



Spotlight on the Israel-Palestinian Conflict

August 20-27 , 2024

Overview¹

- ▶ **The southern arena:** IDF forces continued fighting in the southern and central Gaza Strip, expanding their activity in Khan Yunis and Deir al-Balah. The Palestinian terrorist organizations continued firing rockets into Israeli territory, including the central part of the country. Seven IDF soldiers were killed in combat.
- ▶ **The hostages and a ceasefire agreement:** Israeli security forces rescued an Israeli hostage who was being held in a tunnel in the southern Gaza Strip. The Hamas delegation left Cairo after another round of talks in an attempt to reach an agreement for a ceasefire and the release of hostages; Hamas accused Israel of making new demands. According to the White House spokesman, the discussions regarding the ceasefire will continue in the coming days.
- ▶ **The situation in the Gaza Strip:** More than 1.2 million doses of polio vaccine arrived in the Gaza Strip in preparation for a mass drive to vaccinate children up to the age of ten.
- ▶ **Israel, Judea and Samaria:** This past week Palestinian terrorists carried out three attacks. An IDF soldier was injured in a vehicle ramming near Ariel. IEDs exploded near Avni Hefetz and Tekoa; there were no casualties. The identity of the suicide bomber in Tel Aviv was released. The Israeli security forces continued counterterrorism activities in Judea and Samaria.
- ▶ The Palestinians reported a resident of east Jerusalem was killed by Israeli gunfire near Bethlehem. Jewish settlers rioted in the village of Rujeib and clashed with Palestinian residents.
- ▶ **The Palestinian Authority:** Preparations continued to advance Mahmoud Abbas' initiative to visit the Gaza Strip.

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The Southern Arena

IDF operations in the Gaza Strip

► This past week the IDF forces focused their activity on the southern and central Gaza Strip, killing a large number of terrorist operatives and destroying terrorist facilities and tunnels. Seven IDF soldiers were killed during the week.

► **Rafah:** IDF forces focused their activity on the Tel al-Sultan neighborhood, killing dozens of terrorist operatives from the ground and air and destroying terrorist facilities. The soldiers located large quantities of weapons and intelligence documents near a school complex, as well as IEDs hidden in UNRWA bags whose objective was to attack the forces. They destroyed a kilometer-long tunnel containing IEDs, an electrical system and blast doors. On August 11, 2024, a squad of Hamas terrorist operatives emerged from a tunnel shaft to attack IDF forces; the operatives were eliminated. On August 22, 2024, an IDF soldier was killed by an anti-tank missile. On August 24, 2024, an IDF soldier was killed by an IED (IDF spokesperson, August 20-27, 2024).



Right: Weapons sites near schools in Rafah. Left: Weapons in UNRWA bags (IDF spokesperson, August 22, 2024)

► **Khan Yunis and Deir al-Balah:** IDF forces killed dozens of terrorist operatives in ground and air strikes, destroyed terrorist facilities and located rocket launchers and weapons. The forces destroyed a 700-meter long tunnel in Deir al-Balah and found weapons in a room with a crib (IDF spokesperson, August 20-27, 2024).



Weapons in Deir al-Balah in a room with a crib (IDF spokesperson, August 26, 2024)

► To prevent harm to civilians in preparation for IDF activity, the IDF spokesperson in Arabic issued evacuation notices to the residents of the al-Maghazi refugee camp and various neighborhoods of Deir al-Balah (Avichay Adraee's X account, August 22-24, 2024). The Deir al-Balah municipality announced that nearly 250,000 people had to evacuate the area within 72 hours and warned that there was a threat to the only government hospital which still provided services to more than half of the residents of the Gaza Strip (Deir al-Balah municipality Facebook page, August 26, 2024).

► **The central Gaza Strip:** IDF forces operated in the al-Zeitoun neighborhood and the outskirts of Gaza City. They eliminated terrorist operatives and destroyed terrorist facilities along the Netzarim Corridor. On August 23, 2024, three IDF soldiers were killed and seven others injured by an IED in the al-Zeitoun neighborhood. Another IDF soldier was killed in a clash with terrorists On August 25, 2024, an IDF soldier was killed by an IED (IDF spokesperson, August 20-27, 2024).

Attacks on Hamas facilities in civilian installations

► On August 21, 2024, Israeli Air Force fighter jets attacked a weapons warehouse located near a Hamas military site which had previously been the Saladin School in Gaza City. The warehouse held rockets and other weapons planned for firing into Israeli territory (IDF spokesperson, August 22, 2024). The Hamas government media information office in the Gaza Strip claimed that four people were killed and 18 wounded in the attack (al-Jazeera Telegram channel, August 21 2024)

► On August 23, 2024, Israeli Air Force fighter jets attacked a camouflaged Hamas command and control complex disguised in a building which had previously been the Jaafar Ali bin Abu Taleb school in the al-Zeitoun neighborhood. Measures were taken before the attack to reduce

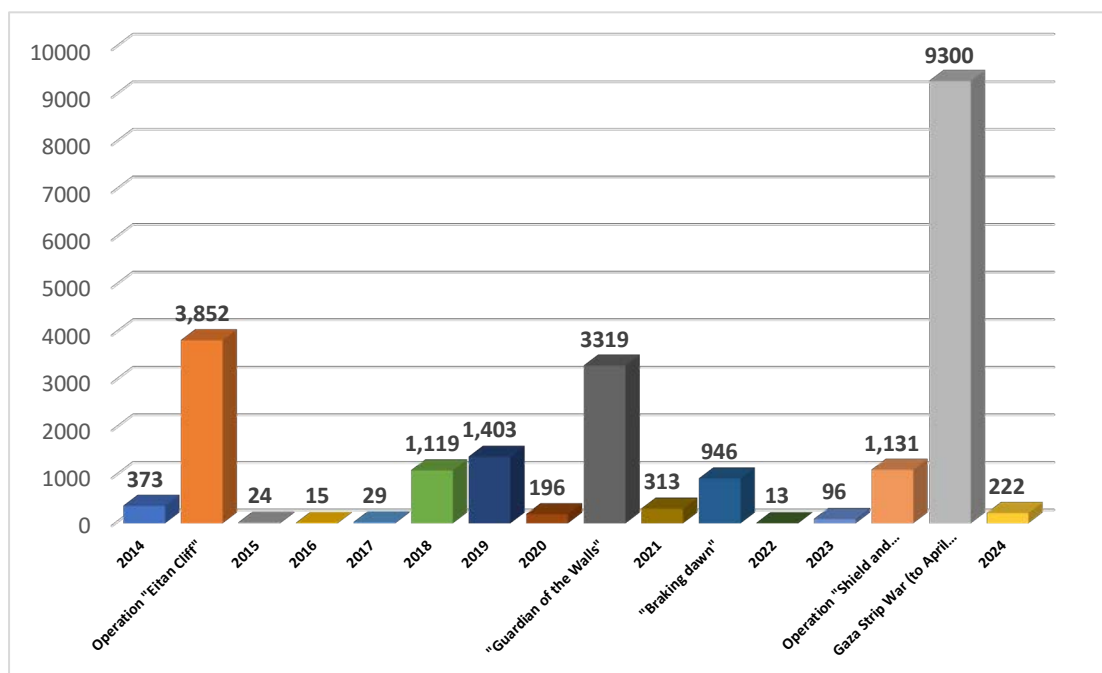
possible harm to civilians, including the use of precision weapons (IDF spokesperson, August 23, 2024).

Rocket fire from the Gaza Strip

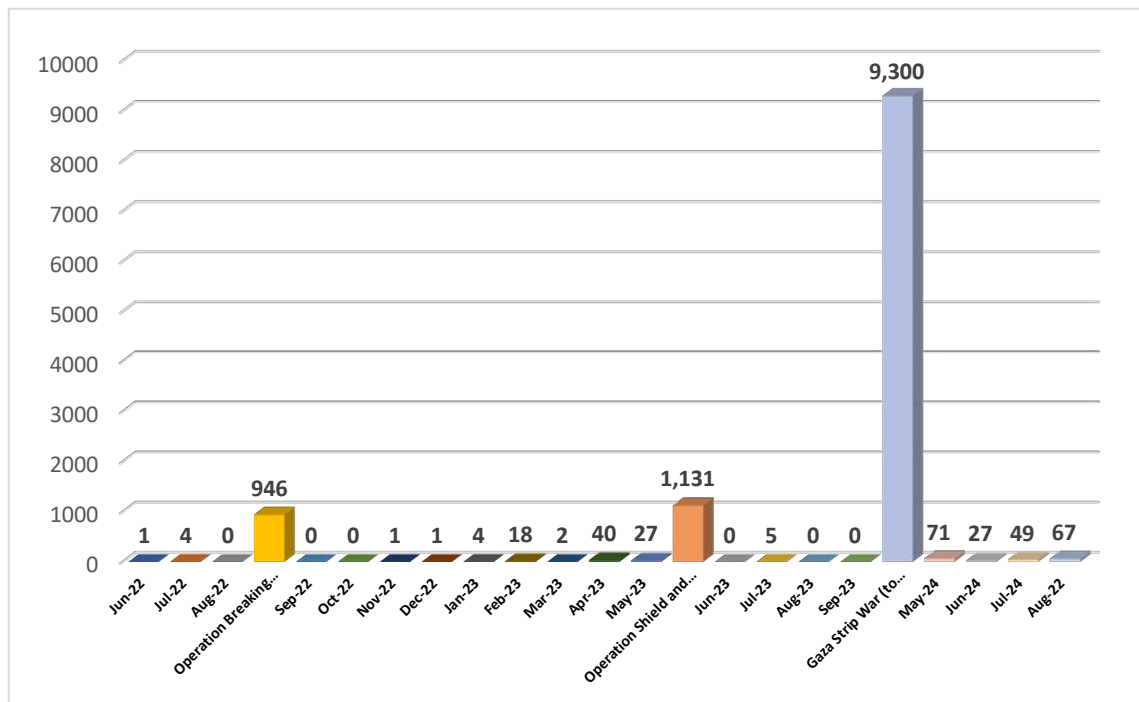
► The Palestinian terrorist organizations continued firing rockets into Israeli territory, most of them targeting the cities, towns and villages surrounding the Gaza Strip. One rocket was fired at the greater Tel Aviv area:

- ◆ **August 23, 2024:** A rocket fell in Israeli territory to the north of the Gaza Strip. There were no casualties and no damage was caused (Israeli media, August 23, 2024). The Jerusalem Brigades, the military wing of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), claimed responsibility for firing rocket barrages at Ashdod, Ashqelon and the towns and villages near the Gaza Strip (Paltoday Telegram channel, August 23, 2024). Two rockets were fired at Sderot; one was intercepted and the other fell in an open area. No casualties were reported (IDF spokesperson, August 23, 2024).
- ◆ **August 25, 2024:** A rocket fired from a site near a school in Khan Yunis fell in an open area in the Rishon LeTzion area in the center of Israel. No casualties or damage were reported (IDF spokesperson and Israeli media, August 26-25, 2024). Hamas claimed responsibility for firing an M90 rocket at Tel Aviv in response to "the Zionist massacre of civilians and the displacement of residents" (Hamas military wing Telegram channel, August 25 2024).

Monthly Distribution of Rocket Fire



Annual Distribution of Rocket Hits



* Distribution for 2024 begins in May

The hostages and a ceasefire agreement

- ▶ On August 27, 2024, Israeli security forces rescued an Israeli civilian who was kidnapped by Hamas in the October 7, 2023 attack and massacre and held in a tunnel in the southern Gaza Strip (IDF spokesperson and Israeli media, August 27, 2024).
- ▶ Between August 24 and 25, 2024, a Hamas delegation led by Khalil al-Haya, deputy chairman of the Hamas political bureau in the Gaza Strip, was in Egypt for talks with the Egyptian and Qatari mediators regarding negotiations for a ceasefire and the release of the hostages. Izzat al-Rishq, a member of Hamas' political bureau, told the mediators that the movement was committed to the proposal of July 2, 2024, which was based on the outline of United States President Biden and the UN Security Council. The movement reiterated that any agreement had to include a permanent ceasefire, a full Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, the return of all Gazans displaced from the northern Gaza Strip, aid and the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip, and a "serious" exchange deal (Izzat al-Rishq's Telegram channel, August 25, 2024).
- ▶ Hamas spokesman Jihad Taha said that the movement's delegation to Cairo "listened to the ideas and solutions presented for the unresolved issues." He said the movement would formulate the "resistance's" response with the other Palestinian organizations. He added that "we adhere to our position and demand the establishment of mechanisms to implement what was agreed on July 2 [2024]" (al-Araby al-Jadeed, August 25, 2024).

- ▶ "A source in the leadership of the Palestinian resistance" said that the meeting in Cairo had not made "significant progress." He claimed that Israel insisted on remaining on the Philadelphia Axis during the first phase of the agreement, which Hamas opposed (al-Mayadeen, August 24, 2024).
- ▶ Osama Hamdan, a senior Hamas figure who lives in Lebanon, accused Israel of posing new conditions and backpedaling from the existing agreements. He said Hamas "will not accept talk of withdrawing from the July 2 agreements or new demands," accusing the United States administration of "raising false hopes" and claiming its statements about an imminent agreement were related to the American presidential election (al-Aqsa TV, August 25, 2024).
- ▶ According to reports, the mediators began working for a four-day-a-week humanitarian ceasefire to meet demands and bring polio vaccine and sanitation products into the Gaza Strip (al-Araby al-Jadeed, August 25, 2024).
- ▶ White House spokesman John Kirby said that the discussions regarding the ceasefire would continue in the coming days, held by groups working to examine certain issues. He dismissed reports that the talks had failed and said an understanding had been reached that lower-level working groups should be established to discuss minor details regarding the number of hostages to be exchanged, their identities and the pace of their possible release (Reuters, August 27, 2024).

The Gaza Strip

Palestinian casualties

- ▶ **The Hamas-controlled ministry of health in the Gaza Strip** reported that since the beginning of the war, 40,476 Palestinians had been killed and 93,647 injured (ministry of health in Gaza Facebook page, August 27, 2024, 2 p.m.).

The situation in the Gaza Strip

- ▶ On August 25, 2024, the Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) announced that polio vaccine doses for 1,255,000 people had been brought into the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom Crossing in coordination with the WHO and UNICEF. He said that in the coming days there would be a drive to vaccinate children under the age of ten. The drive would be made by the WHO and UNICEF in coordination with the IDF as part of routine humanitarian breaks allowing the local population to reach medical centers to be inoculated (COGAT X account, August 25, 2024).

► UNICEF confirmed that 1.2 million doses of polio vaccines had arrived in the Gaza Strip and they would begin vaccinating more than 640,000 children under the age of ten, in collaboration with the WHO, UNRWA and other partners (UNICEF "Palestine" X account, August 25, 2024).



**The shipment of polio vaccines which arrived in the Gaza Strip
(UNICEF X account, August 25, 2024)**

► The ministries of health in Gaza and Ramallah confirmed that 1.2 million vaccines had arrived in the Gaza Strip and they were preparing to vaccinate children in cooperation with international organizations (ministry of health in Gaza Telegram channel and Wafa, August 25, 2024).

► On August 23, 2024, trucks carrying vaccines for the American field hospital entered the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom Crossing. Dozens of Palestinians attacked the trucks in the Kaf-Mirage area in Rafah and opened the packages, thinking they contained property worth looting, thereby destroying the vaccines (al-Nuseirat Rafah Crossing Telegram channel, August 23, 2024).

Hamas-Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) meeting

► On August 21, 2024, a Hamas delegation led by Muhammad Darwish, chairman of the Shura Council, met with PIJ secretary general Ziyad al-Nakhalah, and his deputy Muhammad al-Hindi, at Hamas headquarters in Doha. According to reports, they discussed "the latest developments, the stability of the resistance and its ability to attack all of occupied Palestine." The talks also focused on negotiations for a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and the release of hostages in exchange for Palestinian prisoners. The participants called for an end to the "occupation's aggression " and for the prosecution of the Israeli leadership, and blamed Israel for not reaching an agreement. They also called for the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip regardless of the negotiations. It was the first time Hamas revealed a picture of Darwish, who has been mentioned as a possible successor to Ismail Haniyeh, head of the Hamas

political bureau who was killed in Tehran on July 31, 2024 (Hamas Telegram channel, August 21, 2024).



Darwish (right) and al-Nakhlah (Hamas website, August 21, 2024)

Hamas criticism of UN envoy

► Hamas condemned Tor Wennesland, special UN envoy to the Middle East peace process, who at the UN Security Council meeting on August 22, 2024, said that both sides should stop the violence. Bassem Na'im, a member of the Hamas leadership in the Gaza Strip and the chairman of the political department, accused Wennesland of having "adopted the narrative of the occupation regarding the use of shelters, civilian buildings and the UN headquarters for military purposes," in addition to adopting the narrative "justifying aggression against Palestinians in the West Bank." Na'im complained that Wennesland had "described the resistance of our people as terrorism," and had spoken "passionately about the suffering of the Zionist prisoners held by the resistance, forgetting thousands of Palestinian prisoners." Hamas demanded that Wennesland "retract his mistakes and return to the limits of the mission given to him as an international mediator to relate to international law and UN policy" (Hamas Telegram channel, August 23, 2024).

Israel, Judea and Samaria

Terrorist attacks

► This past week Palestinian terrorist operatives carried out three attacks; an IDF fighter was injured.

Vehicle ramming in Ariel

► On the evening of August 25, 2024, Palestinians carried out a vehicle ramming attack at the entrance to Ariel. Two terrorist operatives driving from the direction of the Tapuah Junction sped against the direction of traffic, collided with Israeli vehicles and tried to run over IDF soldiers. IDF forces shot and killed them. A vest and ammunition magazines were discovered in the car. An IDF soldier was injured (IDF spokesperson, August 25, 2024). The PIJ claimed

responsibility for the attack and claimed the terrorists, Uday Nizar Nimr Abu Naasha and Mus'ab Hassan Ali Mekatzkets, were operatives of the Jenin Battalion of Jerusalem Brigades [the PIJ military wing] (PIJ Telegram channel, August 26, 2024).



**Right: The vest and magazines found in the terrorists' car (IDF spokesperson, August 25, 2024).
Left: PIJ mourning notices for the two terrorists (Telegram channel of the city of Hebron and its residents, August 26, 2024)**

IED planted near Avnei Hafetz

► On August 24, 2024, an IED detonated during IDF searches near the community of Avni Hefetz in northern Samaria. The explosion occurred inside a cistern; there were no casualties. IDF forces searched the area for suspects and to rule out the presence of additional explosives (IDF spokesperson, August 24, 2024).

IED planted near Tekoa

► On August 25, 2024, an IED detonated close to a civilian bus near the community of Tekoa and the village of Marah Rabah. No casualties were reported; minor damage was done to the bus. IDF forces launched a search for suspects (IDF spokesperson, August 25, 2024).

Indictment in stabbing in Givon HaHadasha

► On August 27, 2024, the military attorney's office announced that the murder of a Prison Service officer whose body was discovered in his home in the Giv'on HaHadasha community on July 8, 2024 with numerous stab wounds, was a terrorist attack. Ibrahim Mansour, accused of the murder, is a Hamas-affiliated resident of the village of Bidu. He is accused of entering Giv'on HaHadasha knowing that it was a Jewish-only community and stabbing the Israeli 66 times (Israeli media, August 27, 2024).²

² Following the military prosecutor's announcement, the attack was added to the graph of critical terrorist attacks.

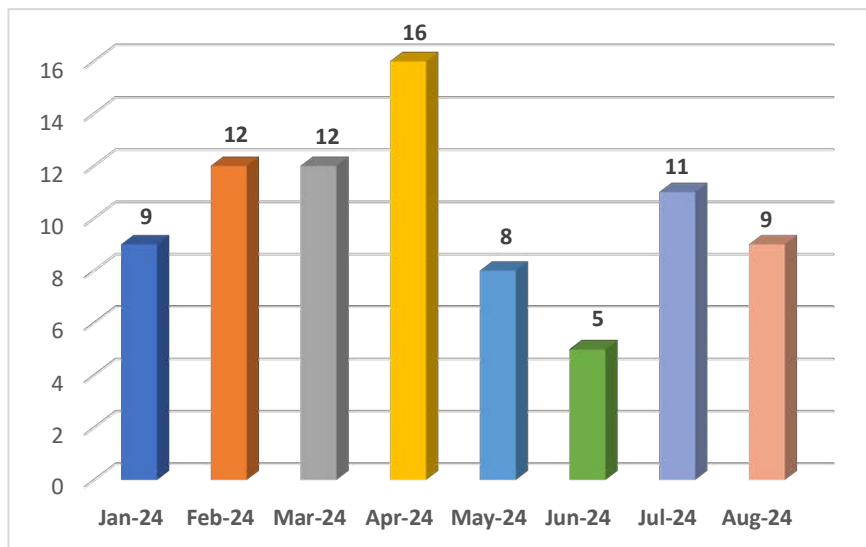
The identity of the suicide bomber in Tel Aviv revealed

► On August 22, 2024, a family in Nablus announced that their son, Jafar Muna, 30 years old, had carried out the suicide bombing attack in Tel Aviv on August 18, 2024, in which an Israeli citizen was injured. Muna's mother claimed he disappeared from his home a day before the explosion and that his mobile phone was turned off. Two days after the attack, the Israeli security forces raided the family's home in Nablus and arrested the brother, after which they informed the family that Jafar had carried out the attack. According to the family, he had not belonged to any political movement (al-Araby al-Jadeed, August 22, 2024). However, Hamas' military wing, which claimed responsibility for the attack, along with the PIJ's military wing, issued a mourning notice for the death of "suicide bomber" Jafar Sa'ad Muna (Hamas Telegram channel, August 22, 2024).



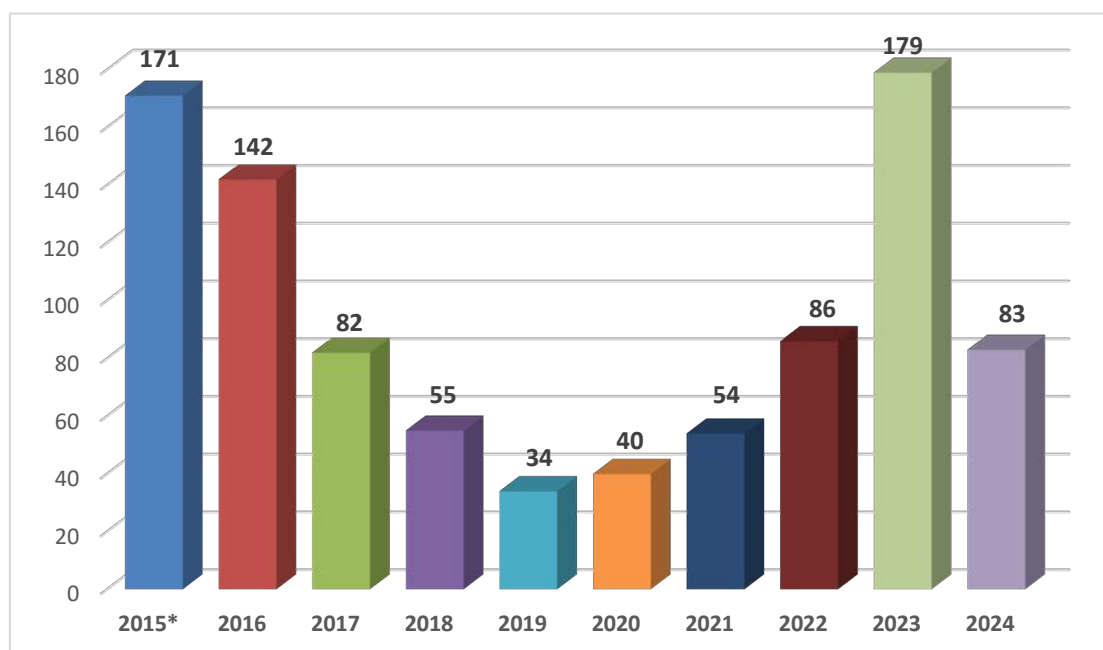
Hamas mourning notice for the death of Jafar Muna (Hamas Telegram channel, August 22, 2024)

Critical terrorist attacks, 2024³



³ A critical attack is defined by the ITIC as involving shooting, stabbing, a vehicular attack, the use of IEDs, or a combination of the above. Rocks and Molotov cocktails thrown by Palestinians are not included. Shots fired at IDF forces during counterterrorism activities in Judea and Samaria are included.

Annual distribution of critical terrorist attacks



Counterterrorism activities

► The Israeli security forces continued their counterterrorism activities in Judea and Samaria. Since the beginning of the war, approximately 4,940 wanted persons have been detained, of whom more than 1,970 were Hamas operatives (IDF spokesperson, August 20-27, 2024):

- ◆ On the evening of August 26, 2024, an Israeli Air Force aircraft attacked an operations room in the Nur Shams refugee camp (IDF spokesperson, August 26, 2024). "Local sources" said that four missiles were launched at a building in the Nur Shams refugee camp and that the target of the attack was Jibril Jibril, a wanted Palestinian who was released in the hostage deal with Hamas in November 2023 (al-Jazeera, August 26, 2024). The ministry of health in Ramallah reported that along with Jibril Jibril, 20 years old, from Qalqilya; Muhannad Kamal Qar'awi, 19 years old; Adnan Isser Jaber, 15 years old; Muhammad Ali Mustafa Yusuf, 49 years old; and Muhammad Ahmed Muhammad Aliyan, 16 years old, were killed (Wafa, August 26, 2024). The Hamas military wing confirmed that Jibril Jibril and Muhannad Qar'awi were its operatives (Hamas-affiliated in Judea and Samaria Telegram channel, August 27, 2024).



The five killed in the attack in Nur Shams (Telegram channel of al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades – Youth of Revenge and Liberation (August 27, 2024)

- ◆ On August 22, 2024, Israeli security forces completed a 14-hour operation in Tulkarm, during which an Israeli Air Force aircraft eliminated three armed terrorist operatives. The forces detained a wanted Palestinian and destroyed two explosives laboratories and IEDs planted in road to attack the security forces (IDF spokesperson, August 22, 2024). According to reports, Wasim al-Manbar, Muawiya alHajj Ahmad, and Imad Shreim. were killed by an Israeli drone attack in the Tulkarm refugee camp (Quds Agency, August 22, 2024). Hamas' military wing confirmed that Muawiya Khaled al-Hajj Ahmed from the Tulkarm refugee camp was one of its operatives and expressed condolences for the death of Wasim al-Manbar and Imad Shreim. Hamas stated that the "escalation of aggression" against Tulkarm and its refugee camps would be an incentive for the continuation of "the struggle of the Palestinian people to achieve their freedom" (Hamas in Judea and Samaria Telegram channel, August 22, 2024).



Hamas mourning notice for the three deaths in Tulkarm (Hamas Telegram channel, August 22, 2024)

Palestinian-Jewish settler riots

► On the night of August 26, 2024, the ministry of health in Ramallah reported that Khalil Salem Halawi, 40 years old from Beit Safafa, was shot and killed by Jewish settlers in the village of Wadi Rahal, south of Bethlehem, and that three other people were wounded. The head of the village, Hamdi Ziada, claimed that the settlers attacked the residents' houses near the boys' school and opened fire (Wafa, August 27, 2024). Hamas said that "raids and aggression by terrorist settlers" had caused the death of Khalil Salem Ziada, 37 years old, in the town of Wadi Rahal, adding that "the attacks by the settler militias are the true face [sic] that reveals the occupation's policies and plans to take control of the West Bank" (Hamas Telegram channel, August 27, 2024). The IDF spokesperson stated that Palestinians threw stones at an Israeli vehicle near the Eitam Farm, damaging it. Afterwards, Palestinians threw stones at other civilians who arrived in the Khirbat Abdullah Ibrahim area. A fire broke out at the site and the Israeli security forces responded with gunfire. It was also reported that the claim about an Israeli citizen being killed during the incident was being investigated (Israeli media, August 27, 2024).

► On August 24, 2024, dozens of masked Israelis from the community of Itamar entered the village of Rujeib. A riot developed and settlers and Palestinians threw rocks. Several Palestinian vehicles were damaged. The Israeli security forces stopped the riot and dispersed the participants (IDF spokesperson, August 24, 2024).



Jewish attackers near Rujeib (Quds Agency Telegram channel, August 24, 2024)

The Palestinian Authority (PA)

Mahmoud Abbas' initiative to visit the Gaza Strip

► Mahmoud Abbas, chairman of the PA is planning to visit the Gaza Strip with the PA leadership, and on August 25, 2024, the committee making preparations for the visit met in Ramallah. Abbas announced the visit in a speech to the Turkish Parliament on August 15, 2024. Hussein al-Sheikh, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee, also attended the meeting, which discussed the preparations necessary for the visit to achieve the objectives, chiefly the cessation of the "ongoing aggression" against the Gaza Strip and the complete and immediate withdrawal of the Israeli forces. According to the summary statement, the committee decided to "establish a preparatory committee for practical steps for political and legal action, to mobilize Arab, Islamic and international support and to secure the support of the United Nations, its institutions and bodies for the visit." It was also agreed to maintain contact with the leadership of the Hamas political bureau and with additional Palestinian organizations to agree on joint steps to advance the initiative (Wafa, August 25, 2024).



The meeting of the committee preparing Mahmoud Abbas' visit to the Gaza Strip (Wafa, August 25, 2024)

► On August 20, 2024, Mahmoud Abbas and the members of the PLO Executive Committee met to discuss the visit the Gaza Strip. Mahmoud Abbas claimed that the PA and the PLO had authority over all the territories of "Palestine," including the Gaza Strip, Judea, Samaria and east Jerusalem. The PLO Executive Committee confirmed that it would continue to monitor the political action steps at all regional and international levels, and would establish a joint committee of all Palestinian organizations to ensure the success of the initiative and plan the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip (Wafa, August 20, 2024).

► Hussein al-Sheikh, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee, said that many officials and countries had been informed of Mahmoud Abbas' intention to visit the Gaza Strip. He noted

that the assessment was that Israel would refuse to allow it, but the Palestinians had already formulated "other scenarios about which Arab countries and even UN Security Council member states had been informed (al-Arabiya, August 21, 2024).

► Riyad al-Maliki, Mahmoud Abbas' envoy and adviser on foreign affairs, said, regarding Israel's refusal to allow Mahmoud Abbas to visit the Gaza Strip, that Israel's answer indicated the Gaza Strip "is under Israeli military occupation." He added that "we are not asking Israel for permission to visit any part of the Palestinian territories." He said Mahmoud Abbas knew in advance that Israel would not allow him to visit the Strip, so he asked for support and security from the UN Security Council to overcome Israel's refusal (Ramallah News Facebook page, August 23, 2024).

Activity in the international arena

► On August 21, 2024, PA chairman Mahmoud Abbas spoke with the Dick Schoof, the Dutch prime minister. They discussed the latest developments in the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria, an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, the acceleration of the delivery of humanitarian aid, and the completion of the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip to enable the PA government to "shoulder its responsibilities and fulfill its obligations." Mahmoud Abbas also stated that they expected the support of the Netherlands and all the countries and organizations in the world to act in favor of stopping the war (Wafa, August 21, 2024).

► On August 25, 2024, Muhammad Mustafa, PA prime minister, met with Tor Wennesland, special UN envoy to the Middle East peace process. They discussed the latest developments and efforts "to increase aid to the Gaza Strip and "to stop aggression in the Gaza Strip and attacks by settlers in the West Bank." They also discussed the existing PA government aid operations in the Gaza Strip and plans to expand the urgent aid operations once the war stopped, in addition to the restoration of basic services, the unification of national institutions, and the general reconstruction plan (Wafa, August 25, 2024).



Mustafa and Wennesland (Wafa, August 25, 2024)

► On August 22, 2024, Muhammad Mustafa, PA prime minister, spoke with the José Manuel Albares Bueno, the Spanish foreign minister. Mustafa noted the importance of continued international coordination, especially in Europe and the UN, and expressed hope for the upcoming Arab-European meeting to promote efforts to end the fighting in the Gaza Strip, and to address the humanitarian crisis by taking practical steps towards the establishment of a Palestinian state, within the framework of the two-state solution (Wafa, August 22, 2024).

► On August 22, 2024, Jabril al-Rajoub, secretary of Fatah's Central Committee, met with Badr Abdelatty, the Egyptian foreign minister. Al-Rajoub informed Abdelatty of Mahmoud Abbas' intention to visit the Gaza Strip, noting that "the PLO has jurisdiction over all the Palestinian territories as a single political unit." Abdelatty said Egypt opposed "any plan that includes the displacement of Palestinian residents from their lands" and reviewed the efforts to secure recognition for a Palestinian state. According to reports, they agreed on "the importance of every proposal to resolve the Palestinian issue based on the unification of the Palestinian territories and that would ensure the achievement of Palestinian aspirations" (Wafa, August 22, 2024).

► On August 22, 2024, during a UN Security Council session, Riyadh Mansour, the Palestinian delegate to the UN, stated that in September 2024 the Palestinians planned to submit a resolution for the approval of the UN General Assembly which would secure the International Criminal Court's opinion that Israel's presence in the occupied Palestinian territories was illegal. According to Mansour, the decision would be a "significant step" towards achieving a two-state solution, in which independent states of Israel and "Palestine" would live side by side in peace (AP Agency, August 22, 2024).

New PA police chief

► On August 22, 2024, PA chairman Mahmoud Abbas issued a "presidential" decree stating that Lt. Col. Alam al-Saqa would be promoted to the rank of colonel and appointed head of the PA police directorate. Al-Saqa will replace the current head of the police directorate, Lt. Gen. Yousef Ali al-Halou, who is retiring (Wafa, August 22, 2024).



Alam al-Saqa and Mahmoud Abbas (Alam al-Saqa's Facebook page, August 3, 2019)

The International Criminal Court

Announcement from the chief prosecutor

► On August 23, 2024, the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Karim Khan, asked the judges to make an urgent decision regarding the issuance of arrest warrants for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, in accordance with his request of May 20, 2024. According to Khan, the tribunal also has judicial authority over Israeli citizens who commit "brutal crimes in the Palestinian territories," despite Israel's claims that it conducts its own investigations of suspected war crimes. Khan added that any delay in issuing the arrest warrants for Netanyahu and Gallant, and for Yahya al-Sinwar, head of the Hamas political bureau in the Gaza Strip, and Muhammed Deif, the commander of Hamas' military wing (whom Israel announced was killed in an attack on July 13, 2024), was "unjust" and affected the rights of the victims (Reuters, August 23, 2024).