Spotlight on Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict
October 20 - 28, 2026

Trending

► Efforts to advance the second phase of the ceasefire agreement in the Gaza Strip are deadlocked.

► Disagreements of principle hamper the reconciliation efforts between Hamas and Fatah.

Overview[1]

► IDF forces continued to destroy infrastructure and eliminate terrorist operatives in the Gaza Strip, among them Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Popular Resistance Committees field commanders, terrorist operatives involved in the atrocities of the October 7, 2023 invasion and massacre and operatives involved in financing terrorism.

► Hamas denied reports that it was preparing to carry out another attack similar to October 7, 2023.

► Hamas accused the Board of Peace of attempting to justify Israel's current activities in the Gaza Strip. Reportedly, for more than a month no significant talks have been held to advance the ceasefire agreement.

► Hamas continued trying to revive its "hunger" narrative and claimed a shortage of basic products existed in the Gaza Strip.

► Hamas "security" forces in the Gaza Strip claimed they had arrested militia operatives trained in Israel to carry out abductions and assassinations.

► The meetings between Hamas and Fatah in Cairo reportedly ended with disagreements over Hamas' refusal to recognize Israel and the movement's opposition to limiting the so-called "struggle" to peaceful means.

► Israeli security forces carried out extensive counterterrorism activity in Hebron after two IDF soldiers were shot and killed at the entrance to the city.

[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

► IDF forces continued to operate against Hamas terrorist operatives and infrastructure in the Gaza Strip. This past week field commanders and terrorist operatives in Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), the head of the Popular Resistance Committees in Khan Yunis, operatives involved in the atrocities of the October 7, 2023 invasion and massacre and in holding hostages, and operatives involved in transferring funds from Iran and Turkey were eliminated. Terrorists who entered the Yellow Line area and terrorists who emerged from a tunnel shaft were attacked, and a structure used as a sniper position was destroyed. A UAV that attempted to cross into the Gaza Strip was intercepted in Israeli territory (IDF spokesperson, October 21–28, 2026).

► The Islamic University of Gaza harshly criticized two airstrikes which hit the campus and its surroundings. Several students were injured in the first strike, and in the second, which was near the university gate, three university employees were reportedly killed. Following the incidents, the university announced the suspension of administrative and academic activity for three days and the suspension of frontal studies until the end of the week at its three campuses in Gaza, the central Gaza Strip and the southern Gaza Strip (Facebook page of the Islamic University of Gaza, October 25, 2026). Rawhi Fattouh, chairman of the Palestinian National Council, claimed the attacks violated international humanitarian decisions and harmed and educational institutions despite the ceasefire. He accused Israel of collective punishment, revenge and an attempt to force the Palestinians to leave (Wafa, October 27, 2026).

► Hamas denied a report that during a meeting with Ramiz Alakbarov, the humanitarian coordinator for the occupied Palestinian territories, senior movement figures threatened Hamas was prepared to carry out another invasion and massacre like the one on October 7, 2023 and was liable to act wherever it was able to. Hamas claimed it was committed to the ceasefire agreement and alleged the report was part of an Israeli incitement campaign to justify the continuation of the war in the Gaza Strip and serve Benjamin Netanyahu's political interests ahead of the Israeli elections (Hamas Telegram channel, October 22, 2026).

► A source in one of the "resistance factions"[2] said several messages had been sent to the mediators, influential regional countries and senior officials on the Board of Peace, warning that the coalition in Israel might undertake a "dangerous escalation" in the Gaza Strip out of

[2] Terrorist organizations.

electoral considerations. According to the source, at every meeting with Nikolay Mladenov, his aides or senior American officials, the Palestinian "factions"[3] reiterated their commitment to the ceasefire agreement, while noting the need to compel Israel to comply with its provisions. The source also revealed that new instructions had been issued to all senior figures in the "resistance factions," inside and outside Gaza, to exercise increased caution, particularly in light of the Israeli threats (*al-Quds al-Arabi*, October 23, 2026).

Negotiations for the Second Phase of the Ceasefire Agreement

► Hamas spokesperson Hazem Qassem sharply criticized the Board of Peace and its representative for the Gaza Strip, Nikolay Mladenov, accusing them not only of failing to halt Israel's "violations" of the ceasefire agreement but also of attempting to justify the continuation of the hostilities in the Gaza Strip. Qassem held Mladenov and the Board of Peace responsible for harm to children and school students in Gaza (Hazem Qassem's Telegram channel, October 21, 2026).

► Palestinian-American political activist and businessman Bishara Bahbah claimed he had repeatedly tried to revive the American plan with senior American officials but had been told Washington was not interested. Regarding contacts with Hamas, he said his last contact was two months after the disarmament agreement had been reached. He claimed Hamas had a message for Nikolay Mladenov, "Mr. Mladenov, we agreed on a process for disarmament two months ago, and you still haven't spoken to us. What are you waiting for?" *(al-Quds al-Arabi*, October 21, 2026).

► A source in one of the Palestinian terrorist organizations said that for over a month there had been no contacts to advance the ceasefire agreement or exert pressure on Israel to implement its first phase. He claimed the deadlock was the result of the Israeli government's refusal to renew the negotiations lest they harm its popularity ahead of the elections. He said the contacts had not progressed since the last meeting of the leaders of the participating "factions" and the meeting between Hamas representatives and senior American official Jared Kushner. The source added that Kushner had promised to work to compel Israel to implement all the provisions of the first phase after it refused to proceed to the second phase but, he claimed, had not kept his promise (*al-Quds al-Arabi*, October 23, 2026).

[3] Terrorist organizations.

► The Palestinian national committee for the administration of Gaza hosted Robert Silverman, chargé d'affaires at the United States embassy in Cairo, to discuss planned reconstruction activities in the Gaza Strip. Committee chairman Ali Shaath presented the committee's recovery plan for the Gaza Strip and its work plan for the first six months, whose main priorities were rehabilitating critical sectors, restoring essential services, supporting economic recovery and improving residents' living conditions (committee X account, October 22, 2026).

► The Board of Peace said an agreement had been signed by the international stabilization force and Albania, according to which Albania would provide additional support for security operations and operational planning capabilities for the mission in the Gaza Strip. Albanian liaison officers are expected to deploy in the region in November (Board of Peace X account, October 23, 2026).

The signing ceremony (Board of Peace X account, October 23, 2026)

The Gaza Strip

The Civilian Situation in the Gaza Strip

► Hamas spokesperson Hazem Qassem claimed Israel intended to deny Gazans food again and the absence of punishment for the same conduct in the past encouraged Israel to repeat it. He called on the Arab League to convene to discuss the issue and urged all activists in the Arab world to take action on the ground to pressure all parties to act (Telegram channel of Hamas Hazem Qassem, October 24–25, 2026).

Hunger in Gaza (Facebook page of Alaa al-Laqta, Hamas' in-house cartoonist, October 22, 2026)

► Ali al-Hayek, chairman of the Palestinian businessmen's association, warned of the economic and humanitarian consequences of the [alleged] decline in the volume of aid entering the Gaza Strip. He claimed restrictions on aid and the collapse of the Gazans' purchasing power exacerbated the economic crisis and "recession" in the Gaza Strip. He called on international institutions and UN agencies to take immediate action to address the decline in the volume of aid (alresala.net, October 21, 2026).

► Nahed Shuheibar, chairman of the association of private transport companies in Gaza, said basic products were largely absent from markets in the Gaza Strip, particularly vegetables, fruit and flour. He claimed most of the goods entering were considered "luxury products" and did not meet basic needs (Raya, October 26, 2026). According to claims, Israel prohibits the entry of food products, particularly meat, vegetables and fruit. Meat and vegetables quickly ran out in the markets and dozens of restaurants were forced to close their doors and dismiss their workers (al-Ayyam, October 24, 2026).

► On October 22, 2026 Abd al-Nasser al-Ajrami, chairman of the bakery owners' association, claimed no flour for commercial use had entered the Gaza Strip for more than ten days. He claimed this had led directly to the closure of ten of the 17 commercial bakeries on which most residents relied, leaving only eight commercial bakeries, which would probably cease operations within 48 hours. He said the 21 bakeries supported by the World Food Programme were operating normally and producing 150 tons of bread, but that met only one quarter of the Gazans' needs (Safa, October 22, 2026). The Egyptian committee in the Gaza Strip said it had begun sending truckloads of flour into the Gaza Strip to assist the bakeries (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 24, 2026). The Hamas ministry of national economy in the Gaza Strip said it had made efforts to coordinate with and held a series of meetings and contacts with representatives of the World Food Programme, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

and the Egyptian committee in order to overcome the crisis (Hamas government media information office in the Gaza Strip, October 25, 2026).

► UNRWA education director Julia Decom warned that reviving the education system in the Gaza Strip could take up to seven years because of the cumulative disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the war. He said by the end of September 2026, UNRWA was operating 84 temporary learning spaces for approximately 100,000 students and provided remote learning for approximately 280,000 more. However, shortages of buildings, equipment and teaching hours, alongside restrictions on the entry of construction materials, made it difficult to resume regular studies (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 23, 2026).

► The joint committee for refugees in the Gaza Strip warned of the consequences of UNRWA's intention to dismiss large numbers of employees and reduce services because of its financial crisis. The committee said dismissing employees would prejudice the livelihoods of thousands of families and worsen the situation of refugees who depended on the agency's education, health and humanitarian aid services. The committee called on the UN and donor countries to ensure stable funding for the continuation of the agency's activity and on workers' unions and Palestinian bodies to coordinate organizational and legal measures against the dismissals (alresala.net, October 23, 2026).

► In Beirut, Ghassan Abu Sitta, a British plastic surgeon of Palestinian origin who worked in hospitals in Gaza during the war, announced the launch of a program to provide clinical training for 500 Palestinian doctors in Turkey over five years to help reconstruct public healthcare in the Gaza Strip. The program, funded and conducted in cooperation with Turkey's council of higher education and the conflict medicine program at the American University of Beirut, will train doctors in surgery, internal medicine and pediatrics. The first group is expected to have 184 doctors, 50 to 60 of them from the Gaza Strip, in cooperation with the Palestinian ministry of health. Another track is intended to train Palestinian doctors in Lebanon, in cooperation with the American University of Beirut (Anadolu Agency, October 23, 2026; Legal Agenda website, October 24, 2026).

Military Governance

► Hamas "security" forces continued their activity against "collaborators." The Rada Force reported it had killed "collaborator" Imad Salim al-Louh in an ambush in eastern Deir al-Balah (Rada Force Telegram channel, October 22, 2026); in another incident, Rada Force operatives reportedly caused casualties to the "collaborating gangs" after they advanced toward the

displaced persons' tents in northwestern Rafah under cover from Israeli aircraft. According to the announcement, UAVs fired two missiles at "resistance fighters"[4] and IDF artillery intervened to cover the gangs' retreat into the Yellow Line area (Rada Force Telegram channel, October 26, 2026). The ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip announced the deaths of two "internal security operatives" in the central Gaza Strip district, shot and killed while attempting to arrest a wanted man in Deir al-Balah (Telegram channel of the ministry of interior and national security in the Gaza Strip, October 26, 2026).

► The Rada Force also claimed Israeli officers had trained operatives in the collaborating militias to carry out abductions and assassinations. According to the claim, four operatives who had undergone training at IDF bases were arrested, three of them after the abduction of an armed operative had been prevented and the fourth in an ambush. The force said it intended to publish a list of collaborators who had undergone training at IDF bases, including operatives who had been involved in recent abductions and assassinations (Rada Force Telegram channel, October 23, 2026).

Civilian Governance

► At a meeting organized by clans in Khan Yunis, Hamas' Khan Yunis district governor,[5] Osama Abu Anza, warned that measures would be taken in the coming days against merchants and owners of shops and stalls who exploited residents and refused to accept cash payments. Regarding land, Abu Anza said that the ministry of the interior had prohibited the removal of any civilian from the land where he was located without his full consent and called on anyone affected by such action to approach the designated centers or contact the relevant authorities to submit a complaint. Abu Anza also said the collection of exorbitant sums to exploit residents' need for housing and land would not be permitted (alresala.net, October 20, 2026).

Palestinian Authority Involvement in the Gaza Strip

► Ahed Bseiso, Palestinian Authority minister of public works and housing, announced an emergency plan to establish 23 new shelter compounds in the Gaza Strip, with a capacity of 20,000 tents, in preparation for the winter and to help alleviate the worsening distress. He said efforts to provide housing solutions for displaced residents faced difficulties because the population was concentrated in an area of no more than 30% of the Gaza Strip, there was a

[4] Terrorist operatives.

[5] Apparently a reference to the district police commander. In Hamas, the term *muhafiz* (district governor) has previously been applied to police commanders at the district level.

shortage of land and tents, and there were restrictions on the entry of heavy engineering equipment. He said that in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 1.36 million tons of rubble had been cleared from 62 vital sites, 370,000 tons had been processed and 390,000 tons had been used to repave roads and rebuild infrastructure in shelter compounds. In addition, 420 roads with a total length of 670 kilometers had been cleared and opened to traffic. Safety inspections of damaged buildings continue, and an agreement was signed with the Bank of Palestine, which allocated half a million dollars to demolish a residential high-rise in danger of collapse. He said the shortage of heavy equipment delayed the removal of rubble and dangerous buildings and increased the risk to displaced residents ahead of the winter (alresala.net, October 21, 2026).

Efforts to Promote the Internal Palestinian Reconciliation

► Palestinian sources said disagreements had surfaced between Fatah and Hamas at their meetings in Cairo the previous week. At the first meeting, Hamas raised the issues of rebuilding the PLO, the Supreme Court, positions, the future of public-sector employees in the Gaza Strip, passports and the activity of the Palestinian Authority security forces against its operatives in Judea and Samaria, and noted the need to find solutions, since those were the issues which would lay the foundations for ending the schism. At the second meeting, described as more serious, the Fatah delegation presented a document from Palestinian Authority chairman Mahmoud Abbas which included demands to which Hamas had to agree. Three main disagreements remained unresolved. They were Hamas' refusal to accept the PLO's commitments involving recognition of Israel and security coordination with it, although Hamas does not oppose recognition of the PLO and its program; Hamas' agreement to the establishment of a Palestinian state within the June 4, 1967 borders, while opposing wording that implies recognition of Israel; and its opposition to limiting the [so-called] Palestinian "struggle" to peaceful "resistance." The Fatah delegation said it would submit Hamas' reservations for internal deliberation and a decision by Mahmoud Abbas. Meanwhile, a Fatah source said the PIJ said it was committed to accepting agreements reached within the framework of the Palestinian national consensus but had reservations about the wording limiting the "resistance" to a "peaceful popular struggle" (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, October 21, 2026).

International Hamas Activity

► Hamas spokesperson Hazem Qassem criticized the limited public activity of Palestinians abroad, which he claimed did not reflect the size of the Palestinian communities or the presence of the Palestinian "factions"[6] and embassies in the various countries. He called on the embassies and "faction" leaders to increase their diplomatic and public activity and exert pressure on international parties to halt Israeli military activity in the Gaza Strip and support the Gazans (Hazem Qassem's Telegram channel, October 22, 2026).

Israel, Judea and Samaria

Shooting Attack near Hebron

► On October 23, two Palestinian terrorists from Hebron got out of a vehicle at the Yehuda Junction and opened fire with an automatic weapon and a handgun at soldiers who were inspecting vehicles at the exit from Hebron. The terrorists were shot and killed. Two IDF soldiers were killed in the attack and three others were wounded. According to the IDF, the terrorists had also planned a larger attack on a main traffic route or inside Israel. A closure was imposed on Hebron and Halhul and Israeli security forces launched an extensive counterterrorism operation in the Hebron area, detaining Palestinians suspected of terrorist activity, confiscating weapons and sealing the homes of the two terrorists who had carried out the shooting. Residents in the areas of Israeli security force activity were evacuated through checkpoints (IDF spokesperson and Israeli media, October 23–28, 2026). Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist organizations welcomed the attack and claimed Israel's actions would not bring security or stability (Hamas Telegram channel and al-Jazeera "Palestine," October 23, 2026).

► Palestinian sources claimed that following the attack, IDF forces harassed at least 338 families in Hebron. The municipality, in cooperation with the Palestinian authorities and local and international organizations, formulated a 96-hour emergency plan which included providing humanitarian aid, locating shelter for families forced to leave their homes, mapping damage and assisting with the supply of electricity to closed areas. Meanwhile, the municipality has been documenting the evacuation of residents, damage to property and restrictions on movement, particularly in the areas of the Old City, the Cave of the Patriarchs, Farsh al-Hawa, Deir Baha and al-Jalda, to prepare a legal case to be submitted to the International Criminal Court in The Hague, claiming that some of Israel's actions violate the

[6] Terrorist organizations.

Fourth Geneva Convention and could be considered war crimes. Palestinian National Council chairman Rawhi Fattouh described the actions as systematic collective punishment to terrorize residents and force them to leave their homes (Wafa, October 24–25, 2026).

Right: IDF forces operating in Hebron (Palestinian Information Center, October 24, 2026). Left: Residents evacuating because of IDF activity (Quds Agency, October 24, 2026)

Counterterrorism

► In addition to the counterterrorism activity in the Hebron area, this past week Israeli security forces operated at more than 400 sites in 40 villages in Judea and Samaria, focusing on locations affiliated with Hamas. More than 110 suspects were detained, including operatives affiliated with Hamas and the PIJ, terrorists who planned attacks in the immediate future and suspects involved in incitement, riots and rock throwing. Dozens of weapons were seized, including rifles and four explosive devices (IDF spokesperson, October 22–28, 2026).

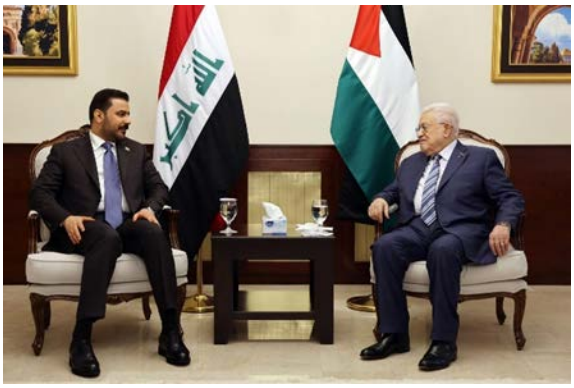
Settler Terrorism

► Reports continued of attacks by Jewish rioters in Judea and Samaria. In Immatin, east of Qalqilya, a tractor was reportedly stolen and agricultural equipment damaged; rocks were thrown at Palestinian vehicles in the areas of Qusra, the Za'tara checkpoint, Ein Ayoub and Sinjil; four vehicles were attacked in Aqraba; olive harvesters were reportedly attacked in Lubban al-Sharqiya and Beit Iksa; racist slogans were spray-painted in Beit Hanina; armed Jewish rioters attacked Palestinian farmers in Khirbet Soba, south of Hebron, and several people were reportedly wounded; according to the "colonization and wall resistance commission," on October 24, 2026, 19 attacks by Jewish rioters and Israeli forces against Palestinian olive harvesters and agricultural land were documented in six districts in Judea and Samaria, including shootings, physical assaults, arrests, theft of crops and equipment, property damage and prevention of access to land (Safa, October 24–25, 2026; Wafa, October 25, 2026; Anadolu Agency, October 24, 2026).

The Palestinian Authority (PA)

► PA chairman Mahmoud Abbas spoke with Jordan's King Abdullah II, expressed condolences for those killed in the shooting attack at St. George's Church in the Karak district and wished the wounded a speedy recovery. He condemned the attack and said the Palestinian leadership opposed terrorism, violence and harm to innocent people and places of worship. He expressed solidarity with Jordan and noted the importance of preserving national unity and coexistence between Muslims and Christians (Wafa, October 24, 2026).

► Mahmoud Abbas met in Amman with Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi to discuss the situation in the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria, the Palestinian financial crisis and the expansion of cooperation between the two countries. He thanked Iraq for its support for the Palestinians, humanitarian aid, support for UNRWA and reception of wounded people from Gaza. He warned of the escalation in Judea and Samaria and east Jerusalem, the expansion of Israeli communities in Judea and Samaria and the violence of Jewish rioters and said Israel's withholding $7 billion in Palestinian tax revenue funds damaged the government's ability to provide basic services. Al-Zaidi reiterated Iraq's support in principle for Palestinian rights, including an end to the "occupation," self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, and said "justice" for the Palestinians was a condition for security and stability in the region (Wafa, October 26, 2026).



Mahmoud Abbas (right) and al-Zaidi (Wafa, October 26, 2026)

► PA deputy chairman Hussein al-Sheikh spoke with Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan about regional developments. Al-Sheikh said "Palestine" condemned aggression against Saudi Arabia's security and stability and stood alongside it in "confronting the plot directed against it." He briefed the Saudi foreign minister on developments in the Palestinian territories and the Israeli escalation facing the Palestinian people (Wafa, October 22, 2026).