



## Spotlight on Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict April 14 – 28, 2026

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

- ▶ IDF forces continued operations to locate terrorist operatives and destroy weapons and terrorist infrastructure within the Yellow Line in the Gaza Strip. Operatives who violated the ceasefire and planned terrorist attacks were eliminated, including those involved in the October 7, 2023 attack and massacre. Hamas claimed Israel was expanding the Yellow Line boundaries.
- ▶ Direct talks were held between Hamas representatives and representatives of the American administration for the first time since the ceasefire. The Board of Peace high commissioner, Nikolai Mladenov, said an agreement could be reached for disarming Hamas, but warned that swift understandings were required to maintain momentum.
- ▶ Hamas rejected statements by the IDF and the American vice president regarding an increase in aid to the Strip, and alleged that Israel still restricted the entry of food, medicine and fuel.
- ▶ A slate affiliated with Fatah won the local elections in Deir al-Balah, the first time since 2006. Hamas police and hundreds of Hamas government officials were involved in organizing and securing the voting.
- ▶ Clashes took place between Hamas "security" forces and opposing militias, which had announced an operation against Hamas because of its refusal to disarm.
- ▶ There were two stabbing attacks in Judea and Samaria; no casualties were reported. Israeli security forces located a cache of explosive devices in a school in the Hebron area.
- ▶ Settler terrorism continued in Judea and Samaria, and two Palestinians were killed by gunfire in a confrontation with Jewish rioters.
- ▶ The European Union and donor countries rejected the Palestinian Authority's request for emergency assistance of €300 million.

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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 Fighting in the Gaza Strip

► IDF forces continued their activity within the Yellow Line in the Gaza Strip to locate terrorist operatives and destroy weapons, tunnels and other terrorist infrastructure. Four Hamas tunnels in the northern Gaza Strip were destroyed, with a total length of about 800 meters, with living quarters, sleeping equipment, explosive devices and materials used for preparing explosive devices. Operatives who approached IDF forces or attempted to infiltrate the Yellow Line were eliminated. Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) terrorists preparing to attack were eliminated, including operatives involved in the October 7, 2023 attack and massacre, and Hamas operatives working to rearm the military wing were also eliminated (IDF spokesperson, April 14-28, 2026).

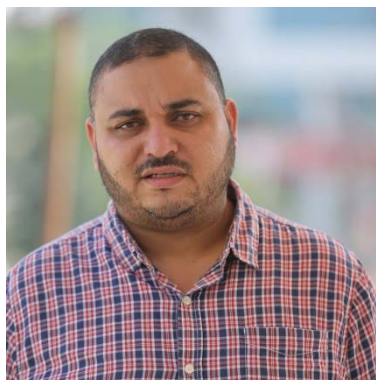


**The IDF destroys Hamas terrorist tunnels in the northern Gaza Strip  
(IDF spokesperson, April 27, 2026)**

► Hamas spokesperson Hazem Qassem claimed that IDF forces had moved the Yellow Line hundreds of meters westward, allegedly in violation of the ceasefire. He added that the mediators and the Board of Peace had to clarify their positions regarding the "occupation's violations" (Shehab Agency, April 26, 2026).

► On April 22, 2026, the PIJ's military wing issued a slate of 23 names of commanders from different units who were killed during the war in the Gaza Strip and after the ceasefire. Among them was Muhammad Jamal al-Mubayyad, who was a commander in the central recruitment unit of the Gaza Brigade, eliminated on May 28, 2025 (Jerusalem Brigades Telegram channel, April 22, 2026). According to reports, he had been the project manager in the Gaza Strip for the IHH, a Turkish anti-Israeli, anti-Western Islamist organization close to the Turkish government,

which has been involved in organizing flotillas to the Gaza Strip, including the *Mavi Marmara* flotilla of 2010 (Alam Radio, May 28, 2025).<sup>2</sup>



Right: al-Mubayyad (Quds Agency, May 28, 2025)

## Negotiating the Second Phase of the Ceasefire Agreement

► According to Hamas sources, for the first time since the ceasefire in Gaza in October 2025, direct talks were held between the United States and Hamas. A delegation of the movement headed by Khalil al-Hayya met in Cairo on April 14, 2026 with a delegation headed by senior advisor to the American administration, Aryeh Lightstone, with the Board of Peace high commissioner, Nikolai Mladenov, in attendance. According to the sources, al-Hayya said Israel had to meet its commitments to the first phase of the ceasefire agreement, including ceasing airstrikes and allowing the delivery of additional humanitarian aid, as a condition for moving to the second phase. According to an American source and diplomat familiar with the details, the meeting with al-Hayya was preceded by a meeting Lightstone held with Prime Minister Netanyahu to ensure Israel was committed to implementing the conditions of the first phase. According to one of the sources, Israel agreed to implement them on the condition that Hamas committed to disarm (CNN Arabic, April 15, 2026).

► Hamas reported that its delegation held several meetings in Cairo with the mediators and Palestinian "factions"<sup>3</sup> to complete the implementation of the first phase of the agreement and end the "difficult humanitarian situation" in the Gaza Strip, ensuring the withdrawal of IDF forces from the entire Strip and beginning reconstruction. Hamas claimed Israel had to be

<sup>2</sup> See the October 2025 ITIC report, [The Turkish IHH, which led the Mavi Marmara flotilla, operates in the Gaza Strip and is involved in its reconstruction](#)

<sup>3</sup> Terrorist organizations.

compelled to implement the clauses of the first phase to pave the way for serious dialogue on the second phase ( Hamas Telegram channel, April 19, 2026). In another statement, Hamas said it and the Palestinian "factions" treated the proposals presented "positively and responsibly" to reach an agreed-upon arrangement, adding that Hamas wanted to continue negotiations with the mediators to overcome obstacles ( Hamas Telegram channel, April 21, 2026). A source in Hamas "abroad" claimed the movement was open to proposals but insisted Israel be obligated to meet the conditions of the first phase, including stopping attacks, beginning reconstruction of schools and hospitals and opening the crossings more broadly (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, April 27, 2026).

► Hamas spokesperson Hazem Qassem called on the mediators and Arab parties to the agreement to fulfill their role in finding "logical and reasonable" approaches which would be acceptable to the Palestinians. He said it was necessary to ensure that the war did not return and that the Palestinians realized their rights, especially the right to self-determination. He said that as far as Hamas was concerned, the Board of Peace was helpless and accused it of bias toward the Israeli position. He claimed that either the council was incapable of pressuring Israel to stop its "violations" and meet its commitments, or unwilling. Regarding Israeli threats to renew the fighting, Qassem said such "pressure tactics" would not succeed, adding that in practice Israel has not stopped the war (Anatolia Agency, April 22, 2026).

► Board of Peace high commissioner Nikolai Mladenov claimed he was "fairly optimistic" that an arrangement could be reached for disarming Hamas and additional [terrorist] organizations, but warned that the process would take time. He said that in recent weeks "serious but not easy" talks had been held with Hamas, and he noted that understandings had to be reached within days to two weeks so as not to lose momentum. He added that the issues of establishing a new governing mechanism in the Gaza Strip, Israel's withdrawal, the Yellow Line, the entry of aid and medicines, and the expansion of activity at the Rafah Crossing were also being discussed. Mladenov said that in addition to practical progress, trust had to be built between the sides to enable the implementation of the plan to stop the war and rebuild the Strip (Reuters, April 20, 2026).

### **The Gaza Strip Management Committee**

► A civilian in the Gaza Strip, who is reportedly in constant contact with the national committee for managing the Strip, stated that at least two members of the committee residing in the Strip had submitted their resignations to the committee chairman, Ali Shaat, and to

Nikolai Mladenov. He said Mladenov had rejected the resignations outright and said no member could resign, rather, they were obligated to continue their work according to the planned tasks of the committee, without objections. According to the civilian, one of the problems facing the committee was the lack of budget to begin operations and the non-payment of salaries to its members. He added that some members were dissatisfied with the way they were being treated, their exclusion from contacts regarding the next phase in the Strip and the absence of clearly-defined work plans. A source from one of the terrorist organizations claimed that at least three members tried to resign in protest over Mladenov's policy and his "adherence to Israeli dictates." The source said one of the conditions of the second phase was the handing over to the committee of weapons belonging to the "factions"<sup>4</sup> and clans and personal weapons, which raised questions about the committee's capabilities. He added that apparently Ali Shaat did not have real authority over the management of the committee (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, April 17, 2026).

## The Gaza Strip

### The Situation in the Gaza Strip

► The Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) reported that since the beginning of the ceasefire in October 2025, 1.5 million tons of food had been delivered to the Gaza Strip, especially proteins and dietary fibers, and that currently 209 local kitchens were operating that provide hot meals and 33 bakeries supplied 3.6 million pitas daily. In addition, more than 12,500 tons of medical aid and 20 ambulances had been brought in, and currently 11 hospitals and 12 field hospitals were operating (COGAT X account, April 26, 2026).

► Hamas sharply criticized the remarks made by the American vice president, who claimed that the volume of aid currently entering the Gaza Strip was the highest in the past five years. According to Hamas, the statement was misleading and distorted the situation to whitewash the [alleged] "crisis" and "hunger" in the Gaza Strip. Hamas also claimed Israel had imposed "severe restrictions" on the entry of aid, disrupted basic living conditions and caused shortages of food, medicine and fuel. Hamas called on the mediators and the international community, especially the United Nations, to exert pressure on Israel to allow a sufficient and uninterrupted flow of aid and goods into the Gaza Strip (Hamas Telegram channel in Judea and Samaria, April 15, 2026).

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<sup>4</sup> Terrorist organizations.

- ▶ The director of the Rantisi Children's Hospital in the Gaza Strip, Dr. Jamil Suleiman, reported a recent increase in infectious children's diseases, especially chickenpox, because of overcrowding in displaced persons' shelters and tents and the deterioration of hygiene (Shehab, April 22, 2026).
- ▶ Reportedly, merchants in the Gaza Strip were "renting" bank accounts from residents with active accounts to carry out electronic transactions in exchange for a fixed monthly payment or a percentage of each transaction. It began after the bank accounts of hundreds of Palestinians were frozen by order of the Palestinian Monetary Authority following suspicions regarding account activity or transfers received from abroad. Another factor is "cash traders," who exploit the shortage of cash in official banks to sell banknotes in exchange for electronic bank balances, while charging exorbitant commissions (*al-Quds al-Arabi*, April 23, 2026).
- ▶ Gazans reported a large number of rodents in the tents of the displaced, and said they had begun scattering black pepper and chili peppers around the tents to keep them away (Khan Yunis Telegram channel, April 26, 2026).
- ▶ A project instituted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is collecting concrete blocks and metal from the ruins of buildings. The blocks are sorted, crushed and reused to pave roads, prepare shelter areas and restore access to essential services such as wells and hospitals. In the assessment of the UNDP in Gaza, Alessandro Marakic, there are about 61 million tons of debris in the Strip, of which only about 287,000 tons have been cleared so far, and that full clearance is expected to take about seven years, provided the continuous entry of heavy equipment and fuel is allowed. According to estimates by the European Union, the United Nations and the World Bank, reconstruction of the Strip over the next decade will require about \$71.4 billion (Reuters, April 27, 2026).

### **Civilian Governance**

- ▶ On April 25, 2026, local elections were held in Deir al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip for the first time since 2006. Four slates ran in the elections, one of them including candidates affiliated with Hamas. According to the published results, the Nahda slate, affiliated with Fatah, won six of 15 seats, while the Deir al-Balah Tajamma'na slate, affiliated with Hamas, won only two seats. However, only about 23% of the 70,000 eligible voters participated in the vote, which was held simultaneously with local elections in Judea and Samaria. The Palestinian Authority chose to hold elections in the Gaza Strip to present national unity in the face of international initiatives regarding the future of the Strip, and Deir al-Balah was the only place where the

elections were held because it sustained relatively little damage compared to other areas in the Strip (Reuters, April 25-26, 2026). The Hamas government media information office reported that more than 500 government employees from all sectors, ministries and government institutions participated in securing and organizing the elections in Deir al-Balah, including Hamas police personnel (Hamas government media information office Telegram channel, April 25, 2026). Hamas spokesperson Hazem Qassem welcomed the local elections in Deir al-Balah and said he hoped conditions would allow elections to be held in the rest of the Strip. He called for holding elections for the other Palestinian political frameworks, including the Legislative Council and the presidency (al-Arabiya, April 25, 2026).



**Hamas police secure the voting in Deir al-Balah  
(Hamas ministry of the interior website, April 25, 2026)**

► An investigation in Britain found that children in the Gaza Strip were being sexually harassed by clerics affiliated with Hamas, and in many cases threats and extortion were used to keep them and their families from exposing the crimes, or to force them to join Hamas. The investigation presented testimonies of children and fathers who claimed that the abuses took place in mosques, but when they tried to complain they were threatened by Hamas members and operatives of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, the Hamas military wing, who threatened to accuse them of collaborating with Israel. Sources in the Strip noted that pedophilia was known, and that in most cases orphans and widows were harassed. It was noted that journalists reporting the situation were pressured and harassed by Hamas (*Daily Mail*, April 26, 2026).

## Security Governance

► On April 19, 2026, Ghassan al-Dahini, the commander of the Popular Forces militia in east Rafah and head of its military wing, announced the start of Operation Deterrence of Aggression, in cooperation with operatives of the Palestinian Popular Forces, throughout the Gaza Strip. He said the operation was a response to Hamas' "stubbornness regarding the issue of disarming" (Ghassan al-Dahini Facebook page, April 19, 2026). The objectives of the operation are to expel Hamas terrorist operatives from their bases while they use civilians as human shields, to deploy the Popular Forces' security forces in new locations, and to recruit new volunteers to the forces (Facebook page of Popular Forces military wing, April 19, 2026). Following the announcement of the operation, a unified military and political statement was published by all the militias (the Popular Forces under the command of Hussam al-Astal, the Popular Army under the command of Ashraf al-Mansi, the Popular Defense Forces headed by Rami Helles, the Free Homeland Forces headed by Shawki Abu Nassira and the militia headed by al-Dahini), in which they called on all civilian Gazans to distance themselves from areas of military operations, warned against providing shelter to Hamas operatives, and called on residents to immediately join the militia forces in every city and area (Facebook page of the Popular Army in the northern Strip district, April 19, 2026).

► Extensive activity by the militias was reported in broad areas under Hamas control. The Popular Army of Ashraf al-Mansi operated in west Gaza City and Beit Lahia (Facebook page of the Popular Army in the northern Strip district, April 20, 2026; Hamza al-Masri Telegram channel, April 20, 2026). Hussam al-Astal reported that his men operated in Abu Hamid Square in Khan Yunis, and one operative was killed in exchanges of fire with operatives of the Hamas military wing. Israeli unmanned aerial vehicles reportedly allowed militia members to withdraw toward their positions in south Khan Yunis (Facebook page of Hussam al-Astal and *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, April 20, 2026). Operatives of al-Dahini's militia distributed cigarettes and money to residents in Mawasi in northwest Rafah, after which there were exchanges of fire (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, April 20, 2026). According to reports, several Hamas checkpoints and ambushes were attacked (Facebook page of the Popular Army in the northern Strip district, April 20, 2026; Facebook page of the Popular Defense Forces, April 20, 2026). Militia operatives reportedly infiltrated beyond the Yellow Line in the al-Zeitoun neighborhood in Gaza City and kidnapped six men (aljazeera.net, April 22, 2026).



**Militia fighters with displaced persons in an area under Hamas control  
(Khan Yunis channel discussions Telegram Channel, April 27, 2026)**

► Hamas "resistance" security stated that an attempt by "collaborating gangs" to carry out a "terrorist operation" at al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah was foiled. Hamas claimed that operatives of the "gangs" intended to use a group of civilians as human shields to storm the hospital and kidnap wounded persons in order to hand them over to Israel, under the direction of Israeli intelligence. "Resistance" security also claimed that an Israeli intelligence agent was arrested who admitted to photographing the hospital rooms of the wounded (al-Akhres Telegram channel, April 22, 2026).

### **Flotilla to the Gaza Strip**

► On April 27, 2026, the organizers of the Global Resilience Flotilla reported they had sailed from Italy on their way "to break the siege on the Gaza Strip," and claimed the number of vessels participating had increased. According to the flotilla website, at least 57 vessels were taking part, and additional vessels were expected to join later from Greece and Turkey (Resilience Flotilla X account, April 27, 2026; flotilla website, April 28, 2026).

## **Hamas' Foreign Relations**

► A Hamas delegation led by political bureau member Dr. Basem Na'im, head of the office for Arab and Islamic relations, visited Malaysia, where a series of meetings with the deputy prime minister, Dr. Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, senior government officials, party representatives, and civil society actors were held. Hamas said the objective of the visit was to strengthen ties with Malaysia, present developments in the Palestinian arena, and discuss ways to increase political and humanitarian support for the Palestinians (Hamas Telegram channel, April 25, 2026).

## The Palestinian Islamic Jihad

### Failed Elimination in Iran

► Three PIJ "sources" reported that Akram al-Ajouri, a member of the political bureau and head of the PIJ's military wing, had evaded an attempted elimination in Iran in March 2026 during Operation Lion's Roar (the Second Iran-Israel War). Two PIJ figures in Lebanon stated that the location in the city of Qom where al-Ajouri was supposed to stay was in mid-March but al-Ajouri had left "a day or hours" before the strike for routine security reasons. According to one of the sources, the site belonged to Mohammad Seed Izadi (Hajj Ramadan), head of the Palestine branch in the Qods Force, who was eliminated during the First Iran-Israel War in June 2025 (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, April 21, 2026).

### Hamas-PIJ Coordination

► On April 15, 2026, Ali Baraka, head of Hamas's national relations department abroad, met with Ihsan Ataya, a member of the PIJ political bureau. They condemned the continuation of Israeli activity in the Gaza Strip and in Judea and Samaria, the continuation of the [so-called] "siege" of the Strip, and Israel's lack of commitment to implementing the first phase of the ceasefire agreement, as well as increased settler visits to al-Aqsa Mosque. They said it was necessary to strengthen national unity and deepen coordination among all Palestinian forces and factions, expressed full solidarity with Lebanon in light of the continued Israeli attacks, and praised the steadfastness of the Lebanese people and their "resistance" (Hamas Telegram channel in Judea and Samaria, April 15, 2026).

## Israel, Judea and Samaria

### Terrorist Attacks

- During the past two weeks there were two terrorist attacks; no casualties were reported.
- ◆ **Stabbing near Revava:** On April 15, 2026, a Palestinian terrorist armed with a knife went to the Emek Doron farm near Revava in Samaria. He attempted to stab farm workers; he was shot and killed by an armed civilian (Israel Police spokesperson and IDF spokesperson, April 15, 2026).
  - ◆ **Stabbing in Negohot:** On April 18, 2026, an alert was activated because of suspected terrorist infiltration in the community of Negohot in the Hebron Hills. When a community security officer arrived at the gate, a Palestinian terrorist armed with a knife rushed toward him; the security officer shot and killed him. IDF forces raided the

terrorist's house and found improvised weapons and military equipment, and detained his brother for questioning (IDF spokesperson and Israeli media, April 18, 2026).



**Equipment found in the terrorist's house (IDF spokesperson, April 18, 2026)**

### Counterterrorism

► Israeli security forces continued activity to prevent terrorism throughout Judea and Samaria and in east Jerusalem. Dozens of wanted persons and suspects involved in terrorist activity were detained, including Hamas and PIJ operatives, rock- and Molotov cocktail-throwers, arms dealers, individuals involved in incitement and illegal residents. Weapons were seized, including explosive devices hidden in a school in the village of Beit Ummar in the Hebron area, and more than 100,000 shekels intended for financing terrorist activity through charitable associations linked to Hamas were confiscated. In the village of Beit Duqu, a terrorist who threw rocks at an IDF force was eliminated, an Israeli child was superficially injured by rock-throwing on Route 60, and suspects fled after attempting to run over IDF soldiers operating in the village of Burqa. The smuggling of weapons across the Jordanian and Egyptian borders was prevented (IDF spokesperson, Israel Police spokesperson and Israeli media, April 14-28, 2026).



**IEDs found in Beit Ummar (IDF spokesperson, April 20, 2026)**

## Settler Terrorism

► During clashes in the village of al-Mughayyir, two Palestinians aged 14 and 32 were shot and killed by a Jewish settler, and others were injured. The head of the local council said that Jewish settlers and soldiers entered the village and opened fire at a school, first at the students and then at others who arrived at the scene (Reuters, April 21, 2026). The IDF spokesperson stated that IDF forces arrived at the village following a report of rock-throwing at a vehicle of Israelis, one of them a reservist soldier, who fired at suspects. The forces dispersed the riot and the claims regarding two Palestinian fatalities were known (IDF spokesperson, April 21, 2026). The prime minister of the Palestinian Authority, Muhammad Mustafa, visited the wounded in a hospital in Ramallah. He said the government was monitoring the consequences of the attack on the village and acting in coordination with the relevant authorities to provide medical and humanitarian assistance to civilians (Wafa, April 22, 2026).

► Local sources reported that a Palestinian child and a young man were injured when Jewish rioters attacked houses in the village of Jalud, southeast of Nablus. A few hours later, Jewish rioters again arrived in the village, set fire to at least three structures and vehicles and threw rocks at residents. It was reported that a Palestinian family fled from one of the buildings and at least one local resident of the village was injured. IDF forces arrived at the scene and detained an Israeli civilian who was transferred for police questioning (Quds Agency and Israeli media, April 27, 2026).

## The Palestinian Authority (PA)

### Political Activity

► Muhammad Mustafa, PA prime minister, and Amal Jadou al-Shakaa, held several meetings in Brussels with international officials, including the EU's finance minister, Board of Peace commissioner Nikolai Mladenov, and the EU's foreign policy chief, Maria Kallas. Mustafa reviewed the latest developments in the Palestinian arena, including "the measures of the Israeli occupation" in Judea and Samaria and the need to implement international decisions concerning the Gaza Strip. He called for international intervention to stop all Israeli measures which he claimed damaged Palestinian efforts, including the release of withheld tax revenues (Wafa, April 20, 2026).

► The PA reportedly requested €300 million of emergency financial assistance during the donors' conference in Brussels, but the EU and the donor countries did not respond to the request. A European source said the EU and the donor countries were convinced that

additional assistance to the PA would not solve the problem in the absence of a fundamental solution and because of Israel's insistence on not releasing the tax revenues. Reportedly, discussions attended by the PA prime minister and the PA finance minister were very heated. There was considerable resentment among the Palestinian leadership after the EU and donor countries made it clear to the Palestinians that the EU should not be the only party from which they requested assistance, and there were Arab and Islamic countries which had to bear their responsibility toward the Palestinians (*al-Araby al-Jadeed*, April 24, 2026).

### **Extradition of a Suspect Who Attacked Jews in France**

► On April 16, 2026, it was reported that the PA extradited Mahmoud Khader al-Adra (75), aka Hashem Harb, to France. He is wanted for involvement in an attack on a Jewish restaurant in Paris in August 1982, in which six people were murdered. Al-Adra's lawyer, Mohammad al-Harini, claimed the move was carried out only hours before a court in Ramallah was supposed to discuss the question of extradition (*al-Quds al-Arabi*, April 16, 2026). Hamas condemned the arrest and claimed it seriously harmed the history of the Palestinian "national struggle" and was persecution of a Palestinian "fighter" over events that occurred more than four decades ago. Hamas added that security cooperation with "foreign elements" at the expense of Palestinians was a dangerous deviation from the national consensus and damaged to the rights of the Palestinian people ( Hamas Telegram channel in Judea and Samaria, April 18, 2026).