Notice proclaiming the Palestinian “victory” over Israel following the dismantling of the security installations. The Arabic reads, “The occupation surrendered to the firm stance of the residents of Jerusalem and removes the bridges [the installations for the security cameras]” (Palinfo Twitter account, July 27, 2017).

Overview of Current Situation

1. On the night of July 26, 2017, Israel dismantled the scaffolding for “smart” security cameras at the entrances to the Temple Mount, meant to be set up at a later date. A “senior source” in the Israel Police Force reported that by doing so the [security] situation had returned to status quo ante before the shooting attack, that is, the absence of any effective check at any of the gates through which Muslims enter the Temple Mount compound (Ynet and Haaretz, July 27, 2017). The scaffolding was dismantled after the removal of the metal detectors (July 25, 2017), which had been installed at the entrances to the Temple Mount compound, following a decision of the Israeli Political-Security Cabinet.
Dismantling the security camera scaffolding amid a mass celebration of Arabs from east Jerusalem yelling “Allahu akbar” (Facebook page of QudsN, July 27, 2017).

2. The removal of the installation heightened the sensation of "victory" over Israel felt by various Palestinian agencies involved in the Temple Mount crisis. In Palestinian perspective, it was not only a victory of removing security measures and preserving the status quo. It was a victory to increase Palestinian sovereignty and influence on the Temple Mount and in Jerusalem. After the security cameras were removed, thousands of shouting Palestinians took to the streets of east Jerusalem to celebrate. However, on the morning of July 27, 2017, a mass morning prayer was nevertheless held outside the Temple Mount compound, waiting for a later decision from the Muslim religious leadership.

Mass prayer held in front of the Lions' Gate in east Jerusalem on the morning of July 27, 2017 (Facebook page of QudsN, July 27, 2017).
On the morning of July 27, 2017, senior Muslim clerics held a press conference in east Jerusalem. They called on the Palestinian public to go to al-Aqsa mosque the following day (July 28, 2017) for the Friday prayers. They also called on the Palestinian public to gather in front of the gates to the Temple Mount compound before the prayer in the late afternoon, and to enter al-Aqsa mosque shouting of “Allahu akbar” (Facebook page of QudsN, July 27, 2017). However, there may still be last minute obstacles on the path to the renewed entrance of Muslims to the Temple Mount.¹

¹ According to the Palestinian media, Bab al-Hitta (the Gate of Remission), one of the gates to the Temple Mount, was not opened by the Israeli police. For that reason Muslims refuse to enter the Temple Mount compound, claiming they will continue to pray in the open space in front of the gates.
On the morning of July 27, 2017, senior Muslim clerics hold a press conference in east Jerusalem announcing the renewal of prayers on the Temple Mount. Sitting at the table are Sheikh Ikrima Sabri (center, wearing glasses), who delivers the sermons in al-Aqsa mosque and who has a long history of harsh anti-Israel incitement; to the right (black beard) is Sheikh Omar al-Kiswani, waqf-appointed director of al-Aqsa mosque with ties to Jordan; to the left is Sheikh Abdel-Azeem Salhub, director-general of the Islamic waqf, in effect Jordan’s senior representative on Temple Mount compound. Missing from the picture is Sheikh Muhammad Hussein, the Mufti of Jerusalem and the PA, who at the time was in a meeting with Mahmoud Abbas in Ramallah to update him on developments (Facebook page of QudsN, July 27, 2017).

### The Palestinian Authority (PA) Supports the Decision of the Muslim Clerics

The PA joined religious leaders in authorizing prayer in al-Aqsa mosque. The Palestinian News Agency reported that Mahmoud Abbas, after having met in his office in Ramallah with the Palestinian leadership, decided to allow the noon prayer to be held inside al-Aqsa mosque, after an examination had shown the situation in the Temple Mount compound had returned to the status quo ante.

3. Mahmoud Abbas held a meeting of the Palestinian leadership in his office in Ramallah, also attended by Sheikh Muhammad Hussein, the Mufti of Jerusalem and the PA, who updated them on the situation of the Temple Mount compound. He told them that after waqf guards had examined the area, they found that Israel had in fact dismantled all security measures installed after July 14, 2017. Mahmoud Abbas praised the firm stance of the residents of Jerusalem against Israel. He added that the PA government’s decisions regarding Jerusalem would be implemented (Wafa, July 27, 2017).
4. The initial reactions of the PA were the following:

a. Yusuf al-Mahmoud, spokesman for the Palestinian government, said the moment of entering the al-Aqsa compound was "a great, historic moment" in preparation for the liberation, and heralding the approaching removal of the [Israeli] occupation. He said the campaign for al-Aqsa mosque was a campaign for sovereignty in Jerusalem. He called on the Palestinians to close ranks to bring the Palestinian struggle to a [successful] end (Ma'an, July 27, 2017).

b. The Palestinian foreign ministry in Ramallah issued an announcement praising the Palestinian people and residents of Jerusalem for forcing Israel to remove the security measures recently installed on the Temple Mount compound. The announcement called on the Palestinian public to perpetuate the achievement and build on it in the future (Facebook page of Wafa, July 27, 2017).

5. Other reactions to recent developments were the following:

a. Fatah spokesman Usama al-Qawasmeh congratulated the Palestinian people and the Palestinian leadership headed by Mahmoud Abbas for their achievements in Jerusalem and al-Aqsa mosque. He said the merging of people
at the official and popular level had played a role in the victory of the campaign for al-Aqsa mosque. The campaign had not yet ended, he said, and the great, real victory would be pushing the [Israeli] "occupation" out of the Palestinians' lands and holy places, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state (Fateh Media, July 27, 2017).

b. Nasr al-Qudwa, a member of Fatah's Executive Committee, congratulated the Palestinian people on their achievement, and said it deserved to be celebrated (Fateh Media, July 27, 2017).

c. Ismail Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau, said the Palestinian people and the residents of Jerusalem had proved their loyalty to al-Aqsa mosque and the Muslim and Christian holy places. The events, he said, showed that the Palestinian people could achieve their rights in Jerusalem (Facebook page of QudsN, July 27, 2017).

"#Jerusalem was victorious" (Facebook page of QudsN, July 27, 2017).

What Next?
The return of Muslims to pray on the Temple Mount may signal the end of the current phase of the Temple Mount crisis. However, in ITIC assessment, the way the crisis ended can be very problematic for Israel and may lead to further crises. That is because of the Palestinian sensation of "victory" and the perception that Israel folded under popular pressure (accompanied by terrorist attacks inspired by the crisis, the worst of which was the triple murder in Halamish). That may encourage different agencies which participated or meddled in the Temple Mount crisis to create
difficulties and obstacles preventing the return to routine daily life. **Such agencies include the Palestinian street in east Jerusalem, the PA and Hamas, all of which may try to create new crises around the Temple Mount and use them to promote their own interests.**

6. In ITIC assessment, such efforts may take the following forms:

   a. **Terrorist attacks:** the crisis caused by the shooting attack from the Temple Mount is liable to encourage copycat attacks (attacks on the Temple Mount similar to the one carried out by the Israeli Arabs from Umm al-Fahm, or other types of attacks). The lack of an effective security solution for entrance to the Temple Mount compound is also liable to encourage various types of copycats. Hamas and other agents of incitement, which regard the Temple Mount as a tool for leveraging their own interests, **can be expected to continue inciting terrorist attacks to "protect" the Temple Mount and al-Aqsa mosque and the Temple Mount from Israel.**

   b. **The political level:** Mahmoud Abbas, the PA and Fatah will try to exploit the success of the campaign to exert pressure on Israel. That will be done through activity on the ground (the "popular resistance") and in the **international arena** (see below). At this stage it is unclear if Mahmoud Abbas will restore collaboration with Israel to the status quo before the crisis, even after the crisis is ended.

   c. **The popular level:** Muslim clerics on the Temple Mount and the residents of Jerusalem may choose **new political targets** after the removal of security measures from the entrance to the Temple Mount. Their targets may go beyond tying Israel's hands on the Temple Mount. They may try to mobilize east Jerusalem residents to hold **extensive protests** (accompanied by mass prayers) over other ongoing issues in the conflict with Israel, especially sovereignty over east Jerusalem.

7. **Friday, July 28, 2017** is a possible date for a mass protest. Fatah called for a "day of rage" on July 28 before the recent developments, but so far no formal announcement has canceled or updated it. Hamas announced, also before the recent developments, a "day of rage" for the sake of al-Aqsa mosque, and can be expected to hold it.
The Temple Mount crisis began with the shooting attack on July 14, 2017, which killed two Border Policemen, and continued when Israel installed metal detectors on July 16, 2017, to enable security oversight of the entrances to the Temple Mount. Their installation led to a wave of angry protests and turned a single shooting attack into a local crisis with regional implications, which lasted for two weeks. The crisis has been led and nourished by both the public and Muslim clerics in east Jerusalem. Clerics, some affiliated with the PA and some with Jordan, meddled in the crisis. They forbade Muslims to enter the mosques on the Temple Mount and initiated alternative prayers at the entrances to the Temple Mount and other locations. The Palestinian public from east Jerusalem obeyed them.

1. Some of the Muslim clerics prominent in fomenting the Temple Mount crisis are:

   a. **Sheikh Muhammad Hussein**, Mufti of Jerusalem and the PA, in effect the PA representative on the Temple Mount. He used his influence to escalate the events of the Temple Mount crisis.

   b. **Sheikh Yusuf Idi’s**, Palestinian minister of endowments, who also represents the PA on the Temple Mount.

c. **Sheikh Ikrima Sabri**, former Mufti of Jerusalem and the PA (until 2006, when he was replaced by Sheikh Muhammad Hussein). Today he delivers sermons in al-Aqsa mosque. **He actively preached the escalation of the current crisis.** **He has a long history of anti-Israel incitement.**

d. **Sheikh Abdel-Azeem Salhub**, director-general of the Islamic waqf, appointed by Jordan. During the current crisis he has been less active (at least regarding the media) than other Muslim clerics.

e. Sheikh Omar al-Kiswani, waqf-appointed director of al-Aqsa mosque, also represents Jordan on the Temple Mount.

2. The aforementioned clerics led the Temple Mount crisis and enflamed the emotions of the east Jerusalem public. Apparently prominent among them were clerics representing the PA: first, Sheikh Ikrima Sabri, who called on the public to protect al-Aqsa mosque, forbade entrance to the Temple Mount compound through the metal detectors and instructed Muslims to pray next to them. Second, Sheikh Muhammad Hussein, the Mufti of Jerusalem and the PA, said anyone who entered the Temple Mount compound through the metal detectors could consider his prayer
null and void. **The statements were received by the Palestinian public as fatwas because of the high standing of those issuing them.** The result was that many people gathered near the metal detectors but did not enter the Temple Mount compound. Mass prayers were also held on the outskirts of the Old City\(^2\) (Dar al-Ifta' website, July 23, 2017).

3. In view of the continuation of the crisis and its potential for escalation, on July 24 Israel's Security-Political Cabinet reached the decision to install an alternative technological system, which would be put in place by the Israeli police. **Its installation was supposed to make it possible to remove the metal detectors at the entrances to the Temple Mount.** According to the proposal, eight systems of facial recognition cameras would be installed at a distance from the entrance to the Temple Mount and connected to a control center. Following the decision, on July 25, 2017, the metal detectors were removed before the alternative systems had been installed. However, Israel's move was rejected by Muslim clerics and the general population in east Jerusalem, and protest prayers at the entrances to the Temple Mount continued.

4. The Palestinians perceived Israel's announcement about the removal of the metal detectors as a partial victory. It was credited to the religious leadership and the 

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\( ^2 \) **Sheikh Muhammad Hussein, Mufti of the Palestinian Authority**, denied that his office (Dar al-Ifta) issued a fatwa about entering al-Aqsa mosque through the metal detectors. He said he had issued a call to the residents of Jerusalem from sources of religious authority not to cooperate with the metal detectors the "forces of occupation" [i.e., Israel] had installed at the entrances to the mosque, because they were considered a change in the status quo (Dunia al-Watan, July 17, 2017).
residents of east Jerusalem (especially the young residents), and not to the Palestinian political leadership. However, alongside the sensation of victory, the Israeli measure was received with considerable suspicion. The waqf in Jerusalem announced it was forbidden to enter the Temple Mount compound until Israel had removed all the security systems and the waqf had evaluated the situation. Palestinians sources stressed they would accept no compromises and would not agree to any other type of security measure. They demanded a return to the status quo ante of July 14, 2017, the day of the shooting attack on the Temple Mount.

5. On the night of July 26, 2017, the Israeli police dismantled the scaffolding for the cameras (the cameras had been dismantled previously, following the decision of the Security-Political Cabinet). The fences set up at the entrances were also removed. At that point the Muslim clerics called on the Palestinian public to hold the Friday prayer in al-Aqsa mosque. The PA joined the call.

Muslim Cleric Responses During the Crisis

6. The following are some of the responses of Muslim clerics and religious institutions to Israel's actions during the crisis:

   a. The waqf administration announced it rejected out of hand any change in the status quo, including the introduction of technological measures. It stressed its objection Israel's "aggressive measures" on the Temple Mount since July 14, 2017, and called for all the entrances to the Temple Mount to be opened and free passage without delay for anyone wanting to pray. The administration also said Muslims would continue to hold prayers at the gates of al-Aqsa and in the streets of Jerusalem until Israel removed everything it had installed (Facebook page of Sheikh Ikrima Sabri, July 25, 2017).
b. Abdallah al-Abadi, administrator of the inspection department for Jerusalem affairs and al-Aqsa mosque in the Jordanian waqf ministry, opposed any change made by Israel in al-Aqsa mosque, including the decision to install smart cameras instead of metal detectors. According to Jordanian sources, including the waqf department and the office of the Supreme Sharia judge, the decision was made to leave everything in the mosque as it was and appoint a committee to examine its contents (JO24, a Jordanian Internet newspaper, July 25, 2017).

c. Sheikh Yusuf Idi's, Palestinian minister of endowments, called for the rejection of all the measures Israel was trying to impose, including the installation of smart cameras and the "humiliating" measures for search and examination. He called for support and help for the residents of Jerusalem. He also called for the Friday prayers to be held in public places in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and to devote the sermons to al-Aqsa mosque (Facebook page of the Palestinian ministry of endowments, July 26, 2017).
Members of the Islamic waqf headed by Sheikh Omar al-Kiswani, director of al-Aqsa mosque hold the evening prayer in an open space near the Lions' Gate after the metal detectors were removed from the Temple Mount (Facebook page of Fatah, July 25, 2017).
Appendix B

The PA's Actions during the Crisis

Mahmoud Abbas, the PA and Fatah did not initiate the Temple Mount crisis, but they were quick to exploit it for their own political purposes and ride the wave of the popular religious protest in Jerusalem. That was because they viewed the Temple Mount crisis as a way to exert considerable pressure on Israel and increase PA influence on the Temple Mount compound. Important means for increasing its influence are religious figures representing the PA, especially Sheikh Muhammad Hussein, the Mufti of Jerusalem and the PA.

1. **To increase pressure on Israel, Mahmoud Abbas announced the stopping of all types of coordination with Israel, including security coordination** (Wafa, July 23, 2017). His decision, he said, would remain in force until the metal detectors were removed from the Temple Mount and Israel committed itself to preserving the historical legal status of al-Aqsa mosque (Wafa, July 21, 2017). At this point it is unclear if his decision will remain in force after the current developments.

2. **Mahmoud Abbas gave his full support to the Muslim clerics after they refused to renew entrance into the Temple Mount compound** once the metal detectors had been removed. After they had been removed Mahmoud Abbas met in his office in Ramallah with Muhammad Hussein, the Mufti of Jerusalem and the PA. They discussed the steps the Muslim clerics were planning to take. Mahmoud Abbas stressed that he supported the clerics’ position, adding that the PA’s position would not change as long as the situation in the Temple Mount compound had not returned to the status quo ante (Wafa, July 25, 2017). Thus Mahmoud Abbas helped worsen the crisis and prevented the success of any attempt to calm the Palestinians' inflamed emotions.
3. In the international arena the PA tried to convince the United States and the UN Security Council to exert pressure on Israel. Saeb Erekat, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee, and Majed Faraj, head of Palestinian General intelligence, met with Jason Greenblatt, the American president's special envoy to the Middle East. In all probability Greenblatt demanded that the Palestinians calm the situation in Jerusalem. The Palestinians demanded that Israel preserve the status quo ante on the Temple Mount as it was before July 14, 2017, the day of the shooting attack (Ma'an, July 25, 2017).

4. The PA was disappointed by the positions taken by the UN Security Council and the United States. Riyadh Mansour, PA representative to the UN, said an emergency session of the UN Security Council held on July 24, 2017, had ended without a resolution for what he called "Israel's attack on the Temple Mount." He also said that during the deliberations the United States had refused to condemn the events at al-Aqsa mosque (al-Quds, July 25, 2017).

5. Apparently, the Palestinians also are preparing to escalate their struggle against Israel in the international arena. Sabri Sidam, PA minister of education and deputy secretary general of Fatah's Central Committee, said the Committee had decided to escalate the popular struggle on the Temple Mount. He also said Fatah had decided to call on people to hold Friday prayers in the local squares, not inside the mosques. He said Fatah had begun preparations for joining 28 international organizations and was compiling an appeal to the International Criminal Court in The
Hague (ICC) about the steps Israel was taking on the Temple Mount (Sawa, July 26, 2017).

July 26, 2017, senior Fatah figures (left to right) Jamal al-Muheisen, Mahmoud al-'Alul and Tawfiq al-Tirawi meet with regional Fatah heads to discuss further escalation following Israel’s decisions about the Temple Mount (Facebook page of Fatah, July 26, 2017).

Cartoons on Fatah’s Facebook page. Left: Muslims celebrate their victory as Israel decides to remove the metal detectors from the Temple Mount. Right: "Allah hears those who stand firm..." (Facebook page of Fatah, July 25 and 26, 2017).
Left: A cartoon in al-Hayat al-Jadeeda, the PA official organ, shows Palestinian opposition to installing cameras in the Temple Mount (al-Hayat al-Jadeeda, July 26, 2017). Handala, a cartoon figure symbolizing the so-called Palestinian “right of return,” says, “I don’t want to enter al-Aqsa mosque through a metal detector” (Facebook page of Fatah, July 25, 2017).
Appendix C

Hamas' Actions

The Temple Mount crisis served Hamas’ interest to draw attention away from the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip and its strategic hardships, and focus it on Jerusalem and the Temple Mount. The Hamas media called on the residents of Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria to clash with Israel, hoping to prolong and aggravate the Temple Mount crisis. In the meantime Hamas has been careful to preserve the lull along the border between the Gaza Strip and Israel. Preserving the lull is aimed to prevent a deterioration in the situation of the Gaza Strip because of the events in Judea and Samaria, like what happened before Operation Protective Edge.

1. The following are example of Hamas incitement during the crisis:

   a. Hamas called for the crisis to continue even after the removal of the metal detectors. For example, senior Hamas figure Khalil al-Haya claimed the smart cameras would be worse than the metal detectors, and called for the Palestinians to refuse to allow any changes to be made to the entrances to the Temple Mount. The Islamic Bloc, the Hamas student movement, said it was planning to hold daily demonstrations at friction points where clashes were held with the Israeli security forces, attended by Islamic Bloc activists from various universities.

   b. Hamas also called on its activists to demonstrate at the friction points on Friday after the end of the afternoon prayer. Senior Hamas figure Ahmed Bahar said Israel was trying to fool the Palestinian people by removing the metal detectors and installing cameras. He called on the Palestinian people to express solidarity with Jerusalem and continue their activities until the cameras were removed.

   c. Hamas called on the residents of Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria to take to the streets and participate in mass demonstrations on July 28, 2017. Hamas stressed the need for the broad participation of all the Palestinian organizations (Shehab, July 26, 2017).

   d. In the meantime, Hamas held demonstrations of solidarity with al-Aqsa mosque throughout the Gaza Strip.
e. In an appeal to the leaders of the Arab and Muslim states, Ismail Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau, claimed no one had seen such "acts of aggression" carried out by Israel in al-Aqsa mosque during the past 50 years. He claimed Israel was more determined than ever to enforce its full control over al-Aqsa mosque. He claimed Israel wanted to appoint itself as the exclusive authority to conduct the mosque’s affairs by limiting and pushing aside the historical role of the waqf in Jerusalem (Hamas website, June 28, 2017).

f. Hamas called on the Palestinian public in Judea and Samaria to march en masse to the friction points on Friday, July 28, 2017, and to clash with Israeli security forces "for the sake of al-Aqsa."
The July 26, 2017 Hamas call to the Palestinian public in Judea and Samaria to march en masse to the traditional friction points on Friday, July 28, 2017, to clash with the "occupation" for the sake of al-Aqsa mosque (Palinfo Twitter account, July 26, 2017).