to kidnap a soldier. The training was part of Hamas preparations to oppose an IDF ground offensive in the Gaza Strip. The suspect revealed that his cell had trained in setting up anti-tank missile ambushes and sniper attacks against IDF ground forces. Hamas had designated the 10th floor of a Red Crescent building in Khan Yunis as a sniper position. According to Israeli authorities, the suspect told Shin Bet officers in Gaza that he joined Hamas in 2007 and became a part of its military wing, the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades. The suspect traveled to Malaysia in 2012 where he and nine other Hamas members participated in a week-long military-style exercise to learn how to fly a powered parachute. The cell members underwent repeated training sessions on how to fly into Israel and carry out attacks, and were ordered by their Hamas commanders to keep their training top secret.⁶⁵ The IDF said during the course of the day on July 21, at least 139 rockets were fired from Gaza towards Israel, of which at least 116 rockets struck Israel and 17 were intercepted by the Iron Dome missile defense system. At least 14 rockets were launched at Israel from Gaza between midnight and 05:00. The IDF said that Hamas fired rockets from Wafa Hospital in the Gaza neighborhood of Shuja'iya.⁶⁶ At 06:30 two militant squads were detected infiltrating through two tunnels from the northern Gaza Strip into Israel. Four IDF soldiers were killed by Hamas gunmen who emerged from a tunnel dug from Gaza into Israel near Kibbutz Nir Am. The Hamas cell, dressed in IDF uniforms, emerged from the tunnel and waited for

⁶³ Times of Israel, "IDF releases details on Shejaiya battle in which 7 soldiers died July 20", August 21, 2014.

⁶⁴ Jpost, "Hamas terrorists trained in Malaysia for parachute attack, Shin Bet says", July 22, 2014.

⁶⁵ For further details see: <http://www.ict.org.il/Article/1225/Malaysia-and-the-Hamas-Connection>

⁶⁶ For further details of the use of hospitals by Hamas to launch rockets see: <http://www.idfblog.com/blog/2014/07/28/hamas-uses-hospitals-ambulances-military-purposes/>

an approaching IDF jeep before opening fire, killing the IDF officer and three soldiers who were in the vehicle. The second cell emerged near Erez, in Israeli territory. Surveillance soldiers spotted the infiltrators and summoned an aircraft to the area. The aircraft opened fire, killing the gunmen. Rockets were also fired towards central and southern Israel.⁶⁷

On July 22, the IDF said 90 rockets were fired from Gaza towards Israel, of which at least 70 rockets struck Israel and 18 were intercepted by the Iron Dome missile defense system.⁶⁸ IDF troops engaged militants the Gaza Strip, killing ten of them. According to the military, other Hamas militants used an ambulance in order to escape the firefight.⁶⁹ The UN agency announced that it had discovered rockets stockpiled in a school which “is situated between two other UNRWA schools that currently each accommodate 1,500 internally displaced persons.” UNRWA said it “strongly and unequivocally condemns the group or groups responsible for this flagrant violation of the inviolability of its premises under international law.” Israeli authorities charged UNRWA with having a history of letting Hamas use its facilities for its terrorist activities, including allowing the terrorist organization to stockpile weapons, fire rockets, steal UNRWA humanitarian equipment, and cause damage and fire in UNRWA’s hangars.⁷⁰ Also on July 22, several North American and European airlines cancelled their flights in and out of Israel's Ben-Gurion International Airport after a rocket fired from the Gaza Strip landed near Yehud, a town located a few kilometers from the airport outside Tel Aviv.⁷¹ Shortly thereafter, Delta Air Lines, American Airlines Group and United Airlines cancelled their flights, and the American Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) issued a notice prohibiting all US airlines from flying in or out of Ben-Gurion Airport for a period of up to 24 hours. On July 23, the FAA lifted its restrictions saying the cancellation was effective at approximately 23:45.⁷² Several European airlines, including Air France, KLM, Easy Jet, Lufthansa and Swiss Air, also suspended their flights to Israel. The European Air Safety Agency (EASA) issued a “strong

⁶⁷ Times of Israel, “Nine IDF soldiers killed in battles with Hamas Monday”, July 22, 2014

⁶⁸ MFA, “Israel Under Fire”, July 22,2014

⁶⁹ IDF, “Hamas Uses Hospitals and Ambulances for Military Purposes”, July 28, 2014

⁷⁰ Times of Israel, “For second time, rockets found at UN school in Gaza”, July 22, 2014

⁷¹ Jpost, “Rocket damages Yehud house in first direct hit in Tel Aviv area”, July 22,2014

⁷² Major airlines cancel flights to Israel as Hamas rockets target Ben-Gurion Airport.

recommendation"⁷³ to avoid Ben-Gurion Airport, but on July 24, the EASA said it would remove its recommendation.⁷⁴

On July 23, the IDF said 98 rockets were fired from Gaza towards Israel, of which at least 70 rockets struck Israel and 25 were intercepted by the Iron Dome missile defense system. An agricultural worker from Thailand was killed by a mortar fired from Gaza while working in a greenhouse in one of the Israeli communities in the Ashkelon Coast Regional Council.⁷⁵ Five rockets were intercepted that morning over the Ashkelon Coast Regional Council and five more were intercepted over the city of Ashkelon. Rockets exploded in open areas in the Eshkol and Sdot Negev regional councils, and rockets were also fired at Sderot and Beersheba. During the night, rockets were intercepted over Tel Aviv.⁷⁶ The IDF Spokesperson's Unit released footage documenting Hamas terrorists launching rockets from the Al Wafa Hospital compound in Gaza City's Shajaiyeh neighborhood.⁷⁷ The IDF made a warning call to the hospital; audio from the call confirms that the hospital was closed and that no medical staff or patients were in the building. After confirming that no civilians were present, the IDF attacked the compound and the militants within the hospital grounds, in order to remove the threat posed to IDF forces.⁷⁸ The IDF also said it had killed 10 Hamas militants and found a tunnel that contained IDF uniforms and arms.⁷⁹

On July 24, 150 Hamas militants surrendered to the IDF during a nighttime offensive on the neighborhoods of Khan Yunis and Rafiyah in the Gaza Strip. The militants were transferred to the Shin Bet for questioning regarding the movements and operations of Hamas in Gaza.⁸⁰ During the course of the day, the IDF said 63 rockets were fired from Gaza towards Israel, of which at least 47 rockets struck Israel and 15 were intercepted by the Iron Dome missile defense system.⁸¹ The IDF

⁷³ AP, "US, European airlines cancel flights to Israel after rocket hits near airport", July 22, 2014.

⁷⁴ AP, "FAA, EASA lift ban on US flights to Ben-Gurion Airport", July 24, 2014.

⁷⁵ Jpost, "Thai worker dies in Ashkelon mortar shell attack", July 23, 2014.

⁷⁶ MFA, "Israel Under Fire", July 22, 2014.

⁷⁷ Ynet, "Terrorists fire rockets from Gaza hospital", July 23, 2014.

⁷⁸ For further details see: <http://www.idfblog.com/blog/2014/07/28/hamas-uses-hospitals-ambulances-military-purposes/>

⁷⁹ Ynet *ibid*.

⁸⁰ Jpost, "150 Hamas militants surrender to IDF in Gaza", July 24, 2014.

⁸¹ MFA, "Israel Under Fire", July 22, 2014.

also said that Hamas militants fired an anti-tank missile at the IDF from Al-Wafa Hospital, using the structure as an attack base despite Israel's air strike on the structure the previous day following previous gunfire and missiles fired from it by Hamas. The IDF retaliated, killing two terrorists, and the IAF targeted the building from which the missile was fired. The IAF also struck a structure near Al-Wafa Hospital used as a command and control center and to store weapons. On the same day, the IDF said that it struck 90 targets, including underground rocket launchers, terrorist lookout points, and other infrastructure used to facilitate projectile attacks on Israel. IDF paratroopers also detected two terrorists who emerged from a tunnel shaft. They were arrested and taken into custody for questioning. Paratroopers were also alerted to an armed militant in southern Gaza. Soldiers opened fire and killed the militant. Minutes later, the unit discovered two tunnel shafts nearby. An Armored Corps unit detected gunmen in its vicinity and fired shells at it, striking the militants.⁸²

On July 25, a cease-fire plan by US Secretary of State John F. Kerry was rejected by Israel.⁸³ During the day, a barrage of rockets was directed at the southern communities of Asheklon, Rishon Lezion, Rehovot, Ramle, Lod, Petah Tikva, Tel Aviv, Raanana and Kfar Sava. At night, rockets were fired at the southern communities of Ashdod, Ashkelon, Kiryat Malakhi, Rosh HaAyin, Gan Yavne, Sharon Plain, Shfela, Emek Hefer and Netanya. An IAF airstrike killed Salah Abu Hassanein,⁸⁴ the leader of Islamic Jihad's military wing. Eight other senior Hamas militants were also killed in the strike.⁸⁵

On July 26, another humanitarian ceasefire took place for twelve hours, followed by a unilateral extension by Israel for another 24 hours, which was rejected by Hamas. Shortly after 20:00 Hamas resumed the rocket barrage at Israel's cities. At this stage, the Palestinian death toll reached 1,000.⁸⁶ During the course of the day, Israeli authorities said that 22 rockets were fired from Gaza

⁸² Jpost, "Terrorists fire anti-tank missile from Al-Wafa hospital in Gaza", July 24, 2014.

⁸³ Times of Israel, "Israel rejects Kerry ceasefire deal, IDF death toll 35; 6 killed in West Bank", July 25, 2014.

⁸⁴ <https://twitter.com/FollowFIDF/status/492559523400269824>

⁸⁵ National Post, "Israel says it has targeted and killed high-profile terrorists during Gaza fighting", July 29, 2014

⁸⁶ Al-Jazeera, "12-hour truce comes into force in Gaza", July 26, 2014

towards Israel, of which 16 rockets struck Israel and six were intercepted by the Iron Dome missile defense system.⁸⁷

On July 27, the IDF said 71 rockets were fired from Gaza towards Israel, of which 50 rockets struck Israel and nine were intercepted by the Iron Dome missile defense system. A barrage of rockets directed at the Sharon and Shfela regions, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gan Yavne, and towns and villages on the Gaza periphery occurred in the early morning hours. Shortly thereafter, a rocket exploded near Petah Tikva. Hamas asked for a truce yet continued to fire rockets. In the afternoon, Hamas claimed responsibility for a rocket barrage that had been fired at Sdot HaNegev, Eshkol and Hof Ashkelon Regional Councils several hours earlier. Additional rockets were fired towards southern Israeli cities.⁸⁸

On July 28, the IDF said that 66 rockets were fired from Gaza at Israel. Despite requests for a humanitarian ceasefire, one rocket was fired at Ashkelon and six others were fired at communities near the border with the Gaza Strip. The IDF returned fire, targeting rocket launchers. A Code Red siren was sounded in Zichron Ya'akov, Binyamina, Hadera and Caesarea in northern Israel at around 19:11. Two rockets were fired at the Carmel area; one of them landed in an open area near Zichron Ya'akov. And the second was not found.⁸⁹

A terrorist infiltration via an underground tunnel from Gaza near Kibbutz Nahal Oz was thwarted, but five IDF soldiers were killed during the incident. The IDF confirmed that one of the militants was killed.⁹⁰

On July 29, U.N. Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, and US Secretary of State, John F. Kerry, announced a three-day ceasefire that was set to begin on August 1. After just a few hours, clashes between Hamas and Israeli troops led to the abandonment of the ceasefire. Rockets were fired

⁸⁷ MFA, "Israel Under Fire", July 2014

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ynet, "Four IDF soldiers killed in mortar fire on Eshkol", July 28, 2014.

⁹⁰ AFP, "Terrorists attempt to infiltrate kibbutz via tunnel", July 28, 2014.

towards Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Israeli authorities said that one rocket landed in Beit Shemesh and another in Hebron, in the West Bank. Rockets were also fired at southern Israel.⁹¹

On July 30, rockets were fired at central Israel. The PA chief negotiator headed to Qatar to meet Hamas leader, Khaled Mashal while the Israeli delegation returned from Cairo. During a humanitarian ceasefire window between 15:00-19:00, 26 rockets were fired at Israel, two of which were intercepted over Ashkelon and Netivot.⁹² Three IDF soldiers were killed in battles in the coastal territory in the afternoon. The IDF also said that Hamas rockets were found in one of UNRWA's Gaza schools, marking the third such incident since the start of 'Operation Protective Edge'.⁹³ The incident, however, was not publicized by UNRWA on its Web site or official Twitter feed, or on that of its spokesperson.⁹⁴ The IDF made this statement in an initial response to the killing of 19 Palestinians in a UNWRA school on July 30, charging that militants near the facility had fired mortar bombs and Israeli forces had shot back. During the entire campaign, the IDF launched seven airstrikes on UNWRA facilities in Gaza. The IDF stated that "Hamas chooses where these battles are conducted and, despite Israel's best efforts to prevent civilian casualties, Hamas is ultimately responsible for the tragic loss of civilian life. Specifically in the case of UN facilities, it is important to note the repeated abuse of UN facilities by Hamas, namely with at least three cases of munitions storage within such facilities."⁹⁵ The Palestinian Health Ministry claimed that 1,300 Palestinians were killed in total, and more than 6,500 were wounded, by this stage of the operation. Israeli authorities said that three Israeli civilians and 56 soldiers had been killed since the fighting began, and approximately 110 IDF soldiers were hospitalized.⁹⁶

⁹¹ MFA, "Israel Under Fire", July 2014.

⁹² Haaretz, "LIVE UPDATES: Operation Protective Edge, day 23", July 30, 2014.

⁹³ Jpost, "IDF accuses Palestinians of firing from vicinity of UNRWA school, says probing deaths", July 30, 2014.

⁹⁴ Times of Israel, 'Rockets found in UNRWA school, for third time', July 30, 2014.

⁹⁵ Guardian, "Gaza crisis: a closer look at Israeli strikes on UNRWA schools", July 30, 2014.

⁹⁶ Times of Israel, 'Rockets found in UNRWA school, for third time', July 30, 2014

Phase 3: Withdrawal of IDF troops

On August 1, Israel accepted the UN/US proposal for a 72-hour humanitarian cease-fire beginning at 08:00. Hamas violated the ceasefire an hour-and-a-half later. At approximately 09:30, Hamas terrorists, including a suicide attacker, fired at IDF forces. During the attack, two IDF soldiers were killed by Hamas fire in the Rafah area of Gaza. Israeli authorities believe that Second Lt. Hadar Goldin was kidnapped during the exchange of fire and dragged into a tunnel (he was declared dead on August 3 based on forensic evidence found inside the tunnel).⁹⁷

On August 2, the IDF reported that 86 rockets were fired from Gaza towards Israel, of which 58 rockets hit Israel and six others were intercepted by the Iron Dome missile defense system.⁹⁸

On August 3, the IDF pulled most of its ground forces out of the Gaza Strip after completing the destruction of 32 Hamas tunnels. Israeli authorities said that Hamas had spent five years building the tunnels.⁹⁹ Within the tunnels, the IDF discovered weapons, explosives and equipment that would enable terrorists dressed in civilian clothing to disappear into a shaft in Gaza and emerge in Israel, disguised as IDF soldiers and fully equipped to carry out a mass casualty attack. The IDF also seized motorcycles in some of the tunnels, which were earmarked by Hamas for rapid raids into Israel and subsequent retreats back into Gaza.¹⁰⁰ Despite the IDF withdrawal, 119 rockets were fired from Gaza towards Israel, of which 109 rockets struck Israel and 8 were intercepted by the Iron Dome missile defense system.¹⁰¹

On August 4, Israel authorized a seven-hour humanitarian window in Gaza, from 10:00-17:00.¹⁰² However, Hamas continued firing rockets throughout the lull. Rockets were fired from Gaza at

⁹⁷ Ynet, "IDF: Hamas used ceasefire to kidnap soldier; ceasefire over". August 1, 2014

⁹⁸ MFA, "Israel under Fire"- <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Terrorism/Pages/Israel-under-fire-July-2014-A-Diary.aspx>

⁹⁹ Haaretz, "IDF to complete destruction of Hamas tunnels by Sunday; Troops begin withdrawal", August 2, 2014.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ MFA, "Israel under Fire"- <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Terrorism/Pages/Israel-under-fire-July-2014-A-Diary.aspx>

¹⁰² Reuters, "Israel, Palestinians accept Egypt's 72-hour truce bid", August 4, 2014.

southern Israel in the early morning hours directed towards Ashdod, Ashkelon, Kerem Shalom and the Eshkol region.¹⁰³

On August 5, Israel notified Egypt that it agreed to its ceasefire proposal. A 72-hour ceasefire went into effect at 08:00.¹⁰⁴ However, shortly before the ceasefire began, a barrage of rockets was fired at Ashdod, Ashkelon, Beersheba, Rishon Lezion, Gush Etzion, Bethlehem and Maale Adumim.¹⁰⁵

On August 8, Israel agreed to Egypt's call to extend the 72-hour ceasefire. However, at approximately 04:00, with the ceasefire still in effect, two rockets struck in open areas near the Eshkol Regional Council. At approximately 08:00, two rockets were fired towards Ashkelon, marking the renewal of rocket fire from Gaza, as Hamas refused to extend the 72-hour ceasefire.¹⁰⁶ By 10:00 over 18 rockets were fired from Gaza at Israel. The IDF said that two rockets were intercepted over Ashkelon, 14 hit open areas and two landed in Gaza. At 10:30 rockets were fired at Sderot.¹⁰⁷

On August 10, an Egyptian-brokered 72-hour ceasefire came into effect at midnight. Shortly before the ceasefire began, rockets were fired at Beersheba and Tel Aviv, following a day of rocket fire directed at Israeli civilians. Despite the firing of several rockets towards the end of the 72-hour ceasefire, at midnight on August 13, the ceasefire was extended until midnight on August 18.¹⁰⁸

On August 19, at approximately 15:30, three rockets fired from Gaza hit Beersheva and Netivot, ending the five-day ceasefire. Rockets targeted most of southern Israel, as well as Tel Aviv and, shortly before midnight, the Jerusalem area as well. The IDF said that a total of 50 rockets were fired from Gaza during that day. In response, the IDF struck terrorist targets in Gaza. It was reported that an IAF airstrike targeted the home of Mohammed Deif, the chief commander of Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas. His wife and two children were killed, but it was

¹⁰³ Ynet, "IDF withdraws majority of ground forces from Gaza", August 3, 2014.

¹⁰⁴ MFA, "Protective Edge: Hamas' violations of ceasefires - A chronology", August 19, 2014.

¹⁰⁵ Times of Israel, "IDF finishes tunnel demolitions and leaves Gaza as truce holds", August 5, 2014.

¹⁰⁶ New York Times, "New Fighting a Bid for Leverage as a Gaza Cease-Fire Expires", August 8, 2014.

¹⁰⁷ MFA, "Protective Edge: Hamas' violations of ceasefires - A chronology", August 19, 2014.

¹⁰⁸ MFA, "Israel under Fire"- <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Terrorism/Pages/Israel-under-fire-July-2014-A-Diary.aspx>

unclear whether Deif himself was killed in the incident.¹⁰⁹ Sami Abu Zuhri, a Hamas spokesman, denied that Deif was killed, claiming he was not home at the time of the strike. He added that Deif would retaliate against the strike.¹¹⁰ Israeli authorities neither confirmed nor denied that Deif was targeted. Israel holds him responsible for the deaths of dozens of its citizens in suicide bombings. Deif has been targeted in air strikes at least four times since the mid-1990s.¹¹¹ Hamas threatened international airlines to cease flights to Ben-Gurion International Airport. Despite the threat, no major disruptions to any flight schedules were reported.¹¹² Rocket warning sirens were heard across southern and central communities throughout the day.¹¹³ Ashdod, Beersheba, Ashkelon, Sderot and Petah Tikva were among the targeted areas. The IDF Spokesman's Office said that 175 rockets were fired into Israel and over 100 targets were struck by the IAF in Gaza since the end of the cease-fire.¹¹⁴

On August 21, an Israeli man was seriously wounded when a rocket exploded in a building that housed a kindergarten. The man had come to celebrate his son's third birthday, and shielded the children with his body. Also on August 21, an IAF airstrike killed three senior Hamas commanders in the Gaza Strip and said that it would continue to target the group's armed leadership after a ceasefire failed.¹¹⁵

On August 22, Daniel Tregerman, 4, was killed in a direct mortar hit outside his home in Kibbutz Nahal Oz. He was the youngest Israeli casualty. The child was at home with his parents and siblings in the Sha'ar Hanegev Region, close to the border with Gaza, when the attack took place.¹¹⁶ The IDF

¹⁰⁹ Jpost. "Conflicting reports on whether Hamas military chief Deif killed in IDF strike", August 21, 2014.

¹¹⁰ Ynet, "Hamas vows revenge for Deif's family", August 20, 2014.

¹¹¹ ABC, "Gaza conflict: Hamas says military commander Mohammed Deif survived Israeli air strike", August 21, 2014.

¹¹² Israel Hayom, "Hamas threat against Ben-Gurion Airport proves hollow", August 21, 2014.

¹¹³ <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Terrorism/Pages/Protective-Edge-Hamas-violations-of-ceasefires-chronology.aspx>

¹¹⁴ Jpost ibid.

¹¹⁵ Reuters, "Israeli air strike kills three Hamas commanders in Gaza", August 21, 2014.

¹¹⁶ Ynet, "4-year-old Daniel Tregerman was killed while running for shelter", August 24, 2014.

spokesperson's unit said the mortar shell was fired from near a school used as a shelter for Palestinian refugees.¹¹⁷ A total of nine civilians were wounded in rocket attacks, including a direct hit on an Ashdod synagogue, a Sderot home, near a preschool in Beersheba, and in Gan Yavne.¹¹⁸

On August 24, three Israeli-Arab taxi drivers waiting to collect Gazan residents and bring them into Israel for medical treatment were wounded, two seriously, by mortar shells fired at the Erez Crossing.¹¹⁹

On August 26, a rocket hit an Ashkelon home, wounding over 20 people, including six young children. Hamas claimed responsibility for the attack.¹²⁰ A rocket also exploded in the playground of a kindergarten in Ashdod. Shortly before 18:00, Ze'ev Etzion, 55, and Shahar Melamed, 43, of Kibbutz Nirim were killed and four others were wounded in a mortar attack on the Eshkol region.¹²¹ Several hours after the attacks, the Egyptian Foreign Minister, Sameh Shoukry, announced that Egypt's ceasefire proposal has been accepted by both sides and would enter into effect at 19:00. The Israeli government stated that "the Egyptian ceasefire proposal has no time limit."¹²² It includes none of Hamas' declared conditions for ending the fighting: Hamas does not receive an airport; Hamas does not receive a seaport; Hamas does not receive the release of prisoners; and Hamas does not receive money for its payroll. If Hamas honors the ceasefire, within a month indirect negotiations will begin, during which Israel will raise the issue of the demilitarization of Gaza. As it repeatedly stated from the beginning of the hostilities, Israel has nothing against the civilian population of Gaza. According to the Egyptian proposal, reconstruction equipment and supplies will be transferred to Gaza. The transfer will be subject to an oversight mechanism between Israel and

¹¹⁷ Times of Israel, "Four-year-old killed in mortar attack named as Daniel Tragerman", August 22, 2014.

¹¹⁸ MFA, 'Israel under Fire', <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Terrorism/Pages/Israel-under-fire-July-2014-A-Diary.aspx>

¹¹⁹ Times of Israel, "Waiting to transport sick, drivers at Gaza crossing come under attack", August 24, 2014.

¹²⁰ Jpost, "Israeli killed, two seriously wounded in Eshkol mortar strike", August 26, 2014.

¹²¹ Times of Israel, "2 killed, 4 hurt in mortar strike on southern kibbutz", August 26, 2014.

¹²² CNN, "Israel-Gaza truce reached, this time with no expiration date", August 26, 2014.

the international organizations operating in Gaza. The fishing zone will be restored and in the future, the possibility of its expansion will be evaluated".¹²³

Summary

In conclusion, Operation 'Protective Edge' lasted 50 days, during which time the IDF carried out its dual aim to restore security to Israeli civilians and to dismantle the Hamas tunnel network used by Hamas militants to infiltrate Israel.

According to official IDF figures, IDF aerial, naval and ground forces struck 4,762 terror sites across the Gaza Strip throughout the operation, including:

- **1,678** rocket launching facilities.
- **977** command and control centers.
- **237** military administration facilities.
- **191** weapons storage and manufacturing facilities.
- **144** training and military compounds.
- **1,535** additional terror sites.

Throughout Operation 'Protective Edge', the IDF targeted terrorists in Gaza responsible for the planning and execution of attacks on Israeli soldiers and civilians, including:

- At least **253** Hamas terrorists.
- At least **147** Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorists.
- At least **65** terrorists from various smaller organizations.
- At least **603** terrorists of unknown affiliation.

In addition, **159** terrorist suspects were questioned by Israeli security forces.

¹²³ MFA, "Israel accepts Egyptian ceasefire", August 27, 2014.

Throughout the operation, 4,564 rockets and mortars were fired at Israel from the Gaza Strip. The Iron Dome intercepted 86% of them.

- The IDF said that it attacked 5,263 targets across the Gaza Strip, hitting rocket launching sites, arms and munitions factories and warehouses, as well as the homes and offices of Hamas and its local regime. Over 34 known tunnels were also destroyed.
- In total, 64 IDF soldiers and six Israeli civilians, including a child, were killed, and over 2,000 Palestinians were killed. Israel said that Hamas bears responsibility for civilian casualties because it operates among civilians and uses schools and mosques to store weapons and as launch sites for rockets.¹²⁴

Rocket Threat - According to IDF intelligence, Israel believed that terrorists in Gaza held approximately 10,000 rockets. One-third of these rockets were fired at Israel, and another third were destroyed by IDF forces. According to official IDF figures, throughout Operation Protective Edge militants in Gaza fired 3,360 rockets at Israel.

- 2,303 rockets hit Israel.
- 115 rockets hit populated areas in Israel.
- 584 rockets were intercepted by the Iron Dome.
- 119 rocket launches failed.
- 475 rockets landed within the Gaza Strip.

Tunnel Threat

- IDF forces neutralized 32 terror tunnels.
- IDF forces said that 14 of these tunnels crossed into Israel.
- IDF said that two tunnels had access points located 300m-500m from Israel.

Throughout Operation 'Protective Edge', Hamas violated international law and launched rockets from civilian facilities in Gaza, schools and hospitals. According to IDF figures:

¹²⁴ Ynet, "Operation Protective Edge in numbers", August 27, 2014.

- Militants fired 597 rockets from civilian facilities in Gaza.
- Approximately 260 rockets were fired from schools.
- Approximately 160 rockets were fired from religious sites, including mosques.
- Approximately 127 rockets were fired from cemeteries.
- Approximately 50 rockets were fired from hospitals.¹²⁵

Hamas violations of ceasefires

Since the beginning of Operation 'Protective Edge', Israel respected numerous ceasefires, most of them humanitarian lulls for the benefit of the residents of Gaza. Prior to the August 10-13 ceasefire, Hamas violated every other ceasefire. Hamas also violated the July 15 ceasefire initiated by Egypt and supported by most of the international community, including the Arab League, while Israel accepted the ceasefire. If Hamas would have accepted the ceasefire, Israel would not have had to start phase two of Operation 'Protective Edge' - the ground operation. This same ceasefire was later accepted by Hamas on August 5. On August 26, a ceasefire deal was finally met, brokered by the Egyptian government with the support of Qatar and the US, but without a fixed long-term agreement and without Hamas's ten original conditions being met.

¹²⁵ <http://www.idfblog.com/blog/2014/08/05/operation-protective-edge-numbers/>

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