

Operation ‘Protective Edge’: A Detailed Summary of Events

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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 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 penetrated Israeli airspace over the coast near Ashdod[10]), 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 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.
- **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.
- **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]

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 fire[29]. 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 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 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 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-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’iya 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 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 UNRWA 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 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'ya, a Hamas stronghold close to the Israel-Gaza border.[59] According to the IDF, Hamas turned the Gaza City neighborhood of Shuja'ya 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 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 an approaching IDF jeep before opening fire, killing the

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The database team of the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT), IDC Herzliya publishes a monthly report that provides a summary and analysis of terrorist attacks and counter-terrorism operations that occurred during the previous month. The incidents mentioned in each report are added to over 35,000 previously recorded terrorist and counter-terrorist incidents in our open source intelligence database. Throughout 2013, ICT database team analyzed approximately 300 terrorist and counter-terrorist incidents.

<https://ict.org.il/operation-protective-edge-a-detailed-summary-of-events-2/>