



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

November 28-December 4, 2012



Right: The Palestinian delegation after the vote in the UN General Assembly upgrading the Palestinian Authority to a non-member observer state. Left: The vote (UN website, November 30, 2012).

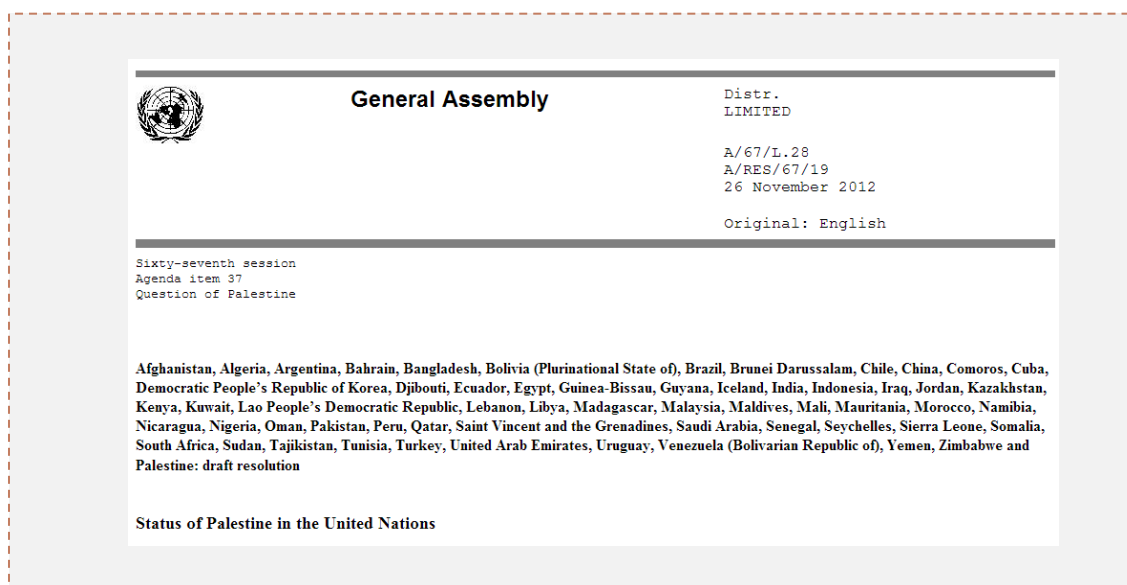
Overview

- Since the end of Operation Pillar of Defense on November 21, 2012, no rockets or mortar shells have been fired into Israeli territory from the Gaza Strip. Gazans continue gathering near the security fence to demonstrate presence and defy Israel. In several instances the IDF was forced to fire warning shots to disperse rioters. The minister of the interior in the de-facto Hamas administration said that the administration's security forces would control the area of the border for a distance of 300 meters from the fence (the "perimeter").
- On November 29, a symbolic date in the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the UN General Assembly voted by a large majority to upgrade the status of the Palestinian Authority to non-member observer state. In response, Israel announced it would authorize the construction of thousands of residential units in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem, including in area E1, which joins Maaleh Adumim to Jerusalem. The announcement led to a wave of international condemnation, including from the United States and Europe.

The Palestinian Authority

The UN Upgrades the PA's Status to Non-Member Observer State

- On November 29, a symbolic date in the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the UN Gaza Strip **voted 138 for**, 41 against and nine abstentions, **to upgrade the status of the PA to non-member observer state**.
- According to the resolution, the status of the PA as a non-member observer state does not affect the authority of the PLO in the UN to represent the Palestinian people. It stresses the necessity of the two-state solution based on the pre-1967 borders, the right of all the countries in the region to live in peace with secure borders and recognition from the international community. A separate statement issued by Mahmoud Abbas expresses hope that the UN Security Council will one day soon recommend the PA's application to the General Assembly for full UN membership (Unispal.un.org website, November 29, 2012).
- Beyond the symbolic aspect, a practical significance of the resolution is that the PA can now request membership in international organizations and conventions open only to recognized states. Membership in such organizations will make it easier for the Palestinians to wage political warfare and lawfare in the international arena. The PA will now be able to appeal to the International Criminal Court in the Hague to pursue its lawfare against Israel.



The UN resolution (Unispal.un.org website, November 29, 2012).

Mahmoud Abbas' Belligerent Speech on the Eve of the Vote

- Before the UN vote **Mahmoud Abbas**, chairman of the Palestinian Authority, delivered a defamatory, slanderous speech describing Israel as a racist country with an "apartheid regime," which spreads hatred and engages in the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians. He did not extend his hand in peace based on the two-state solution.
- The main points of his speech were the following (Palestinian National TV, November 30, 2012):

- **Slander of Israel:**

- ✓ The "Israeli aggression" in the Gaza Strip, he said, again emphasized the need to push for an end of the Israeli occupation, for the end of the adherence of the government of Israel to the path of force, oppression and war.

- ✓ No senior Israeli, he said, had expressed the desire or "genuine diligence" to rescue the peace process. The Palestinians have witnessed an unprecedented escalation in acts of military aggression, siege, settlement activities and ethnic cleansing, especially in occupied east Jerusalem, extensive detentions, acts of aggression and war crime and other steps which complete the nature of the [Israeli] apartheid regime.

- ✓ The occupation [i.e., Israel], he said, was building settlements, anchoring the plague of racism in laws and giving root to hatred and incitement. Israel, he said, is convinced it is above international law and has immunity which protects it from having to give an account of its actions or having them investigated.

- **Recognition of Israel:** Mahmoud Abbas said he did not intend to delegitimize the state which for decades has been known as Israel, but rather to stress the legitimacy of the state which had to be established quickly, the state of Palestine.

- **The peace process:** Mahmoud Abbas paid lip service to adherence to a peaceful solution, claiming that the Palestinian move in the UN was not intended to harm the peace process or Israel's legitimacy. We did not come here, he said, to add complications to the peace process "after Israel[']s steps] threw it into the emergency care unit," but to give a serious last chance to implementing it.

- **The Palestinian conditions for negotiations:** The PLO, he said, was the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The Palestinians would not accept any agreement except for the establishment of a Palestinian state on

all the territory occupied in 1967, with east Jerusalem as its capital. Any negotiations would have to include a **solution for the problem of the Palestinian refugees, based on UN Security Council Resolution 194.**

- **The popular resistance:** The Palestinian people, he said, adhered to its right to defend itself from [Israeli] aggression and the occupation. Palestinians would continue what they could, which was waging a **non-violent popular resistance.**

Israel's Response to Mahmoud Abbas' Speech

- In response to Mahmoud Abbas' speech in the General Assembly, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that "the world watched a defamatory and venomous speech that was full of mendacious propaganda against the IDF and the citizens of Israel. Someone who wants peace does not talk in such a manner."¹



Mahmoud Abbas addresses the UN General Assembly (Wafa News Agency, November 30, 2012).

Demonstrations and Rallies in Judea and Samaria to Celebrate the Vote

- On the day of the UN vote, and more so after the votes had been counted, large demonstrations and rallies were held in the cities in Judea and Samaria to celebrate. Organized by Fatah and the PA, they stressed the national character of the event by including representatives from all the Palestinian organizations.
- A festive reception was held for Mahmoud Abbas when he returned from New York. In a speech delivered at the presidential residence in Ramallah, he said that the Palestinian people should be proud of themselves, because they had resisted the

¹ <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Spokesman/Pages/spokeUN291112.aspx>

intense pressure exerted on them to postpone the move. He added that UN recognition changed many parameters, created a new situation and **deepened Israel's isolation** (Palestinian TV, December 2, 2012).

■ The main theme of senior Palestinians speaking at the rallies was the change in the status of the PA vis-à-vis Israel:

- **Saeb Erekat**, a member of the PLO's Executive Committee, said the UN was the beginning, and that the road ahead was still long and difficult, but that Palestine was now on the map. Israel had to understand, he said, that now negotiations had to be based on the UN decision and that from now on the occupation was an international crime. He said that from the moment the UN had voted, the equation had changed and from now on any Israeli annexation of territory would be a war crime (AKI, November 30, 2012).
- **Jibril Rajoub**, a member of Fatah's Central Committee, gave an extremist, belligerent speech at a rally that was broadcast by Palestinian TV. He said that the time had come for everyone to have a united plan for the struggle: "**All your options for resistance are open** [i.e., including violence and terrorism]"...[and] "anyone who enters this region will leave in a coffin" (Palestinian TV, November 29, 2012).



Ramallah celebrates the UN vote (Wafa News Agency, November 30, 2012).

Initiating Advances to International Institutions

■ **Nasr Safaa al-Din**, Palestinian minister of communications, began taking practical steps following the upgrading of the PA's status. She appealed to all the companies, international institutions, human rights organizations and institutions in the private

sector to **begin using the term "state of Palestine"** in all their business dealings and on their websites, and not the "National Palestinian Authority." She is also seeking full membership for "Palestine" in the **International Communication Association and the International Postal Union** (The PIJ's PalToday website, November 30, 2012).

Responses to the Upgrading of the PA's Status

Israel

- In response to the UN's vote to upgrade the status of the Palestinian Authority **Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu** said that the decision would not change anything on the ground. The decision, he said, only distances the founding of a Palestinian state because a Palestinian state cannot be established until the Palestinians declare an end to the conflict and until there is a settlement that ensures the security of Israeli citizens. The UN decision, he said, makes no mention of security arrangements for Israel, does not recognize the State of Israel as the state of the Jewish People, and makes no mention of the end of the conflict (Israeli Prime Minister's website, November 29 and December 2, 2012).

- At the government meeting on December 2, Benyamin Netanyahu said that the PA's unilateral move in the UN General Assembly was **a gross violation of agreements the Palestinians signed with the State of Israel** and there the Israeli government rejected the UN vote. He said that "[t]he response to the attack on Zionism and the State of Israel must reinforce and underscore the implementation of the settlement plan in all areas in which the Government decides regarding settlement" (Israeli Prime Minister's website, December 2, 2012).

- The Israeli media reported that on November 29 the Israeli government made the decision **to authorize the construction of 3,000 residential units** in Judea and Samaria, and thousands of units in Jerusalem and other locations, **including E1, the designation of the area joining Maaleh Adumim (east of Jerusalem) to Jerusalem**. It also reported that the transfer of tax money to the PA would be frozen.

- The Israeli decisions **led to a wave of condemnations from the international community**, which claimed that they were detrimental and harmed the efforts to renew the peace process: **American Secretary of State Hillary Clinton** said they were posing additional obstacles to the peace process and that an agreement could only be reached through direct negotiations (AP, November 29, 2012). Condemnations were also voiced by Britain, France, Germany and Russia.

Hamas

- The de-facto Hamas administration allowed a rally to be held on the occasion of the UN vote, attended by an estimated 1,000 Palestinians. It was held in a closed hall in the middle of Gaza City and its theme was "The Rally for Unity and Victory" (Wafa News Agency, November 29, 2012) to lend the issue an air of pan-Palestinian nationalism.
- **Khaled Mashal** said that the UN's recognition of Palestine as a non-member observer state, in conjunction with the most recent confrontation between the Gaza Strip and Israel, was a strategy which would increase the might of the Palestinians. He expressed support for the move in the UN by telling Mahmoud Abbas he wanted the move to be part of an overall Palestinian national strategy which, he said, **included the "armed resistance"** [i.e., terrorist campaign against Israel] (Reuters, November 30, 2012).

Iran

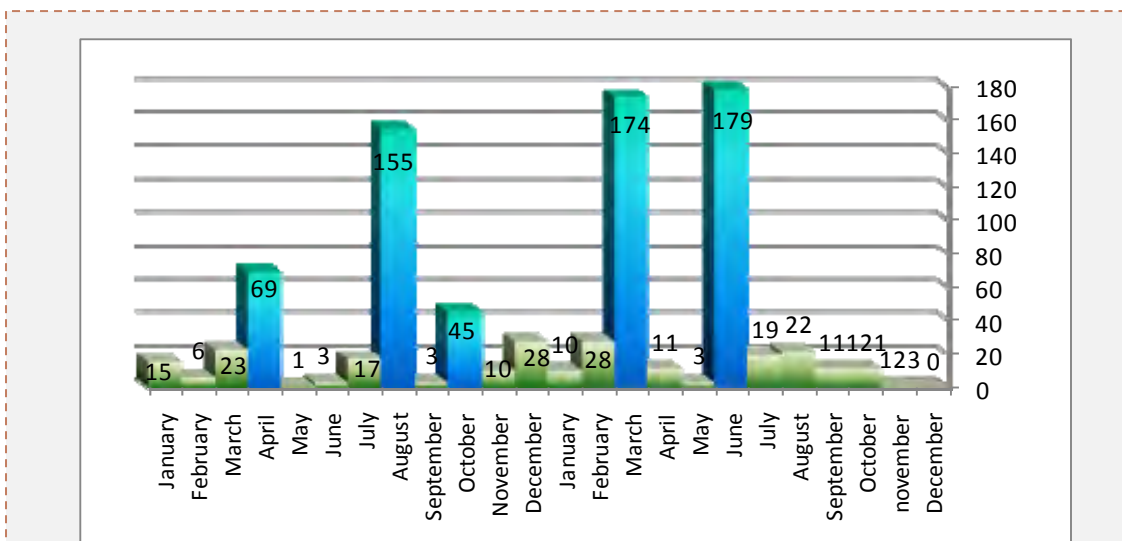
- **Hossein Amir-Abdollahian**, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Arab and African Affairs, said the UN vote it was a positive step that showed how an international organization related to the rights of Palestine and the illegitimacy of the "Zionist regime." He said that it could be viewed as the **first step toward enforcing the absolute rule of Palestine over its historic lands**, the return of all the Palestinians to their homeland and the resistance against Israel (FARS News Agency, Iran, November 30, 2012).

The Gaza Strip

Rocket Fire

- Hamas and the other terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip continue to honor the understandings reached at the end of Operation Pillar of Defense. **Since 2300 hours on November 21 no rockets or mortar shells have been fired into Israeli territory.**

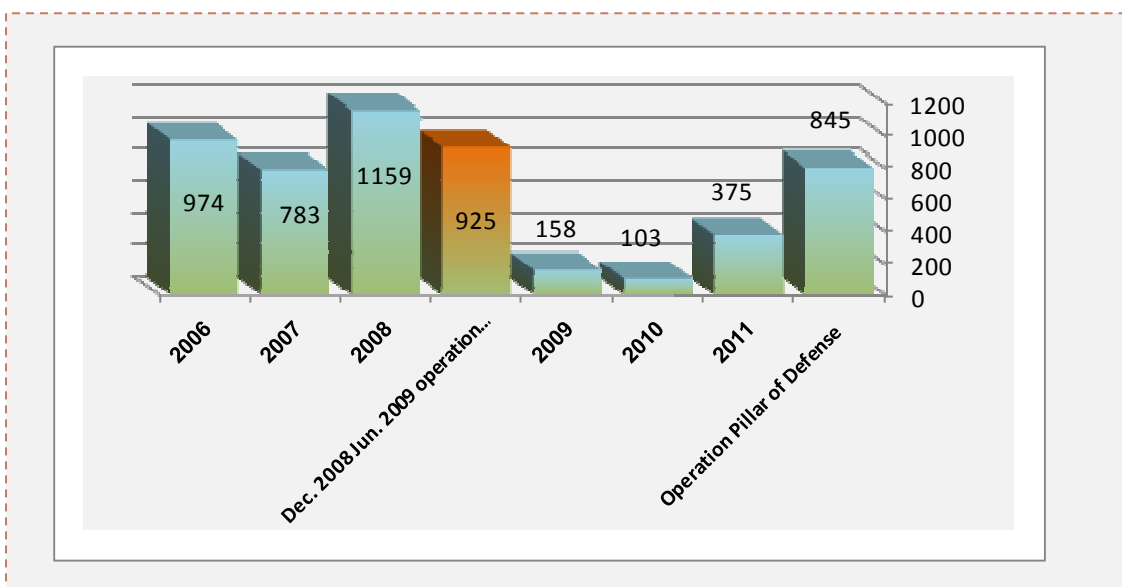
Rocket Hits in Israeli Territory since the Beginning of 2011²



Since the end of Operation Cast Lead, 2,298 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory.

Since the beginning of 2011, 2,197 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory; 1,822 since the beginning of 2012.

Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire³



² As of December 4, 2012. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.

³ The statistics for 2008 and 2009 include rocket hits identified during Operation Cast Lead. They do not include mortar shell fire.

The Situation on the Ground

Friction near the Gaza Strip Security Fence

■ Since the end of Operation Pillar of Defense, **Gazans have gathered daily near the security fence to demonstrate presence and defy Israel.** Some of them also try to cross the fence or damage it. According to reports in the media, since the end of Operation Pillar of Defense, IDF forces have not been operating in the area 300 meters from the fence on the Gaza Strip side, which they did until the operation (the area referred to as "the perimeter").



Palestinians gather near the security force (Hamas forum website)

■ The following were some of the incidents in which IDF forces responded with gunfire to Palestinian provocations near the security fence (according to reports in the Palestinian media):

- On **November 28** the Palestinian media alleged that seven or eight Palestinians had been wounded by IDF fire near the security fence east of the refugee camps of al-Maghazi and al-Bureij. A Palestinian from Khan Yunis was wounded by IDF fire in the region of the Sufa crossing (Safa and Ma'an News Agencies, November 28, 2012).
- On **December 1** the Palestinian media alleged that a Palestinian had died from wounds incurred when he was shot by IDF forces in the Rafah region. In addition, eight Palestinians were allegedly wounded (Alresala.net website, December 1, 2012). In response, Abu Ahmed, spokesman for the military-terrorist wing of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, said that Israel was trying to evade

its commitment to the [ceasefire] agreement, which clearly illustrated its aggressive intentions toward the Palestinian people. He called on the [Egyptian] mediators to make Israel fully honor the lull. He said that if Israel continued to violate the agreement the Palestinians would respond (Jerusalem Brigades website, December 1, 2012).

- On **December 3** the Palestinian media alleged that a Gazan farmer had incurred a minor wound from IDF gunfire near the security fence (close to the Al-Bureij refugee camp) (Qudsnet website, December 3, 2012).

■ **Fathi Hamad**, minister of the interior of the de-facto Hamas administration, said that **the security forces of the Hamas administration were overseeing the 300 meter the so-called "perimeter"] on the Gazan side of the security fence** (Website of the Hamas administration's ministry of the interior, December 2, 2012).

Deliberations in Egypt to Complete the Lull Agreement

■ According to reports in the Arab media, on **November 27** indirect Israel-Palestinian talks were held through Egyptian mediation. The Egyptians met with the Palestinian delegation, headed by **Ziad Zaza**, deputy head of the Hamas administration, and with the Israeli delegation. A senior Hamas figure present at the meeting said that the negotiations dealt primarily with implementing the articles of the agreement dealing with "lifting the [so-called Israeli] siege" (Al-Hayat, November 29, 2012). Ziad Zaza said that in the indirect negotiations authorization had been given for international commercial concerns and institutions to deliver all the materials necessary to rebuild the Gaza Strip. He said the authorization would ensure the implementation of articles of the lull agreement (Safa News Agency, November 29, 2012).

Judea and Samaria

Terrorist Operative Killed while Attacking Israeli Security Personnel

■ On the morning of December 3, a **Palestinian** resident of one of the village in the Tulkarm district, used his vehicle to attack Israeli security personnel and then rushed at them holding an axe. The Palestinian media reported that his name was Hatem Mustafa Shadid and that he was a construction worker from the village of Alar (north of Tulkarm) (Ma'an and Safa News Agencies, December 3, 2012).

■ The initial investigation of the incident revealed that during operational security activities in the region of Deir Sharaf (a village between southeast of Shavei Shomron

in the Nablus district), a Palestinian swerved his vehicle and rammed into a jeep. The jeep was overturned and its passengers incurred cuts and bruises. The Palestinian then jumped out of his vehicle and rushed the jeep brandishing an axe and shouting "Allahu akbar." He wounded two of the Israeli passengers; another shot and killed him. Five security personnel were wounded in the incident (IDF Spokesman, December 3, 2012).

Weapons Seized in Judea and Samaria

■ On the night of November 28, in an operation conducted by Israeli security forces in the village of Yatta (near Hebron), a large quantity of weapons and ammunition was seized, including a pistol, ammunition for a heavy machine gun, ammunition for a sniper rifle and military equipment; knives were also found (IDF Spokesman, November 29, 2012).



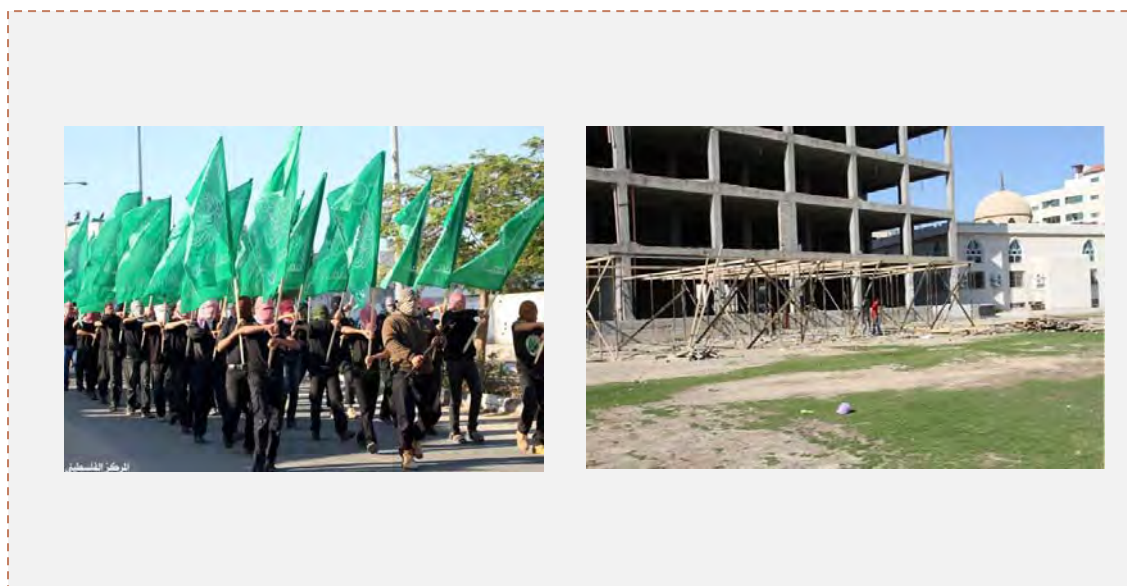
Some of the weapons seized in Yatta (IDF Spokesman's website, November 28, 2012)

The Situation in the Gaza Strip

The 25th Anniversary of the Founding of Hamas

■ Hamas spokesman **Fawzi Barhoum** told a press conference held near the house of Hamas founder Ahmed Yassin that events for the 25th anniversary of the founding of Hamas had officially begun. The high point would come on December 8 (Al-Aqsa TV, November 29, 2012). A senior source in Hamas confirmed that the main rally, held on December 8, **would be attended by Khaled Mashal**, chairman of Hamas' Executive Committee, and that he would be accompanied by other senior Hamas figures as well

as high-ranking members of the Egyptian administration (Safa News Agency, November 29, 2012). If Khaled Mashal actually attends it will be the first time he sets foot in the Gaza Strip.



Left: The Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades on parade for the 25th anniversary of the founding of Hamas (Palestine-info website, December 3, 2012). Right: Erecting the stage in the Al-Katiba plaza in the center of Gaza City in preparation for a Hamas rally (Hamas forum website, November 28, 2012).

The Hamas-Iran Connection

■ Senior Hamas figures continue praising Iran for its military support of the Gaza Strip: **Ali Barake**, Hamas representative in Lebanon, said in an interview **that Iran was the principal military and financial supporter** of most of the Palestinian [terrorist] organizations in the Gaza Strip, and did not, he said, demand anything in return or impose conditions. He stressed that the ties between Hamas and Iran were strategic and continued even after Hamas had announced its position on Syria. He added that during Operation Pillar of Defense a senior Iranian had contacted him every day for updates. The Iranian has said Iran was ready to provide material and military support during the operation, in the name of its "ideological and moral commitment." As for the long-range M75 rockets fired during Operation Pillar of Defense, said Barake, they were the local version of the Fajr-5, whose technology had come from Iran (NTV, November 25, 2012).

Propaganda Events

■ A new initiative is being organized, this one called the **March Freedom Ride**. According to its organizers, its objective is to make the public aware of the "condition of the Palestinian communities in the Jordan Valley and the south Hebron region." The events will take place between March 17 and 27, and will include joint agricultural labor with local Palestinian farmers, construction and rebuilding work, and being present on the ground to protect the Palestinians, what the organizers refer to as "protective presence activity." There will be guided tours, workshops and cultural events. Activists interested in participating are asked to pay \$35 a day to cover expenses. A group sponsored by the Free Theatre is organizing to tour Judea and Samaria by bus (ISM website, November 28, 2012).