



# Spotlight on the Israel-Palestinian Conflict

April 1 –7, 2025

## Overview<sup>1</sup>

- ▶ IDF forces continued operations targeting the military capabilities of Hamas and other terrorist organizations in the northern Gaza Strip, the Rafah area and along the Morag Axis in the south, ordering the evacuation of entire areas. Terrorist operatives were eliminated, some of whom were hiding in civilian buildings. Rocket fire at Israeli territory continued; nine people were injured.
- ▶ Hamas opposed Israeli demands in the negotiations for renewing the ceasefire and releasing the hostages. The spokesperson for the Hamas military wing stated half of the hostages had been deliberately left in the combat zones.
- ▶ Isolated protests continued against the ongoing war and calling for an end to Hamas rule. The family of a young Palestinian who was shot by a Hamas police officer responded by killing the officer.
- ▶ A study by a British research institute found that the names of thousands of alleged Palestinian fatalities disappeared from the records of the Hamas-controlled ministry of health in Gaza.
- ▶ According to reports, Egypt is formulating a new framework through which it would assume responsibility for administering the Gaza Strip for one year, followed by a five-year transitional period of Egyptian security rule in coordination with an international force.
- ▶ Israeli security forces continued extensive counterterrorism operations in Judea and Samaria.

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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 Southern Front

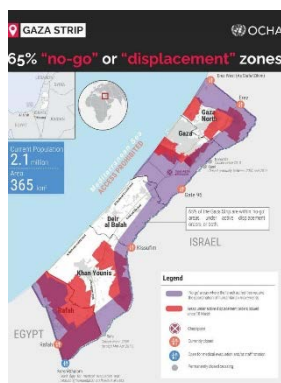
### IDF activity in the Gaza Strip

► This past week, IDF forces continued Operation Strength and Sword targeting military capabilities in the Gaza Strip, primarily of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ). They advanced on the ground in various areas in the northern, central and security forces, along with aerial and ground attacks on dozens of terrorist operatives, facilities, rocket launchers and weapons (IDF spokesperson, April 1–7, 2025):

◆ **Northern Gaza Strip:** As part of efforts to expand the security zone, forces eliminated terrorist operatives, including a nakhba commander, and destroyed rocket launchers and other terrorist facilities. During the week, the IDF spokesperson in Arabic issued evacuation instructions for large areas in northern Gaza, including in Mashroua in Beit Lahia, Beit Hanoun, Sheikh Zayed, the Tel al-Zaatar and al-Manshiya neighborhoods of Beit Hanoun, Jabalia and the Jabalia refugee camp, calling on local inhabitants to evacuate westward toward shelter centers in Gaza City (IDF X account in Arabic, April 1–2, 2025). Gazans living in the al-Sabra, Tel al-Hawa and western al-Zeitoun neighborhoods and Gaza's old city were instructed to evacuate southward to shelter centers in Mawasi, Khan Yunis (IDF Arabic spokesperson, April 3, 2025). IDF forces operated on the outskirts of the al-Shejaiya neighborhood to expand the buffer zone after the area was evacuated and inhabitants moved westward (IDF spokesperson, April 4, 2025).

◆ **Southern Gaza Strip:** IDF forces completed the encirclement of the Tel al-Sultan neighborhood in Rafah, where dozens of terrorist operatives were eliminated, Gazans suspected of terrorist activity were detained, and dozens of weapons and terrorist facilities were located and destroyed. The forces located two rockets inside a building and a launcher aimed at Israel. The IDF also began operating along the Morag Axis, which divides Rafah from the central Strip, and the IDF Arabic spokesperson repeated calls for inhabitants of Rafah and adjacent towns, as well as areas east of Khan Yunis, to evacuate to the Mawasi area in Khan Yunis (IDF spokesperson in Arabic, April 1, 2025). IDF forces began a ground operation in Rafah on the morning of April 2 to take control of the Morag Axis and wrest the city from Hamas control (Israeli media, April 2, 2025). Palestinian networks blamed Hamas, claiming it was killing youths [protesters against Hamas rule]

instead of confronting the IDF's entrance into Rafah (Ahrar Gaza Telegram channel, April 2, 2025).



**Right: The IDF in Tel al-Sultan, Rafah (IDF spokesperson, April 2, 2025). Left: A map from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), showing 65% of the Gaza Strip off-limits or under active evacuation orders (Facebook page of journalist Adli Abu Taha, April 5, 2025)**

◆ IDF forces, with support from the Israel Security Agency (Shin Bet), continued targeted eliminations of senior terrorist operatives from Hamas and other terrorist organizations operating in the Gaza Strip, including terrorists involved in the October 7, 2023 Hamas attack and massacre. Some of them hid in buildings used for civilian purposes.<sup>2</sup> Among those eliminated were Hamas al-Aqsa Radio broadcaster Muhammad Saleh al-Bardawil, a key promoter of the movement's propaganda and psychological warfare; Said Ahmed al-Abd Al-Khadhari., an important Hamas money changer; and Muhammad Hassan Muhammad Awad, a military commander in the al-Mujahideen Brigades military intelligence unit responsible for the abduction of the Bibas family in Nir Oz on October 7, 2023. Hamas operatives hiding in a command and control compound in Jabalia were also eliminated (IDF spokesperson, April 1–7, 2025). "Palestinian sources" reported at least 19 killed, including children, in a strike on an UNRWA clinic in Jabalia (Al Jazeera, April 2, 2025).

◆ According to reports, the targeted killings of senior members of Hamas political bureau in the Gaza Strip since the resumption of fighting have hindered efforts by the

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<sup>2</sup> Using civilian facilities such as schools and hospitals for terrorist purposes is typical of the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip, especially Hamas. The organizations exploit Israel's attacks for propaganda and incitement, exaggerating the number of casualties, claiming large numbers of alleged civilian injuries, and in most cases concealing the identities of the terrorists who were targeted. In all cases, the IDF takes measures before attacks to minimize the likelihood of civilian harm, including the use of precision weapons, aerial surveillance and intelligence information.

leadership, led by acting bureau chief Khalil al-Haya, to rebuild the organizational structure and coordinate appointments and initiatives for internal elections. It was also reported that the crisis caused delays in paying the salaries of Hamas government employees, and that operatives in the movement's military and political wings received partial and delayed salaries. The report noted that Hamas had adopted a new management model, the so-called "leadership council," of five to seven members headed by Shura Council Chairman Muhammad Darwish, with participation from heads of the political bureau in Gaza, Judea, Samaria and abroad. Matters are decided by consensus with consultation from the other the bureau members when necessary, especially concerning ceasefire negotiations in coordination with the military wing leadership headed by Muhammad al-Sinwar (al-Sharq al-Awsat, April 3, 2025).

### **Rocket fire**

► This past week 13 rockets were fired at Israel from the Gaza Strip, including a barrage of ten rockets targeting the Ashkelon and Ashdod areas. Some of the rockets were intercepted; at least nine people were injured and property damage was reported (IDF spokesperson and Israeli media, April 1–7, 2025). The Hamas military wing claimed responsibility for the rocket barrage (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades Telegram channel, April 6, 2025), and the PIJ's military wing of PIJ claimed responsibility for attacking Sderot and the Israeli communities near the Gaza Strip (Jerusalem Brigades Telegram channel, April 1–7, 2025).

## The Hostages and the Ceasefire

► According to reports, Hamas decided not to address or respond to the latest Israeli document submitted to the mediators on March 28, 2025, and informed the mediators that the document subverted everything previously agreed on. Hamas claimed that Israel had made substantial changes in most of the mediators' proposals, including a demand to release ten kidnapped soldiers on the first day of the ceasefire compared to five soldiers over fifty days, and shortening the duration of the new phase from fifty to forty days. Hamas also claimed that Israel introduced new principles as a basis for negotiations, including a demand for Hamas to disarm and a refusal to withdraw its forces from the Gaza Strip (Al Jazeera Network X account, April 2, 2025).

► According to al-Hares TV, the release of "captives" [hostages] during combat in the Gaza Strip is a critical weak point which Israel will try to exploit, and therefore preparations have to be made at the highest level of secrecy, speed and coordination, including the use of deception

and ambushes. It was further stated that in the event of complete encirclement, the "captives" [hostages] should be murdered to prevent the "enemy" from achieving a psychological or propaganda victory (al-Hares Telegram channel, April 3, 2025).

► Abu Obeida, spokesman for Hamas' military wing, claimed half of the Israeli "captives" [hostages] still alive were currently being held in areas of the Gaza Strip that the IDF recently demanded be evacuated. He said would not evacuate the "captives" but they would be kept under conditions which endangered their lives. He said that if Israel truly cared about their safety, it had to renew the negotiations immediately. He added that Israel could not claim lack of blame if the "hostages" were harmed, and the Israeli government was fully responsible for their lives (Abu Obeida's Telegram channel, April 4, 2025).

## The Gaza Strip

### The situation in the Gaza Strip

► Following a ten-fold increase in the price of flour, from about \$13.20 to about \$132 per sack, Gazans were asked to remain calm and show social responsibility amid the food price crisis. According to claims the recent increase in prices of flour and other basic goods was the result of temporary pressure and prices would return to a "reasonable" level. Gazans were asked not to rush to the markets or hoard flour in order not to inflame the greed of merchants and intensify smuggling and price gouging (Gaza Market Prices Telegram channel, April 1, 2025).

► The ministry of health announced the completion of the restoration and reopening of al-Durra Children's Hospital in Gaza Governorate, adding that the hospital was prepared to receive patients and provide medical services around the clock (al-Quds TV Telegram channel, April 1, 2025). However, the European Hospital announced it had closed its outpatient clinics and declared a state of emergency (Greater Abasan Facebook page, April 3, 2025).

► The Gaza Municipality announced a temporary halt in the water supply following a malfunction in the supply from Mekorot, the Israeli company which provides about 70% of the city's drinking water. The halt affected large areas of the city, including the neighborhoods of Daraj al-Tuffah, al-Sabra and parts of al-Zeitoun, al-Shejaiya and Sheikh Radwan. The municipality called on people living in those areas to prepare accordingly and promised to supply limited quantities of water from alternative sources (Gaza Municipality Facebook page, April 5, 2025).

► The World Food Programme (WFP) announced that all 25 bakeries it supported in the Gaza Strip had shut down following shortages of fuel and flour. The organization warned that food

supplies in the kitchen providing hot meals would last less than two weeks (WFP Arabic X account, April 6, 2025).

### **Discrepancies in the numbers of reported fatalities in the Gaza Strip**

► The Hamas-controlled ministry of health in Gaza reported that since the resumption of IDF military activity on March 18, 2025, 1,391 people had been killed and 3,432 wounded. According to the ministry, since the beginning of the war on October 7, 2023, the death toll in the Gaza Strip reached at 50,752, with 115,475 injured (ministry of health in Gaza Telegram channel, April 1, 2025).

► According to a report published by the Henry Jackson Society, a conservative British think tank, approximately 3,400 names were removed from the new casualty list published by the ministry of health in Gaza in March 2025, including 1,080 children, compared to previous lists. The report further stated that Hamas inflated the figures through falsifications, gross errors and manipulations, which included registering men as children and women, including deaths from before the war, and even victims of Hamas' own attacks. In addition, about 72% of the casualties were men between the ages of 13 and 55, a statistic which negates and questions the claim that most of the casualties were women and children. According to the report, Hamas is attempting to maintain its credibility in the face of unrest in the Gaza Strip and a global public opinion increasingly questioning the "victim" narrative Hamas has promoted since the beginning of the war (New York Post, April 4, 2025).

### **Hamas governance**

► This past week sporadic demonstrations were held in Jabalia refugee camp and Beit Lahia to protest the ongoing war and Hamas rule in the Gaza Strip, with the participation of dozens to a few hundred residents (journalist Abd al-Hamid Abd al-'Atti's Facebook page, April 1, 2025; Hamza al-Masri's Telegram channel, April 2 and 6, 2025). Participants in a demonstration in the Jabalia refugee camp chanted "Hamas is garbage" and "Hamas are terrorists." They accused the movement of destruction, hunger and continued wars, but also condemned the ongoing Israeli attacks. One female protester said, "Hamas speaks in our name, but it doesn't feel what we feel" (al-Sharq al-Awsat, April 6, 2025; Odeh TV, April 6, 2025). "Palestinian sources" reported that Hamas operatives in Beit Lahia threatened several residents who participated in the demonstrations (Thawra Media Telegram channel, April 3, 2025).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> For further information, see the March ITIC report, "[Demonstrations in the Gaza Strip against Hamas.](#)"



**Protest demonstration in the northern Gaza Strip  
(Hamza al-Masri's Telegram channel, April 2, 2025)**

- ▶ Al Jazeera and its correspondent Tamer Al-Masahal were criticized after he said that the wave of protests in the Gaza Strip was part of an "Israeli plot" to pressure Hamas. Critics called it a "serious allegation" indirectly accusing the protesters of collaborating with Israel, thereby helping Hamas undermine the legitimacy of the protest. Al-Masahal and Al Jazeera were accused of betraying the values of the Palestinian people and delegitimizing the popular protest, while deliberately attempting to humiliate the Gazans (Ahrar Gaza Telegram channel, April 3, 2025).
- ▶ Violent armed clashes broke out in Deir al-Balah in central Gaza after a local man was shot dead by Hamas police. His family, the Abu Samra clan, accused a Hamas policeman of shooting Abd al-Rahman Sha'ban Abu 'Ubayd in the chest while he was waiting in line to buy flour. In response, members of the Abu Samra clan publicly executed the policeman, but called to avoid further escalation. The incident sparked widespread public outrage, with activists and clans in Gaza calling for a broad civil rebellion and stressing they would no longer tolerate Hamas thugs' bullying the Gazans (Nasr Palestine Telegram channel, April 1, 2025).
- ▶ According to reports, Sa'ad Sakhr Hassanein from the al-Shejaiya neighborhood in Gaza was killed by Hamas police fire during clashes with his family. The Hassanein family called for revenge and demanded that major clans in the Strip support their struggle for justice. Social media users speculated whether the Hassanein family would, like the Abu Samra clan, take revenge against those responsible for the shooting (Ahrar Gaza Telegram channel, April 2, 2025).
- ▶ Reportedly, 20,000 sacks of flour were stolen from UNRWA warehouses in the al-Tuffah neighborhood in Gaza City (shamal.gaza1 Facebook page, April 2, 2025; Nasr Palestine Telegram channel, April 2, 2025). It was later reported that humanitarian aid was burned in



Rafah and looted in the al-Tuffah neighborhood in central Gaza City. The authorities responsible for aid distribution were accused of failing to distribute the shipments fairly while the aid accumulated in warehouses and reached residents only rarely or not at all. That directly harmed civilians, fueled frustration and led to theft and burning of humanitarian aid, because the local leadership demonstrated neither order, oversight nor transparency (al-Meidan Media Network Telegram channel, April 3, 2025).

► On April 4, 2025, a resident of eastern Gaza City was executed after accusations of collaborating with Israel and confessing to relaying information about several Palestinian families (Combat Information – West Bank Brigade Telegram channel, April 4, 2025).

## "The Day After"

► Mahmoud al-Habbash, advisor to the chairman of the Palestinian Authority for religious and Islamic affairs, claimed that Hamas policy in the Gaza Strip encouraged Israel to escalate its attacks on Palestinians. He called for a national popular movement to demand that Hamas relinquish its control over the Strip, describing Hamas as "reckless and irresponsible." He said the protesters in the Gaza Strip expressed the will of millions who sought to end the war and strengthen national status under the PLO. Adnan al-Dameiri, a member of Fatah's advisory council, accused Hamas of bringing poverty, unemployment and oppression to the Gaza Strip, and of causing the emigration of about 150,000 young people. He said Hamas did not operate as a purely Palestinian movement, as it was still tied to the interests of "other countries" (Wafa, April 3, 2025).

► A Fatah delegation presented a roadmap for dialogue with Hamas during meetings with Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty. According to the proposal, the first stage would include talks behind closed doors to formulate a framework for Fatah-Hamas communication. UN resolutions would serve as the basis for resolving the conflict, and Hamas would have to accept the PLO's international commitments. In the second stage, the talks would expand to include all Palestinian "factions,"<sup>4</sup> with adherence to international agreements and recognition of non-violent struggle to establish a Palestinian state based on political freedom, civil rights and the rule of law (Sky News Arabia, April 6, 2025).

► Egyptian media reported that the leadership in Cairo was discussing a new proposition for ending the fighting in the Gaza Strip, which would include a two-month ceasefire, the exchange

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<sup>4</sup> Terrorist organizations.



of "captives"<sup>5</sup> and temporary Egyptian control over the Strip. According to the plan, Hamas would relocate its forces to Rafah, where Egypt would deploy a special security force, and Israel would commit itself not to attack Hamas operatives in the area. Subsequently, Egypt would expand its security deployment throughout the Strip as Israeli forces withdrew, and Hamas would dismantle its governing bodies within a month. Egypt would assume management of the Strip for one year, followed by a five-year transitional period under Egyptian security rule in cooperation with an international force that would manage the border crossings. During this period, control over tunnels [sic] and heavy weapons would be transferred to Egypt, an internal Palestinian dialogue would be held, a civilian government would be established, and the Strip would undergo extensive reconstruction. At the end of five years, control would be transferred to an elected Palestinian Authority that would establish a unified national police force for the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria (PNN News, April 6, 2025).

## Israel, Judea and Samaria

### **Attempted stabbing**

► On April 3, 2025, a terrorist armed with a knife advanced towards IDF forces at the Gilboa outpost (Jalameh checkpoint), north of Jenin. The forces carried out protocol and shot at the terrorist (IDF spokesperson, April 3, 2025). Palestinian media reported that "a young Palestinian man" was shot and killed during an attempted stabbing at the Jalameh checkpoint (Jenin Refugee Camp 24 Hours Telegram channel , April 3, 2025).

### **Counterterrorism activities**

► This past week, Israeli security forces continued Operation Iron Wall, the large-scale counterterrorism operation in northern Samaria, during which at least two terrorists were eliminated and wanted individuals were detained. The forces located an explosives lab in Tulkarm and a cache of weapons in the village of Burqin. Meanwhile, Israeli security forces continued routine operations in Judea and Samaria, attacking terrorists who threw rocks,

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<sup>5</sup> Israeli hostages and Palestinian terrorist operatives in Israeli jails.

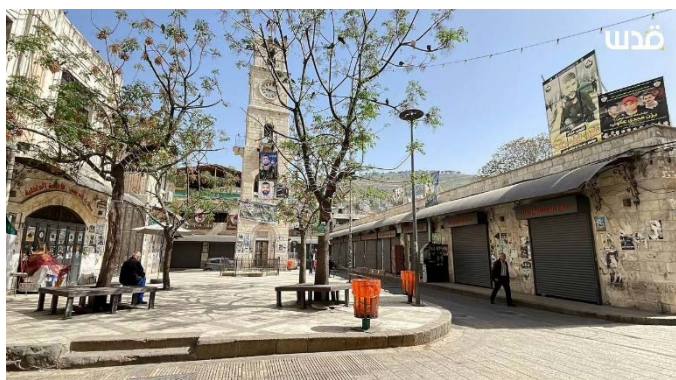
detaining Palestinians wanted for involvement in terrorist operations and confiscating weapons and other terrorist materials (IDF spokesperson, April 1–7, 2025).



**Weapons found in the lab in Tulkarm (IDF spokesperson, April 1, 2025)**

### General strike held calling for the end of the war in the Gaza Strip

► On April 7, 2025, a general strike was held in Judea and Samaria to protest the ongoing war in the Gaza Strip, in accordance with the call of national and Islamic forces, including the Palestinian Authority and Hamas. The strike halted all aspects of life, closing universities and schools, banks, factories, shops, both government and private institutions, there was no public transportation in Judea and Samaria, and the streets were empty of vehicles and pedestrians (Wafa , April 7, 2025). Palestinian youths set tires on fire and blocked roads in al-Tur in the Jerusalem area (Quds News X account, April 7, 2025).



**The general strike. Right: Ramallah (Wafa, April 7, 2025). Left: Nablus (Quds News X account, April 7, 2025)**

### Clashes between Israeli settlers and Palestinians

► On April 1, 2025, dozens of Israeli settlers set fire to property in the area of the village of Duma, southeast of Nablus. Later, Israeli settlers and Palestinians clashed inside the village, and several Palestinians who were injured in the incident. Israeli security forces arrived to end the incident (IDF spokesperson, April 2, 2025).

► "Palestinian sources" reported that Israeli settlers attacked a Palestinian resident in the village of Qira, north of Salfit, beat him, burned his car in front of his home and wrote racist slogans (Wafa, April 4, 2025).

## The Palestinian Authority (PA)

### International activity

► Fatah figure Jibril Rajoub said PA chairman Mahmoud Abbas might be the last Palestinian leader who believed in a two-state solution and in rejecting violence to achieve national goals. Rajoub said he doubted that after him a leader would be found who would want or be able to lead a peace agreement. Rajoub called on the American administration to work with Abbas as long as he was in power, saying Hamas could be integrated into the political system in the future if it accepted the principles of the PLO. In addition, Rajoub condemned the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023, but claimed the root of the conflict lay in decades of Israeli "occupation, destruction and humiliation." He expressed support for internal political reforms, holding elections and the establishment of a democratic regime under the principle of "one authority, one law, one weapon." He criticized Trump's proposals to annex the Gaza Strip and the administration's inaction in addressing Palestinian suffering, but said efforts had to continue to reach an agreement based on the 1967 borders and mutual recognition (Times of Israel, April 2, 2025).

► The UN Human Rights Council passed two resolutions against Israel submitted by the PA. The first resolution, with 34 in favor, 3 against and 10 abstentions, claimed Israel's policy of "colonialism, annexation and apartheid" violated international law, damaged Palestinian human rights, and endangered the two-state solution. The second resolution, with 43 in favor, 2 against, and 2 abstentions, recognized the "right of self-determination of the Palestinian people." Both resolutions also called for the immediate cessation of settlement construction and the dismantling of existing ones, the removal of the "separation" [border security] fence, and the imposition of economic and legal sanctions on those involved in violations (Wafa, April 4, 2025).

### Actions taken by the PA security forces

► "Palestinian sources" reported that Samer al-Murad, a Jenin Battalion terrorist operative who was arrested by the PA security forces, was tortured in the Junaid prison in Nablus and had an eye gouged out with a screwdriver. It was further claimed that "resistance fighters"<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Terrorist operatives.

were being tortured at the detention facility, described as humiliating and merciless treatment of the "heroes of the West Bank" by a government that was supposed to protect them (Saraya Jenin Telegram channel, April 5, 2025).

► Reportedly, PA security forces confiscated and destroyed explosive devices planted by "resistance fighters" near Tubas intended to attack Israeli security forces (al-Shahid, April 5, 2025).