



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

October 24-30, 2012



Left: Rocket about to be fired into Israeli territory (Palestine-info website, October 29, 2012). Right: Israel Police demolitions expert holds the remains of a Grad rocket which hit the southern Israeli city of Beersheba (Israel Police Force Facebook page, October 28, 2012).

Overview

- This past week terrorism events focused on the new round of escalation in southern Israel, during which 105 rockets and an estimated 12 mortar shells hit Israeli territory. One of the rockets, a long-range Grad, fell in an open area on the outskirts of the city of Beersheba. The IDF responded by striking terrorist targets and rocket-launching squads.
- Hamas and the Popular Resistance Committees (PRC) claimed responsibility for most of the rocket launchings. Their spokesmen threatened they would respond to every new so-called "act of Israeli aggression," claiming that Israel had turned the Gaza Strip into part of its election campaign.
- The visit paid by the emir of Qatar to the Gaza Strip and his promise of generous financial aid (\$400 million according to the media) caused considerable satisfaction to Hamas senior figures. However, senior Fatah figures and the Palestinian Authority criticized the visit, which, they claimed, deepened the internal Palestinian schism.

The Latest Round of Escalation in the South – Update

Rocket Fire and Attacks on IDF Forces Continue

■ **During the past week intermittent rocket and mortar shell attacks continued to target Israel's south.** Beforehand, on October 24 more than 60 rockets and mortar shell fell in Israeli territory (four rockets were successfully intercepted and downed by the Iron Dome aerial defense system).



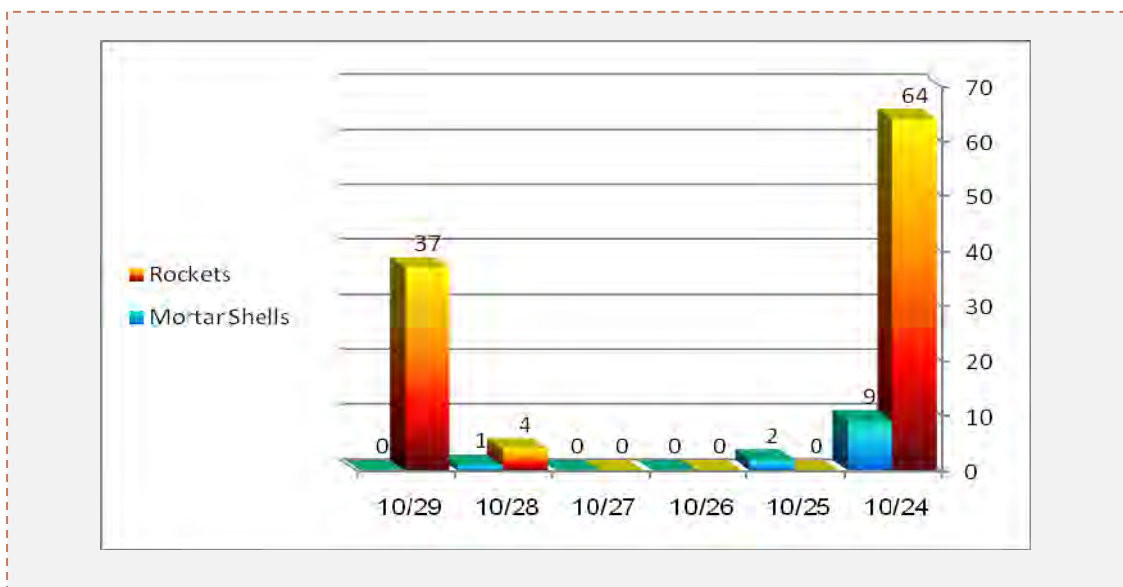
A rocket hit near the entrance to one of the villages in Israel's south (Photo by Yehuda Lahiani, used courtesy of NRG, October 29, 2012).

■ On **October 28**, following IDF counterterrorism activities and the killing of a Hamas terrorist operative, **rocket fire from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory was renewed.** In the early morning a Grad rocket fell in an open area on the **outskirts of the southern city of Beersheba.** There were no casualties and no damage was reported (IDF Spokesman, October 28, 2012). **Additional rockets** fell in the western Negev in open areas. There were no casualties and no damage was reported.

■ The military-terrorist wing of the PRC claimed responsibility for the Grad rocket fire targeting Beersheba. The organization said in an announcement that the rocket fire was in retaliation for so-called "continued Zionist aggression" against the Gazans. PRC spokesman **Abu Mujahed** said that the organization was committed to defending the Palestinian people and would not let Israel "evade punishment." He said the Grad rocket attack on Beersheba was meant to send the message that the geographical area of the confrontation was not limited and that **the central cities of Israel would also not escape retaliation** (PRC website, October 28, 2012).

■ In the early morning hours of **October 29** more than 30 rockets landed in Israeli territory, all of them falling in open areas. There were no casualties and no damage was reported. **The military-terrorist wing of Hamas** claimed responsibility for the barrage, calling it retaliation for so-called "continuing Zionist aggression against the Gaza Strip" (Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades website, October 29, 2012).

Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire during the Five Days of Escalation (October 24-29)



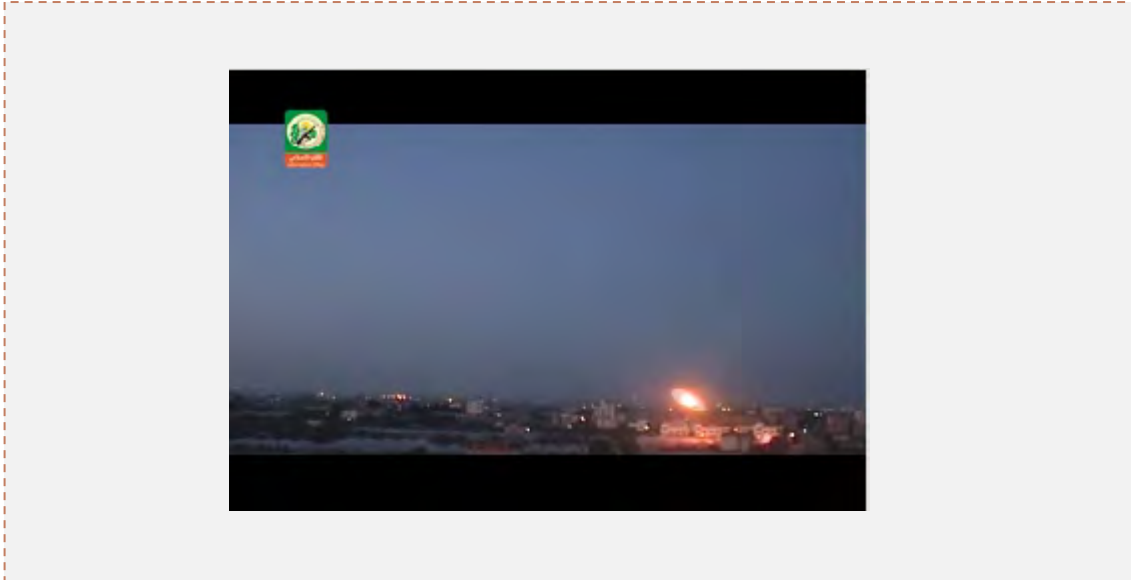
A total of 105 rockets and 12 mortar shell hits in Israeli territory

The Lull Declaration and Its Violation

■ On October 24 the media reported that a lull agreement had been reached between Hamas and Israel, brokered by Egypt, as of midnight October 24. According to a Palestinian source, Egyptian mediation for renewing the lull included a verbal commitment from Hamas to calm down the situation and a commitment from Israel not to attack the Gaza Strip as long as the calm was preserved and Israel's security was not threatened (Ma'an News Agency and Al-Quds, October 25, 2012).

■ On the ground, however, **the lull was not honored by the terrorist organizations, which publicly denied its existence**: **Abu Mujahed**, spokesman for the PRC, said that the [terrorist] organizations would respond to Israeli "aggression" against the Gaza Strip and denied the existence of a formal lull with Israel (Safa News Agency, October 25, 2012). **Ayman Taha**, a senior Hamas figure, also denied the existence of a lull, adding that there was "enforcement on the ground" and that Hamas would respond to any new "Israeli aggression" (Resala.net website, October 24, 2012). **Mahmoud al-**

Zahar, a member of Hamas' Executive Committee, said that there was no truce (*hudna*) between Israel and Hamas, rather a lull in the fighting, which as far as he was concerned meant that as long as Israel did not attack, there would be no rocket fire from the Gaza Strip (BBC Radio, October 28, 2012).



Video uploaded by Hamas' military-terrorist wing documenting rocket fire from the Gaza Strip on October 29 (Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades website, October 29, 2012). Click here to see the video. <http://www.alqassam.ps/arabic/video1.php?id=541&cat=4>

IDF Counterterrorism Activities

■ Israeli Air Force aircraft carried out counterterrorism strikes, attacking a number of terrorist targets and rocket-launching squads about to fire rockets into Israeli territory from the Gaza Strip:

- On **October 28** IAF aircraft struck a terrorist squad in the central Gaza Strip which was making final preparations to launch rockets into Israeli territory (IDF Spokesman, October 28, 2012). The Palestinian media reported that Suleiman Kamel al-Kara, a Hamas terrorist operative, had been killed, and another operative had been critically wounded. According to eyewitnesses, before the IAF attack armed terrorist operatives fired mortar shells at IDF forces (Resala.net website, October 28, 2012). The Palestinian media reported that among the targets struck were two posts belonging to Hamas' military wing, one in the region of Khan Yunis and the other in Beit Hanoun (The PIJ's PalToday website and the Safa News Agency, October 28, 2012).

- During the night of **October 29** IAF aircraft struck a hotspot of terrorist activity and a rocket-launching site in the northern Gaza Strip, as well as a hotspot of terrorist activity in the southern Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman, October 29, 2012).
- Sources in Hamas reacted strongly to the IAF activity:
 - Senior Hamas figure **Salah al-Bardawil** said that the Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip were proof that Israel was not committed to the lull. He added that Israel was waging a political war through its election campaign, but that Hamas would not let the situation in the Gaza Strip become an issue in the campaign (QudsPress, October 29, 2012).
 - Ihab al-Ghusein, head of the information department of the de-facto Hamas administration, said that Israel was trying to use the escalation to force the Gaza Strip into a new military confrontation "in the shadow of the union between war criminals Lieberman and Netanyahu" (Safa News Agency, October 29, 2012).

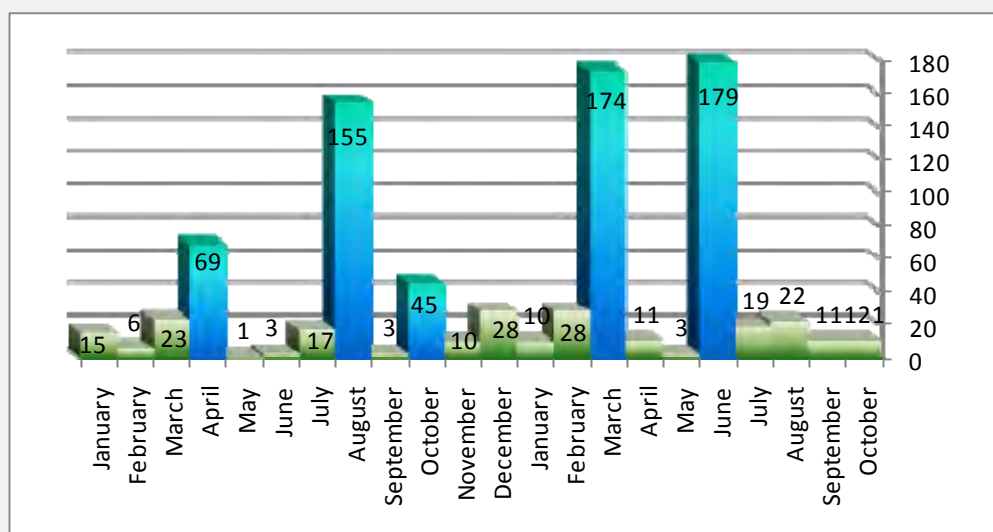
The Double Identities of Hamas Security Force Operatives

- The ministry of the interior of the de-facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip expressed its condolences on the deaths of **Ismail al-Teli and Yousef Abu Jalhoum** (aka Abu Musa'b), Hamas terrorist operatives who were killed in an IDF attack in the Jabalia district on October 23. According to the ministry's announcement, al-Teli also served as **a policeman in the Hamas police force**, and Abu Jalhoum worked for the **Hamas Rehabilitation and Imprisonment Administration** (Safa News Agency, October 24, 2012).



Left: Official Hamas ministry of the interior notice of the death of Yousef Muhammad Abu Jalhoum, who was also an operative in Hamas' military-terrorist wing (Hamas Rehabilitation and Imprisonment Administration website, October 25, 2012). Right: Ismail al-Teli, senior Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades artillery figure, prepares a rocket for launching. In addition to his terrorist activities, was also in the police force (Hamas forum, October 28, 2012).

Rockets Fired into Israeli Territory since the Beginning of 2011



Since the end of Operation Cast Lead, 1,220 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory.

Since the beginning of 2011, 975 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory; 672 since the beginning of 2012.

¹ As of October 30, 2012. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.

Judea and Samaria

Hamas Terrorist Network Exposed in the Ramallah District

■ Since the exposure by the Israel Security Agency and the IDF of a large Hamas terrorist network in the Ramallah district in June 2012, **30 terrorist operatives involved in the network have been detained**. The operatives were in the process of re-establishing Hamas' network in the area. Interrogation revealed that one of the network's objectives was to **bolster Hamas' political power before the upcoming PA elections**. Network operatives gave money to Hamas prisoners and their families and worked to strengthen the Hamas student cells in the universities.

■ **Members of the network were in contact with the external Hamas leadership**, which sent them funds and directives. Interrogation also revealed that there were plans for form similar networks in Hebron and Bethlehem, but they were prevented by the detention of the operatives. The network was headed by **Murad Muhammad Khaled Abu Baha**, who led a strict hierarchy of functionaries. Among those detained were **two who participated in the lynch of two IDF reserve soldiers in Ramallah in 2000²** (IDF Spokesman, October 29, 2012).

Easing Restrictions on Palestinians for Eid al-Adha (the Feast of the Sacrifice)

■ Between October 26 and 29 Muslims celebrated Eid al-Adha, the feast of the sacrifice. On the eve of the holiday the Israeli Civilian Authority eased restrictions on the Palestinian population in Judea and Samaria. The civilian and commercial crossings were open longer, military crossings were opened to the civilian population, exit visas for trips abroad were given, as were permits to and from Jordan, and permission to visit family members in Israel was made easier (Coordinator for government activities in the territories website, October 26, 2012). During the holiday IDF activity in Palestinian population centers was reduced, while Palestinian security force activity was increased in certain areas.

² On October 12, 2000, two IDF reserve soldiers, Staff Sergeant Yossi Avrahami and Private Vadim Nurzhitz took a wrong turn on their way back to base, and entered Ramallah. They were dragged out of their car and attacked by a rabid mob. They were taken to the Palestinian Police station where they were attacked by police and the mob, beaten, tortured and brutally murdered.

The Gaza Strip Crossings

Kerem Shalom and Erez Crossings Closed on Account of Rocket Fire

■ In view of the escalation in the south, in an exceptional move the Kerem Shalom and Erez crossings were not opened on Wednesday, October 24. Some of the rockets and mortar shell landed near the crossings, endangering workers. For that reason the fuel from Qatar for the Gaza Strip, which ordinarily would have been transferred through the Kerem Shalom crossing, was not delivered (IDF Spokesman, October 24, 2012).

The Rafah Crossing

■ Egyptian sources reported that the Rafah crossing would open to civilian traffic during Eid al-Adha, the first time since the violent Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip in 2007. The sources said that many Gazans exploited the occasion to vacation in Egypt, resulting in crowding at the exit (Filastin al-Yawm, October 28, 2012).

The Gaza Strip

The Emir of Qatar's Visit (Update)

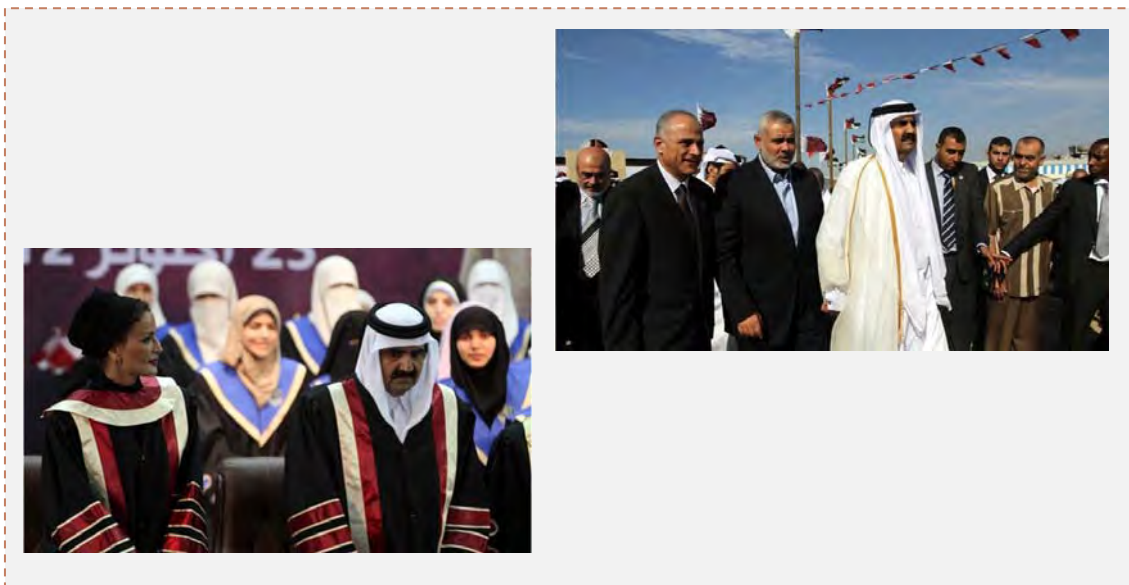
■ On October 23 the emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa, and his wife paid a short visit to the Gaza Strip, staying for a number of hours. It was the first visit of an Arab head of state to the Gaza Strip since Hamas took over in June 2007. The emir was formally received by Ismail Haniya, head of the de-facto Hamas administration.

■ During his visit the emir officiated at the launching of a housing project named for him in Khan Yunis, met with children injured in Operation Cast Lead, and along with his wife was given an honorary doctorate by the Hamas-affiliated Islamic University. A mass reception and a reception in Ismail Haniya's office planned in the emir's honor did not materialize. Ismail Haniya gave a speech in which he said that **Qatar would increase the amount of aid for rebuilding the Gaza Strip from \$254 million to \$400 million** (Filastin al-'Aan, QudsNet and Shihab websites, October 23, 2012).

■ After the visit, Hamas expressed its satisfaction. Ismail Haniya said that it had sent a message to the world that the Gaza Strip was supported by the Arab nation. He said that "the visit was the official lifting of the political and economic closure of the Gaza

Strip and is considered a victory for the Palestinian people" (Filastin al-'Aan, October 23, 2012).

- However, senior Fatah and PA figures were not pleased and criticized the visit:
 - **Sultan Abu al-Einein**, a member of Fatah's Central Committee, said that the visit deepened the Palestinian schism and that he had hoped the emir would declare aid for rebuilding the Gaza Strip from Jerusalem and not Gaza City (Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda, October 24, 2010).
 - **Saeb Erekat**, a member of the PLO's Executive Committee, called on Qatar to exert pressure on the leaders of Hamas to honor the Doha Agreement signed in Qatar (Ma'an News Agency, October 24, 2012).
 - The Egyptian media reported that the **king of Bahrain**, Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa, is expected to visit the Gaza Strip this coming Thursday, November 1. According to the report his plane will land in El Arish and from there an Egyptian helicopter will take him to the Rafah crossing terminal.



Top: The emir of Qatar and Ismail Haniya lay the corner stone for a hospital in the northern Gaza Strip. Bottom: The emir of Qatar and his wife receive honorary doctorates from the Hamas-affiliated Islamic University in Gaza City (Filastin al-'Aan, October 23, 2012).

Miles of Smiles 17 Convoy Reaches the Gaza Strip

- Miles of Smiles convoy number 17 entered the Gaza Strip through the Rafah crossing. It was composed of 136 pro-Palestinian activists from a number of Arab-Muslim countries and brought 40 tons of medicine, especially for dialysis patients, 15 vehicles for the handicapped and food (Hamas' Felesteen, October 25, 2012).

The Palestinian Authority

The Palestinian Move in the UN

■ Mahmoud Abbas continues his political activity to lodge an appeal with the UN General Assembly:

- At a meeting with Catherine Ashton, EU foreign minister, he said the PA's appeal to the UN General Assembly next month (November 2012) was intended to upgrade the Palestinians' status in the Assembly and did not contradict his desire to reach a solution based on the two-state solution. He said the PA was prepared to return to the negotiating table after its appeal to the UN to renew deliberations on the final status arrangement (Qudsnet website, October 25, 2012).



Mahmoud Abbas and Catherine Ashton (Wafa News Agency, October 29, 2012)

- At a meeting of Fatah's Revolutionary Council, Mahmoud Abbas said that the PA was currently in contact and consulting with various Arab states because of messages recently sent to the Palestinian leadership meant to prevent it from continuing its move in the UN (Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda, October 25, 2012).
- Mahmoud Abbas sent a communiqué to the presidents of the EU and the United States asking them to support the Palestinian appeal in the UN, saying the vote would not be held before the American presidential elections (Al-Quds TV, October 28, 2012).

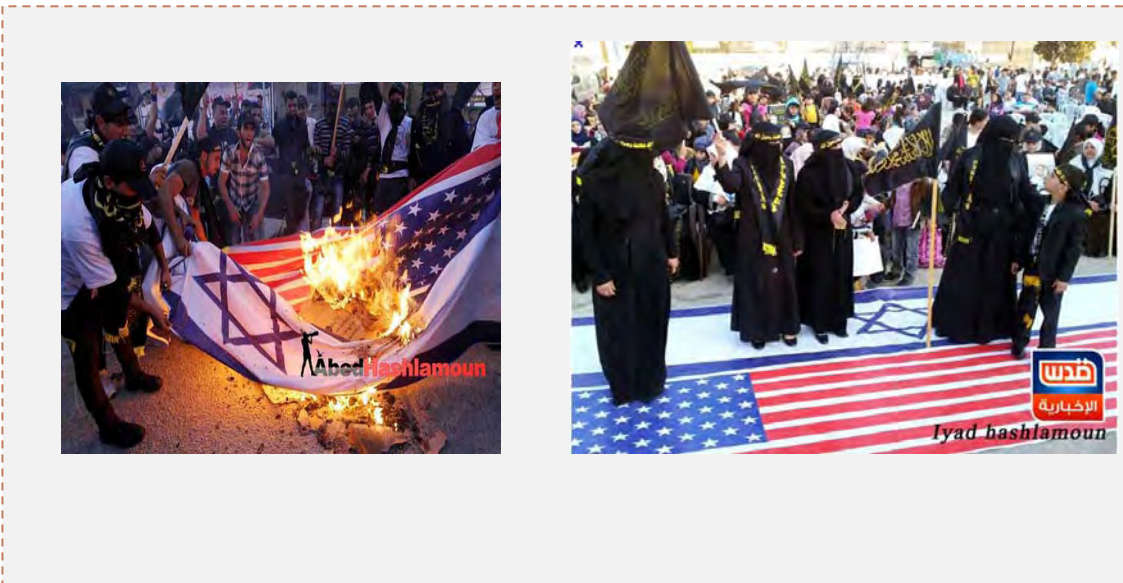


Hamas' view of Mahmoud Abbas' chances of changing the PA's status n the UN.

Palestinian Islamic Jihad Rally in Hebron Attended by the District Governor

- On October 28 the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) held a rally in Hebron for the first time in 10 years, to mark the 31st anniversary of the PIJ's founding and the 17th of the death of its founder, Fathi Shqaqi. It was held in the yard of the Ibn Rashad school and attended by Kamal Hamid, the district governor, PIJ activists and representatives of other organizations. The district governor gave a formal speech in the name of the Palestinian leadership headed by Mahmoud Abbas, praising the organization. He stressed the importance of continuing the "national campaign" to establish a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital (Ma'an News Agency, October 29, 2012).

- Women PIJ members presented a display in which they trampled on Israeli and American flags. Other activists burned Israeli and American flags.



Left: PIJ activists burn Israeli and American flags (Hamas forum on Facebook, October 29, 2012).
 Right: Women PIJ activists trample the Israeli and American flags (Al-Quds forum, October 29, 2012).

Propaganda Events

Palestinian and Foreign Activists Demonstrate at a Supermarket North of Jerusalem

■ On October 24 a demonstration was held at a popular Israeli supermarket ("Ramy Levy") serving Palestinians and located five kilometers north of Jerusalem (Shaar Benyamin). Dozens of Palestinian activists affiliated with the Popular Resistance Committees campaign demonstrated against the security fence and settlements in Judea and Samaria, and were joined by far-left Israelis and foreign pro-Palestinian activists. They waved Palestinian flags, yelled slogans and confronted the Israeli security forces. Before the demonstration they blocked the main thoroughfares in the region. According to one of the organizers, they were protesting the sale of products from the settlements and Israeli activity in general (Al-Quds TV, October 24, 2012).



Palestinian, Israeli far-left and foreign pro-Palestinian activists demonstrate at a supermarket north of Jerusalem (Facebook page of "Youth against the high cost of living in Judea and Samaria," October 24, 2012).