

Spotlight on Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict May 26-June 2, 2026

Trending

- ▶ *Internal pressure is increasing inside the Hamas military wing because of the successive eliminations of senior commanders.*
- ▶ *The tension between Hamas and the Board of Peace continues.*
- ▶ *Hamas and Turkey have increased coordination ahead of the negotiations on the second stage of the ceasefire agreement.*

Overview¹

- ▶ IDF forces continued operating in the Yellow Line and other areas in the Strip to eliminate terrorists who posed a threat and destroy terrorist infrastructure. Hamas military wing commander Muhammad Odeh was killed in a targeted attack in Gaza two weeks after the elimination of his predecessor.
- ▶ A Hamas spokesman accused the Board of Peace and the American administration of helplessness vis-à-vis Israel and claimed that continuation of the strikes in the Gaza Strip and statements regarding the migration of the Strip's residents indicated an Israeli intention to abandon the ceasefire and promote the forced displacement of the Palestinians. Hamas met leadership with the head of Turkish intelligence ahead of another round of talks in Egypt.
- ▶ Hamas accused the EU of being biased in favor of Israel after sanctions were imposed on ten senior movement figures, headed by Khalil al-Hayya and Khaled Mash'al.
- ▶ Three Israelis were wounded in a vehicular attack in Gush Etzion, and an Israeli Arab teenager was detained on suspicion of murdering an Israeli couple for nationalist reasons. Israeli security force counterterrorism activity continues in Judea and Samaria.
- ▶ The families of Palestinian shaheeds, wounded and prisoners continued holding protests in front of the Palestinian Authority government building because of non-payment of allowances.

¹ 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

The IDF

► IDF forces continued activities in the Yellow Line and other areas in the Strip, eliminating terrorist operatives and destroying terrorist infrastructure, including Hamas depots used to store explosive devices, long-range weapons, sniper rifles and other combat equipment, and ten pickup trucks. The Hamas military wing commander, Mahmoud Odeh, who had the role for only two weeks after the elimination of Izz al-Din al-Haddad,² was killed in a targeted strike in Gaza. The deputy commander of Gaza City Brigade and the commander of the Zeitoun Battalion of the Hamas military wing, as well as a senior figure in the Hamas financial array, were eliminated. Reportedly, during activity in the Beit Hanoun area in recent months, IDF forces carried out hundreds of drillings, through which they located and destroyed more than 11 kilometers of tunnels and hundreds of above-ground terrorist facilities and assets (IDF spokesperson, May 26-June 2, 2026).

► Hamas claimed that many civilians had been harmed in airstrikes in the center of Gaza City, calling the activity another "blatant violation" of the ceasefire agreement. Hamas called on the United States and the states guaranteeing the agreement to take a stand and compel Israel to abide by the agreement, which according to Hamas is in danger of collapse because of Israel's "violations" (Hamas Telegram channel, May 28-29, 2026).

► Sources in Hamas admitted that the elimination of Izz al-Din Brigades commanders complicated the process of appointing a new commander for the military wing, and they were examining the possibility of establishing a temporary military leadership council. It would be composed of several of the remaining commanders and would manage affairs until the situation stabilized. The sources said choosing Muhammad Odeh's successor could be a lengthy process because of the "security situation" and the fear that Israel would attempt to strike anyone whose identity became known. The names mentioned as candidates included Imad Aqel, head of the home front staff and the last remaining member of the military council that led the military wing's atrocities during the October 7, 2023 terrorist attack and massacre; Gaza Brigade commander Muhannad Rajab; commander of the northern Strip brigade, Izz al-Din al-Bikh, if his health permits following an attempt to eliminate him; and Khan Yunis Brigade commander Muhammad al-Barim. Reportedly, there was another candidate, a veteran military

² See the May 2026 Amit Institute report, [Muhammad Odeh, New Head of the Hamas Military Wing, Eliminated in the Gaza Strip](#)

figure with security experience, whom Israel attempted to eliminate several times during the war but without success (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, May 30, 2026).

► The Board of Peace denied a statement attributed to a source in the council by Israeli TV channel Kan 11 News, according to which the council considers the elimination of senior figures in the Hamas military wing as part of the process of disarming the movement, since Hamas had not internalized that it had to disarm (Board of Peace X account, May 28, 2026).

Negotiations for Implementing the Second Stage of the Ceasefire Agreement

► Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem continued criticizing the Board of Peace, accusing it of helplessness vis-à-vis Israel and claiming that the continuation of the strikes in the Gaza Strip and the statements of senior Israeli government figures indicated an intention to abandon the ceasefire:

- ◆ Qassem claimed the Board of Peace bore responsibility for the continued escalation in the Gaza Strip because it took no effective action, remained silent in the face of the Israeli "violations" and adopted the Israeli position. He claimed the continuation of the strikes reflected Israel's contempt for the efforts of the mediators and the states guaranteeing the ceasefire. He also criticized the Muslim world for its silence in the face of the events in the Strip on the eve of Eid al-Adha, at a time when deeds, words and prayers were expected (Telegram channel of Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem, May 26, 2026).

- ◆ He also strongly criticized the statements of the Israeli defense minister, who said Israel would continue promoting the migration of the residents of the Gaza Strip. Qassem claimed the remarks proved that the Israeli leadership still had "illusions" of uprooting the Palestinians, despite Israel's failure to break the will of the Palestinians or impose its plans during the war. He added that the minister's remarks indicated that the Israeli government was not actually committed to the ceasefire agreement and intended to abandon it when it saw fit. Qassem called on the Board of Peace, the American administration and the states guaranteeing and mediating the ceasefire to take a "responsible stance" against the remarks. He also appealed to the Arab states, especially those which he claimed might become targets for the migration plans, to act politically, diplomatically and legally against what Hamas represented as the Israeli attempt to

eliminate the Palestinian issue through displacement and forced migration (Hamas Telegram channel, May 28, 2026).



Hazem Qassem (Shehab Agency, May 28, 2026)

- ◆ Relating to the Israeli prime minister's instructions to the IDF to take control of 70% of the Strip's territory, Qassem condemned the complete silence of the Board of Peace and its representative, Nikolay Mladenov, and calling it an "explicit violation" of the ceasefire plan and the understandings regarding the Gaza Strip. He added that the disregard for the declarations and the failure to condemn Israeli policy raised questions about the degree to which the sponsoring parties were committed to compelling Israel to fulfill its obligations and end its continuing violations (Telegram channel of the Hamas movement, May 29, 2026).
- Egypt invited the Hamas negotiating delegation, headed by Khalil al-Hayya, to visit Cairo to renew the negotiations regarding the transition to the second stage of the agreement. An Egyptian source familiar with the mediation efforts said intensive efforts and contacts were taking place between the parties to organize negotiations to save the agreement from collapse following the recent Israeli strikes on the Gaza Strip and the Israeli prime minister's instructions to the IDF to take control of 70% of the Strip. According to the source, Cairo was in contact with the mediators in Turkey and Qatar, as well as with elements in the American administration, to renew the negotiations. He said Cairo had sent a message to the Israeli government stating that Egypt opposed any measures which would cause the Gazans to migrate voluntarily, and opposed the defense minister's statements on the matter. A senior Hamas figure "abroad" confirmed that the movement's leadership had received Egyptian assurances that it would try to halt the latest escalation and prevent the collapse of the negotiations (aljazeera.net, May 30, 2026).

► A source close to Hamas confirmed that a delegation headed by al-Hayya would arrive in Cairo and the mediators were coordinating a meeting between the delegation and Nikolay Mladenov to discuss handing over the administration to the committee for managing the Gaza Strip and beginning the process of reconstruction. Another source said Hamas and the "factions"³ would reject any proposal regarding disarmament in accordance with Israel's demands, but said they were willing to examine any proposal that guaranteed a comprehensive solution which would not harm the "right" of the Palestinian people ["to resist"] (Ultra Palestine, June 1, 2026).

► Sources reported that the talks would be held in the city of El Alamein in Egypt with the participation of senior Egyptian figures, Mladenov and representatives from Turkey and Qatar. Representatives of Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Popular Resistance Committees, the Palestinian National Initiative and Muhammad Dahlan's Fatah "reformist current" would participate. In preparation for the meeting, the mediators presented Hamas with ideas, including mechanisms to reduce the gaps between the "factions'" demand to compel Israel to a ceasefire and implementation of the clauses of the first stage of the agreement on the one hand, and Israel's insistence on beginning the disarmament process on the other (Juthour Agency, June 1, 2026).

► Before the meeting in Egypt, a Hamas delegation met with the head of Turkish intelligence, Ibrahim Kalin, in Ankara. The delegation was headed by the chairman of the Shura Council, Muhammad Darwish, and included the Hamas leader "abroad," Khaled Mash'al, the head of the political bureau in the Gaza Strip, Khalil al-Hayya, and the Hamas leader in Judea and Samaria, Zaher Jabareen. Reportedly they dealt with the "Israeli escalation" in the Gaza Strip, the Hamas claim that Israel was abandoning its commitments in the ceasefire agreement and the non-completion of the first stage of the agreement. The Hamas delegation gave its assessment of the agreement and warned that daily "violations and attacks" were preventing progress to the next stages but noted the movement's commitment to the ceasefire and its appreciation for the efforts of the mediators in Turkey, Egypt and Qatar. The delegation also discussed the issues of Jerusalem and al-Aqsa Mosque, settler violence in Judea and Samaria, the situation of the prisoners and Israel's inclusion on UN lists regarding sexual violence in Israeli prisons, accusations which Israel rejects as outrageous and absurd. The Hamas

³ Terrorist organizations.

delegation thanked Turkish president Erdoğan for his country's efforts to halt the fighting in the Gaza Strip (Hamas Telegram channel, June 1, 2026).

► Osama Hamdan, Hamas representative in Lebanon, said Hamas was giving the ceasefire agreement an opportunity to succeed despite the Israeli "violations," out of a desire to protect civilians and ease the Gazans' suffering. He claimed Hamas' adherence to the agreement did not come from weakness or lack of choice, but from a commitment to the understandings achieved with the mediators and the international community, and a desire to show who bore responsibility for the failure to implement the agreement. However, Hamdan said that giving temporary priority to the political efforts did not mean Hamas was relinquishing the options of "resistance"⁴ or its leverage. He said the movement's leadership conducted an ongoing assessment of the situation and chose its course of action according to the circumstances on the ground and the Palestinian interest, while possessing "a variety of political and military options" for dealing with the continuation of the "violations and developments" (aljazeera.net, Gaza 1, 2026).

The Palestinian Committee for Managing the Gaza Strip

► A member of the national committee for managing the Gaza Strip denied reports that the committee was supposed to enter the Strip after Eid al-Adha, adding that it refused to begin operating in areas beyond the Yellow Line or to cooperate with militias operating in coordination with Israel. He said the committee would enter only after the establishment of an international stabilization force and its deployment in the buffer zones, and it would operate only in areas from which Israel had withdrawn in accordance with the ceasefire agreement. He added that there were no upcoming meetings with the Hamas leadership in Cairo, and the committee met only with Nikolay Mladenov and solely at his request. Regarding the issue of weapons, the committee member ruled out the possibility that Hamas would agree to fully disarm as a condition for the second stage and reconstruction, adding that Hamas proposed to deposit the weapons of the "resistance" in warehouses under the supervision of a committee from three countries, part of a time-limited agreement would guarantee the safety of the [terrorist] operatives and senior figures of the "factions" in the Strip. According to the report, Israel rejected the idea and insisted on Hamas' full disarmament (aljazeera.net, May 31, 2026).

⁴ Terrorism, terrorist attacks and efforts to obliterate the State of Israel.

► Former Palestinian Authority minister and political commentator Sufian Abu Zaida claimed that within the framework of the arrangements taking shape for managing the Gaza Strip, employees of the Gaza government would receive their salaries even if some of them were not permitted to actually continue working because of an American veto or Israeli reservations. He said any such person would continue receiving a salary but would remain at home (Telegram channel of activist Hamza al-Masri, June 2, 2026).

The Gaza Strip

The Situation in the Gaza Strip

► Gazans received notice of new aid payments from the World Food Programme, 1,250 shekels (about \$440) for each eligible person. The public was called upon to check the digital wallets and the messages being received (Telegram channel of Mutabaa min al-Midan, May 30, 2026).

- The Hamas public health system in the Strip continues promoting "distress" propaganda:
- ◆ Director of the Shuhada' al-Aqsa Hospital, Dr. Ra'ed Hussein, warned of electricity distress at the hospital, which reached a critical stage after the fourth backup generator [allegedly] went out of service, threatening the continued operation of various departments and endangering patients' lives. Hussein reported that operations had been cancelled and the dialysis units, neonatal intensive care unit, intensive care departments and laboratories faced the risk of closure if the crisis continued. He said the hospital's backup generators were worn out after operating continuously for more than a year under the "exceptional circumstances in the Gaza Strip," and were no longer capable of meeting the daily needs of the various departments. He added that engineering and technical interventions carried out by specialist teams were no longer effective because of the deterioration of the generators and the shortage of spare parts (Palestine Online, May 31, 2026).
 - ◆ Dr. Bashar Murad, director of health programs at the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, told Voice of Palestine Radio that what remained of the public health system in the Gaza Strip had collapsed, and said the strict restrictions on the entry of basic medical supplies now directly threatened to stop surgeries and the activity of emergency departments, especially the severe shortage of gauze, which was the backbone of urgent medical interventions. He claimed the medical crisis was worsening, and according to the Hamas ministry of health almost 50% of essential medicines were out of stock, along with a

severe shortage of medical and laboratory equipment and the prohibition on importing spare parts needed for malfunctioning equipment (Sawa, May 31, 2026).



The needs of Gaza, a cartoon by Alaa' al-Laqta, the Hamas in-house cartoonist (Palestine Online Instagram account, June 1, 2026)

► The Civil Defense Directorate in the Strip stated that the number of fires had recently risen, both because of negligence and the failure to observe safety and precautionary measures, and because of the continuing Israeli "aggression" against homes, tents and vehicles. That increased the scope of the humanitarian intervention efforts at a time when three firefighting and rescue vehicles and two ambulances were taken out of service because of a shortage of spare parts and firefighting equipment, as well as the depletion of a significant portion of available fuel, which was limited to begin with. It was further noted that interventions in fire and rescue incidents were limited to only the most urgent humanitarian cases. The Directorate warned that the lack of spare parts for civil defense vehicles and the absence of permits for bringing in firefighting and rescue equipment and fuel could lead to a complete cessation of services within days (Telegram channel of the Civil Defense Directorate in the Strip, May 31, 2026).

Civilian Governance

► According to reports, the absence of supervision over the goods entering through the crossings contributed to the development of a black market in the Strip and raised health concerns because of growing complaints regarding the entry of fresh and frozen foods whose expiration date was close or had already expired, and the food was of poor quality or did not meet the approved health standards. Muhammad Barbakh, head of the policy and planning department in the Hamas ministry of national economy, said the ministry suffered from Israel's refusal to allow it to control the crossings, directly affecting the ability of the regulatory bodies to inspect and control the quantities entering the markets and monitor the quality of the goods before their entry into the Gaza Strip. He said the ministry was setting up checkpoints and

inspection points on many main roads to monitor the movement of trucks and goods, and they had identified a large number of violations, but could not achieve full supervision without direct control over the crossings (*al-Araby al-Jadeed*, May 31, 2026).

Security Governance

► Hamas "resistance security" announced it had arrested "an Israeli agent" who was directly involved in transferring "security information" which harmed senior "resistance" commanders. According to a source, the "agent" was arrested while fleeing towards the Yellow Line, having received urgent instructions from "an officer in Israeli intelligence." According to the report, after he was confronted with the information and the "technical evidence," he admitted monitoring the movements of several "resistance" commanders and reporting their locations, which facilitated turning them into targets (al-Akhres Telegram channel, May 28, 2026).

► According to the "military information" channel of the al-Qassam Brigades, electronic devices, telephones and Israeli SIM cards which allegedly served as means of penetration, monitoring and intelligence gathering by Israel were displayed. Reportedly, use of an electronic device, communication signal or conversation could expose location, movement patterns and operational connections, thereby turning the user into a mobile target in Israeli monitoring systems. Israeli SIM cards, allegedly marketed at low prices and with tempting offers, were regarded as especially dangerous because they made it possible to locate, monitor, gather information, tempt and handle agents (military information channel of the al-Qassam Brigades, May 29, 2026).

International Activity against Hamas

► The EU announced it was expanding sanctions to include ten senior Hamas figures: head of the political bureau in the Strip, Khalil al-Hayya; Hamas leader "abroad," Khaled Mash'al; chairman of the Shura Council, Muhammad Darwish; and political bureau members Nizar Awadallah, Muhammad Nazzal, Husam Badran, Zaher Jabareen, Abu Khalil al-Qardas, Fathi Hammad and Musa Abu Marzouq. They were accused of having significant roles in Hamas decision-making and influencing the activity of the military wing, and were therefore responsible for its actions (European Union foreign ministry website, May 28, 2026).

► Hamas claimed the sanctions were unjust, biased in favor of the Israeli narrative and reflected a double standard toward the Palestinian issue. Hamas claimed that the decision was made while Israel continued its actions against the Palestinians and "violations" of the

ceasefire agreement, while the EU ignored "documented violations" of international law. It was further claimed criminalizing the "resistance" would not change the fact of the "occupation" and "resistance" was a legitimate right. Hamas called on the EU to reconsider, stop politically backing Israel and act to bring its leaders to trial instead of "persecuting the Palestinians" (Telegram channel of Hamas in Judea and Samaria, May 30, 2026).

► A court in Rotterdam acquitted Palestinian activist Amin Abu Rashid, who was accused of financing Hamas by transferring €8 million between 2010 and 2013. The court ruled the evidence presented was insufficient and unreliable. The court also rejected the attempt to connect humanitarian aid activity in the Gaza Strip to financing terrorism, and criticized the prosecution's reliance on Israeli reports and claims, which were described as "tainted by political bias." However, Abu Rashid was sentenced to a suspended prison term of six months after being convicted of evading sanctions and managing an illegal organization (*Jerusalem Post*, May 27, 2026). Israel designated Abu Rashid a member of the Hamas headquarters in Europe in December 2013, while the United States designated him an international terrorist and imposed sanctions on him in June 2025.

Israel, Judea and Samaria

Terrorist Attacks

► **Vehicular ramming in Gush Etzion:** On May 31, 2026, a Palestinian terrorist from Hebron carried rammed into and wounded three Israeli civilians at the Gush Etzion Junction, including a 17-year-old girl, who was critically wounded. The terrorist was shot and killed by an IDF soldier (IDF spokesperson and Israeli media, May 31, 2026). Hamas and the PIJ welcomed the attack and called for the continuation of the "resistance"⁵ (Telegram channels of Hamas and PIJ, May 31, 2026).

► **Suspicion of a nationalist-motivated double murder in south-central Israel:** A 17-year-old Israeli Arab from Lod was detained on suspicion of murdering an Israeli couple after they were found shot inside a vehicle in south-central Israel on May 22, 2026. The suspect's brother carried out a vehicular ramming in Gilot in October 2024, killing an Israeli civilian. The suspect's father, three of his brothers and two Palestinians from Hebron were detained (Israeli media, May 27-29, 2026).

⁵ Terrorist attacks.

Counterterrorism Activity

► The Israeli security forces continued extensive activity in Judea and Samaria, detaining more than 60 wanted persons, among them terrorists planning an attack in the immediate future. The forces seized materials for manufacturing explosive devices, drones, military equipment, ammunition, hand guns and other weapons. A terrorist who planned to carry out an attack in the immediate future was detained in Jenin; a Hamas operative who promoted terrorist activity was detained in the village of Sida; and three terrorists were detained in Qalandia and al-Bireh, among them one engaged in assembling explosive devices. In the Jenin refugee camp, a terrorist who threw rocks at the security forces was shot, and in Hebron a suspect engaged in weapons trafficking and terrorist activity was detained. In addition, a Palestinian terrorist who was involved in a shooting in which an Israeli civilian was killed in November 2007 was detained in Qalqilya shortly after being released from preventive detention by the Palestinian Authority (IDF spokesperson, Israeli Security Agency and police spokespersons, May 26-June 2, 2026).

► Indictments for terrorism offenses and contact with a foreign agent were filed against two residents of east Jerusalem who learned how to manufacture explosive devices, were in contact with a Hamas operative and had begun preparing an explosive device to throw at the security forces (X account of the ministry of justice, May 31, 2026). Reportedly, they planned to attack the IDF Anatot base, and one of the suspects transferred to a relative, a Hamas operative in Cyprus, information about soldiers who were about to stay at a hotel in Jerusalem and said he was willing to carry out a suicide bombing attack (i24News, May 30, 2026).

Settler Terrorism

► Palestinians reported Jewish settler violence throughout Judea and Samaria. In Madama near Nablus, settlers reportedly attacked a house and shot and wounded Palestinians; in Masafer Yatta, settlers broke olive trees and prevented Palestinian farmers from plowing their land; in Bayta, south of Nablus, settlers attacked Palestinian houses and vehicles; south of Hebron, settlers burned agricultural land; and in al-Tayba near Ramallah, settlers reportedly attacked a house (al-Qassam Brigades' combat information Telegram channel, May 30, 2026).

The Palestinian Authority (PA)

Diplomatic Activity

► Muayyad Shaban, chairman of the Authority for the Struggle against the Wall and the Settlements, criticized the launching of the Israeli electronic system for land registration and

regulation of rights in Judea and Samaria. He called it a dangerous move of "creeping annexation" to reshape land ownership in favor of the Jewish communities (Wafa, May 28, 2026).

Payments to the families of the shaheeds, wounded and prisoners

► For the second week in a row, dozens of wounded Palestinians, released prisoners and family members of shaheeds held a sit-in strike opposite the PA government building in Ramallah to protest the non-payment of "allowances" and the breaking of promises given to them before Eid al-Adha. According to the participants, the first strike was suspended after a commitment by the minister of the interior and the committee for civil peace to transfer a one-time grant of 1,500 shekels (about \$525) to every eligible person, but the money was not paid on time and other promises were not kept. The protesters claimed that the last regular salary they received was in September 2025, and the only payment since then, through the Tamkeen fund from Bahrain, was partial and ranged from only 250 to 1,400 shekels. Attempts at mediation by senior Palestinian figures, among them former prisoner Zakaria al-Zubaidi, who was elected to Fatah's central committee, did not end the protest after the protesters rejected a proposal for another partial payment and demanded the original commitment for 1,500 shekel be met. Al-Zubaidi claimed the delay was caused by technical and administrative reasons, and Mahmoud Abbas had given instructions to begin the payments immediately after the holiday (Sawa, May 31, 2026).



**Al-Zubaidi (center) with the protesters in Ramallah
(Facebook page of Najah FM channel, May 28, 2026)**