

## Spotlight on Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict May 12-19, 2026

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

- ▶ IDF forces continued operating within the Yellow Line and in other areas in the Gaza Strip, eliminating terrorists who posed a threat, including those involved in the October 7, 2023 attack and massacre. Izz al-Din al-Haddad, who headed the Hamas military wing and was one of the planners of the October 7 attack, was eliminated in a strike in Gaza City, and reportedly, military intelligence chief Muhammad Oudeh was appointed to replace him.
- ▶ The Board of Peace announced the ceasefire continued despite the "violations," and called Hamas' refusal to disarm the main obstacle to advancing the process and beginning reconstruction of the Strip. Hamas and the other Palestinian terrorist organizations refused to disarm on the grounds that Israel had not met its commitments to the first stage of the agreement and called for the resignation of Mladenov, representative of the Board of Peace.
- ▶ Despite the demand that Hamas transfer governance of the Gaza Strip to the Palestinian technocrat committee, Hamas government ministries continue routine activity to ensure the movement's hold on the territories over which it has control.
- ▶ The Israeli Navy prevented the Global Resilience Flotilla from reaching the Gaza Strip and halted dozens of vessels which had departed from Turkey.
- ▶ Hamas announced that no candidate had won the first round of elections for the movement's leadership, and therefore another round would take place.
- ▶ UNRWA reportedly smuggled its archives from the Gaza Strip headquarters and east Jerusalem to Jordan.
- ▶ The Israeli security forces continued extensive counterterrorism activity in Judea and Samaria. A Palestinian who planned an attack during Jerusalem Day was detained.
- ▶ The eighth Fatah conference called for continuing "non-violent popular resistance" for the establishment of a Palestinian state which would include Judea and Samaria, the Gaza Strip

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

and have east Jerusalem as its capital. Marwan al-Barghouti, who is serving life sentences in Israel for terrorist crimes, won the vote for the movement's central committee, and the son of the chairman of the Palestinian Authority was also elected. Palestinian elements called for closing ranks and formulating a unified Palestinian strategy to advance a broad political and popular struggle.

## The Fighting in the Gaza Strip

### The IDF

- ▶ IDF forces continued to destroy terrorist infrastructure and locate terrorists within the Yellow Line, eliminating terrorists who approached the forces or tried to infiltrate the Yellow Line. Hamas operatives who planned to attack IDF forces and Israeli civilians were eliminated, including those involved in the atrocities of the October 7, 2023 attack and massacre (IDF spokesperson, May 12-19, 2026).
- ▶ On May 15, 2026, the Israeli security forces eliminated Izz al-Din al-Haddad, head of Hamas' military wing and one of the planners of the October 7, 2023 attack and massacre who also led Hamas' reconstruction after the ceasefire. He was killed in a strike on an apartment in Gaza City. Hamas confirmed his death, calling him a "great commander" who had been a jihadist for decades, culminating his career with the "invasion of Israeli territory." Hamas accused Israel of "violating the ceasefire" agreement.<sup>2</sup> Several Hamas sources in the Gaza Strip said Muhammad Oudeh, head of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades' military intelligence, had been appointed the new commander of Hamas' military wing. Oudeh had reportedly been offered the position of commander in chief after the elimination of Muhammad al-Sinwar in May 2025, but declined and al-Haddad was appointed instead. Sources said Oudeh had been close to al-Haddad and in continuous contact with him, especially regarding the renewal of the organizational structure (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, May 18, 2026).

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<sup>2</sup> See the mat 2026 Amit Institute report, [Elimination of Izz al-Din al-Haddad, Head of Hamas' Military Wing: Reactions and Significance](#)

## Negotiations for the Second Stage of the Ceasefire Agreement

- ▶ According to a Board of Peace report submitted to the UN Security Council, the ceasefire has held for seven months despite the continued "violations." The report noted that Hamas' refusal to disarm and relinquish control of the Gaza Strip was the main obstacle to implementing the ceasefire agreement, and the Security Council was called upon to exert pressure on Hamas and the other terrorist organizations to accept the commitments as stated in the agreement. The report added that there had been an increase of more than 70% in the volume of humanitarian aid entering the Strip, with 300,000 tons of aid, however there were shortages of water and medicines. The Board noted that approximately 85% of the buildings and infrastructure in the Strip had been destroyed or damaged and about 70 million tons of rubble had to be cleared, and while reconstruction required more than \$30 billion, so far the Board had received commitments for only \$17 billion. Accordingly, reconstruction will not begin before the complete disarmament of Hamas (Al Jazeera, May 19, 2026).
- ▶ Hamas and the other Palestinian terrorist organizations accused Israel of "violating" the ceasefire agreement and conditioned the transition to the second stage, including the issue of disarmament, on Israel's full implementation of the first stage:
  - ◆ Taher al-Nunu, adviser to the head of the Hamas political bureau, said they related to the American plan as a unit, while the "occupation" wanted only disarmament. He claimed they were prepared to conduct negotiations if Israel met the commitments of the first stage of the agreement (Al Jazeera Mubasher, May 13, 2026).
  - ◆ Osama Hamdan, Hamas representative in Lebanon, claimed one of the objectives in eliminating Izz al-Din al-Haddad had been to pressure Hamas, because the "enemy" wanted the resistance to surrender and had no interest in the American plan. He said they were in contact with the mediating countries regarding al-Haddad's elimination, adding that the "enemy's" actions violated the agreement. He called disarmament "a demand for surrender" to make the Palestinians leave their land or remain and be killed (Al Jazeera Mubasher, May 16, 2026).
  - ◆ Muhammad al-Hindi, deputy secretary general of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), accused Israel of not meeting its commitments in the first stage of the ceasefire agreement and said no one demanded accountability from Israel. He claimed Israel could not renew the war until it had a green light from the United States, which was still

focused on Iran. He added that disarming Hamas, as Israel wanted, would lead to militias taking control in the Strip (Al Jazeera Mubasher, May 17, 2026).

◆ At the conclusion of the Palestinian terrorist organizations' meetings in Cairo, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) stated that the representative of the Board of Peace, Nikolay Mladenov, had rejected the response formulated by Hamas and the other organizations because it defined the agreement only as a basis for further negotiations regarding the transition to the second stage. He demanded that any agreement headed by disarmament would lead to an immediate transition to the second stage, and added five new clauses, including opposition to a commitment to establish a Palestinian state during the second stage. Hamas said its leadership would not agree to disarm the "resistance"<sup>3</sup> because the weapons symbolized the entire "project," and its precondition for discussing weapons was the dismantling of the Israeli-affiliated militias in the Gaza Strip and the removal of their Israeli protection as a demonstration of good faith on the part of the mediators and the parties involved (aljazeera.net, May 14, 2026).

► Egypt reported growing concern over the collapse of the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, the stagnation in the negotiations and Israel's insistence on advancing disarmament before meeting its commitments to the first stage of the agreement. Egyptian sources claimed the Israeli "violations" were undermining confidence in the process, adding that the humanitarian situation in the Strip could not continue in its current format, while the Palestinian terrorist organizations currently rejected any discussion regarding disarmament except with clear guarantees for the establishment of a Palestinian state, while simultaneously demanding the networks of "collaborators" in the Strip be dismantled. Egypt reportedly understands the position of the terrorist organizations and seeks to postpone the discussion on weapons, combine the demands of the first and second stages, accelerate the deployment of the security forces in the Strip and allow the entry of the civilian management committee. It was also noted that Cairo opposed Israeli plans to rehabilitate areas east of the Yellow Line, claiming that could perpetuate a Gaza Strip divided into isolated enclaves under Israeli security control (*al-Akhbar*, May 16, 2026).

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<sup>3</sup> Terrorist organizations.

## Hamas vs. Mladenov

- ▶ Nikolay Mladenov, representative of the Board of Peace, told a press conference in Jerusalem that his office handled "violations" by both sides on a daily basis. He accused both sides of violating the ceasefire and noted the issue of disarmament as a central point of disagreement. He said Hamas was obligated to relinquish its weapons arsenal, an issue which was non-negotiable, adding that was why there was no progress on all the other issues, including reconstruction, the withdrawal of IDF forces and establishment of a new Palestinian government. He said Hamas was strengthening its grip on the parts of the Strip under its control, imposing taxes and blocking aid efforts to build temporary housing for displaced persons. He added that if Hamas renounced armed activity it could remain as a political party (AP News Agency, May 13, 2026).
- ▶ In response, Hamas spokesperson Hazem Qassem criticized Mladenov's remarks regarding daily "violations" of the ceasefire agreement and said that speaking about it in a general manner contradicted the facts. He accused Israel of being the one violating the agreement and killing more than 850 civilians, in addition to [alleged] restrictions on the entry of aid and the continued westward shifting of the Yellow Line, all contrary to the full commitment of Hamas and the "resistance" (QudsN X account, May 13, 2026).
- ▶ Mladenov shared a post by Palestinian-American researcher and Hamas opponent Ahmad Fouad al-Khatib, who called for evacuating the residents into the Yellow Line area to prevent Hamas from using them as bargaining chips in the negotiations. He condemned Hamas after reports in Israel that for the first time, Hamas terrorist operatives had used guns to threaten Gazan contractors and prevented them from beginning work on building the new Palestinian city in Rafah, in coordination with the IDF and the multinational command (CMCC) (Mladenov X account, May 13, 2026).
- ▶ In response, Bassem Na'im, a member of the Hamas political bureau, raged that "Mladenov is not worthy of being responsible even for one day over a transitional administration for our Palestinian people. How can a man entrusted with managing a complex negotiation succeed in his mission when he adopts such a position?!" To Mladenov himself he said, "Gaza will not be an item on your resumé for career advancement. If the mission is too big for you, resign!" (Basem Na'im's X account, May 13, 2026).
- ▶ Social media affiliated with Hamas published posts under the hashtag #Mladenov\_Netanyahu's\_envoy, which claimed Mladenov had lost his fairness and become a

representative of Netanyahu's office under international sponsorship and had adopted the narrative of the "occupation" (al-Safa Media Telegram channel, May 14, 2026).



**Netanyahu beneath Mladenov's mask**

**(Telegram channel of the Palestine Dialogue Agency, May 16, 2026)**

► Isma'il al-Thawabta, director of the Hamas government media information office, rejected claims that Hamas used force or threats to prevent workers or contractors from moving or working within the Gaza Strip. He called the claims "completely false and part of attempts to distort the situation in the Strip." He claimed that any movements in the field or arrangements under the supervision of the Israeli "occupation" which served its military and security agenda or its plans to reshape Gaza's geography or demography encountered "broad popular opposition" (Palestine Online, May 13, 2026).

### **The Palestinian Committee for Managing the Gaza Strip**

► Nikolay Mladenov stated that the national committee for managing the Gaza Strip had completed all its preparations to receive the governing powers and begin its work immediately, once the conditions on the ground had been met. He called on the current political leadership in the Strip to step aside and allow the committee to operate. He added that the Board of Peace did not seek to control the aid, but rather aspired to coordinate it fully through the national committee to ensure that it reached those who needed it. He noted a significant improvement in the flow of trucks, with their number increasing from 1,300 per week before the ceasefire to 4,000 trucks per week. He added that the percentage of aid diverted by "armed groups" had declined to only 1%, allowing food aid to reach the Gazan population (al-Quds, May 13, 2026; aljazeera.net, May 13, 2026).

► Hamas spokesperson Hazem Qassem called for the immediate entry of the national technocrat committee into the Strip and for it to receive full governing authority. He claimed Hamas had taken all the steps required to transfer the areas of governance to the committee. He said he had been surprised by Mladenov's remarks demanding that the administration in

the Strip resign from its role before the committee entered, warning that would lead to chaos and anarchy, which he claimed was what Israel wanted (Telegram channel of Hamas spokesperson Hazem Qassem, May 13, 2026).

## The Gaza Strip

### **The Situation in the Gaza Strip**

- ▶ The Palestinian Red Crescent reported problems in evacuating patients from the Gaza Strip. According to the organization, since the beginning of February 2026, only about 700 patients had left, while more than 18,000 wounded and sick were still on evacuation lists, waiting to receive medical treatment outside the Strip. According to the report, despite the ceasefire agreement which went into effect in October 2025, Israel still imposed restrictions on the departure of patients and on the entry of medicines and medical equipment in the quantities agreed upon, thereby increasing the burden on the healthcare system (al-Quds, May 13, 2026).
- ▶ The World Central Kitchen announced it would return to supplying meals to the Gaza Strip as it had before the ceasefire, and would provide hundreds of thousands of hot meals daily to needy families, as at the beginning of the year it had increased its activity to one million hot meals a day in direct response to the collapse of food access caused by the border closure. The organization said that did not represent a reduction in the number of needy persons but rather a decision resulting entirely from economic pressure, since the its activity was funded by private donations. The organization reported that since the beginning of the war in 2023 it had spent more than half a billion dollars in feeding Gazans (WCK X account, May 15, 2026).
- ▶ The Palestinian ministry of public works and housing, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), continued erecting shelter centers for displaced families throughout the Strip. In the al-Sabra area in Gaza City, a camp covering an area of approximately four dunams was erected; in the Jabalia area in the northern Gaza Strip, a camp is under way which will cover an area of 11.5 dunams and have 135 tents made of fiberglass-reinforced plastic and two multi-purpose tents with 44 toilets and 13 water tanks. A camp is being erected in Khan Yunis on an area of approximately 13 dunams, and its first stage has 127 tents made of fiberglass-reinforced plastic, and four service units with approximately 40 toilets. The project also has 16 water tanks with a capacity of 2,000 liters each (Facebook page of the Palestinian ministry of public works and housing, May 13-16, 2026).



**Right: The new tent camp in the northern Gaza Strip (Facebook page of the Palestinian ministry of public works and housing, May 15, 2026). Left: The camp in the al-Sabra area in Gaza City (Facebook page of the Palestinian ministry of public works and housing, May 13, 2026)**

► Following reports in the Palestinian media about rodents in the refugee tents, the Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) said that in coordination with the UN and international organizations, this past week Israel had transferred to the Strip more than 30,000 cans of insecticides, more than 10,000 cans of mosquito sprays, more than 4,500 rodent traps, more than 1,500 extermination stations and more than 2,500 insect-trapping devices (COGAT Facebook page, May 15, 2026).

### **Civilian Governance**

► The Hamas government ministries continued routine activity despite the demand to end the movement's rule. The Hamas ministry of health announced the renewal of corneal transplants for residents as part of the ministry's efforts to restore healthcare services (Facebook page of ministry of health in Gaza, May 17, 2026). The Hamas ministry of economy announced the renewal of the activity of the intellectual property department [*sic*]. Reportedly, initially requests would be handled online (Telegram channel of press photographer Hazem Mazid, May 18, 2026).

► Hamas police in Khan Yunis announced that prior approval was necessary to hold any private party or wedding in order to preserve "comfort and public quiet." Applicants were required to end the party by 23:00 at night, not display or fire weapons, not block roads or hold parties in the main streets and not raise the volume of loudspeakers (Telegram channel of the Khan Yunis police, May 17, 2026).

► According to reports, many clans in the Gaza Strip had recently turned to reorganizing their ranks and holding elections for clan councils, clan leaders and mukhtars, reflecting fear regarding the present and the future because of the loss of peace and security resulting from "Israeli aggression." Mahmoud al-Sultan, quoted in the article, said his extended family's

desire to reorganize and conduct elections in its branches recently came from the loss of all basic necessities after the Israeli "occupation" destroyed all their buildings and killed hundreds of their relatives. He added that the security, economic and social stability provided by the relevant authorities was insufficient, causing family members to focus on creating an entity capable of offering them protection. He said the difficult situation led them to reconnect with the family solely in order to protect their interests and it was not directed against other entities (al-Ayyam, May 13, 2026).

### **Security Governance**

- ▶ The al-Akhres channel of Hamas "resistance security" issued warnings to local residents and "resistance"<sup>4</sup> operatives regarding attempts at temptation and ambushes near IDF-controlled areas and the Yellow Line. Reportedly, gangs allegedly collaborating with Israel staged "incidents" which appeared accidental, such as fights, accidents or sudden gatherings, to lure wanted persons or operatives to exposed points where surveillance or ambushes were carried out. It was claimed that the gangs operated from residential buildings near the Yellow Line, climbed onto roofs and fired shots randomly, endangering civilians (al-Akhres Telegram channel, May 13, 2026).
- ▶ The "resistance security" Rada Force claimed that "gangs of collaborators" operating under direct Israeli guidance were forcing Palestinians to evacuate their homes in the Abu al-Ajin area, near the Yellow Zone, east of Deir al-Balah, in an attempt to frighten the population because of its refusal to move to the camps of those gangs within the Yellow Line (Telegram channel of the Rada force, May 14, 2026).
- ▶ Sources in the Gaza Strip reported that operatives belonging to the gang of Shawqi Abu Nassira in areas of northern Khan Yunis and the central Gaza Strip had entered the Abu al-Ajin area in Deir al-Balah under cover of Israeli UAVs, threatening people and demanding they leave. The Gazans later received calls from an "Israeli officer responsible for the area" who delivered the same message. The report claimed that the operatives forced more than 10,000 Palestinians who lived in the Abu al-Ajin area to move from Salah al-Din Street to more than 400 meters eastward toward the Yellow Line, in order to expand the area held by Israel (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, May 14, 2026).

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<sup>4</sup> Terrorist operatives.

## UNRWA Activity to Preserve the Status of the Palestinian refugees

► According to reports, UNRWA employees took the document archives which had been in their headquarters in the Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem and smuggled them into Jordan. After the IDF ordered UNRWA to evacuate its headquarters in Gaza, the documents were smuggled to Egypt, and from there transferred to Amman by a Jordanian charity organization using Jordanian military aircraft which supplied aid to the Strip. During 2024, UNRWA employees smuggled the documents in the east Jerusalem archive to the agency's offices in Amman, where a broad effort was launched to digitize them, funded mainly by Luxembourg. Approximately 30 million documents were digitized, including original registration documents of Palestinian refugees as well as records of births, marriages and deaths. That enables UNRWA to preserve "an important historical, legal and political asset of the Palestinian refugee issue." The original registration archives of millions of refugees and their descendants are important in preserving the memory of the Palestinian refugee experience and the continuity of refugee status from generation to generation (*The Guardian*, May 14, 2026).

## The Flotilla to the Gaza Strip

► On May 14, 2026, more than 50 vessels sailed from the port of Marmaris in Turkey as part of another attempt by the Global Resilience Flotilla to reach the Gaza Strip, after the IDF halted the flotilla's progress in the Mediterranean Sea on April 29-30, 2026. The flotilla was led by the Turkish IHH, which was behind the violent *Mavi Marmara* flotilla in 2010<sup>5</sup> (Reuters and IHH website, May 14, 2026).

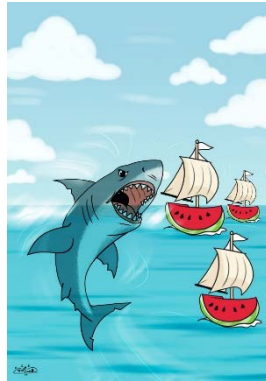
► On May 18, 2026, the Israeli navy halted the flotilla's progress in international waters hundreds of kilometers from Israel and detained approximately 50 vessels, without confrontations, while the activists were transferred to a large ship to take them to Israel. No humanitarian aid whatsoever was discovered on the vessels (Israeli media, May 18-19, 2026). The flotilla organizers accused Israel of the "illegal and violent kidnapping [*sic*]" of the activists and claimed that it was a "peaceful humanitarian mission" intended to break the illegal siege on Gaza (Global Resilience Flotilla X account, May 18, 2026).

► Hamas condemned the "attack" on the resistance flotilla and accused Israel of "piracy." Hamas called on the countries of the world, the UN and humanitarian organizations to

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<sup>5</sup> See the October 2025 Amit Institute report, [The Turkish IHH, which led the Mavi Marmara flotilla, operates in the Gaza Strip and is involved in its reconstruction](#)

condemn the "piracy." Hamas also praised the activists for "resisting the occupation" and called for the flotillas to continue (Hamas Telegram channel, May 18, 2026).



**The Palestinian perspective on Israeli takeover of the vessels  
(account of Hisham Shamali, May 18, 2026)**

## Elections for the Hamas Leadership

► Hamas announced that no candidate had won the first round of elections for the movement's leadership, and therefore another vote would be held at a later date, in accordance with its internal regulations and organizational procedures (Hamas Telegram channel, May 16, 2026). No mention was made of who the candidates were or what level of support they received, however it was reported that the only two contenders are the head of the political bureau in the Gaza Strip, Khalil al-Hayya, and the head of Hamas abroad, Khaled Mashal (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, May 16, 2026).

## The Internal Palestinian Reconciliation

► On May 14, 2026, the eighth Fatah movement opened in Gaza City with Hamas spokesperson Hazem Qassem in attendance (Sunud Agency, May 14, 2026). Fatah supporters were angered by the presence of a representative of the Hamas militia because of the bitter rivalry between the movements (Facebook page of Ammar Omar, May 14, 2026). In response, Mundhir al-Hayek, Fatah spokesperson in the Gaza Strip, said the invitations to Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) were in accordance with protocol and their objective was to show that they had a responsibility to listen to the speech of Palestinian Authority chairman Mahmoud Abbas, who noted the need to adhere to the PLO program, the unity of weapons, authority and the judicial system, and the rejection of any plan to separate the Gaza Strip from Judea and Samaria and east Jerusalem. Al-Hayek added that the presence of the faction representatives was limited to the opening session and Mahmoud Abbas' speech (Facebook page of Amal al-Jalayta, May 16, 2026).

- ▶ Husam Badran, Hamas political bureau member and head of the national relations office, called on Fatah to hold a meeting directly after the conclusion of Fatah's eighth conference to formulate a joint Palestinian national strategy. Badran described the conference as an opportunity for a turning point in internal Palestinian relations, overcoming past disagreements and preparing to face what he claimed were "Israeli plots to eliminate the Palestinian issue" ( Hamas Telegram channel, May 14, 2026).
- ▶ Reportedly, Palestinian terrorist organizations and the monitoring committee of the national and Islamic forces in the Gaza Strip recently sent messages to Palestinian Authority chairman Mahmoud Abbas through senior Fatah figures, calling on him to convene a general national meeting in Cairo. Sources in the Palestinian terrorist organizations noted that no response had yet been received, however the senior Fatah figures who conveyed the messages confirmed that steps would soon be taken on the issue after the movement completed its internal arrangements. They said Egypt strongly supported the efforts made regarding the matter, and had recently conveyed messages from the terrorist organizations in Cairo, including the Hamas delegation which remained there, to the Palestinian Authority and the Fatah leadership. Similar messages were also conveyed from Turkey during the visit of Hussein al-Sheikh, deputy chairman of the Palestinian Authority, to Ankara (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, May 15, 2026).

## Israel, Judea and Samaria

### Counterterrorism

- ▶ The Israeli security forces continued counterterrorism activity throughout Judea and Samaria. A terrorist who threw rocks at Israeli vehicles on Route 60 near al-Lubban al-Sharqiya was eliminated and two other were pursued; in the village of al-Jib, 14 pipe bombs containing explosive material were discovered and a suspect was detained; a Palestinian suspected of planning an attack on Jerusalem Day was detained in the Abu Tor neighborhood in east Jerusalem; and a suspect in throwing explosive devices at Rachel's Tomb was detained in the Aida refugee camp near Bethlehem (IDF spokesperson and Israel Police spokesperson, May 12-19, 2026).



**Pipe bombs in al-Jib (Israel Police spokesperson, May 14, 2026)**

► Palestinians reported an Israeli security force wave of raids, detentions and searches during which dozens of Palestinians were detained. In Dura, south of Hebron, an operation was reported which included raids on dozens of houses, field interrogations, turning homes into temporary detention centers and the detainment of more than 21 Palestinians. Other detentions were reported in the Ramallah, Tulkarm and Salfit areas; in Jenin, forces reportedly entered a school in Silat al-Thar, removed a "Palestine" flag and conducted raids in Yabad and Bayt Qad; there were reports of extensive activity in Tuqu', Nahalin in the Bethlehem area, in Tulkarm, Qalqilya, Araba and Mithlun in the Jenin area, in Zawata and Tell in the Nablus area, in al-Jadida south of Jenin and in the Shuafat refugee camp in Jerusalem; a Palestinian fatality was reported in the Jenin refugee camp (al-Quds, May 13-16, 2026).

### **Settler Terrorism**

► This past week incidents of settler terrorism and friction between Jewish settlers and Palestinians continued in Judea and Samaria:

◆ Local sources reported that Jewish settlers rioted in the town of Sinjil and the village of Jaljaliya north of Ramallah, attacked shepherds and stole hundreds of sheep. According to the report, local residents confronted the attackers and rescued part of the flock. It was further reported that during clashes with Israeli security forces who arrived at the scene, a 16-year-old youth was killed and three residents were wounded (Quds Agency, May 13, 2026). The Israeli security forces reportedly operated in the village of Jaljulia following the entry of Israeli civilians into the area after livestock had been stolen from an illegal outpost in Area A. The forces removed the civilians and the livestock, detained suspects in the theft, and during their withdrawal a rock-throwing riot developed. The force responded with riot dispersal protocol and live fire direct at instigators, and the IDF stated that the claim of wounded persons and a fatality caused by IDF gunfire was under examination (IDF spokesperson, May 13, 2026).

◆ Jewish settlers reportedly set fire to a mosque and vehicles in the village of Jibiya northwest of Ramallah and sprayed racist slogans (Wafa, May 15, 2026). The ministry of religious endowments in the Palestinian Authority condemned the incident and claimed it was part of a "systematic policy of incitement" by the Israeli government to intimidate Palestinians and attack their presence and "religious identity." The ministry called burning mosques "an act of cowardice," accused the international community of silence that encouraged continued attacks on holy sites and called on local residents to defend the mosques. It appealed to UNESCO, human rights organizations and the Arab and Islamic world to take action to protect houses of worship and holy sites of Islam and Christianity (Wafa, May 15, 2026).

◆ According to claims, during a confrontation between Jewish shepherds and Palestinians near the village of Shuqba northwest of Ramallah, the Palestinians set fire to the grazing area and threw rocks at the settlers. In response, Jewish rioters raided the outskirts of the village of Shuqba, where they set fire to and vandalized several Palestinian vehicles. Hours later, the police detained five Jews suspected of involvement in the arson (Telegram channels of Moriah Asraf and Doron Kadosh, May 16, 2026).

► The Palestinians claimed there had been an "Israeli escalation" in Jerusalem and at al-Aqsa Mosque regarding Jerusalem Day events and the Flag March, including restrictions on the entry of Muslim worshippers, closure of shops in the Old City and the entry of Jews onto the Temple Mount. Hamas and the Mufti of Jerusalem represented the events as an attempt to break the status quo, impose Israeli sovereignty and change the site's Palestinian-Arab-Islamic identity, and called for increasing the presence and the struggle to defend al-Aqsa (Telegram channel of the military media of the al-Qassam Brigades, May 14, 2026).

## The Palestinian Authority (PA)

### The Fatah Conference

► On May 18, 2026, after four days, the eighth Fatah conference ended with a final statement regarding the status of the PLO as the legitimate and sole representative of the Palestinian people and the need for national unity under one political framework, one law and one "legal weapon" in Judea and Samaria, east Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. The statement voiced confidence in the PA chairman and Fatah movement leader Mahmoud Abbas, noted the centrality of Jerusalem as the capital of "Palestine" and adherence to the Hashemite custodianship over the holy places, and stated that there was no state without Gaza. Fatah also

committed itself to continuing the [so-called] "non-violent popular resistance" for the establishment of a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders with east Jerusalem as its capital, to strengthening state institutions, to supporting prisoners and the families of those killed, and to political, diplomatic and legal activity in the international arena (Wafa, May 18, 2026).

► At the conference the official but non-final results were published for the elections to Fatah's central committee and revolutionary council, with the voting held simultaneously in Ramallah, Gaza, Lebanon and Cairo. The voting rate stood at 94.64% of 2,595 conference members, while 59 candidates competed for 18 seats on the central committee and 450 candidates competed for 80 seats on the revolutionary council (Wafa, May 18, 2026). According to the results, Marwan al-Barghouti, who is serving life sentences in Israel for crimes of terrorism, retained his place on Fatah's central committee and received the highest number of votes. After him came the head of the PA general intelligence, Majed Faraj; chairman of the Palestinian Football Association, Jibril Rajoub; and PA deputy chairman, Hussein al-Sheikh. Yasser Abbasa, son of the PA chairman, and Zakaria al-Zubeidi, one of the commanders of the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades in Jenin who was released from Israeli prison on one of the hostage release deals in the Gaza Strip, were elected to the central committee (al-Quds, May 17, 2026).



**The eighth Fatah conference (al-Quds, May 17, 2026)**