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2000/1 SALW Update

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**Egypt**

As will be discussed in detail below, Egypt is a major source of small arms for the Palestinian Authority—which is transferred via tunnels at the border of the Gaza Strip and sea routes along the Gaza coast.i[1] Smuggling along the Gaza coast was highlighted at the end of January 2001, when forty barrels containing weapons and ammunition thrown from an Egyptian boat were captured by Israeli forces. The barrels contained 50 rocket propelled grenade launchers, 1,000 rockets, and a large amount of 60mm mortar rounds.ii[2]

On June 6, 2001, Ha'aretz reported the IDF had embarked on a program to find and block underground tunnels used by Palestinians to smuggle firearms, ammunition, and people, by digging a deep trench along several kilometers of the Rafah section of the Egyptian-Israeli border.iii[3]

Egypt remains a source of small arms for Sudanese rebels. In addition, the African country of Chad allegedly supplies weapons to terrorists in upper Egypt, which are smuggled via Sudan.iv[4]

**Iran**

Iran has long been a major source of weapons for Hizballah, which operates in Lebanon, and continues to launch cross-border attacks, despite Israel's withdrawal from south Lebanon in May 2000.

In February 2000, the Washington Post reported that a Boeing 747, loaded with arms and operated by the Iranian military, landed in Damascus twice a month to supply Hizballah.v[5] In 2001, the government of Turkey closed its airspace to Iran for such shipments to Damascus, and Iranian arms have been transported over land, sea and other air routes. Following the Israeli withdrawal, this activity increased and the deliveries were airlifted by Antonov 124 transport planes that landed at Damascus International Airport, and reportedly overflew Saudi Arabia and Jordanian airspace.vi[6]

Iran is also reported to be involved in smuggling SALW to the Palestinians. In addition, Hizballah has begun to train Palestinian guerrillas in bases in the Beka'a Valley in Lebanon. Intelligence reports indicate that Hizballah had direct links, including weapons supplies, with Palestinian cells operating in the territories (such as in the PA city of Nablus)—in addition to the ties it maintains with Fatah. vii[7]

Iranian small arms and ammunition have also found their way to Europe and Africa. Weapons and ammunition, sold by Jacques Monsieur, a former Belgian army officer, have been (illicitly) delivered to: Croatia, Togo, and the Republic of Congo. Although Monsieur was investigated

for years, he continued his activities his arrest and detention by Iranian authorities in 2000.viii[8]

### ***Israel***

Israeli firms manufacture a number of small arms and light weapons, both for internal use by the security services and for export. The primary motivation for Israeli arms sales is economic, both to provide employment and income to offset the costs of the development costs of high-tech weapons that are needed by the IDF. Exports of weapons and ammunition also ensure an economic means for maintaining production even after the IDF needs have been met. This strategy provides Israel with a critical surge capacity if necessary.ix[9]

The Government of Israel carefully monitors the export of small arms.x[10] (Of the 28 national control systems examined in the 2001 Small Arms Survey, Israel was one out of only seven countries that had enacted legislation directly regulating arms brokers.)xi[11] However, some brokers are able to arrange transfers to states that maintain weak export procedures and tepid enforcement of regulations.xii[12] As in the case of expatriates of various nationalities, Israelis living abroad engaged in SALW sales are outside the framework of the Israeli legal process. Israeli-made small arms can be found in many parts of the world as a consequence of both licensed exports and illicit transfers. In Colombia, for example, there is a thriving black market for Uzis and Galil's,xiii[13] including weapons sold to the Colombian military, some of which are then stolen by drug traffickers.xiv[14]

### ***Jordan***

There have been a number of instances in which small arms shipments have been intercepted in transit from Jordan to the Palestinian autonomous areas in the West Bank. In August 2000, Peru's President, Alberto Fujimori, announced the arrest of a multinational ring of gun smugglers who had transported weapons from Peru to Colombia. According to Fujimori, the ring allegedly supplied Russian manufactured assault rifles, acquired in Amman, to a Colombian Marxist rebel group known as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). Fujimori also stated that a Jordanian general was implicated in the case, and revealed that the smugglers were discovered during an attempt to drop a fourth shipment of weapons in the Amazonian jungle near the Colombian border.xv[15]

### ***Palestinian Authority***

In the agreements creating the Palestinian Authority (PA) (the 1993 Declaration of Principles and subsequent), the level of weapons to be held by the PA were carefully regulated. This framework served as the basis for the establishment of a Palestinian police forcexvi[16], and stipulated limitations on the number of weapons it was authorized to possess.xvii[17] The police force was created for the express purpose of providing a basis for law and order in the PA, and to counter and disarm the terrorist groups operating within the PA's jurisdiction. Israel agreed to transfer automatic firearms to the PA under these terms.

The obligation of the Palestinian Authority to confiscate illegal weapons is stipulated in the Israeli-Palestinian interim agreements. Article II(1)of Annex I of the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, 28 September 1995, states that "...Any illegal arms will be confiscated by the Palestinian Police." This was later re-affirmed in the Wye River Memorandum of October 1998 (which also included U.S. assistance), and again in the Sharm El-Sheikh Memorandum in September 1999."xviii[18]

However, between 1993 and 2001, Palestinian security forces made few or no attempts to collect, destroy, or decommission illicit small arms in the PA's legislation. xix[19] The Palestinian Police force exceeded the agreed ceiling on the size of the policy force, (by approximately 10,000 persons), as well as the permitted weapons quota. According to data presented by the Israeli government, the Palestinian Police obtained an excessive number of pistols, assault rifles, and sub-machine guns.xx[20]

In addition, numerous armed Palestinian militias, including official groups such as Force 17 (controlled directly by Arafat), the Tanzim (local armed gangs connected with the Fatah organization),<sup>xxi[21]</sup> as well as Hamas and other Islamic groups. <sup>xxii[22]</sup> According to unofficial estimates, the Tanzim groups have at least 70,000 guns, primarily M-16's and AK-47s, as well as other automatic rifles, and some heavy machine guns, many stolen from the Israeli army. <sup>xxiii[23]</sup> Other weapons include handguns, rifles, semi-automatic weapons, machine-guns, hand grenades, rocket propelled grenades, grenade launchers, anti-tank missiles, and shoulder launched anti-aircraft missiles.<sup>xxiv[24]</sup> The Palestinian Authority also established numerous arms factories that are capable of producing mortars and grenades.<sup>xxv[25]</sup>

Following the outbreak of violence in September 2000, these weapons were used to kill numerous Israelis. Fatalities involving the use of small arms have most often occurred on the highways of the West Bank, where Palestinian terrorists lie in ambush for vehicles bearing Israeli license plates. In addition, there have been a number of shooting attacks in Israeli cities. On August 5th, Ali al-Julani, an Arab resident of East Jerusalem shot and wounded 10 soldiers and civilians with an M-16 automatic rifle in front of the Israeli Ministry of Defense in Tel Aviv.<sup>xxvi[26]</sup>

### ***Weapons Smuggling***

As noted above, illicit weapons in PA areas are obtained via Jordan, Egypt, and Lebanon through smuggling via land, sea, and air routes, in violation of the 1994 Gaza-Jericho Agreement. <sup>xxvii[27]</sup> In addition, Israel has traced arms smuggled in the automobiles of Palestinian officials that have VIP-1 status—which grants them immunity from security checks.<sup>xxviii[28]</sup>

Smuggling along the coast in Gaza was highlighted at the end of January 2001, when forty barrels filled with weapons and ammunition thrown from an Egyptian boat were captured by Israeli forces. The barrels contained 50 rocket propelled grenade launchers, 1,000 rockets, and a large amount of 60mm mortar rounds.<sup>xxix[29]</sup> On May 2001, the Israeli Navy intercepted a Lebanese fishing boat on its way to Gaza carrying various missiles and mortars, as well as 30 Kalashnikov assault rifles and 13,000 rounds of 7.62 mm ammunition.<sup>xxx[30]</sup>

Palestinian smuggling of weapons over land routes<sup>xxxi[31]</sup> was highlighted by the arrest of Jordanian truck driver, Abdul Basat Suleiman Dalashe, at the Sheikh Hussein Bridge crossing near Beit She'an on March 1, while attempting to smuggle weapons from Jordan hidden in his truck. Israeli custom officials found four Kalashnikov assault rifles, two M-16 assault rifles, a Beretta 9 millimeter submachine gun and 20 handguns concealed in the fire extinguisher and air pump of Dalashe's truck.<sup>xxxii[32]</sup> According to media reports, the smuggling ring had purchased weapons and ammunition from Hizbullah and Lebanon. Since 1998, Dalashe had transported legal merchandise between Jordan and Israel, and in January 2000, he began smuggling arms. During interrogation, Dalashe admitted that he had made four smuggling runs between February 10 and 27—three times to Nablus and once to Atarot, north of Jerusalem. <sup>xxxiii[33]</sup>

There have been additional attempts to smuggle weapons from Jordan into Israel.<sup>xxxiv[34]</sup> On July 16th, Jordanian authorities confirmed that they had arrested a Lebanese man who had (a week before) smuggled 25 mortars into Jordan from Syria, apparently en-route for delivery to the West Bank. According to Jordanian Prime Minister, Ali Abu al-Ragheb, "In Jordan we have seen many cases where there has been some smuggling of arms or ammunition ... to various factions through Jordan or to Jordan and it's not new." Al-Ragheb noted that "we deal with these issues maybe on a monthly basis and it depends on the size and maybe the last one was a big one compared to others."<sup>xxxv[35]</sup>

Palestinian weapons smuggling to the Gaza Strip via a land route was illustrated on June 25<sup>th</sup>, when Israeli security forces intercepted a load of contraband weapons hidden in a truck with Israeli license plates at the Karni crossing-point between Israel and the Gaza Strip. The driver, an Arab resident of East Jerusalem, had unsuccessfully attempted to conceal an M-

16 assault rifle, a pistol, and various types of ammunition.xxxvi[36] In October, Israeli police stopped a truck on its way to Gaza that contained thousands of bullets hidden behind a double wall.xxxvii[37]

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<sup>i[1]</sup> Small Arms Survey 2001, pg. 171 citing Smith, 1999; Suzanne Goldenberg, "Guns for sale - how stolen Israeli weapons arm Fatah's fighters," *The Guardian*, 16 December 2000.

<sup>ii[2]</sup> Amos Harel, PA Smuggled Arms Via Sea, IDF Suspects,"*Ha'aretz*, 29 January 2001;"1,000 rockets caught on way to Palestinians," *IMRA*, 4 February 2001.

<sup>iii[3]</sup> Ze'ev Schiff, "Under fire, IDF digs up weapons tunnels," *Ha'aretz*, 6 June 2001.

<sup>iv[4]</sup> Small Arms Survey 2001, pg. 171, citing Al-Bindari, 2000)

<sup>v[5]</sup> The amount of Iranian weapons flights to Hizballah peaked during the mid-1990s—when Iran flew 747 jumbo jets to Syria as many as three times a week, Robin Wright, "US Blocks a Key Iran Arms Route," *Los Angeles Times*, 6 May 2001; Janine Zacharia, "US Senate slated to pass Iran nonproliferation act," *Jerusalem Post*, 24 February 2000.

<sup>vi[6]</sup> Ze'ev Schiff, "Iranian Airlift Sends More Arms to Hezbollah-Via Damascus," *Ha'aretz*, 17 July 2001; Robin Wright, "US Blocks a Key Iran Arms Route," *Los Angeles Times*, 6 May 2001.

<sup>vii[7]</sup> Robin Wright, "US Blocks a Key Iran Arms Route," *Los Angeles Times*, 6 May 2001; "Peres: Iran Supplying Arms to the Palestinians," *Jerusalem Post*, 10 July 2001; Ze'ev Schiff, "Iranian Airlift Sends More Arms to Hezbollah-Via Damascus," *Ha'aretz*, 17 July 2001.

<sup>viii[8]</sup> Small Arms Survey: 2001, pg. 106, citing De Morgen, 23 August 1999; La Lettre du Continent, 3 June 1999; *L'Express*, 24 June 1999; Peleman, 2000.

<sup>ix[9]</sup> Gerald M. Steinberg, "Israel: High-Technology Roulette," in *Arms Production in the Third World*, edited by Michael Brzoska and Thomas Ohlson, (London and Philadelphia: Taylor and Francis, 1986), pp. 184-185.

<sup>x[10]</sup> The Firearms Act of 1949 (amended 1992) forbids the manufacture of a firearm unless "authorized and ordered to do so by the government or approved by the government to do so." The Act also states that the export of a military firearm is contingent upon the approval of the government, and requires a license. A (military) firearm is defined as a firearm which has a smooth barrel of 20 mm diameter, and above or spiral barrel longer than 100 mm—and the barrel diameter is greater than .22, and is capable of shooting a bullet, shell, bomb, or similar means that can cause mortality. The export of non-military firearms (for sports or hunting) requires a license from the Ministry of Interior who is obligated to consult the Ministry of Defense before issuing the license to an exporter. The (Israel) Firearms Act, 1949, unofficial translation, Jerusalem, 2001;"Israel Position on Transfer, Trade, and Manufacture of Small Arms and Explosives," State of Israel, Ministry of Defense, Tel Aviv, 2001; "Israel Position on Transfer, Trade, and Manufacture of Small Arms and Explosives," State of Israel, Ministry of Defense, Tel Aviv, 2001.

<sup>xi[11]</sup> Small Arms Survey: 2001, pg. 124 (proofs).

<sup>xii[12]</sup> Report of the Group of Governmental Experts Established Pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 54/54 V of 15 December 1999, entitled "Small Arms," A/CONF.192/PC33, 12 March 2001, citing 1999 Report, A/54258, paragraph 65.

<sup>xiii[13]</sup> According to some estimates, in 1988, there were over 10,000 Galil rifles in circulation in Colombia, Testimony of James Jay Baker, Director, Federal Affairs, National Rifle Association Institute for Legislative Action on Colombian Narcotics Traffickers and the Acquisition of Firearms, Before the Select Committee on Narcotics, Abuse and Control, U.S. House of Representatives, November 1, 1989, [http://www.totse.com/en/politics/the\\_world\\_beyond\\_the\\_usa/narc\\_gun.html](http://www.totse.com/en/politics/the_world_beyond_the_usa/narc_gun.html), citing Edward C. Ezell, *Small Arms Today* (Harrising, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 1988) pp.110-111.

<sup>xiv[14]</sup> Testimony of James Jay Baker, Director, Federal Affairs, National Rifle Association Institute for Legislative Action on Colombian Narcotics Traffickers and the Acquisition of Firearms, Before the Select Committee on Narcotics, Abuse and Control, U.S. House of Representatives, November 1, 1989, [http://www.totse.com/en/politics/the\\_world\\_beyond\\_the\\_usa/narc\\_gun.html](http://www.totse.com/en/politics/the_world_beyond_the_usa/narc_gun.html).

<sup>xv[15]</sup> According to Fujimori, the guns were smuggled to Peru under the cover of a lumber export operation. The Peruvian wood was first shipped to Amman, and then the weapons were loaded into crates for the return journey to Peru, "Officials Express 'Surprise' Over Arms to Colombia Deal," *Jordan Times*, 23 August 2000, translated by IMRA, <http://www.imra.org.il>.

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xvi<sup>[16]</sup> Under the 1994 "Gaza – Jericho" Agreement, the Palestinian police force was limited to 9,000 policemen in all its branches. The permitted number of police was later raised to 30,000 (12,000 in the West Bank, and 18,000 in the Gaza Strip)—the limit for the interim period, in Article IV(3) of Annex 1 of the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, 28 September 1995. "Gaza – Jericho Agreement, Annex 1, article 3," Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/go.asp?MFAH00q30#artiii>.

xvii<sup>[17]</sup> This force was allowed to possess 7,000 light personal weapons, and up to 120 machine guns of 0.3" or 0.5" caliber (the machine gun limit was raised to 240 in 1995, and the permitted number of rifles and pistols in the West Bank was raised to 8,000—while the rifle and pistol limit in the Gaza Strip remained unchanged.)

xviii<sup>[18]</sup> Sharm-el-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee – First Statement of the Government of Israel," Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/go.asp?MFAH0jcb0>.

xix<sup>[19]</sup> Sharm-el-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee – First Statement of the Government of Israel," Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/go.asp?MFAH0jcb0>.

xx<sup>[20]</sup> "Gaza– Jericho Agreement, Annex 1, article 3," Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/go.asp?MFAH00q30#artiii>, " Sharm-el-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee– First Statement of the Government of Israel," Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/go.asp?MFAH0jcb0>.

xxi<sup>[21]</sup> Concerns over Palestinian weaponry violations led to Note for the Record of 15 January 1997 in which the Palestinian side explicitly reaffirmed its commitment in respect of the "confiscation of illegal firearms." Sharm-el-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee– First Statement of the Government of Israel," Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/go.asp?MFAH0jcb0>.

xxii<sup>[22]</sup> *ibid*

xxiii<sup>[23]</sup> Suzanne Goldenberg, "Guns For Sale - How Stolen Israeli Weapons Arm Fatah's fighters," *The Guardian*, 16 December 2000.

xxiv<sup>[24]</sup> Sharm-el-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee – First Statement of the Government of Israel," Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/go.asp?MFAH0jcb0>.

xxv<sup>[25]</sup> Documents made public by the Israeli General Security Service detail the production process under the control of the Palestinian Authority. Eitan Rabin, "PA Producing and Stockpiling Weapons - Including Katyusha Rockets," *Ma'ariv*, October 19, 1998, p.9, (translated by *IMRA*, <http://www.imra.org.il/story.php3?id=2209>); Alex Fishman, "The Palestinians are Establishing a Military Industry," *Yediot Ahronot*, 15 April 1997, pg. A7, (translated on *IMRA*, <http://www.imra.org.il/story.php3?id=12621>); Arie O'Sullivan, "GSS: PA Deeply Involved in Mortar Attacks," *Jerusalem Post*, 24 May 2001.

xxvi<sup>[26]</sup> "10 wounded in shooting attack at HaKiryat military base in TA," *Ha'aretz*, 5 August 2001.

xxvii<sup>[27]</sup> Israeli Defense officials also suspect that Egyptian police officers are involved in smuggling arms across the border to the Palestinian Authority town of Rafiah. The report also noted that such tunneling activity requires significant engineering equipment, and is taking place with the cooperation of the Palestinian Authority. Suzanne Goldenberg, "Guns for sale - how stolen Israeli weapons arm Fatah's fighters," *The Guardian*, 16 December 2000; Amos Harel, "Egyptian Police May Be Aiding Smugglers Bringing Arms to the PA," *Ha'aretz*, 13 August 2001; "20 smuggling tunnels - 11 meters (36 ft) underground cross Israel-Egypt border with PA cooperation," *IMRA*, 4 November 2001; "Gaza – Jericho Agreement, Annex 1, article 3," Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/go.asp?MFAH00q30#artiii>.

xxviii<sup>[28]</sup> In November, *Ha'aretz* reported that weapons were smuggled into the West Bank via the Allenby Bridge in the car of VIP permit holder, Abed al Razak Yechia. According to Palestinian sources, Fuad Shubaki, the head of the financial department of the Gaza PA police, traveled to Jordan and Iraq on a fund raising trip to purchase weapons for the PA. Amos Harel, "Shin Bet Uncovers Iraqi-Sponsored Palestinian Terrorist Cell," *Ha'aretz*, 25 November 2001; "Israel Radio: PA Official Visiting Iraq and Jordan To Buy Weapons," *IMRA*, 31 December 2001.

xxix<sup>[29]</sup> Amos Harel, PA Smuggled Arms Via Sea, IDF Suspects," *Ha'aretz*, 29 January 2001; "1,000 rockets caught on way to Palestinians," *IMRA*, 4 February 2001.

xxx<sup>[30]</sup> Israeli Prime Minister Sharon that the smugglers had successfully reached Israel three times in the past. Dan Ephron, "Israelis Seize Ship Loaded with Weapons," *Washington Times*, 8 May 2001; "Sharon: Smugglers Previously Entered Israel; Jibril confirms," *Ha'aretz*, 8 May 2001; Amnon Barzilai, David Ratner and Aluf Benn, "Navy stops arms-laden boat bound

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**for Gaza,” *Ha’aretz*, 8 May 2001.**

<sup>xxxii</sup>[31] In September, Israeli border police stopped a car in close proximity to the Israeli-Arab village, Umm el-Fahm. Two pistols were found in the vehicle, along with 3,000 NIS. In October, Israeli police stopped a truck on its way to Gaza that contained thousands of bullets hidden behind a double wall. “Border Police Special Unit Makes Gun Smuggling Arrest,” *Jerusalem Post*, 5 September 2001.

<sup>xxxiii</sup>[32] Margot Dudkevitch, “Jordanian Held for Arms Smuggling,” *Jerusalem Post*, 23 April 2001; Nicole Krau, “Jordanian Arms Smuggling Ring Discovered,” *Ha’aretz Daily*, 22 April 2001.

<sup>xxxiii</sup>[33] Margot Dudkevitch, “Jordanian Held for Arms Smuggling,” *Jerusalem Post*, 23 April 2001.

<sup>xxxiv</sup>[34] In November, Jordanian authorities arrested an Iraqi truck driver who was accused of smuggling hand grenades headed for the Palestinian autonomous areas. Shafika Mattar, “Jordanian Nab Iraqi Arms Smuggler Bound For PA,” *Associated Press*, 25 November 2001.

<sup>xxxv</sup>[35] Daniel Sobelman, “Jordan Nabs Arms Smuggler Heading for West Bank,” *Ha’aretz*, 17 July 2001.

<sup>xxxvi</sup>[36] Palestinians have been arrested within the “green line,” on charges of purchasing weapons and ammunition with the intention of taking them into PA controlled areas. In July, three Palestinians from the West Bank city of Jenin were arrested for purchasing firearms. “Three Palestinians Arrested After Purchasing firearms,” *Ha’aretz*, 8 July, 2001, “Weapons Captured at Gaza Crossing Point,” *Jerusalem Post* (breaking news), June 25, 2001.

<sup>xxxvii</sup>[37] “Police Thwart Arms Smuggling Attempt Into Gaza,” *Jerusalem Post*, 22 October 2001.