



Spotlight on the Israel-Palestinian Conflict

April 7 –21, 2025

Overview¹

- ▶ IDF forces continued operating against Hamas and other terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip, completing the takeover of the Morag Axis in the southern Gaza Strip and encircling the city of Rafah. The forces discovered tunnels and weapons depots, destroyed Hamas command complexes and eliminated dozens of Hamas terrorist operatives. One IDF soldier was killed in the northern Gaza Strip.
- ▶ Hamas rejected the partial ceasefire and hostage release deal since it did not include a full Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the reconstruction of the Strip; Hamas also opposed Israel's demand for disarmament.
- ▶ According to reports, targeting Hamas money changers affected the movement's ability to pay its operatives and government employees. However, Hamas claimed that eliminating senior figures in its political bureau and military wing had only a temporary effect and did not constitute an existential crisis.
- ▶ Hamas appealed the UK's decision to designate its political bureau as a terrorist organization.
- ▶ Israel, Judea and Samaria: Two terrorist attacks were carried out and a third incident was suspected of being an attack. Israeli security forces continued counterterrorism operations in Judea and Samaria. Arab-Israelis were detained on suspicion of planning attacks inside Israel.
- ▶ The Palestinian Authority praised French President Macron for his intention to recognize a Palestinian state in the coming months.

The Southern Front

IDF activity in the Gaza Strip

- ▶ IDF forces continued extensive operations against terrorist targets, primarily Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) targets in the Gaza Strip, as part of Operation Strength and Sword. The operations included ground advances in the northern, central and southern Gaza Strip, along with aerial and ground attacks which eliminated dozens of terrorists, including

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

senior commanders and operatives involved in the October 7, 2023 attack and massacre. Terrorist facilities were targeted, including underground installations, and command and control compounds operating from civilian buildings,² rocket launchers and weapons. One IDF soldier was killed by Hamas fire in the northern Gaza Strip and five others were injured. According to the IDF spokesperson, since the beginning of the operation on March 18, 2025, more than 100 targeted killings were carried out and approximately 1,200 terrorist targets were attacked (IDF spokesperson, April 7–22, 2025):

◆ **Northern Gaza Strip:** IDF forces continued expanding the security buffer zone. They eliminated terrorist operatives, attacked command and control compounds, including in the al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza City, and destroyed a tunnel about 1.2 kilometers long and 20 meters underground. The IDF called for the evacuation of the neighborhoods of al-Shejaiya, Ajdida, al-Turkman, eastern Zeitoun, al-Nour, and Tuffah in eastern Gaza City (IDF Arabic spokesperson, April 11, 2025). On April 9, 2025, “Palestinian sources” reported an alleged attack on the al-Shejaiya neighborhood, with eight residential buildings attacked simultaneously, resulting in at least thirty civilian deaths and dozens of injuries (Telegram channel of Gaza correspondent Mahmoud al-Louh, April 9, 2025). The Hamas-controlled ministry of health in Gaza condemned the strike on the al-Ahli Hospital, claiming the attack on a structure within the complex forced the evacuation of patients and medical staff (Shehab News Agency, April 13, 2025).



Strike on a Hamas command and control center in the al-Ahli Hospital (IDF spokesperson, April 13, 2025)

² 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.

◆ **Central Gaza Strip:** IDF forces attacked a Hamas command and control compound in Deir al-Balah in central Gaza. Reportedly, Hamas operatives planning additional attacks were in the compound at the time. Palestinian media reported that the Deir al-Balah municipal building was attacked twice (Quds News Agency Telegram channel, April 13, 2025; Alburajj Telegram channel, April 13, 2025).

◆ **Southern Gaza Strip:** IDF forces completed the takeover of the Morag Axis, which separates Rafah from the central Gaza Strip, encircled Rafah and expanded operations in the city's neighborhoods of Shaboura and Tel al-Sultan. The forces eliminated terrorist operatives and destroyed above- and below-ground terrorist facilities. A tunnel shaft was discovered in a compound previously used as a kindergarten, and a tunnel about twenty meters deep was destroyed; it served as a staging point for terrorist attacks against IDF forces and connected multiple tunnels in the area. The IDF also called for the evacuation of Khirbat Khiza'a, Abasan al-Kabira, and Abasan al-Jadeeda in southern Gaza to facilitate the expanded activity (IDF Arabic spokesperson, April 11, 2025).



Right: Hamas tunnel shaft in a compound formerly used as a kindergarten (IDF spokesperson, April 11, 2025). Left: Operations along the Morag Axis (IDF spokesperson, April 12, 2025)

► IDF forces, assisted by the Israel Security Agency (Shin Bet), continued targeted eliminations of senior Hamas operatives and members of other terrorist organizations, including those involved in the October 7, 2023 Hamas attack and massacre. Some of the terrorists were hiding in buildings used for civilian purposes. Those eliminated included a Hamas Shadow Unit operative involved in guarding Israeli hostages, Mahmoud al-Ajla, commander of the al-Shejaiya Battalion of the Hamas military wing, and Yahya Fathi Abd al-Qader Abu Sha'ar, head of arms smuggling for Hamas.

Rocket fire

► Five rockets were fired at the Israeli communities near the Gaza Strip border; all five were intercepted by the Israeli Air Force. No casualties or damage were reported (IDF spokesperson,

April 7–22, 2025). The Hamas military claimed responsibility for some of the rocket fire (Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades Telegram channel, April 12, 2025).

► Gazan cleric Sheikh Taysir Tarban (Abu Abdallah) said firing rockets or mortars from residential areas was forbidden by Islam and was a grave moral, national and revolutionary offense. He said it caused the killing, destruction, suffering and displacement of innocent civilians without any real benefit and ultimately served only the interests of the "occupation" (Taysir Tarban's X account, April 8, 2025).

The Hostages and the Ceasefire

► The mediators continued efforts to renew the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and achieve the release of the Israeli hostages. According to reports Hamas received an Israeli proposal for a 45-day ceasefire during which ten live hostages and sixteen bodies of abducted IDF soldiers would be released in exchange for the release of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners and the entry of humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip. In addition, negotiations for the "day after," including the disarmament of Hamas, would begin (al-Mayadeen, April 14, 2025). Hamas rejected the offer, reiterated its own proposal to release all the hostages in exchange for an end to the war, and refused to disarm:

◆ Khalil al-Haya, head of the Hamas political bureau in the Gaza Strip and head of the negotiating delegation, announced Hamas' rejection of the Israeli proposal, which he claimed included "impossible conditions," and blamed Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu for the failure of the ceasefire agreement signed in January 2025. He claimed Hamas had met all its commitments while Israel reneged on them and continued committing "crimes and killings." He claimed Hamas was prepared for immediate negotiations on a comprehensive deal for the release of all "prisoners" [hostages] and an agreed number of Palestinian "detainees" in exchange for a cessation of hostilities, full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, the start of reconstruction and an end to the [so-called] blockade. He said Hamas would not agree to partial deals, adding that "resistance"³ and weapons were a "natural response to the occupation" (Hamas Telegram channel, April 17, 2025).

³ Anti-Israel terrorist attacks and violence.



Khalil al-Haya (Hamas Telegram channel, April 17, 2025)

- ◆ In response to statements from families of hostages opposing partial deals and emphasizing the importance of a comprehensive exchange deal, even if it ended the war, Bassem Na'im, a member of the Hamas leadership in the Gaza Strip and the chairman of the political department, claimed that had long been the movement's declared position. He accused Netanyahu and his government of obstructing such a deal for personal and political reasons, and stated that the "deception of partial deals" in exchange for food and water, followed by "more killing," was a thing of the past for Hamas (Bassem Na'im's Facebook page, April 16, 2025).
- ◆ Senior Hamas operative Mahmoud Mardawi reiterated Hamas' commitment to a comprehensive deal. He claimed Netanyahu was not seeking the return of the "prisoners" but was endangering their lives and using them as a pretext to continue the war for internal political gains. Mardawi said the only way to achieve the release of the "prisoners" [hostages] was through a full deal, and that all statements by Netanyahu and his spokespeople were "attempts at deception" (Mahmoud Mardawi's Telegram channel, April 19, 2025).
- ▶ As part of Hamas' psychological warfare, Abu Obeida, spokesman for Hamas' military wing, claimed that the group had "lost contact" with the unit holding an Israeli-American hostage following a direct strike on their location. He later claimed that Hamas had recovered the body of a military wing operative killed while guarding the Israeli "prisoner," but the fate of the "prisoner" and the remaining operatives remained unknown. He warned that the hostages' lives were in danger, although he claimed that "Hamas is trying to protect the lives of all prisoners" (Abu Obeida's Telegram channel, April 15 and 19, 2025).

► A “source in Hamas” said Hamas leadership and senior American officials were holding secret meetings parallel to the mediator talks in Egypt and Qatar, after pressure resulting from previous leaks. According to the source, the talks are not limited to the release of dual-nationality hostages but also cover broader issues such as a long-term ceasefire, the future of Hamas’ weapons and its rule of Gaza. Meanwhile the negotiations under the auspices of Egypt, Qatar and the United States continue despite significant disputes regarding approaches, with Hamas insisting on a final comprehensive deal (al-Modon, April 21, 2025).

The Gaza Strip

The situation in the Gaza Strip

► On April 10, 2025, the Hamas-controlled ministry of health in Gaza issued an urgent appeal, claiming unprecedented shortages of medicine and medical equipment. Hamas claimed that hospital departments such as intensive care units and emergency rooms were operating with dangerously depleted inventories which endangered lives. The ministry warned that tens of thousands of diabetes and hypertension patients were left without medication, and over half of all cancer and blood disease medications had run out completely, adding that the closure of crossings exacerbated the crisis and posed a major barrier to treating the sick and injured (*al-Araby al-Jadeed* April 10, 2025).

► Following the Gaza municipality’s announcement on April 5, 2025, of the shutdown of Israel’s Mekorot water line, which supplies 70% of Gaza City's water needs, on April 15, 2025, the municipality reported that in coordination with the Palestinian Water Authority, maintenance on the line in eastern Shejaiya had been completed. Gradual water pumping resumed, allowing for water supply to the affected areas according to the pre-established water distribution schedule (Gaza Municipality Facebook page, April 15, 2025).

► Dr. Wael Khalifa, medical director of the al-Wafaa Rehabilitation Hospital in Gaza, said the hospital had reopened two months previously after being damaged in an aerial attack which destroyed 30%-40% of its ability to function. Despite the damage, the staff continued to provide basic care, especially to those injured in aerial attacks who had spinal, brain and limb injuries. He claimed the institution had a severe shortage of wheelchairs, crutches, medications and basic medical supplies because of the blockade and ongoing conflict (Shehab Telegram channel, April 16, 2025).

Hamas governance

► On April 16, 2025, spontaneous protests against Hamas broke out in Beit Lahia in northern Gaza. Demonstrators accused Hamas of corruption, harming the youth and creating a life of fear and death. They called for an end to Hamas rule, physically attacked Hamas supporters who raised pro-Hamas signs and forced Hamas operatives out of the area. Vulgar and mocking posters were raised against Hamas and its leaders Fathi Hamad, Osama Hamdan, Mahmoud al-Zahar, and Sami Abu Zuhri (Nasser Palestine Telegram channel, April 16, 2025; al-Ain News, April 17, 2025).



Demonstration in Beit Lahia (Hamza al-Masri's Telegram channel, April 16, 2025)

► In response, Fatah spokesman Maher al-Namoura said the demonstrations reflected the people's suffering caused by Hamas' conduct and their opposition to its policies, which brought only misery. He added that the protests were natural and spontaneous, sparked by the lack of prospects for a ceasefire and the heavy civilian toll in Gaza (Voice of Palestine Radio, April 17, 2025). Sufian Matar, a member of the Central Committee of the Palestinian Liberation Front, said the protests against the war in Gaza were spontaneous and a result of the Gazans' harsh living conditions. He noted that over 70% of Gaza had been destroyed and said it was time for Hamas to prioritize national over partisan interests (Wafa, April 17, 2025).

► Hamas is facing severe economic problems following the elimination of key money changers, the halt in humanitarian aid and restrictions on cash transfers. According to a report, Hamas has almost completely stopped paying its operatives and government employees, making it difficult to recruit new fighters. Despite estimates of about \$3 billion in cash within Gaza, Hamas ability to use the funds is very limited because of logistical constraints and military oversight (*Wall Street Journal*, April 16, 2025). "Sources in Hamas" stated that the assassination of leaders in Gaza created a management vacuum which caused delays in government employee salary payments. However, members of the Hamas political and military branches

received up to 60% of their salaries on the second day of Eid al-Fitr⁴ [March 30, 2025] (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, April 3, 2025).

► Yasser Abu Hein, founder of the Hamas-affiliated Safa News Agency in Gaza, acknowledged that the loss of many senior political and military leaders had had an impact on Hamas but claimed it was “only temporary.” He added that the damage did not pose an existential threat and Hamas has its own internal methods for managing its institutions, claiming Israel could not eliminate the organization. He said the current war inflicted serious damage on the movement’s organizational and military structure but that “the new leadership is more determined to continue the path of liberation [sic].” An unnamed member of the Hamas political bureau said Hamas had absorbed the blows, reorganized its leadership and retained its ability to continue. He said new political bureau members were appointed by the Shura Council based on election results, with the highest vote-getter replacing any member killed by Israel. Decisions are made by majority vote, political bureau meetings are held as needed, and communication and decision-making mechanisms have been approved. Regarding the military wing, a “source close to the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades” said name of the military wing’s new commander would remain secret. However, it is believed that Muhammad al-Sinwar now holds the position (*independentarabia website*, April 10, 2025).

► “Palestinian sources” reported that the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades began recruiting 30,000 young fighters in the Gaza Strip, most of whom had previously been “secretly trained” in annual camps run by the Brigades. Although they lack expertise, they have been trained in guerrilla warfare, the use of anti-tank missiles and planting explosive devices. The sources added that Hamas lost a substantial amount of its weapons stockpile during the war, especially UAVs and long-range rockets, and was now recycling missile remnants to produce explosives (*al-Hadath*, April 20, 2025).

► The Hamas ministry of the interior and national security in Gaza warned of Israeli intelligence activities involving text messages and phone calls to Gazans claiming they could leave the Strip if they met with intelligence representatives. The ministry urged residents not to respond but to protect their safety and avoid traps. It also called on the international community to intervene and stop what it called “forced migration attempts,” which it labeled a violation of international law. The ministry said legal action would be taken against anyone cooperating

⁴ The holiday which ends Ramadan.

with Israeli intelligence and added that Israel would not succeed in its goals through war or deception (Hamas ministry of the interior and national security, April 22, 2025).

The terrorist organizations' use of civilian facilities

► Muhammad Saqr, head of nursing at Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis, claimed he had received death threats from the Palestinian Islamic Jihad's military wing after declaring that the hospital complex was designated for patients only and not for individuals not in need of medical treatment (Nasser Palestine Telegram channel, April 13, 2025).

► Reportedly, medical activities were completely halted at the al-Amal Hospital of the Palestinian Red Crescent in Khan Yunis after Hamas operatives stormed an operating room and control of it for personal use. The medical staff protested and stopped working, voicing harsh criticism of Hamas for turning hospitals into military targets, thereby endangering lives and rendering medical facilities legitimate targets for attack (Ali Shareem's Facebook page, April 15, 2025). In response, the Palestinian Red Crescent Society in Gaza categorically denied that the emergency, surgery and intensive care departments of al-Amal Hospital in Khan Yunis had been closed (Palestinian Red Crescent Society in Gaza Facebook page, April 15, 2025).

► Hamas operatives reportedly murdered Zakaria al-Jamazi after he asked them to leave the al-Gil School, which was housing displaced persons in Gaza City, when it became clear that they were hiding among civilians (Nasser Palestine Telegram channel, April 16, 2025). On April 17, 2025, the families and clans of the southern districts of the Gaza Strip published a leaflet blaming Hamas for the murder of Zakaria al-Jamazi, who they claimed was shot by a Hamas militia in front of civilians, including women and children. The families warned against continued repression and criminal behavior, called on Hamas to expose those responsible and take accountability, and made clear that if no action were taken, they would respond themselves, vowing an "earthquake under the feet of the tyrants" (Telegram channel of the families and clans of the southern districts – Gaza Strip, April 17, 2025).

"The Day After"

► "Palestinian and Egyptian sources" reported progress in the talks Egypt was conducting with various parties regarding the appointment of a community support committee which would be responsible for governing the Gaza Strip after the war. According to the sources, Dr. Majed Abu Ramadan, the Palestinian Authority's minister of health, was a candidate for committee chairman. They added that no changes were expected in Muhammad Mustafa's government, but Abu Ramadan might also serve as deputy prime minister in addition to chairing the

committee. Abu Ramadan, an ophthalmologist, previously served as mayor of Gaza and is considered to have extensive connections (Ajyal Network website, April 11, 2025).

► A Hamas delegation led by Khalil al-Haya, head of the Hamas political bureau in the Gaza Strip, visited Cairo and met with senior Egyptian intelligence officials. “Sources” said they discussed potential candidates to manage the civil administration in Gaza, emphasizing that they should not be affiliated with Hamas. The report added that Egypt wanted a technocratic government to administer Gaza, with broad consensus among Palestinian “factions” and the international community (*al-Araby al-Jadeed*, April 13, 2025).

► Husam Badran, a member of the Hamas political bureau, said the movement supported the establishment of a “national unity government” to govern Gaza, Judea and Samaria. He added that the post-war phase was a Palestinian internal issue and they would will not accept externally-imposed conditions. He said Hamas believed the post-war future had to be jointly handled for Gaza, Judea and Samaria, and had to remain in Palestinian hands (*al-Araby al-Jadeed*, April 14, 2025). Badran later said Hamas had submitted a list of forty names, excluding members of the movement, to demonstrate its serious intent to overcome internal divisions (al-Risalah, April 14, 2025).

► “Hamas sources” said the movement had shown a willingness to transition into a “political party” but refused to disarm “as long as there was occupation.” They also noted that the movement was not opposed to some of its leadership leaving Gaza, but demanded guarantees that they would not be targeted or prosecuted (al-Arabiya, April 14, 2025).

► A “senior Palestinian source” said the Palestinian Authority was engaged in serious discussions with all sides regarding its future role and ability to govern Judea, Samaria and Gaza after the war. In addition, a “source close to decision-making circles in the Palestinian Authority” stated that they were holding both direct and indirect talks with the Americans, Europeans, Arab countries, Hamas and Israel about the day after the war and ways to advance the establishment of a Palestinian state. He claimed Hamas was prepared not only to hand over the Strip and give up control but also to relinquish its weapons (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, April 15, 2025).

► Fatah spokesman Jamal Nazzal said that if Hamas had any intention of respecting the demands of the Palestinian people in Gaza, it would have disarmed and withdrawn. According to him, the public is disappointed with Hamas, but feelings about Israel’s “violent and humiliating conduct” are even stronger (Facebook page of Dr. Jamal Nazzal, April 17, 2025).

Hamas International Activity

Meetings with Turkish officials

► A senior Hamas delegation led by Muhammad Darwish, chairman of the Shura Council, and including Khaled Mashal, Hamas “external” leader; Khalil al-Haya, head of the political bureau in the Gaza Strip; Zaher Jabarin, Hamas leader in Judea and Samaria, and Nizar Awadallah met in Ankara with Turkish intelligence chief İbrahim Kalın. The delegation briefed him on the consequences of the war in the Gaza Strip and expressed willingness to reach a comprehensive agreement for a “prisoner exchange” in return for an end to the war, an Israeli withdrawal from the Strip, the start of reconstruction, the lifting of the blockade and the implementation of the Egyptian initiative to establish a civilian administrative committee. Kalın emphasized Turkey’s opposition to Israel’s policies, expressed support for the Palestinian people and outlined Turkey’s efforts to provide humanitarian aid and achieve a permanent ceasefire (Hamas Telegram channel, April 19, 2025).

► The Hamas delegation also met with Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan. They discussed recent developments on the Palestinian front, particularly the ongoing Israeli “aggression” in the Gaza Strip and efforts to achieve a ceasefire. Both sides agreed that “attempts to uproot Palestinians from their land are unacceptable.” They also accused Israel of using “the blockade and the denial of humanitarian aid as tools to punish the Palestinian people” (Hamas Telegram channel and TRT channel, April 20, 2025).



**The Hamas delegation meets with the Turkish foreign minister
(Hamas Telegram channel, April 20, 2025)**

Hamas appeals its UK terrorist organization designation

▶ Hamas filed a legal appeal with the UK Home Office protesting the 2021 British decision to designate the organization’s political bureau as a terrorist organization.⁵ Hamas said the decision was unjust and showed a “blatant bias in favor of the Zionist occupier, which continues to commit crimes against the Palestinian people and violates human rights.” Hamas called on the British government to “reflect and correct its mistakes” (Hamas Telegram channel, April 11, 2025).

Israel, Judea and Samaria

Terrorist attacks

▶ Two attacks were carried out and a third incident was suspected of being a terrorist attack:

◆ **Stabbing in Samaria:** On April 8, 2025, a female terrorist arrived at the Gitai Avishar junction and threw rocks at an IDF force and Israeli vehicles. She then pulled out a knife and attempted to stab the soldiers; she was shot and killed.

◆ **Suspected vehicle ramming at the Otniel junction:** Police patrol unit fighters were operating against criminals and terrorist elements in the southern Hebron Hills. They ordered the driver of a stolen Palestinian vehicle to stop, but the driver hit one of the officers and fled the scene toward the area of al-Dhahariya. The officer was superficially injured and the driver later turned himself in (IDF spokesperson and Israeli media, April 14, 2025).

◆ **Shooting near Homesh:** On April 20, 2025, a Palestinian terrorist from Qabatyah opened fire at IDF forces at the entrance to the Homesh post in Samaria; he was shot and killed (IDF spokesperson and Israeli media, April 20, 2025).

Counterterrorism activities

▶ Israeli security forces continued their extensive counterterrorism operation in northern Samaria, alongside ongoing activity in other areas in Judea and Samaria. They eliminated at least five terrorists, including a Palestinian Islamic Jihad operative involved in the shooting attack that killed three Israelis at a rest stop in January 2025, a PIJ operative released in the first hostage deal in November 2023 who was wanted for planning attacks, and two terrorists

⁵ Hamas has been designated as a terrorist organization in the United Kingdom since November 2021, when the political wing of the movement was added to the list of proscribed organizations, the outlawing of its military wing, the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, in March 2001. As a result, membership in Hamas or support for the movement is considered illegal, and the UK government may freeze Hamas assets within its jurisdiction and impose economic sanctions on individuals affiliated with it.

who had thrown rocks at vehicles. Dozens of wanted Palestinians were detained and a bomb-making facility was destroyed in the Nur Shams refugee camp. Security forces also demolished the homes of five terrorists who had carried out attacks (IDF spokesperson, April 7–22, 2025).

► Israeli security forces detained six Arab-Israelis suspected of membership in a network which transferred millions of shekels in funds from Hamas headquarters in Turkey to terrorist networks in Judea and Samaria. The investigation revealed that the network’s operatives collaborated with Wajdi Saadi, originally from Jenin who now lives in Turkey and acts as a conduit for transferring funds to fund the activities of Hamas and other terrorist organizations in the area (Israel Police Force and the Israeli Security Agency spokespersons’ units , April 10, 2025).

► In March 2025 Israeli security forces detained two Arab-Israelis on suspicion of planning terrorist attacks. According to the investigation, one suspect, Nur Shabbat, was in contact with a senior operative in the Tulkarm Battalion because he wanted to join terrorist activity in Judea and Samaria. It was further revealed that during their visits to the Temple Mount during Ramadan in 2024 one suspect tried to persuade the other to stab Israeli security forces at the site (Israel Police Force and the Israeli Security Agency spokespersons’ units, April 10, 2025).

► Two teenagers, aged 16 and 17, one an Israeli resident of Lod and the other Palestinian from Hebron, were charged with planning an ISIS-inspired shooting to attack a synagogue in Lod. The Israeli teen had contacted ISIS operatives via social media and was encouraged to carry out on behalf of the organization. He selected a synagogue in Lod as the target for a Saturday morning attack and recruited the Palestinian teen as a partner. The two met, planned the attack and vowed allegiance to ISIS. The plot was ultimately foiled following the arrest of their handler in Jordan (Israeli media, April 17, 2025).

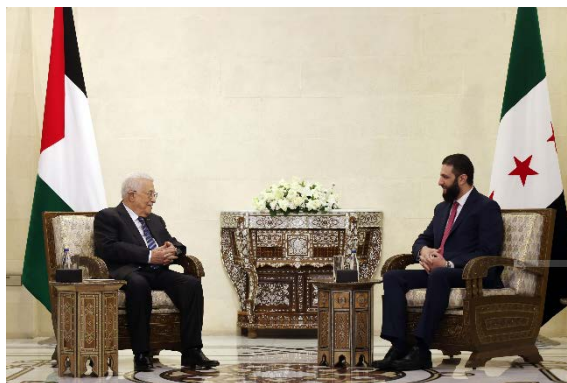
The Palestinian Authority (PA)

International activity

► Palestinian Authority (PA) chairman Mahmoud Abbas and French President Emmanuel Macron discussed the Palestinian front, including the need for a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, accelerated humanitarian aid and the transfer of authority over Gaza to the PA. They expressed opposition to the “displacement” of Palestinian residents from their homes and noted the importance of the two-state solution. Abbas thanked Macron for France’s position rejecting displacement, calling for a ceasefire and supporting the implementation of a two-state solution, emphasizing the importance of recognizing a “State of Palestine.” Macron reiterated

France's commitment to securing the release of all hostages and achieving a lasting ceasefire, stressing the need for Hamas to be disarmed in the post-war period, for credible governance to be established and for reforms within the PA to enable progress toward a two-state solution (Wafa and Emmanuel Macron's X account, April 14, 2025). The PA foreign ministry welcomed Macron's position on the anticipated recognition of the "State of Palestine" in the coming months, calling it a positive step in defending the two-state solution under international law. The ministry urged other countries, especially in Europe, to recognize the Palestinian state and support its full UN membership. It invited all countries to participate in the international conference scheduled for June, initiated by France and Saudi Arabia, noting that halting crime, displacement and annexation, and restoring political prospects were essential for achieving peace, security and regional stability (Wafa, April 10, 2025).

► Mahmoud Abbas visited Syria for the first time in two decades and met with Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa in Damascus. They discussed strengthening bilateral relations and recent Palestinian developments, focusing on the need for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, the delivery of humanitarian aid, reconstruction without "displacement" and a complete Israeli withdrawal from Gaza with civil and security responsibility transferred to the PA. Abbas said weapons in Gaza should be held only by PA institutions and called for an end to violence in Judea and Samaria. He said talks were underway with Saudi Arabia, the United States, Arab states and Europe to promote a two-state solution, including holding an international peace conference in New York in June. Mahmoud Abbas and al-Sharaa agreed to appoint joint committees to enhance cooperation (Wafa, April 18, 2025). Hundreds of Syrians and Palestinian refugees protested against Abbas' visit, demanding his expulsion. Demonstrators took to the streets after Friday prayers in Damascus, chanting, "Abbas, get out! Ramallah will remain free!" They also voiced slogans supporting Gaza and the "resistance" (al-Shahad, April 18, 2025).



Mahmoud Abbas and Syrian President al-Sharaa (Wafa, April 18, 2025)

► Muhammad Mustafa, PA prime minister attended the Antalya Diplomacy Forum in Turkey, holding meetings addressing developments in the Palestinian arena, including the need to reach a ceasefire, promote Gaza reconstruction plans and halt the “aggression” against Palestinians in Judea and Samaria:

◆ Speaking to the Arab-Islamic Ministerial Contact Group on the future of Gaza and the PA, Mustafa expressed confidence that Palestinians would prevail despite “displacement, destruction, aggression, colonialism and economic sanctions.” He described the events in Gaza as a chapter in the long journey toward “Palestinian independence” and regional peace and stability. He accused Israel of turning the residents of Judea and Samaria, especially those in refugee camps, into targets of expulsion and economic blockade. He said that despite difficult conditions, the PA government was doing everything possible to prevent “displacement” and prepare a better future for the Palestinian people in Gaza. He added that the PA leadership was determined to reunite Gaza, Judea and Samaria under a single government and institutional framework (Wafa, April 11, 2025).

◆ Mustafa and Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty discussed supporting the Arab-Islamic plan to rebuild Gaza and preparations for the reconstruction conference Egypt will host jointly with the PA and the UN. They reaffirmed their opposition to the “displacement” of residents from Gaza, Judea and Samaria and noted the need to “end the occupation and establish an independent Palestinian state” (Egyptian foreign ministry Facebook page and Wafa, April 11, 2025).

◆ Mustafa conveyed greetings from Abbas to Turkish President Erdoğan and expressed appreciation for Turkey’s continued support for “Palestine.” Mustafa related to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza amid border closures and [alleged] shortages of medicine

and food, calling for increased international pressure to end the war. He briefed Erdoğan on developments in the Judea and Samaria, especially in northern Samaria refugee camps and east Jerusalem. Erdoğan reiterated his commitment to continue humanitarian aid to Gaza, support Palestinian rights and engage in the post-war reconstruction process (PA prime minister's office, April 12, 2025).



Mustafa meets Erdoğan (Wafa, April 12, 2025)

► Mustafa met with several European Union foreign ministers on the sidelines of the EU-Palestinian political dialogue in Luxembourg to discuss ways to support and implement Gaza's reconstruction. He noted the importance of international pressure to halt the "occupation's aggression" against the Palestinian people, including a ceasefire in Gaza and ending "military aggression" by the IDF and settlers in the West Bank. He also discussed efforts to promote the two-state solution by "ending the occupation and establishing a Palestinian state," as well as preparations for the upcoming international conference on the Palestinian issue, to be led by Saudi Arabia and France at the UN in New York in June 2025 (Wafa, April 14, 2025).