



## Spotlight on Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

January 6-13, 2026

### Overview<sup>1</sup>

- ▶ IDF forces continued operating within the Yellow Line in the Gaza Strip, locating and destroying facilities and weapons, and eliminating terrorists who attempted to attack the soldiers. Following a failed rocket launch and other violations by Hamas, the IDF attacked terrorist facilities throughout the Strip and eliminated operatives from Hamas and other terrorist organizations. The Hamas military wing renewed its searches for the last murdered Israeli hostage in the Strip.
- ▶ There was anger among Palestinians over UNRWA's decision to fire hundreds of employees who were forced to leave the Gaza Strip during the war. The agency was accused of "supporting the occupation's plans."
- ▶ An anti-Hamas militia operating within the Yellow Line claimed responsibility for killing a Khan Yunis police official and threatened to continue attacking Hamas operatives.
- ▶ Reportedly, elections for head of the Hamas political bureau were postponed because of the focus on negotiations for the second phase of the ceasefire agreement and in light of disagreements within the movement's leadership in the Gaza Strip.
- ▶ In preparation for announcing the members of the Peace Council and the technocrat committee which will manage the Gaza Strip, Hamas reiterated that it would dismantle its governing bodies. Fatah warned Hamas against attempting to prevent Palestinian Authority representation on the new administrative committee.
- ▶ Israeli security forces continued extensive counterterrorism activity in Judea and Samaria; an IDF soldier was wounded by gunfire in Nablus.
- ▶ Palestinian Authority chairman Mahmoud Abbas said the current year would be "the year of Palestinian democracy," with local and general elections and strengthening the rule of law.

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<sup>1</sup> Click <https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en> to subscribe and receive the ITIC's daily updates as well as its other publications.

## The Ceasefire Agreement

### The IDF

► IDF forces continued operating within the Yellow Line (territory under IDF control) in the Gaza Strip and eliminated terrorists who approached the line or attempted to cross it to attack the forces. The forces destroyed terrorist facilities and located a launcher with two rockets in the Jabalia refugee camp in the northern Strip. Following ceasefire violations by Hamas, including a failed rocket launch from the Gaza City at Israeli territory, the IDF attacked terrorist facilities and sites for the production and storage of weapons, and eliminated operatives from Hamas and other terrorist organizations, including the head of the Hamas anti-tank missile array and the head of a weapons-production workshop (IDF spokesperson, January 6–13, 2026).



**Right: Trajectory of the failed launch. Left: The loaded rocket launcher in Jabalia (IDF spokesperson, January 8–9, 2026)**

► The Hamas government media information office claimed that from the time the ceasefire went into effect on October 10, 2025 and January 9, 2026, Israel [allegedly] "violated" the agreement 1,193 times, leading to 484 fatalities, 1,206 wounded, and 50 "illegal" detentions. That [allegedly] included 384 incidents of shooting at civilians, 66 incursions of military vehicles into populated areas, 551 attacks and harm to civilians and their homes, and 192 incidents of destruction and demolition of buildings (Telegram channel of the Hamas government media information office, January 9, 2026).

► "Palestinian sources" reported that Hamas complained to the mediators and ceasefire guarantor states about Israel's continued "violations" of the agreement and warned that Israel's targeted killings carried out on "false pretexts" could lead to the agreement's collapse (aljazeera.net, January 9, 2026). "An Egyptian source familiar with the mediation efforts" said that an "angry message" had been received from the Hamas military wing, according to which "the fighters' patience may run out" (al-Araby al-Jadeed, January 11, 2026).

## The Last Murdered Israeli Hostage

► Operatives from the Hamas military wing, accompanied by a Red Cross team, renewed searches in the al-Zeitoun neighborhood of Gaza City for the body of Ran Gvili, the last murdered Israeli hostage held in the Gaza Strip. "A Hamas source" told Agence France-Presse that the searches had been halted over the past two weeks because of weather conditions. Hamas spokesperson Hazem Qassem claimed that the movement continued to meet its commitments under the ceasefire agreement and was working around the clock to complete the "prisoner" exchanges despite the Israeli presence and the destruction in the Strip (Telegram channel of al-Risalah, January 7, 2026).

## The Gaza Strip

### The Situation in the Gaza Strip

► Hamas continued to promote its propaganda of damage to the public health system in the Gaza Strip:

- ◆ The director of al-Shifa Medical Center in Gaza City, Mohammed Abu Salmiya, claimed that hospitals were operating at more than 150% capacity due to an [alleged] almost complete shortage of medications and medical supplies. He claimed that about 50% of nephrology patients had died because of a shortage of more than 70% of medications, and cancer patients were also suffering from a similar shortage (aljazeera.net, January 6, 2026).
- ◆ The head of the pediatrics and maternity department at the Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Yunis reported an increase in congenital birth defects and premature births, with low birth weight caused by maternal malnutrition, lack of essential supplements, and the impact of contaminated water and smoke from burning wood (Telegram channel of journalist Isma'il Abu Omar, January 9, 2026).
- ◆ A senior official in the Hamas Ministry of Health in the Strip, Dr. Ahed Samour, said no flu deaths had been recorded, although several patients were hospitalized in intensive care. He added that the ministry was unable to provide annual flu vaccinations to at-risk groups, including patients, the elderly and children, and noted that the ministry of health in Ramallah had 12,000 doses of flu vaccine, which Israel was [allegedly] preventing from delivery to the Strip (Safa, January 7, 2026).
- ◆ The Hamas government media information office claimed that hospitals and water and sewage infrastructure were nearly paralyzed, and shortages of food, medications,

water and fuel were worsening. It further claimed that more than 127,000 tents were unusable, affecting more than 1.5 million displaced persons (Telegram channel of the Hamas government media information office, January 9, 2026).

- The spokesperson for civil defense in the Gaza Strip, Mahmoud Bassal, said that extracting bodies from the rubble was "very complex," and he estimated that there were about 9,000 bodies under the rubble, while the teams had extremely limited heavy equipment, including two small excavators supplied by the Red Cross. He claimed that without urgent assistance, recovery of the bodies could take years (Shehab, January 5, 2026). The commander of Civil Defense in Gaza District, Raed al-Dahshan, estimated the number of bodies at close to 10,000 and noted that about 350 had been recovered so far (Palestine Online, January 8, 2026).
- The director general of the Hamas government media information office, Isma'il al-Thawabta, claimed that more than 80,000 Gazans had requested to return to the Strip from abroad. He accused Israel of preventing the opening of the Rafah Crossing in both directions because it sought "displacement" from the Strip (aljazeera.net, January 6, 2026).
- According to reports, UNRWA fired hundreds of Gazan employees who were outside the Strip during the war after they were forced to leave due to the strikes or "forced evacuation." UNRWA said the measure was the result of a severe financial crisis which made it difficult for the agency to meet its obligations. According to "Palestinian sources," more than 622 employees were fired at one time, including experienced teachers (al-Risalah, January 7, 2026). Teachers' unions and UNRWA employee unions in the Strip, as well as the PLO, Hamas, and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), condemned UNRWA and called for it reverse the dismissals. It was also claimed that the decision "supported the occupation's plans to damage UNRWA and undermine its role" (Wafa and Safa agencies and Telegram channels of Hamas and PIJ, January 7, 2026).



**Demonstration against UNRWA in the Gaza Strip (Shehab Agency, January 7, 2026)**

## Civilian Governance

- The Gaza City municipality reported that it was continuing rainwater drainage in several areas of the city to reduce damage, especially in low-lying areas where water collected. The municipality said it was operating under difficult conditions and suffering from a suffocating financial crisis which prevented it from paying salaries, as well as shortages of equipment and tools. It ultimately called on Gazans to exercise caution, stay away from buildings and objects that could collapse, maintain cleanliness and avoid dumping waste in streets and gathering areas to keep it out of drainage systems and prevent it from causing flooding and sewage overflow (Telegram channel of journalist Saed al-Suwairki, RT correspondent in Gaza, January 9, 2026).
- Journalist Islam Badr claimed that a senior official in the Hamas ministry of the interior told him that starting from the morning of January 11, 2026, green ID cards would be issued. He said the ID card was official, exactly as issued before the war, and through the same mechanism (Facebook page Rafah.Cross. News, January 10, 2026). Another internet user claimed that the ministry had begun issuing green ID cards and that some people had received them, but no official announcement had yet been published by the ministry. He showed a photo of an ID card dated 10/01/2026 as proof of his claim (Telegram channel of Assistance of the World Food Programme and UNRWA in "Palestine," January 10 and 12, 2026).



Right: The ID card issued on January 10, 2026. Left: People waiting in line near the interior ministry office at the Abu Khadra Mosque junction in Gaza City to submit ID applications (Telegram channel Assistance of the World Food Programme and UNRWA in "Palestine," January 10 and 12, 2026)

## Security Governance

- The Association of Palestinian Tribes and Clans in the Gaza Strip announced that after the extension granted to "collaborators belonging to militias supported by the occupation" to recant and surrender had expired, and as Hamas security bodies had already begun taking action against detainees from such groups, it was offering to mediate with the authorities in the Strip to regularize their status and close the files of those who wanted to repent. According

to the announcement, the arrangement would be possible on the condition that they surrendered themselves to recognized mukhtars and notables or contacted them to coordinate the procedure (Safa Agency, January 7, 2026).

- "Sources in Hamas and among Gazans" reported that several weeks ago the Hamas security forces began summoning social media activists living in the Strip as part of an investigation into the misuse of donations intended for Gazans. According to some of those summoned, the accusations were directed mainly at members of a group known as "the entrepreneurs" (*al-mubadirun*), social media influencers with thousands of followers who were active during the war and collected donations from Palestinians abroad and other sources to transfer to the displaced. "A source close to the investigation" added that the probe would also include heads of charities and others who collected donations from unknown sources, in light of suspicious external signs of enrichment and doubts regarding how the funds were spent (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, January 6, 2026).
- The Hamas ministry of the interior stated that on January 12, 2026, in the al-Mawasi area, the head of the criminal investigations department of the Khan Yunis police, *muqaddam* (lieutenant colonel) Mahmoud Ahmed al-Astal, was killed by gunfire from a passing vehicle carrying several "agents of the occupation." The ministry also claimed the assassination was an attempt to spread chaos and continue the IDF's targeting of commanders and operatives of the security mechanisms and police, after more than 2,700 of them had been killed during the war, constituting 15% of the ministry's manpower (Telegram channel of the Hamas ministry of the interior and national security, January 12, 2026). Hussam al-Astal, leader of a militia operating in the Qizan al-Najjar area of Khan Yunis District, which is under Israeli control, claimed responsibility for the assassination, which was carried out outside the Yellow Line, and stated that it was part of a "campaign against senior Hamas figures." Al-Astal threatened to continue attacking Hamas operatives and declared that "what is coming is greater and the surprises will be many" (Facebook page of Hussam al-Astal, January 12, 2026).
- According to reports, Hamas gunmen killed Karam Fares al-Danaf, 14 years old, in Deir al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip after firing at his family's car while he was inside (Telegram channel Jusoor News Gaza, January 12, 2026).

### **International Activity to Lift the "Siege"**

- The organizers of the Global Sumud (Steadfastness) Flotilla submitted a request to the Egyptian government to allow the passage of a humanitarian land convoy to the Gaza Strip via

the Rafah Crossing. Reportedly, the convoy is attempting to enter Egypt through the crossing on the Libyan border and then continue safely through Egyptian territory toward the Strip's border (Telegram channel of journalist Abu Joud, January 8, 2026).



**"Will Egypt respond? The al-Sumud fleet demands facilitation of a humanitarian convoy to Gaza"**  
**(Telegram channel of journalist Abu Joud, January 8, 2026)**

## Elections for the Hamas Leadership

► "Senior Hamas officials" said the movement decided to postpone the elections for head of the general political bureau, which were scheduled to take place during the first ten days of January 2026; no new date has been set, but "they could take place at any moment." "One source" attributed the postponement to security and political circumstances and to the Hamas preoccupation with negotiations on moving to the second phase of the ceasefire, with intensified efforts on the issue by the mediators. "Additional sources" said the elections were postponed for other reasons, including disagreements which had intensified in recent days due to strong opposition voiced by most leadership levels, administrative bodies and others, to the internal arrangements that recently took place in the Gaza leadership under the leadership of Ali al-Amoudi (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, January 11, 2026).

## Negotiations for the Ceasefire Agreement and "The Day After"

► "A senior American official" confirmed that Bulgarian diplomat Nikolay Mladenov, who served as the UN special coordinator for the Middle East peace process from 2015 to 2020, was the American administration's choice for the position of director of day-to-day affairs on the ground of the Peace Council (AP, January 9, 2026). In response, senior Hamas official Mahmoud Mardawi claimed that Mladenov's name had not been formally presented to them and said the primary test was conduct on the ground and they rejected any form of external trusteeship (Al Jazeera Mubasher YouTube channel, January 10, 2026).

- American mediator Bishara Bahbah, a businessman of Palestinian origin, said the United States, Britain, Germany, Italy, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt would participate in the Peace Council with the participation of heads of state or prime ministers, and added that there was talk of adding the president of the International Monetary Fund, the president of the World Bank, and another figure heading an international institution to the Council. He said he expected the Peace Council to convene on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum meetings in Davos in the third week of January 2026. Regarding names for the committee to manage the Gaza Strip, Bahbah said that the names were not yet precisely known, and all that could be said was that the people nominated for the committee were from the Strip, whether they currently lived there or were of Gazan origin. Regarding Hamas' status and its potential exit from the political arena, Bahbah said the central issue was Israel and the United States' demand that Hamas disarm, and he acknowledged that there were currently no mechanisms or negotiations on this matter. He said Hamas would not agree to disarm without explicit guarantees that would prevent Israel from violating the agreement (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, January 10, 2026).
- Senior Hamas official Mohammed Nazzal said that the movement had submitted a list of 40 names to the authorities in Egypt from which the administrators of the technocratic committee to manage the Strip would be chosen (Al Jazeera, January 12, 2026). Hamas spokesperson Hazem Qassem called for expediting the establishment of the technocrat committee and added that Hamas had a clear decision to dissolve the governing bodies managing affairs in the Gaza Strip and transfer them to the committee. He claimed Hamas would facilitate the committee in its role and the success of its work (Telegram channel of Hazem Qassem, January 10, 2026).
- In preparation for the publication of the names of the committee members, public disputes between Hamas and Fatah resurfaced. Fatah spokesperson in the Gaza Strip, Munther al-Hayek, warned that if Hamas agreed to establish a technocrat committee without representation of the Palestinian Authority, it would lead to division and prevent cooperation among the "factions."<sup>2</sup> He demanded that Hamas representatives meet with the mediators in Egypt and declare that they would not agree to a committee which was not subordinate to the Palestinian Authority. He added that international control over the Gaza Strip would also create a separation between the Strip and Judea and Samaria (Sama Agency, January 12,

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<sup>2</sup> Terrorist organizations.

2026). Hamas spokesperson Hazem Qassem called on the Palestinian Authority leadership to respond to the "positive positions" presented by the movement to reach internal Palestinian arrangements and progress toward national consensus. He said that no Palestinian party benefitted from the current situation and added that the Palestinian Authority leadership was mistaken if it believed it could benefit from the disaster in the Gaza Strip (Telegram channel of Hazem Qassem, January 12, 2026).

- Deputy secretary general of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), Muhammad al-Hindi, accused the "occupation" of delaying the establishment of the technocrat committee. He said Israel refused to involve the Palestinian Authority in managing the Strip and was exploiting the first phase of the agreement to "eliminate senior figures and entrench its occupation." He added that the "resistance"<sup>3</sup> was an inseparable part of the Palestinian people and could not be eliminated (Al Jazeera, January 12, 2026).
- Hamas political bureau member Bassem Na'im said the American plan to end the war in the Gaza Strip had stalled due to Prime Minister Netanyahu's determination "to evade his commitments and escalate in order to sabotage the agreement and return to fighting." Na'im claimed that the "resistance" had met all its commitments under the agreement, as allegedly attested by the mediators and the Americans themselves, and was prepared to conduct itself "in a positive and constructive manner" with the next steps of the plan (Telegram channel of Bassem Na'im, January 9, 2026).

### **Involve ment of the Palestinian Authority in the Gaza Strip**

- At the opening of the 13th session of the Revolutionary Council, Palestinian Authority chairman Abu Mazen stated that implementing the second phase of the American plan for the Gaza Strip had to begin, including full Israeli withdrawal, an end to Hamas rule, and the establishment of a Palestinian transitional committee to manage the Strip that would be subordinate to the Palestinian government, while claiming that the Gaza Strip was an integral part of the "Palestinian state" (Wafa, January 9, 2026).
- Deputy chairman of the Palestinian Authority, Hussein al-Sheikh, met in Ramallah with Nikolay Mladenov. Al-Sheikh reiterated the need to implement the second phase of the American plan and the importance of maintaining an institutional link between the Strip and the Palestinian Authority in Judea and Samaria. He added that alongside advancing the plan in the Gaza Strip, tax revenues had to be released and unilateral measures in Judea and

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<sup>3</sup> The Palestinian terrorist organizations.

Samaria had to stop, including "settler terrorism" and settlement expansion (Wafa, January 9, 2026).



Al-Sheikh and Mladenov (Wafa, January 9, 2026)

## Israel, Judea and Samaria

### Counterterrorist Activity

► This past week Israeli security forces continued counterterrorist activity throughout Judea and Samaria. The forces detained wanted individuals and suspects involved in terrorism, including a terrorist cell from the Hebron area which was planning to carry out an attack in the immediate future and Palestinians suspected of throwing rocks. Lathes for manufacturing weapons and military equipment used for terrorist activity were seized, along with thousands of shekels for financing terrorist activity. The forces also detained a Hamas terrorist suspected of shooting and wounding an IDF soldier during an activity in Nablus and eliminated a terrorist who threw Molotov cocktails. At Bir Zeit University, Israeli security forces clashed with hundreds of Palestinian who attempted to hold a terrorism-supporting event (IDF spokesperson, January 6–13, 2026).

### Friction between Palestinians and Settlers

► This past week there were several violent incidents between Israeli settlers and Palestinians. Dozens of masked Israelis vandalized property near the settlement of Shavei Shomron, set Palestinian vehicles on fire and attacked a Palestinian who was inside one of the vehicles; two Palestinians were wounded. IDF forces detained three suspects (IDF spokesperson, January 8, 2026). In the village of Bazaria, near Nablus, Jewish settlers burned six vehicles and spray-painted racist slogans on the walls of several homes (*al-Araby al-Jadeed*, January 9, 2026). Settlers burned down the school building in Jalud (Ramallah News, January 9, 2026).



**The burning school in Jalud by Jewish settlers (Ramallah News, January 9, 2026)**

- In response to the incidents, a leaflet calling on Palestinians to burn Israeli settlers was circulated on Palestinian social media (Telegram channel Palestine News Network, January 9, 2026).



**"They burned schools in the village of Jalud, they burned cars in the village of Bazaria; we will burn them before they steal our land and our property" (Telegram channel Palestine News Network, January 9, 2026)**

## The Palestinian Authority (PA)

### Diplomatic Activity

- PA chairman Abu Mazen met in Ramallah with the Chinese envoy to the Middle East, Zhai Jun, and thanked him for the humanitarian assistance China provides to the Palestinians. Abu Mazen welcomed the invitation from Chinese President Xi Jinping to participate in the Arab-Chinese summit to be held in Beijing in June 2026 and noted the importance of continuing international efforts to end the "occupation" and achieve independence for a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital (Wafa, January 7, 2026).



**Abu Mazen and the Chinese special envoy (Wafa, January 7, 2026)**

► In his opening address to the 13th session of the Revolutionary Council at the "presidential" headquarters in Ramallah, Abu Mazen declared that 2026 would be "the year of Palestinian democracy," claiming that it would be devoted to promoting reforms and preparing for elections: local elections in April, a Fatah conference and elections for the Palestinian National Council later in the year, followed by general elections. He said elections would be held in the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria, and East Jerusalem as a single unit, and at the same time presented a reform plan to strengthen the rule of law and good governance, increase transparency and accountability, and fortify the separation of powers, including updating election laws and the political parties' law (*al-Arabi al-Jadeed*, January 9, 2026).

### **The Palestinian Authority Security Forces**

► Hamas claimed that the PA security forces in Judea and Samaria, especially in Jenin, had increased political arrests of leaders, activists, students and other groups, which, according to the PA, were escalating internal tension during a sensitive period. According to Hamas, the arrests served Israel by harming opponents, elected officials, and critical voices, at a time when Judea and Samaria were dealing with "escalation, settlement expansion, annexation and displacement, as well as daily attacks by settlers [allegedly]." Hamas warned against the continuation of the policy and called for an immediate halt to all political arrests, the release of all detainees held for their opinions and national affiliation, and directing efforts toward confronting Israel instead of "internal persecution" (Hamas Telegram channel, January 10, 2026).