Hamas intensifies efforts to launch West Bank terror attacks — report

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The Hamas terror group has intensified efforts to carry out West Bank terror attacks, with guidance from the Gaza Strip, Kan news reported Saturday in an unsourced report.

The TV network said Abdallah Arar, a Hamas man released from Israeli prison in the 2011 exchange for the release of abducted soldier Gilad Shalit, had contacted some 60 West Bank Palestinians over the past six months to try to recruit them to carry out attacks.

The report said Arar contacted individuals online, on social media ad on the phone, and had managed to recruit several people to Hamas in recent months. It said Arar was seen as particularly talented at recruitment, and that he often provides the people he enlists with detailed instructions on how to find targets for attacks and build bombs.

Israel and Hamas engaged in 11 days of fighting in May, during which the terror group launched thousands of rockets at Israeli cities and towns, and Israel launched hundreds of retaliatory airstrikes in the Gaza Strip. In the days after the ceasefire was declared, senior Israeli defense officials said they were not sure how long the truce would last, describing it as unstable.

In the most recent round of fighting, Palestinian terror groups tied the rocket fire from Gaza to unrest in Jerusalem, connected to both clashes on the Temple Mount during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, and the pending eviction of a number of Palestinian families from the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood.

A poll in June [found](https://www.timesofisrael.com/poll-shows-dramatic-surge-in-palestinian-support-for-hamas-after-gaza-fighting/) a dramatic surge in Palestinian support for Hamas following the Gaza conflict, with around three-quarters viewing the Islamist terrorists as victors in a battle against Israel to defend Jerusalem and its holy sites.

On Thursday, sources in Hamas told a Lebanese newspaper it would escalate the situation on the Gaza border if Israel does not allow the passage of Qatari funds into the Strip by the end of the week.

With Israel’s approval, Qatar has in recent years distributed hundreds of millions of dollars in cash to enable Gaza’s Hamas rulers to pay for fuel for the Strip’s power plant, pay civil servants’ salaries, and provide aid to tens of thousands of impoverished families.

An official familiar with the negotiations told The Times of Israel this month that Israel had notified Egyptian mediators that it will no longer allow the entrance of unmonitored Qatari cash into the Strip, as had previously been done.

In recent weeks, ministers in Israel’s high-level security cabinet were presented a new proposal that would enable aid to reach Gaza without enriching the terror organization. But no final decision has been reached yet.

Earlier this month it was reported that the United Nations has agreed to take responsibility for the disbursement of the Qatari funds.