



# Spotlight on the Israel-Palestinian Conflict

April 22 – 29, 2025

## Overview<sup>1</sup>

- ▶ IDF forces continued operations against Hamas and other terrorist organization targets in the Gaza Strip, attacking terrorist operatives, commanders, and Gazans involved in the October 7, 2023 attack and massacre, as well as Hamas control centers operating from civilian complexes. Weapons were discovered hidden inside UNRWA aid sacks in Rafah. Two IDF soldiers and one Border Police officer were killed in the northern Gaza Strip.
- ▶ Egypt and Qatar proposed a six-month ceasefire and an exchange of "prisoners" alongside negotiations for a comprehensive agreement to end the war in the Gaza Strip. Hamas continued to demand a permanent ceasefire and refused to discuss disarming as long as the "occupation" continued.
- ▶ Criticism of Hamas in the Gaza Strip over the continuation of the war persists.
- ▶ Israeli security forces continued extensive counterterrorism operations in Judea and Samaria.
- ▶ Mahmoud Abbas, chairman of the Palestinian Authority, called Hamas operatives "sons of dogs" because of their refusal to release the hostages. Hamas condemned Mahmoud Abbas and questioned his fitness to lead the Palestinian Authority.
- ▶ The PLO Executive Committee approved the appointment of Hussein al-Sheikh as Mahmoud Abbas' deputy.

## The Southern Front

### **IDF activity in the Gaza Strip**

- ▶ This past week IDF forces continued Operation Strength and Sword against terrorist targets, primarily of Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) in the Gaza Strip. The forces advanced on the ground in the northern, central and southern Gaza Strip, as aerial and ground attacks targeted dozens of terrorists, including commanders and terrorist operatives involved in the October 7, 2023 attack and massacre. The IDF attacked command and control centers

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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.

operating from civilian buildings,<sup>2</sup> rocket launchers, weapons and dozens of engineering vehicles used by Hamas for tunneling and breaching border fences during the October 7, 2023 attack and massacre. Two IDF soldiers and one Border Police officer were killed in fighting in the northern Gaza Strip and seven soldiers were wounded. The IDF spokesperson reported that since the beginning of the operation on March 18, 2025, more than 1,800 terrorist targets were struck and hundreds of terrorists, including senior figures in Hamas' government and military wing, were eliminated (IDF spokesperson, April 22–29, 2025):

► **Northern Gaza Strip:** On April 24, 2025, after one IDF soldier was killed and three were wounded in an ambush, the IDF Arabic spokesperson called on residents of Beit Hanoun and Sheikh Zayed in the northern Gaza Strip to evacuate and move westward toward Gaza City (IDF Arabic spokesperson Avichay Adraee's X account, April 24, 2025). Hamas' Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades claimed responsibility for shooting at IDF forces (Hamas in Judea and Samaria Telegram channel, April 25 and 26, 2025).

► **Gaza City:** IDF forces eliminated terrorists who had fired an anti-tank rocket from a building in the Daraj-Tuffah neighborhood. Rocket launchers for attacks on Israeli territory were located and destroyed. The IDF Arabic spokesperson instructed residents of the al-Turkman, Ajdida and northeast al-Zeitoun neighborhoods to evacuate westward toward the center of Gaza City (IDF Arabic spokesperson's X account, April 25, 2025). A Hamas-PIJ command and control center was attacked at a site which had previously been the Yaffa School; Palestinian media reported ten fatalities (Palestinian Media Center Telegram channel, April 23, 2025).

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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.

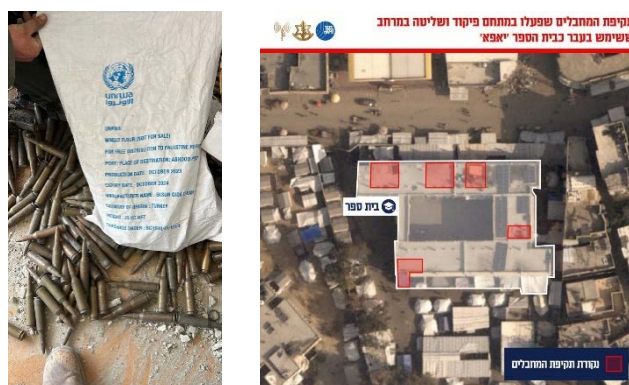


**Command and control center at the Yaffa School site in Gaza City  
(IDF spokesperson, April 23, 2025)**

► **Southern Gaza Strip:** IDF activity focused on the Tel al-Sultan neighborhood in Rafah. The forces eliminated dozens of terrorists, located and destroyed several booby-trapped houses, weapons and dozens of terrorist facilities. IDF forces found Hamas weapons hidden in UNRWA aid sacks near two buildings, one which had previously been a school and the other serving as a hospital (IDF spokesperson, April 24–28, 2025).

## The Hostages and the Ceasefire

► This past week the mediators tried to promote a renewed ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and the release of Israeli hostages. A delegation of the Hamas leadership, led by the head of the Shura Council, Muhammad Darwish, held talks in Egypt, during which Hamas presented its position supporting a comprehensive deal that would include a ceasefire, "prisoner" exchanges [Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners], humanitarian aid and the rehabilitation of the Gaza Strip (Hamas Telegram channel, April 27, 2025):



**Weapons cache found in UNRWA sacks near civilian structures  
(IDF spokesperson, April 28, 2025)**

- ◆ Ahead of the delegation's arrival in Egypt, a " Hamas source " stated that the movement was open to a long-term agreement which would end the war, release all the hostages at once and a five-year ceasefire (Agence France-Presse, April 26, 2025).
- ◆ Osama Hamdan, a senior Hamas figure in Lebanon, said Hamas would not give up the weapons of the "resistance"<sup>3</sup> as long as the "occupation" continued, adding that the movement would agree only to the ceasefire and "prisoner" release agreement signed in January 2025 or to a comprehensive deal (Al Jazeera Mubasher, April 27, 2025).
- ◆ " Hamas sources " revealed the details of Egypt and Qatar's new ceasefire proposal which was presented to the movement during the meetings: a ceasefire of six months, during which fighting would stop and "prisoners," dead and alive, would be exchanged; contacts would be held for a comprehensive agreement to end the war, a plan for the "day after" and the rehabilitation the Gaza Strip according to the Egyptian plan approved at the Arab summit in Cairo, along with the exchange of all "prisoners" between the sides. The "sources" said all the actors, including Israel, were serious about reaching an agreement soon. Hamas said it would examine the proposal, coordinating and dialoguing with other Palestinian "factions"<sup>4</sup> but also reiterated its own position: a demand for a permanent ceasefire (five years this time), a one-time exchange of "prisoners," a complete withdrawal of the IDF from the Gaza Strip, rehabilitation of the Strip, removal of the [so-called] "blockade," and a return to status quo ante March 2, 2025. In addition, Hamas proposed appointing a local committee of independent representatives to manage the affairs of the Strip within the framework of the Egyptian initiative and opposed a discussion of dismantling its weapons (al-Sharq al-Awsat, April 27, 2025).
- ◆ Hamas claimed that during the meetings in Egypt it had showed it was prepared to discuss the issue of weapons as part of a comprehensive agreement. Hamas also claimed it had said it was prepared to withdraw from governance in the Gaza Strip through the establishment of a management committee composed of independent technocrats. However, Taher al-Nunu, communications advisor to the head of Hamas' leadership council, said that the weapons of the movement and the "resistance" factions would remain as long as the "Israeli occupation of the Palestinian lands" continued, and

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<sup>3</sup> The Palestinian terrorist organizations operating in the Gaza Strip.

<sup>4</sup> Terrorist organizations.

claimed Hamas had reacted positively and with flexibility toward all ideas and proposals (al-Sharq TV website, April 27, 2025).

## The Gaza Strip

### The public health system

► On April 23, 2025, Kamal Adwan Hospital in Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip reported that preparations for operating the second phase of the field hospital were continuing. The phase includes the pediatrics, a children's ward and a neonatal intensive care unit, as well as the admission and emergency departments, surgery and post-operative hospitalization, and endoscopy (Kamal Adwan Hospital Facebook page, April 23, 2025). The al-Shifa Medical Center also reported the opening its intensive care unit (al-Shifa Medical Center Facebook page, April 23, 2025). The director of al-Shifa, Muhammad Abu Salmiya, announced the opening of the neonatal intensive care unit at al-Helou Hospital in Gaza City (al-Shifa Medical Center Facebook page, April 24, 2025).



**Right: Intensive care. Left: The neonatal unit at al-Helou Hospital (al-Shifa Medical Center Facebook page, April 23 and 24, 2025)**

► At a conference of the Arab Organization for Human Rights in Britain, the director general of the Hamas ministry of health in Gaza, Dr. Munir al-Barash, claimed that 18 of the Gaza Strip's 38 hospitals were operating partially, while 20 other hospitals, including the al-Shifa Medical Center, were no longer open, claiming six hospitals had been completely destroyed. He added that only 38 first aid centers, of 103 that were in the Strip, were operating partially (Arab Organization for Human Rights X account, April 24, 2025).

### Hamas' "starvation" narrative

► The Hamas media information office in the Gaza Strip warned that the Strip was "facing mass numbers of deaths due to hunger caused by the siege and the prevention of aid entry." The office claimed 52 people had died of malnutrition, including 50 children, more than 60,000

children were suffering from severe malnutrition, and more than a million children went hungry every day. Hamas shifted full responsibility to Israel and the countries supporting it, and said a humanitarian corridor had to be opened immediately and an international investigative commission had to be appointed (Safa Agency, April 25, 2025).



**The international community disregards the situation in the Gaza Strip (Instagram channel of the Palestinian-Swedish cartoonist Mahmoud Abbas [no relation], April 25, 2025)**

► Hamas claimed there was now “famine” in the Gaza Strip, following the depletion of the World Food Program’s stocks, and accused the Israeli government of using hunger as a tool. Hamas called on the international community to take action immediately to stop the "siege" and bring in humanitarian aid, and called on the Arab and Islamic countries to break their silence, act to lift the siege and support the Palestinians' stance against plans of "deportation" (Hamas Telegram channel, April 26, 2025).

### **Criticism of Hamas**

► On April 27, 2025, a demonstration was held by women and children in Beit Lahia to demand an end to the war (Hamza al-Masri’s Telegram channel, April 27, 2025; al-Hadath TV X account, April 27, 2025). Hamas reportedly launched a severe crackdown against the protesters and its operatives abducted Hassan Said, a leader of the local protest, and violently assaulted him. A campaign of threats and summonses for interrogation for other young people who participated in demonstrations against Hamas was also reported. In light of the developments, a public call was issued for the residents of Beit Lahia take action to release Hassan Said and oppose Hamas’ repression (Ahrar Gaza Telegram channel, April 28, 2025).





**The demonstration in Beit Lahia (Hamza al-Masri's Telegram channel, April 28, 2025)**

- ▶ The Rafah News Facebook page was severely critical of Hamas, claiming that it agreed to ceasefire proposals when the IDF attacked the northern Gaza Strip, but when the IDF attacked and "destroyed" Rafah in the south the Hamas leadership did nothing and did not respond, as if nothing had happened (Rafah News Facebook page, April 25, 2025).
- ▶ A resident of Gaza calling himself "Sultan" published a post criticizing Hamas, writing, "How many children need to be slaughtered? How many women must be torn to pieces for you to get out of our lives? The blood of children is flowing in the streets, and you, where are you, scum of al-Qassam? You disguise yourselves in civilian clothes and call yourselves 'resistance,' but the truth is you are a disgrace to the struggle. The limbs of the children under the rubble are screaming, Go away! Get out, traitors! The blood of the children is cleaner than your faces" (Sultan's X account, April 24, 2025).
- ▶ In another post, Hashem al-Amer attacked the Hamas leaders, accusing them of caring for their personal safety and the future of their families abroad while sending the residents of the Strip to death. He said the sister of Hamas leader Musa Abu Marzouk had moved to France and his daughter lived in the United States. He said Hamas leaders did not seeking death but only presented death as an ideal for the simpletons of the Gaza Strip (Hashem al-Amer's X account, April 24, 2025).

## Emigration from the Gaza Strip<sup>5</sup>

- ▶ "Sources in Gaza and Europe" reported that foreign organizations and bodies were helping Gazans leave for Western and European countries, raising concerns about attempts at an "organized displacement" of Palestinians. According to the "sources," dozens of Gazan

<sup>5</sup> For further information, see the February 2025 ITIC report, "[The issue of emigration from the Gaza Strip in light of President Trump's proposal.](#)"

families have left in recent weeks under claims of "humanitarian asylum" and "family reunification." The initial destinations were several Arab countries, and other groups of families left for Balkan and other European countries. According to the report, the emigration is coordinated through Western embassies and consulates in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, through direct contact with the families or through intermediaries operating in the Gaza Strip (al-Quds al-Arabi, April 23, 2025). Later, "sources in the Strip" were quoted as claiming France was implementing a plan to ensure the departure of dozens of Palestinian families and individuals, guaranteeing their arrival in Paris. A document stated that buses take Gazans to the Kerem Shalom Crossing in direct coordination with the IDF, which allows their safe passage, and from there to the King Hussein Bridge on the Jordanian border. Foreign officials in Jordan await the arrival of the buses and ensure the safe travel of the Gaza residents to the countries which offered to receive them (al-Quds al-Arabi, April 24, 2025).

► An officer in the "resistance" security forces in the Gaza Strip said they summoned individuals who had posted content to social media allegedly passed on by Israeli intelligence under the pretense of coordinating travel arrangements abroad. The individuals were required to sign a commitment not to repeat the act after it became clear that most of them did not understand the security risk (al-Haras Channel, April 24, 2025).

► Subsequently, an officer in the "resistance" security forces in the Gaza Strip praised the public in the al-Bureij and al-Nuseirat refugee camps for refusing to respond to offers from Israeli intelligence to hold personal meetings under the pretense of coordinating travel abroad. According to the officer, thanks to the vigilance of local residents, no one arrived at the meeting point, which allegedly led Israeli intelligence to "abduct" seven citizens, most of them women and young people, for propaganda purposes (al-Haras Telegram channel, April 25, 2025).

## Hamas' Relations with Foreign Countries

► A Hamas delegation led by the head of the Shura Council, Muhammad Darwish, met with Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan in Doha and briefed him on the latest developments. The humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip was discussed, and it was agreed that coordination and political action had to continue to end the war and address the urgent needs of the civilians (Hamas Telegram channel, April 27, 2025). The spokesperson for the Turkish foreign ministry denied reports that Fidan had demanded Hamas make concessions as part of the ceasefire negotiations (Anadolu Agency, April 28, 2025).





**The meeting of the Hamas delegation with the Turkish foreign minister  
(Hamas Telegram channel, April 28, 2025)**

► On April 26, 2025, the annual conference of the Justice and Development Party [the local branch of the Muslim Brotherhood] opened in Morocco. A Hamas delegation headed by the movement’s spokesperson, Fawzi Barhoum, was expected to participate in the conference, leading to criticism and opposition in Morocco (Hespress website, April 22, 2025). On the eve of the conference, the chairman of the organizing committee announced that the Hamas delegation would not arrive (Hespress website, April 25, 2025). Speaking at the conference, the secretary general of the Justice and Development Party, Abdelilah Benkirane, said they had wanted the Hamas delegation to participate but the authorities did not grant its members entry visas (Hibapress website, April 26, 2025). Instead, at the opening session, a recorded speech by Fawzi Barhoum was aired, in which he praised Morocco’s public displays of solidarity with the Gaza Strip. He also called on the Arab and Islamic nations to rise up and support the Gaza Strip (aljazeera.net, April 26, 2025).



**Fawzi Barhoum in his speech (Justice and Development Party website, April 26, 2025)**

## Israel, Judea and Samaria

### Terrorist attacks

► This past week there were no terrorist attacks.

## Counterterrorism activities

► This past week Israeli security forces continued extensive counterterrorism operations in northern Samaria, in addition to ongoing activities in other areas of Judea and Samaria. About 75 wanted persons were detained, including Islam Qaraan, who headed a terrorist organization in the Balata refugee camp in Nablus, and a wanted person who planned to carry out an attack in Qalqilya, and dozens of weapons were confiscated (IDF spokesperson, April 22–29, 2025).

► The mayor of Jenin, Muhammad Jarar, said that after 99 days of "occupation" activity in Jenin and the refugee camp, damages to infrastructure and property amounted to \$300 million. He claimed 800 housing units in the city were partially destroyed and 15 buildings were completely destroyed, with the main damage in the eastern neighborhood and the al-Hadaf neighborhood. He added that all civilian houses and property in the refugee camp were either completely or partially destroyed, and the infrastructure was destroyed (Wafa, April 29, 2025).

## The Palestinian Authority (PA)

### PLO Central Council conference

► On April 23, 2025, the 32<sup>nd</sup> session of the PLO Central Council opened in Ramallah. The chairman of the PA, Mahmoud Abbas, referred to Hamas in his speech as "sons of dogs" and demanded that the movement release the hostages to undermine Israel's justification for continuing the war. He accused Hamas of exploiting the situation in the Gaza Strip and said it was surprising that the movement was holding talks with the United States but not with the PA. Abbas also said no weapons should be allowed outside the framework of legal authority and warned against the continued division of Judea and Samaria and against Israel's "displacement" activities in the Gaza Strip (Al Jazeera, April 23, 2025). His speech, particularly his verbal attack on Hamas, outraged the Palestinian arena:

◆ The communications advisor to the head of Hamas' leadership council, Taher al-Nunu, said that Abbas' statements "disgrace the resistance struggle" and showed he was unfit to lead the Palestinian people. He accused Abbas of exacerbating internal division and said Hamas had been silent regarding the PA but could not ignore his recent statements (Al Jazeera Mubasher, April 26, 2025).

◆ Osama Hamdan, a senior Hamas figure in Lebanon, claimed "resistance" fighters were not what Abbas called them. He said Abbas' statements against the "resistance" raised questions about his fitness to lead the PA, adding that he had had opportunities to restore

unity among the Palestinian people but did not realize them, while Hamas always overcame political disputes with Abbas, but "it is unfortunate that he curses and insults the resistance and shows his reverence for the occupation" (Al Jazeera, April 27, 2025).

◆ The Alliance of Palestinian Forces<sup>6</sup> condemned Abbas' speech and said his remarks about the "resistance" deepened division and served the interests of the "occupation." The Alliance claimed the current PLO Council did not represent the will of the Palestinian people adding that Abbas was disconnected from reality. They called on him to step down while advocating a position which would unify the national stance and restore the dignity of Palestinian institutions and national unity (Shehab Agency, April 24, 2025).

◆ The committee of the deported prisoners [released from Israeli prisons in exchange for the release of hostages] issued a statement expressing loyalty to the path of "resistance" and the struggle to free the prisoners. They claimed "resistance"<sup>7</sup> was the only way to achieve "freedom and dignity for the Palestinian people," praised the steadfastness of the people in Gaza, Judea and Samaria as an example of "sacrifice and determination," and total opposed any attempt to harm or question the "resistance" (Qabatiya Around the Clock Telegram channel, April 24, 2025).



**Mahmoud Abbas at the PLO Central Council meeting (Wafa, April 23, 2025)**

► On April 25, 2025, the concluding statement of the PLO Central Council stated that the priority of the Palestinian national struggle was to stop the war and the Israeli "apartheid" in the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria, while rejecting any attempt at deportation or annexation.

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<sup>6</sup> The Alliance of Palestinian Forces is an umbrella organization for so-called "rejectionist organizations," which includes the Palestinian factions which opposed the Oslo Accords. It was established in 1993 and initially included ten organizations. In 1998, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine withdrew from it.

<sup>7</sup> Terrorist attacks

The council noted the “unity of the territory” [the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria], the Palestinian political and legal system, and its commitment to a quiet “popular” struggle<sup>8</sup> and the [so-called] right of return. It also called for broader recognition of the Palestinian state and for ending the "occupation" within a year in accordance with the International Court of Justice ruling. A decision was made to establish a new position of deputy chairman of the PLO Executive Committee (Wafa, April 25, 2025).

► Following the Council’s decision, the PLO Executive Committee, headed by Abbas, convened in Ramallah and approved the appointment of Hussein al-Sheikh as deputy chairman of the Executive Committee and “vice president of the State of Palestine.” Abbas noted the importance of national dialogue with all factions in order to promote reconciliation and strengthen the unity of the Palestinian people within the framework of the PLO. He presented the upcoming political action plan, which includes efforts to end the fighting in the Gaza Strip, bring in humanitarian aid, secure the withdrawal of Israeli forces and advance establishment of a Palestinian state with east Jerusalem as its capital (Wafa, April 26, 2025). Hamas condemned the decision to appoint al-Sheikh, claiming it was a response to external pressures and a reinforcement of centralization and exclusion while ignoring the will of the Palestinian people. Hamas called on all Palestinian factions to reject the appointment and work to rebuild the PLO on a national and democratic basis (Hamas Telegram channel, April 28, 2025).

### **Diplomatic activity**

► The PA prime minister, Muhammad Mustafa, attended the funeral of Pope Francis at the Vatican. On the sidelines of the event he met with Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide and noted the need to increase international pressure on Israel to stop the war in the Gaza Strip, open the crossings and allow the entry of aid in light of the [alleged] “threat of famine.” He presented the reform efforts of his government and expressed readiness to take full responsibility for the Gaza Strip after the end of the "aggression." Both sides agreed to continue dialogue and coordination to end the war and increase aid to the Palestinians (Wafa, April 26, 2025).

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<sup>8</sup> Terrorist attacks.

► Mustafa met in London with British Prime Minister Keir Starmer and Foreign Minister David Lammy. They discussed the continuation of the Israeli "aggression" and the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, as well as Israeli actions in Judea, Samaria and east Jerusalem, and reaffirmed their commitment to the two-state solution. Britain expressed its commitment to recognizing a "Palestinian state" in the future. A memorandum of understanding for cooperation in areas such as development, education, trade and climate change was signed. In addition, a £101 million aid package was announced for the development of the Palestinian economy, the promotion of good governance and the provision of humanitarian assistance (Wafa, April 28, 2025).



**Mustafa meets with the British Prime Minister (Wafa, April 28, 2025)**

### **Palestinian anti-Israel lawfare**

► On April 28, 2025, at the request of the United Nations General Assembly, the International Court of Justice in The Hague, began hearings to formulate an advisory and non-binding opinion regarding Israel's obligations toward the activities of the UN and its agencies in the "occupied territories," given the legislation to terminate UNRWA's operations in Israel. The PA ambassador to the Netherlands, Ammar Hijazi, claimed that the Palestinians were subject to "starvation, bombings and forced displacement" by Israel and accused Israel of having prevented the entry of food, water, medicine, medical equipment and fuel into the Gaza Strip for two months. He claimed the Palestinian delegation would present "evidence" regarding the immediate, medium and long-term consequences of Israeli policy (Wafa, April 28, 2025). Hamas claimed the court had noted the seriousness of preventing the entry of humanitarian aid, calling it a "gross violation" of international humanitarian law. Hamas also claimed the court had exposed the use of hunger by the "occupation" as a weapon of war against civilians. Hamas called on the international community to take responsibility and move from verbal condemnations to practical steps to stop the "crimes of the occupation" (Hamas Telegram channel, April 28, 2025).

**Activities of the Palestinian security forces**

► The PA security forces continued neutralizing explosives belonging to the "resistance," despite the protests of the Palestinian street. Most of the explosive devices were discovered in the Tubas area, including four in a single day in the nearby town of Tamun (Quds Agency Telegram channel, April 22–29, 2025).