Civil Unrest

14
MAY
16:21 UTC

Israel & Palestinian Territories SITUATION UPDATE: Seven Palestinian protesters reportedly killed in West Bank on May 14; points to expansion of unrest

Executive Summary:

- During the night hours of May 13, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) conducted a large-scale attack in the northern Gaza Strip using 450 missiles in a 40-minute operation that targeted the militant group's underground tunnel network.
- This shows the IDF's resolve to use extensive firepower to dismantle Hamas' militant infrastructure and significantly diminish its capabilities. Retaliatory rocket fire towards southern and central Israel will continue to be recorded in the coming hours and days, albeit at a lower frequency in the latter area.
- Seven Palestinians were reportedly killed by IDF fire during clashes in several focal points in the West Bank on May 14. This marks a significant increase in violence in the West Bank, which will likely persist over the coming days, particularly against the backdrop of the Palestinian "Nakba Day" on May 15.
- On May 13, riots continued in several mixed cities in Israel, although it was more contained than previous nights. Regardless, against the backdrop of "Nakba Day", and the increasing tensions in the West Bank, localized unrest in mixed cities in Israel is likely over the coming days.
- **MAX Security has strong on-ground capabilities in Israel, including secure transportation, provision of safe havens, and contingency consultation and planning. Contact us at operations@max-security.com or +44 20-3540-0434.**

Please be advised:

General Developments:

- The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) stated that over 2,000 rockets have been fired from the Gaza Strip toward Israeli territory since the start of hostilities on May 10. At least 300 of them have fallen within the Gaza Strip.
- On May 13, the US State Department revised its travel advisory for Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza and asked its citizens to "reconsider travel" due to the ongoing armed conflict and civil unrest in Israel and the Palestinian Territories.
- On May 14, Turkish Airlines canceled all flights to Ben Gurion International Airport due to security reasons.
- Reports from May indicate that the government approved the transfer of hundreds of assault rifles, helmets, and flak jackets from the IDF to the Israel Police.

East Jerusalem

- During the overnight hours of May 13-14, clashes were reported between Jewish and Arab residents in **Sheikh Jarrah**. The Israel Police reportedly used stun grenades to disperse the protesters.

Gaza Strip:

- On May 13, the Israel Air Force (IAF) announced that the apartment of Samer Abu-Daka, head of Hamas' unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) unit, was targeted in an airstrike.
- The IDF stated that 160 IAF aircraft carried out a large-scale attack using 450 missiles in a 40-minute operation that targeted the militant group's underground tunnel network during the overnight hours of May 13-14. The attack also involved artillery troops firing from outside the Gaza Strip.
- Reports on May 14 indicate that the IDF attempted to kill high-ranking Hamas operatives during the past week.

Southern Israel:

- Reports indicate that one individual was wounded in a rocket attack after it hit a seven-story building in **Ashkelon** during the overnight hours of May 13-14.
- During the morning hours of May 14, the IDF shot down an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) launched from the Gaza Strip that entered Israeli airspace. The location of the incident was not specified.
- Following a barrage of rockets towards the **Beer Sheva** area during the afternoon hours of May 14, high-voltage lines were damaged and caused power outages in several neighborhoods in the city, as well in adjacent towns such as Lahav, and Lehavim. The Israel Electric Company is working to fix the problem, as per the time of writing.
- In addition, a vehicle was damaged in a direct rocket hit in the Beer Sheva during the afternoon hours of May 14.
- Hamas published a video and claimed to have targeted a chemical plant in **Nir Oz** using the newly introduced "Shehab" explosive-laden UAV.
- Following a barrage of rockets towards southern Israel's Eshkol Regional Council on May 14, direct hits caused material damage to cars and houses.

Northern Israel:

- One Israeli woman was lightly wounded in a rock-hurling incident targeting a public bus on Shabbatai Levi Street near the Wadi Nisnas neighborhood in **Haifa** during the night hours of May 13.
- During the late-night hours of May 13, clashes were reported between Israeli security forces and Arab protesters in **Haifa's** Kiryat Eliezer neighborhood. Eight people were reportedly arrested on suspicion of rock-throwing and rioting.
- Reports from the overnight hours of May 13-14 indicate that Israel Police arrested 11 residents of Musmus, an Arab neighborhood in **Haifa** for setting tire fires, hurling rocks, and vandalizing city

infrastructure.
- During the evening hours of May 13, a Jewish family that accidentally traveled to **Umm al-Faham** was reportedly assaulted and had to be rescued by security forces.
- During the afternoon hours of May 14, pro-Palestinian protesters from Lebanon infiltrated the **Lebanese-Israeli** border fence near **Metula**. IDF tanks carried out warning shots, prompting the infiltrators to return to Lebanon. One of the protesters was reportedly killed by the shooting.
- Reports from the evening hours of May 14 indicate that violent clashes between security forces and protesters have resumed in **Akko**.

Central Israel

- During the overnight hours of May 13-14, color red sirens were activated near Ben Gurion International Airport as well as several other areas in central Israel.
- Riots were recorded in central Israel's **Lod** during the overnight hours of May 13-14. 43 rioters were arrested by Israeli security forces. A synagogue in the city was set ablaze by rioters.
- Israeli authorities imposed a night curfew in Lod from 21:00, on May 14 to 04:00 on May 15.

West Bank

- Palestinian reports indicated that seven Palestinians were killed by Israeli fire across several focal points of riots in the West Bank. These include the areas of **Salfit**, **Jericho**, **Ramallah**, **Nablus**, **Jenin**, and **Bethlehem**.
- A Palestinian was killed by IDF forces while attempting to conduct a stabbing attack near Ofra, approximately eight km northeast of Ramallah.
- A local source also reported that a Palestinian police station in **Nablus** was burned by Palestinian youth to protest the Palestinian Authority's (PA) positions regarding the current hostilities.
- In **Jordan**, security forces used tear gas and shot live rounds in the air to prevent approximately 500 pro-Palestinian protesters from crossing into the West Bank territory near the Israel-administered **Allenby Bridge**.
- Reports from the evening hours of May 14 indicate that a vehicle ramming attack against IDF troops was recorded near the West Bank's **Yabad**. The soldiers shot and wounded the assailant.

Assessments & Forecast:

1. The extensive operation that IDF forces conducted in the northern Gaza Strip, which involved artillery forces and reportedly destroyed a significant underground Hamas infrastructure, marks a further expansion in the IDF's campaign given the reported scale of the operation and the use of heavy artillery. It indicates that the IDF aims to continue using significant firepower and inflict a substantial blow to the Gaza-based militant groups' infrastructure while accepting that this will prompt retaliatory rocket launches towards Israeli territory by the militants. The rocket barrage that was launched towards central Israel during the night hours of May 13 indicates that the militants retain the capacity to target central Israel, including areas surrounding the Ben Gurion International Airport.
2. **FORECAST**: As the IDF is likely to carry on with its operations in the Gaza Strip, Gaza-based militant factions will continue to launch rockets towards Israeli territory. Southern areas of Israel, such as Ashkelon, Ashdod, Beersheva, Kiryat Gat, and the Gaza Envelope area will be targeted at a higher frequency and with the use of more rockets. This is because Hamas has far more short-range rockets in its arsenal than longer-range ones that can reach central Israel and are therefore strategic assets for the group. It will seek to preserve more long-range projectiles in the event that

the conflict is prolonged further.

3. The incidents recorded in several locales in the West Bank are a marked increase in violent incidents in this region and are a notable expansion of unrest to this region, which had thus far been relatively calm. It comes amid the Palestinians' commemoration of Nakba Day on May 15, which marks what Palestinians refer to as their "disaster" or "catastrophe", namely, the displacement of Palestinians and the establishment of Israel in 1948. Rioters in the West Bank will also likely feel emboldened by two attempts by protesters to enter Israel-administered territory from neighboring Jordan and Lebanon in support of the Palestinian cause. **FORECAST**: Against the backdrop of the forthcoming Nakba Day, a marked increase in violence in the West Bank is likely, particularly due to the reported killings of multiple demonstrators. Palestinians will likely seek to clash with IDF forces that are stationed at checkpoints and strategic locales throughout the territory, which will elevate the risk for violent clashes and casualties. There are also likely to be several attempted low-scale militant attacks targeting IDF troops stationed in the West Bank, as occurred on May 14. This will likely include stabbing attempts, vehicle rammings, the hurling of Molotov cocktails at IDF posts, and potentially shootings.
4. Nakba Day and the persistent hostilities between Israel and the Gaza-based militant groups will continue to fuel anti-Israel sentiments in the mixed cities within Israel, where violent riots have been recorded over the past days. This is also because Hamas in particular is encouraging Arab citizens of Israel to continue to protest and engage in clashes with Israeli security forces. This serves Hamas' interest as it gains significantly from the ensuing chaos by showing its influence within Israel's Arab population and thus portraying its leadership within the Palestinian arena. **FORECAST**: Thus, while the Israeli government has authorized the call-up of reserve companies of the Border Police, facilitating the more extensive arrest of rioters, riots, as well as intercommunal violence between Jewish and Arab Israelis, will likely continue in Israel's mixed cities over the coming days. In this context, any recorded violence targeting Jewish communities during the evening hours of May 14 will particularly raise tensions as Jews typically celebrate the Sabbath with families during these hours.

Recommendations:

1. Those operating or residing in Israel should adhere to all Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Home Front Command guidelines regarding early warning sirens for incoming rockets.
2. We advise against all travel within 40 km of the Gaza Strip at this time.
3. Those remaining within this vicinity should stay within close proximity of a shelter and remain abreast of Color Red sirens. We advise downloading the Color Red mobile application to receive timely alerts.
4. In case you hear a siren, seek shelter in a protected area and remain inside for at least 10 minutes. When a Color Red siren is sounded: If a designated shelter exists, immediately go there. If not, go to a room with as few external walls, windows, and openings as possible, close all openings, sit on the floor below the window line and near an internal wall.
5. In an open area, lay down on the ground and cover your head with your hands.
6. When driving, safely pull over and follow the above instructions.
7. Those operating or residing in Israel on May 14 are advised to avoid all travel to the vicinity of Lod due to the slated curfew.
8. Avoid protest gatherings throughout the country due to the high likelihood of unrest. These violent demonstrations are more likely in mixed Jewish-Arab locales, such as Haifa, Jaffa, Lod, Ramla, and Akko, as well as Arab-populated cities and towns.
9. **MAX Security has strong on-ground capabilities in Israel, including secure transportation, provision of safe havens, and contingency consultation and planning. Contact us at operations@max-security.com or +44 20-3540-0434.**