



Spotlight on the Israel-Palestinian Conflict

September 24 – October 1, 2024

Overview¹

- ▶ **The southern arena:** IDF forces continued to focus their activities on the southern and central Gaza Strip, including attacks on Hamas facilities operating in civilian sites. An IDF soldier was injured in a clash in the southern Gaza Strip.
- ▶ Hamas said the fighting in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon would stop only if Israel stopped the war.
- ▶ The director of an aid organization was killed by Hamas ministry of the interior forces "by mistake."
- ▶ A senior Hamas official denied publications of an agreement with Fatah on civilian management of the Gaza Strip.
- ▶ **Israel, Judea and Samaria:** A suspect was detained for planning a combined attack in the Galilee. The Israeli security forces continued counterterrorism activities in Judea and Samaria, detaining dozens of wanted Palestinians.
- ▶ **The Palestinian Authority:** Mahmoud Abbas spoke at the UN, accused Israel of committing "genocide" and called for international protection of the Palestinian Authority and the imposition of sanctions on Israel.

The Southern Arena

IDF operations in the Gaza Strip

- ▶ This past week IDF forces focused their activity on the Rafah area in the southern Gaza Strip and the Netzarim Corridor in the center, in addition to targeted raids in Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip. IDF forces attacked dozens of terrorist operatives from the air and the ground, and located and destroyed weapons and terrorist facilities, including launchers ready for firing rockets. A kilometer-long tunnel with several rooms and stored weapons was discovered in a civilian area in the central Gaza Strip and destroyed. An IDF fighter was injured in the fighting in the southern Gaza Strip (IDF spokesperson, September 24-30, 2024).

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



Right: Launchers discovered in the Beit Lahia area (IDF spokesperson, September 25, 2024). Left: Weapons found during the forces' activities (IDF spokesperson, September 24, 2024)

► "Palestinian sources" said that large forces accompanied by bulldozers carried out engineering operations in the town of al-Fukhari, less than a kilometer from the border area, and in the neighborhood of al-Amour to the southeast of the Khan Yunis district. The operations were accompanied by intense artillery shelling and according to claims, many houses were destroyed. According to the "sources," residents were concerned that the forces were flattening the area to facilitate the construction of a buffer zone with embankments for tanks (al-Ayam, September 29, 2024).

Attacks on Hamas in Gaza City, including in civilian facilities

► This past week, Israeli Air Force aircraft continued attacking terrorist operatives and facilities operating in civilian locations in the Gaza Strip to plan and carry out terrorist attacks on the IDF forces and the State of Israel. In all cases, preliminary steps were taken to reduce possible harm to civilians:²

- ◆ On September 26, 2024, an attack targeted Hamas operatives in a command and control complex operating in the al-Fallujah School in the northern Gaza Strip. According to reports, the site was used to plan and carry out attacks on IDF forces and Israeli territory (IDF spokesperson, September 26, 2024). The civil defense forces in the Gaza Strip reported that 14 people were killed in an attack on a shelter for displaced persons at the Hafsa School in the al-Fallujah area of the Jebalya refugee camp (Quds Agency, September 26, 2024).

² Using civilian facilities such as schools and hospitals for terrorist purposes is typical of the activities of the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip, especially Hamas. The terrorist organizations exploit the attacks for propaganda and incitement while exaggerating the extent of the damage and claiming many civilians were injured, in most cases hiding the identity of the terrorists who were attacked.

- ◆ On September 29, 2024, Hamas terrorist operatives were attacked in a command and control complex operating in the Umm al-Fahm School in the northern Gaza Strip, from where they attacked IDF forces and Israeli territory (IDF spokesperson, September 29, 2024). The civil defense forces reported that four people were killed in an attack on the Umm al-Fahm School in Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip (Quds Agency, September 29, 2024).
- ◆ On the night of September 29, 2024, Hamas terrorist operatives were attacked in a command and control complex operating in the Abu Jaafar Mansour School in the northern Gaza Strip, from where they attacked IDF forces and Israeli territory (IDF spokesperson, September 30 2024). Palestinian media reported one death in an attack on the Abu Jaafar School in the al-Salatin neighborhood of Beit Lahia (Palestinian Center for Communication, September 30, 2024).
- ◆ On the night of September 30, 2024, Hamas operatives were attacked in a command and control complex operating in UNRWA's Shejaiya School in Gaza City. According to reports, the complex was used for military activity and the planning and execution of terrorist operations (IDF spokesperson, October a, 2024). Palestinian media reported that seven people were killed in an attack on the Shejaiya School in the al-Tufah neighborhood in eastern Gaza, which was used as a shelter for displaced persons (Shehab Agency Telegram channel, October 1, 2024).

The hostages and a ceasefire agreement

►Osama Hamdan, a senior Hamas figure who lives in Lebanon, said the cessation of fighting in the Gaza Strip did not depend on the United States but on Israel, and that the [Hamas-dictated] "equation today was a complete cessation of 'aggression' in exchange for the cessation of the 'resistance' in 'Palestine' and Lebanon." He said Hamas' demands for a hostage deal were clear to the United States and the negotiators. He claimed Hamas did not want a long war in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon, but would never surrender (al-Jazeera, September 25, 2024).

The Gaza Strip

Palestinian casualties

►**The Hamas-controlled ministry of health in the Gaza Strip** reported that since the beginning of the war, 41,615 Palestinians had been killed and 96,359 injured (ministry of health in Gaza Facebook page, October 1, 2024).

The situation in the Gaza Strip

►Following the first rains and ahead of the winter season, the local authorities in the Gaza Strip increased their preparations for heavy weather. In Khan Yunis, Deir al-Balah and al-Zuwayda, municipal workers unclogged the storm drains (Khan Yunis municipality Facebook page, September 29, 2024; Facebook pages of the Deir al-Balah and al-Zuwayda municipalities, September 25, 2024). The Gaza municipality called on residents to report buildings damaged by rainwater which could pose a danger (Gaza municipality Facebook page, September 27, 2024).



Repairing the drains in Khan Yunis
(Khan Yunis municipality Facebook page, September 29, 2024)

►On September 25, 2024, the ministry of health in Ramallah ended the second week-long blood donation campaign for the Gaza Strip. More than 2,000 units of blood were donated at the hospitals and medical centers in Judea and Samaria. The Palestinian Authority minister of health, Majed Abu Ramadan, said it was the second time a shipment of blood units were delivered directly to the Gaza Strip, while previously they had been delivered through Jordan, and admitted that "this is the least we can do" (Wafa, September 25, 2024).

Hamas Governance in the Gaza Strip

Head of aid organization killed

►On September 26, 2024, Islam Hejazi, director of the Shafa' Palestine humanitarian aid association, was killed in a shooting incident in the center of Khan Yunis. According to reports, unknown persons fired more than 90 bullets at the vehicle she was driving near the Jordanian Hospital (journalist Abu Jawad's Telegram website, September 27, 2024).

►Hejazi's family did not accept the claim of the Hamas authorities, according to which she had been shot because of a "misidentification," and demanded that the authorities bear all the "moral, legal and social consequences" and recognize her as a "shaheed" (Moaman al-Faram's Facebook page, September 27, 2024).

►The Hamas ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip announced the appointment of an investigative committee to examine the circumstances of the incident and warned the public against spreading rumors. The ministry offered its condolences to her family and called on the public to rely on official sources of information (al-Risalah Telegram channel, September 27, 2024).

►On September 30, 2024, the family issued another statement claiming the incident had been "unintentional mistake" [sic] since Hejazi's car was similar to that of "a dangerous fugitive from justice" and was ambushed by ministry of the interior operatives. Although the family admitted that they accepted the conclusion, they demanded that "government authorities bear all the consequences of the incident" (Hamza al-Masri's Telegram channel, September 30, 2024).

Tribal heads vs. local "rogue collaborators"

►The Association of Palestinian Tribes and Clans in the Gaza Strip disowned a group of "rogue" members of several tribes and clans, who "collaborated with the Israeli occupation" by stealing from homes and interfering with humanitarian aid convoys. The association called on Hamas' "security personnel" for justice and for the "traitors" to be judged severely (al-Aqsa TV Telegram channel, September 25, 2024).

"The Day After"

►"A source in Hamas" claimed that an agreement had been reached with the Fatah Movement for civil management of the Gaza Strip. According to "the source," Hamas agreed to give up control of the crossings. According to reports, a meeting with Fatah was expected to be held as part of the reconciliation process between the Hamas and Fatah, where they would discuss the establishment of a local administrative body composed of independent individuals, the establishment of a government of technocrats with the consent of all the Palestinian "factions," and the establishment of a local body under the supervision of the current Gaza "government" (al-Hadath TV, September 26, 2024). In response, a "Palestinian source" stated there was no agreement on the appointing of a committee of independent individuals to manage the Gaza Strip in the future (Sky News Arabia, September 26, 2024).

►Bassem Na'im, a member of the Hamas leadership in the Gaza Strip and chairman of the political department, said reports of an agreement between Hamas and Fatah regarding civil administration of the Strip were inaccurate, as were reports that the two movements would hold a meeting this coming week as part of the reconciliation. He claimed that nothing specific had been agreed on after the meeting in Beijing in July 2024. He said the meeting should be

attended by Hamas, Fatah and all the other "factions," and that if it took place, bilateral meetings could be organized (Ultra Palestine, September 26, 2024).

►Abd al-Fatah Doula, spokesman for the Fatah movement's recruiting and Tanzim department, said there had been no talks or announcements about a meeting with Hamas in Cairo on October 2, 2024. However, there were talks and contacts with Hamas and the other "factions" in view of the ongoing "aggression" and the growing challenges for the future of Palestinian people and the Palestinian issue, and the dangers to the region from "the expansion of aggression" (Telegram channel of the Sabak24 agency, September 30, 2024).

►Ahed Faeq Bseiso, PA minister of public works and housing, admitted that the destruction in the Gaza Strip was "unprecedented" and that the costs of reconstruction could reach \$60 billion or more. He said reconstruction depended on funding, infrastructure and international assistance, noting need for coordination with various agencies to ensure the goals were met. He said projects for renewing the infrastructure, including water and electricity, had to be planned and implemented, adding that he hoped for continued cooperation with donor countries and international organizations (al-Ayam, September 24, 2024).

The Palestinian Arena and the Escalation in Lebanon³

►"Sources in the Gaza Strip" said that Hamas was unable provide a real "support front" for Hezbollah since it had lost many of its capabilities, especially rocket launching capabilities. According to the sources, Hamas' military wing could carry out limited attacks, mainly against ground forces, or surprise the Israeli forces in the Netzarim Corridor and other places in the Gaza Strip. Hamas also lost some of its ability to launch anti-tank missiles, but still possessed al-Yassin-105 missiles, which have caused casualties to IDF forces. "Sources close" to the Izz al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military wing, added that the Brigades could carry out suicide bombing attacks and might carry out "strikes" ahead of the October 7th anniversary and in response to the deadlock in the ceasefire negotiations (al-Sharq al-Awsat, September 26, 2024).

►After the elimination of Hassan Nasrallah, secretary general of Hezbollah, there were demonstrations of solidarity with Hezbollah in a number of locations in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip, including Ramallah, Nablus and the Jebalya refugee camp. Demonstrators

³ For further information, see the September 2024 ITIC report, "[Israeli Attack in Beirut Eliminates Hassan Nasrallah](#)."

waved Hezbollah and Lebanon flags, and called for revenge and the continuation of the "resistance" (Palinfo, September 28 2024; Palestine Online X Account, September 29, 2024).



Right: A procession in Ramallah (al-Arsal Agency Instagram account, September 28, 2024). Left: Demonstrating support for Hezbollah in the Jebalya refugee camp (Palestine Online X Account, September 29, 2024)

Israel, Judea and Samaria

Terrorist attacks

► This past week there were no Palestinian terrorist attacks.

Combined terrorist attack prevented

► The Israeli security forces detained Bassel Abahara, a 22 year-old Arab-Israeli from Arabeh, who was accused of planning a combined terrorist attack using explosive devices and shooting at Jewish worshipers praying at the "graves of the righteous [rabbis]" in the Galilee. The investigation revealed he had received assistance from Palestinians in Judea and Samaria who knew how to prepare explosive devices and had observed the target areas. In addition, two minors who had been recruited to the squad were detained, and materials for making explosives were found (Israel Police Force spokesperson's unit and Israeli media, September 26, 2024).

Counterterrorism activities

► The Israeli security forces continued their counterterrorism activities in Judea and Samaria, detaining dozens of wanted Palestinians and seizing weapons and funds intended to finance terrorism. Since the beginning of the war in the Gaza Strip on October 7, 2023, more than 5,250 wanted persons have been arrested in Judea and Samaria, at least 2,050 of whom were affiliated with Hamas (IDF spokesperson, September 30, 2024):

- ◆ On September 30, 2024, Israeli security forces operating in Nablus and the village of Silwad, near Ramallah, detained a large number of Palestinians wanted for terrorist activity (IDF spokesperson, September 30, 2024).

◆ On September 26, 2024, the Israeli security forces completed a day of Operation Summer Camps in Jenin, an operation to combat terrorism in northern Samaria. The forces detained four wanted Palestinians, destroyed explosive devices planted in the roads, exposed two surveillance rooms and located weapons (IDF spokesperson, September 26, 2024).

◆ On September 24, 2024, the Israeli security forces, in cooperation with the Israeli National Bureau for Counter Terror Financing and the Tax Authority, took action against terrorist financing in east Jerusalem. Five Hamas terrorist operatives were detained, including one involved in money laundering for terrorist activities. In addition, hundreds of thousands of shekels in cash and checks in the amount of one million shekels (about \$269,000) were confiscated, including funds transferred from the PA to security prisoners (Israel Police Force spokesperson's unit X account, September 24, 2024).



Right: Weapons seized in Jenin (IDF spokesperson, September 26, 2024). Left: Money seized in an operation to combat terrorist financing in east Jerusalem (Israel Police Force spokesperson's unit X account, September 24, 2024)

Activities of the Palestinian security forces

► On the night of September 30, 2024, Abd al-Hakim Shahin, a wanted terrorist operative, posted a video to social networks in which he claimed Palestinian security force operatives had tried to kill him, but he did not clash with them and left the area. He called on the residents to go to the Kasbah [the Old City] old city to help him, and as a result, there were exchanges of fire and clashes between armed Palestinians, men and youths, and PA security force operatives. According to reports, before dawn on October 1, 2024, the Israeli security forces operated in the Kasbah and mortally wounded Shahin, taking his body (Quds Agency Telegram channel, September 30-October 1, 2024).



**Shaheen in the Kasbah of Nablus during the clashes
(Quds Agency Telegram channel, September 30, 2024)**

- ▶ On the night of September 30, 2024, plainclothes PA security force operatives blocked a vehicle near the al-Shahid Mosque in Tubas and opened fire. In the vehicle were a number of Tubas Battalion operatives, and according to reports, Ayman al-Masri, who was wanted by the forces, was a passenger and was seriously injured. The security force operatives fired into the air to disperse residents who had gathered to protest the shooting (Safa, October 1, 2024).
- ▶ The Palestinian security forces dismantled and detonated many explosive devices planted by the Palestinian "resistance forces" in the cities of Tamun and Tubas to attack the Israeli security forces (A7rartoubas Telegram channel, September 24-28, 2024).
- ▶ Hamas accused the PA security forces of attacking "resistance activists" in Judea and Samaria, confiscating their weapons and revealing explosive devices, which constituted "full cooperation" with the Israeli forces. Hamas claimed the actions of the PA security forces attacked "national values" and damaged the determination and sacrifices of the Palestinian people and their "struggle." Hamas called on the PA leadership for cooperation between its forces and the "struggle" "to resist the occupation" (Hamas Telegram channel, September 24, 2024).

Support for the armed "struggle" increases

- ▶ A public opinion survey in Judea and Samaria and east Jerusalem, conducted by the al-Quds Center for Political Studies, found that 45% of respondents believed the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023 served the Palestinian national interest, compared to 39.6% who expressed a similar position in the last survey. On the other hand, 24.5% believed that the attack harmed Palestinian interests compared to 30.2% in the previous survey. There was an increase in support for an "armed struggle" to achieve the Palestinian goals, with the support of 51.2% of respondents compared to 40.8% in the May 2024 survey, while support for political negotiations decreased from 44.5% to 35.7%. Regarding the war in the Gaza Strip, 45.7%

believed that Hamas would win compared to 67.1% who thought it would in a survey conducted in October 2023. In addition, 32.6% believed that the war would not end in favor of either side (Watan Agency, September 30, 2024).

Hamas calls for the "defense" of al-Aqsa Mosque during the Jewish High Holidays

►The Hamas movement exploited the events of the anniversary of the Wall Tunnel riots (September 24, 1996) and the outbreak of the second intifada (September 27, 2000) to call on local Palestinians to increase their presence at al-Aqsa Mosque in preparation for the Jewish High Holidays:

- ◆ Senior Hamas figure Muhammad Mardawi called on the "Palestinian masses in the West Bank, Jerusalem and the occupied territories" to mobilize "to defend" al-Aqsa Mosque and oppose the "plans of the occupation and the Temple groups." He claimed the existence of the mosque was in danger because of "the actions of the settlers, supported by Benjamin Netanyahu's rightwing government." He called on Palestinians to use "all the necessary tools and means" to protect al-Aqsa (Hamas in Judea and Samaria Telegram channel, September 28, 2024).
- ◆ Senior Hamas figure Abd al-Rahman Shadid noted the need for "active resistance" to the "Judaization plans" to protect al-Aqsa Mosque. He accused Israel of trying to take over the mosque and claimed that "settler and Temple organizations" were preparing a series of actions for the holiday season (Shehab Agency, September 26, 2024).

The Palestinian Authority (PA)

International activity

►The PA chairman, Mahmoud Abbas, continued meeting with international figures during the UN General Assembly's annual session. He met with the prime minister of Great Britain, the president of France, the president of the European Commission, the president of Brazil and the prime minister of Pakistan. He called for a halt to the Israeli "aggression" in the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria and for the implementation of the UN resolution calling on Israel to end its "illegal presence in the Palestinian territories." He also reiterated his call for the recognition of a Palestinian state and the granting "Palestine" full UN membership (Wafa, September 24-26, 2024).

►On September 26, 2024, Mahmoud Abbas delivered a speech before the 79th General Assembly of the United Nations (Wafa, September 26, 2024):

- ◆ He claimed the Palestinian people were exposed to Israeli "war crimes" and the Gaza Strip had become "an impossible place to live in." He claimed that the Israeli government was "taking advantage of the situation to carry out a genocidal war; Israel occupied the Gaza Strip and destroyed it." He claimed "the enemy started a war of extermination in the Gaza Strip and then moved to Lebanon."
- ◆ He condemned "killing civilians of every religion and nation."
- ◆ He called on the countries of the world to impose sanctions on Israel and expel it from the UN because it did not meet its obligations. He claimed that the world had failed to obligate Israel to stop the "war of genocide and its crimes." He also criticized American opposition to recognizing a Palestinian state.
- ◆ He pointed out that Israeli ministers "were interested in igniting a religious war that would burn everything, and the explosion we always warned about happened on October 7." He expressed opposition to what he claimed were "attempts to change the status quo in the holy places in Jerusalem."
- ◆ He presented a number of demands, including an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and an end to "settler and Israeli army attacks in the West Bank;" the introduction of urgent and sufficient humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip; a full Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip; preventing forced migration of Palestinians and returning the displaced to their homes; international protection for the PA; full control of the PA in the Gaza Strip, including control of the border crossings, including the Rafah Crossing; a request for international assistance in building infrastructure destroyed by Israel in the Gaza Strip, and placing responsibility on Israel; recognition of the PA and the PLO as the only legitimate representatives of the Palestinian people; full membership in the United Nations, noting that "Palestinians have land, authority, people and culture;" implementing the opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to end the Israeli "occupation" within 12 months; convening an international peace conference within a

year to achieve a two-state solution; deploying international forces to ensure the security of both countries.



Mahmoud Abbas at the UN (UN website, February 26, 2024)

► Muhammad Mustafa, the PA prime minister, also held meetings on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, including with the UN secretary general and the foreign ministers of Ireland, Australia, Hungary and Romania. They discussed efforts to stop IDF activities in the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria, opening the crossings to the Gaza Strip and full membership of "Palestine" in the United Nations. Mustafa also participated in meetings dealing with the situation in the Gaza Strip and the Palestinian issue (Wafa, September 27-25, 2024):

- ◆ Meeting with UNRWA's commissioner general, Philippe Lazzarini, Mustafa noted that UNRWA had no replacement and accused Israel of trying to destroy it. He noted the efforts to raise financial support to enable UNRWteA's activities to continue. He also participated in the meeting of ministers to support UNRWA and accused Israel of attacking displaced persons who were in shelters at UNRWA schools in the Gaza Strip.
- ◆ At the meeting of the countries donating to the PA, Mustafa said that all efforts to reach a comprehensive ceasefire had failed so far. He accused Israel of "continuing to act unhindered...deepening the suffering of the Palestinian people." He also presented a plan based on four principles for rehabilitation, growth and reconstruction: the unification of the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria, improving the functioning of public institutions, the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip and the development of an independent Palestinian economy.