News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict
(January 25 – 31, 2017)

Increase in the number of significant terrorist attacks in Judea and Samaria. Left: Improvised Carlo submachine gun found in the vehicle of the terrorist who carried out the shooting attack near the village of Aboud, northwest of Ramallah (QudsN website, January 25, 2017). Right: Vehicular attack at a bus stop in Kokhav Ya’akov, near Beit El (QudsN, January 25, 2017).

Overview

- This past week there was an rise in popular terrorism. Six terrorist attacks were carried out or attempted in various locations in Judea and Samaria. Three were shooting attacks, two were vehicular attacks and one was a stabbing attack. In addition, Palestinians continued to throw stones, riot, and clash with Israeli security forces during counterterrorism activities. There were no Israeli casualties.

- Worthy of note is the increase in shooting attacks, a particularly lethal form of terrorist attack which has been on the rise since 2016. The Palestinian Authority (PA) and Fatah, as usual, do not condemn the attacks since they support popular terrorism (which they refer to as "popular resistance").
Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem

Terrorist Attacks and Attempted Terrorists Attacks

- **January 29, 2017** – Two Palestinians went to the guard post at the entrance to the village of Karnei Shomron (Samaria). They did not heed calls to halt and took out knives. The guards fired shots in the air and detained the two Palestinians.

- **January 27, 2017** – Palestinians shot at an Israeli vehicle driving near the community of Nili (west of Ramallah). There were no casualties; the car was damaged. IDF forces searching the area found a number of shell casings. The following day the Israeli security forces detained two suspects in the village of Deir Abu Masha'l (northwest of Ramallah). They surrendered the weapons they had in their possession. The Facebook page of Deir Abu Masha'l reported that they were Muhammad Hussein Awda al-Barghouti and Usaid Arafat al-Barghouti (Facebook page of Deir Abu Masha'l, January 28, 2017).

- **January 27, 2017** – A Palestinian drove to the Gush Etzion Junction and attempted to carry out a vehicular attack. There were no casualties (Facebook page of Red Alert, January 27, 2017).

- **January 26, 2017** – Palestinians shot at an Israeli vehicle on road 55 near Azoun (Samaria). There were no casualties and no damage was reported (Facebook page of Red Alert, January 26, 2017).
January 25, 2017 – A Palestinian carried out a drive-by shooting at a guard post near the Aboud bypass road (northwest of Ramallah). An IDF force shot and wounded the terrorist. An improvised Carlo submachine gun was found in the car. The terrorist was Omar Nizar al-Barghouti, from Aboud, who had been imprisoned in Israel (Twitter account of Palinfo, January 25, 2017).

January 25, 2017 – A Palestinian attempted to carry out a vehicular attack at a bus stop near the community of Kokhav Ya'akov (between A-Ram and Beit El):

- The Palestinian drove to the bus stop, veered out his lane and rammed into the bus stop, where civilians and soldiers were waiting. He held a knife but did not exit the vehicle. There were no casualties. He was shot and killed by IDF forces.

- The Palestinian media reported he was Hussein Salem Abu Ghosh, 24, from the Qalandia refugee camp. He was the cousin of Hussein Abu Ghosh, who stabbed Shulamit Kriegman to death in Beit Horon on January 25, 2016.

- Hamas issued a death notice for the terrorist. The social media posted praise for the two cousins for their attacks and for dying as shaheeds (QudsN website, January 25, 2017).
Riots, Clashes and Popular Terrorism

In the meantime, demonstrations, clashes and riots continued without exceptional event. The more prominent occurrences were the following:

- **January 30, 2017** – Palestinians threw stones at Israeli vehicles near **Hizma** (Benyamin region). There were no casualties. A vehicle was damaged. In addition Palestinians threw stones at Israeli vehicles near **Luban al-Sharqia** (northeast of Ramallah), wounding an Israeli. A vehicle was damaged. (Facebook page of Red Alert, January 30, 2017).

- **January 29, 2017** – Palestinians threw stones at an Israeli vehicle at **the Elias Junction** (near Kiryat Arba). There were no casualties. The front windshield of the vehicle was shattered (Facebook page of Red Alert, January 29, 2017).

- **January 29, 2017** – A young Palestinian was killed and five Palestinians were wounded in the **Jenin refugee camp** after clashes with Israeli security forces operating in the camp. According to the reports, the Palestinians threw Molotov cocktails at the soldiers. The Palestinian media reported the death of **Muhammad Mahmoud Abu Khalifa**, 19, from the Jenin refugee camp (Hamas website, January 29, 2017). His body was wrapped in a Hamas flag for the funeral (Wafa and the Facebook page of Shehab, January 29, 2017).
• January 28, 2017 – Palestinians threw stones at an Israeli vehicle near the Khader Junction in Gush Etzion. An Israeli was wounded; the vehicle was damaged (Facebook page of Red Alert, January 29, 2017).

• January 28, 2017 – Palestinians threw stones at an Israeli vehicle on the Husan bypass road near Beitar Illit (south of Jerusalem). An Israeli man was wounded; a woman and her infant son were evacuated to a hospital to be treated for shock (Ynet, January 28, 2017).

• January 27 2017 – Palestinians threw an IED at an IDF force during the detention of suspected Hamas operatives in the Jenin refugee camp. An IDF soldier was seriously wounded and evacuated to a hospital for medical treatment (Ynet, January 27, 2017).

One Killed, One Injured in Shooting Attacks in Haifa

On the morning of January 3, 2017, a man was shot and wounded; the attack took place on Haatsmaut Street, the main street in the downtown area of Haifa. An hour before the attack a man was shot and killed on Hagiborim Street, also in Haifa's downtown area. In addition, shots were fired at a woman but she was not hit. The suspected killer is Muhammad Shinawi, from the Wadi Halissa neighborhood of Haifa. According to the indictment handed down on January 30, 2017, the attacks were "nationistically motivated." The indictment also stated that at the end of 2015 Shinawi acquired and hid a Carl Gustav submachine gun, taking it out to practice shooting in the woods around Haifa (Israel Security Agency website, January 30, 2017).

On the night of January 2, 2017, Shinawi decided to carry out a murder. He asked his brother to take the gun and hide it in a bag. The two men who were shot were chosen randomly after Shinawi decided that they looked Jewish. The suspect confessed to having carried out the two shootings and reenacted them. After having shot the two men, he threw away the bag with the gun near the home of his parents and fled with the aid of two friends, who transferred him from one hiding place to another. After the murder he went to Jerusalem where he prayed at a mosque near the Nablus Gate. Two and a half days later he surrendered to the police (Israel Security Agency website, January 30, 2017).
Muhammad Shinawi, who carried out the shooting attacks in Haifa  
(Twitter account of Palinfo, January 30, 2017).

**Significant Terrorist Attacks in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem since September 2015**
Israel's South

Rocket Fire Attacking Israel

- This past week no rocket hits were identified in Israeli territory.

**Monthly Distribution of Rocket Fire, 2016**

**Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire in Israel's South**

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1 The statistics do not include mortar shell fire or rockets which misfired and fell inside the Gaza Strip.
Developments in the Gaza Strip

The Rafah Crossing and Hamas-Egyptian Relations

- On January 28, 2017, Egypt opened the Rafah crossing for three days in both directions for the passage of people and merchandise (Wafa, January 27, 2017). During the days trucks delivered food, flour and medicine to the Gaza Strip (Rafah News, January 29, 2017).

- On January 27, 2017, the day before Egyptian opened the crossing, Ismail Haniyeh, deputy head of Hamas’ political bureau, and Rawhi Mushtaha, a senior Hamas figure, returned to the Gaza Strip. Haniyeh had spent five months outside Gaza (Safa, January 27, 2017). Arriving in the Strip, Haniyeh said that relations with Egypt would improve significantly and that Hamas would continue developing and strengthening the relations in every possible way (alresala.net, January 27, 2017).

- Sources within Hamas regarded the opening of the Rafah crossing as an improvement in relations with Egypt resulting from Ismail Haniyeh’s meetings with senior Egyptian figures (among them Khaled Fawzy, head of Egyptian General Intelligence). Hamas spokesman Ismail Radwan said that the meetings initiated "a new era" in Hamas-Egypt relations. He claimed the first sign of the "breakthrough" was the opening of the Rafah crossing (Dunia al-Watan, January 28, 2017). Egyptian sources also said the meeting meant a new leaf had been turned over in relations between Egypt and Hamas, and that the meetings expressed agreement on many essential principles (Safa, January 28, 2017).
Memorial Rally Held for Muhammad al-Zoari

- The Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military wing, held a memorial rally in Rafah for Muhammad al-Zoari, a Tunisian engineer who was a Hamas operative. During the ceremony his memorial was unveiled. A memorial rally was also held in Tunisia at the university where he worked, and he was posthumously awarded an honorary doctorate. At the ceremony in Rafah, Abu Obeida, spokesman for Hamas' military wing, said that al-Zoari's blood had not been shed in vain. Regarding the report of the Israeli State Comptroller on Operation Protective Edge, he said that the coming days would reveal Israel's great losses and the complete failure its conduct of the war (Twitter account of Palinfo and the Facebook page of al-Risalah, January 31, 2017).

Hamas Relations with Iran

- Sami Abu Zuhri, a member of Hamas' political bureau, held a press conference in Algeria where he said Hamas and Iran were holding contacts to strengthen their relations. He said he hoped the contacts would lead to a change in Iran's policies towards Hamas (Hamas website, January 30, 2017).

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2 On December 15, 2016, the killing of Muhammad al-Zoari was reported. He was an engineer, 49 years old, and came from the Tunisian city of Sfax. He was killed in a drive-by shooting. Al-Zoari was born in to a religious family in Tunisia. In 1991 he went to Syria and joined Hamas military-terrorist wing. He developed drones and paragliders for Hamas. He often went to Lebanon and Sudan, and also shared his knowledge with Hezbollah.
The Palestinian Authority

The PA Response to Israel's Authorization for the Construction of Dwelling Units in Judea and Samaria

- At the opening session of Fatah's Revolutionary Council, **Mahmoud Abbas**, *chairman of the PA*, warned that the decision of the Israeli government to build more residential housing units in the settlements would have **serious consequences**. He referred to Security Council Resolution 2334, which deemed the settlements illegal (Wafa, January 26, 2017). Mahmoud Abbas gave a speech at the African Union Summit in Addis Ababa. He claimed that reaching a comprehensive, just arrangement based on the two-state solution was now endangered, because by continuing the occupation and erecting settlements, Israel was trying to undermine efforts to establish a Palestinian state with east Jerusalem as its capital. He said everything done to change the status quo in east Jerusalem and the Palestinian lands occupied in 1967 destroyed peace and destabilized the Middle East (Wafa, January 30, 2017).

- **Riyad al-Maliki**, the PA foreign minister, said the PA was working at several levels. That included the Palestinian intention to appeal to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague for a formal investigation of the settlements. He added that if the PA did to get the results it wanted, it would appeal to the UN General Assembly and demand a conference under the auspices of the "Uniting for Peace" resolution³ (Voice of Palestine, January 26, 2017).

Additional Reactions to the Possibility of Relocating the American Embassy to Jerusalem

- The possibility that the United States will relocate its embassy to Jerusalem continues to prey on the minds of the PA and Hamas:
  - At the opening session of a conference of Fatah's Revolutionary Council, **Mahmoud Abbas** said the PA had been in contact with various Arab and international groups to clarify the seriousness of relocating the American embassy to Jerusalem. He said that if it came to pass, it would be a "catastrophe for the peace process" (Wafa, January 26, 2017).

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³ According to UN General Assembly Resolution 377, nicknamed "Uniting for Peace" and adopted in 1950, if the UN Security Council is unable to reach a decision because of a veto, an emergency session of the General Assembly can be called to decide issues for which the Security Council has authority. Decisions in such a session require a two-thirds majority to pass. In the General Assembly it is very easy to get a majority vote against Israeli.
Interviewed by CNN in Arabic, **Saeb Erekat, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee**, said that the PLO would revoke its recognition of Israel if the United States relocated its embassy to Jerusalem. He claimed it was unthinkable that the Palestinians recognize Israel while the United States say Jerusalem was part of Israel. He also threatened that the Palestinians would appeal to the UN General Assembly to demand the suspension of Israel's membership in the organization (Dunia al-Watan, January 28, 2017).

**Hamas** issued a statement expressing its rage at the intention of the American administration to relocate its embassy to Jerusalem, saying the United States was initiating a new stage in the conflict by completely siding with Israel. Hamas called on the Palestinians and the entire Arab world to unite against American policy and act immediately to prevent the decision from being implemented (Official Hamas website, January 24, 2017).
Trump Cartoons in the Hamas-Affiliated Media

Left: Cutting American aid to the PA under Trump (alresala.net, January 30, 2017). Right: Trump bursts the peace process balloon (Facebook page of Shehab, January 30, 2017).

Fatah Glorification of Shaheeds

On January 27, 2017, Fatah's official Facebook page posted a notice glorifying the memory of female suicide bomber Wafaa Idris, aka "the first suicide bomber of the al-Aqsa intifada" (Official Fatah Facebook page, January 27, 2017). On January 27, 2002, Wafaa Idris carried out a suicide bombing attack in the center of Jerusalem. One person was killed and about 140 were injured. Wafaa Idris was the first Palestinian to carry out a suicide bombing attack and thus became a role model.

The notice posted to Facebook. The Arabic reads, "The first suicide bomber of the al-Aqsa intifada. The shaheeda Wafaa Idris" (Official Fatah Facebook page, January 27, 2017).