



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

February 12 – 18, 2014



Terrorist attack carried out by the Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, the most prominent terrorist organization affiliated the global jihad in the Sinai Peninsula, targeting a tourist bus on the Egyptian side of the Taba terminal (Facebook pages of Al-Youm Al-Sabea and Al-Masri Al-Youm, February 16, 2014). Four people were killed.

Overview

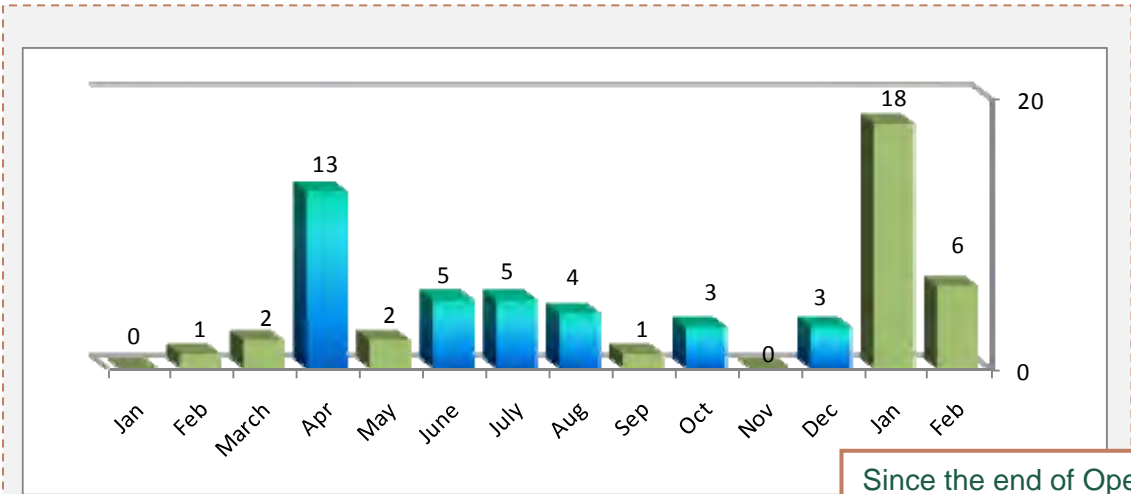
- This past week rocket fire from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory continued. In Judea and Samaria violent "popular resistance" attacks continued.
- On February 16, 2014, there was an explosion on a tourist bus a few dozen yards from the Taba terminal on the Egyptian side of the border. Four people were killed and 13 wounded. Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, the most prominent terrorist organization affiliated with the global jihad in the Sinai Peninsula, claimed responsibility for the attack. The organization has carried out many terrorist attacks against the Egyptian security forces and has fired a number of rockets targeting Israel's southernmost city of Eilat. Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis called on foreigners currently in the Sinai Peninsula to leave Egypt, a clear indication of its intention to destroy Egyptian tourism and damage the Egyptian regime.

The Situation in Israel's South

Rocket Fire

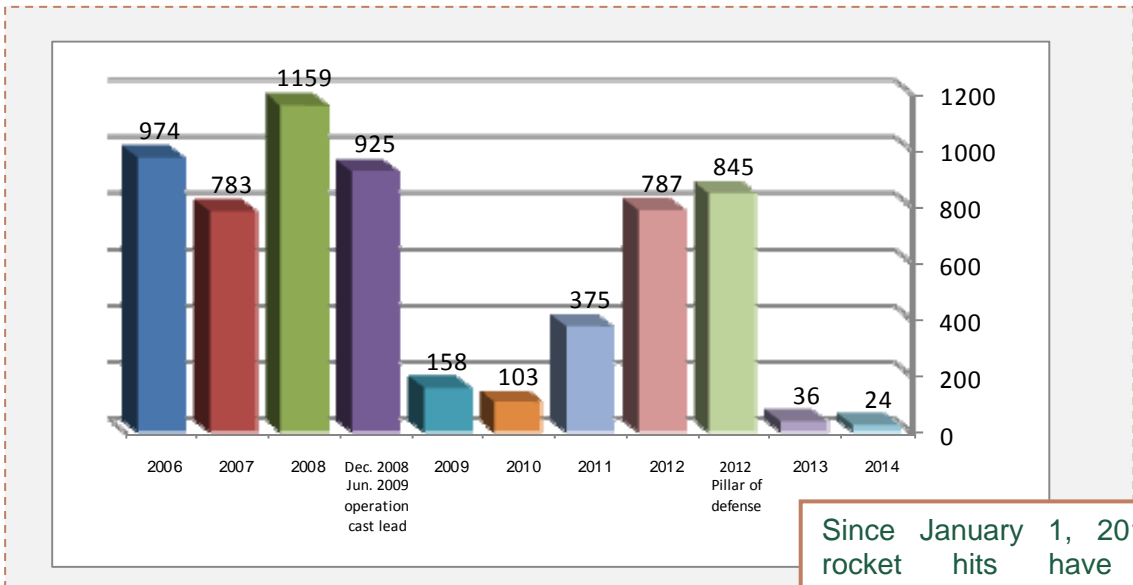
■ On February 14, 2014, two rocket hits were identified in the western Negev. One fell near hothouses in one of the villages. There were no casualties and no damage was reported.

Rocket Hits in Israeli Territory since January 1, 2013¹



Since the end of Operation Pillar of Defense (November 2012), 63 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory, including eight rockets fired at the southern Israeli city of Eilat.

Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire²



Since January 1, 2013, 63 rocket hits have been identified.

¹ As February 18, 2014. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire and rocket hits inside the Gaza Strip.

² The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.

Judea and Samaria

Palestinian Violence Continues

- This past week violent incidents continued in Judea and Samaria, part of the so-called "popular resistance." Stones were thrown at Israeli civilians and Israeli security forces and Molotov cocktails were thrown at vehicles on main roads.
- On **February 12, 2014**, an Israeli Border Police force conducted a routine check of vehicles on one the cross-Judea roads, stopping a car with five Palestinian passengers from Qalandia. In the car were two M-16 assault rifles, magazines and ammunition (Tazpit News Agency, February 12, 2014)



Palestinians throw stones at Israeli security forces in the village of Qadoum during the weekly Friday riot (Wafa News Agency, February 14, 2014).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

The Rafah Crossing

- **The Rafah crossing continues operating intermittently.** Ahmed Abu Ras, assistant Qatari representative in the Gaza Strip, said that he had received assurances from the Egyptians that they would increase the number of days the crossing was open to at least three a week. He said that would make it possible to deliver building materials to the Gaza Strip (Alresala.net, February 12, 2014).

Gazan Statements regarding the Continuation of the Lull

■ With the growing tension between Israel and the Gaza Strip during the past few weeks following rocket fire into Israeli territory, the targeted killings in response and the Gazans' demonstrations of defiance toward Israel, senior Hamas figures related to the lull agreement as follows:

- Hamas spokesman **Sami Abu Zuhri** warned Israel not to continue "violating the lull agreement," saying Israel should not test the "patience of the Palestinian resistance" (Safa News Agency, February 15, 2014).
- **Ihab al-Ghussin**, spokesman for the de-facto Hamas administration, said that the Hamas administration had indirect contacts with Egypt and the EU regarding Israel's "violations" of the lull agreement. He called on them to exert pressure on Israel to stop the violations. He said if Israel continued, it might lead to "new developments" and the end of the lull (Sama News Agency, February 16, 2014).
- **Khader Habib**, a senior member of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), called on the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip to examine a response to what he called "Israel's return to the policy of eliminations." He said Israel had threatened to renew the policy and was now implementing it. Therefore, he said, all the organizations had to examine the issue, because the lack of response meant Israel would continue (Shihab website, February 10, 2014).

Ismail Haniya's Position on the Negotiations with Israel

■ **Ismail Haniya**, head of the Hamas administration, said that **Hamas would not be committed by any Israeli-Palestinian agreement brokered by the Americans**. He said **Hamas would not give up "one inch of the land of Palestine"** or any other Palestinian "right." He also said that Hamas adhered to "**overall resistance**" in all its forms [i.e., including an armed campaign] as the only strategy for "liberation" (Safa News Agency, February 15, 2014).

Conflict between UNRWA and the Hamas Ministry of Education

■ **The Hamas ministry of education attacked UNRWA over the agency's school curriculum**. Hamas claimed it had asked UNRWA to make changes in three of its textbooks dealing with human rights. The textbooks are used in the seventh, eighth and ninth grades. According to Hamas, UNRWA had made only a small amount of the

necessary changes. Sources in the Hamas ministry of education also claimed that the human rights curriculum had been included in the schools without its knowledge or approval.

■ The Hamas ministry of education criticized the following topics (Website of the Hamas ministry of education and the Safa News Agency, February 11, 2014):

- **Human rights** – The textbooks contain a declaration of universal human rights, including the right to **marry freely**, that is, a Muslim can marry a Jew or a Christian. According to the Hamas ministry of education, **that is against Muslim religious law**. Moreover, the declaration appears under the heading of freedom of thought which entitles a person to convert to a different religion. **That is considered heresy in Islam, the punishment for which is death.**
- **The Palestinian cause** – According to Hamas, the textbooks' descriptions of the Palestinians' suffering is superficial and the information about the *nakba* [the "catastrophe" visited upon the Palestinians in 1948 is inaccurate. In addition, the books contain distortions regarding the problem of the Palestinian refugees.
- **The issue of the "resistance"** [i.e., Palestinian terrorism] – The textbooks present the so-called "peaceful resistance" as the solution for the conflict. In addition, an attempt is made to develop negative emotions and arouse hatred among the students for the "armed resistance."

■ **In view of its objections, the Hamas ministry of education presented UNRWA with an ultimatum demanding it change its human rights curriculum.** After **Osama al-Muzeini**, the Hamas minister of education, met with a UNRWA committee, the ministry of education announced that an agreement had been reached. According to the announcement, UNRWA would freeze its human rights curriculum because of the ministry's "unwillingness to compromise and tough stand" (Hamas ministry of education website). It was later reported that the two sides had agreed to appoint a joint committee to reexamine the curriculum. Hamas said in an announcement that the committee would ensure that no new subjects would be taught in UNRWA schools without formal authorization from the ministry of education (Safa News Agency, February 13, 2014).

■ It was not the first disagreement between Hamas and UNRWA over the agency's school curriculum. Hamas regards itself as in charge of educating the younger generation according to its radical ideology, and does not tolerate any deviation or

competition from any other institution [i.e., UNRWA] in the Gaza Strip, as demonstrated in the past by its denial of the issue of the Holocaust.³

The Palestinian Authority

The Negotiations with Israel

■ In expectation of the text of the framework agreement and for American suggestions for continuing the negotiations, senior figures in the Palestinian Authority (PA) again stated the PA's position and its "red lines:"

- **Saeb Erekat**, a member of the PLO's Executive Committee and head of the Palestinian negotiating team, appealed to American Secretary of State John Kerry to examine the framework for the peace process: the establishment of two states based on the 1967 borders, full Israeli withdrawal from the "occupied territories," recognition of Jerusalem as the Palestinian capital and the release of all the Palestinian prisoners (Al-Ayam, February 13, 2014). He also said that the PA opposed extending the negotiations and that it would not accept any idea inconsistent with international law, such as recognizing Israel as a Jewish state (Voice of Palestine, February 12, 2014).
- Meeting in London with members of the local Palestinian community, **Saeb Erekat** reiterated that the Palestinian leadership would not agree to extend the negotiations [after the allotted nine months] "by even one minute." He said Israel had exploited the talks to build 10,000 housing units in the settlements and that all Israel had proposed so far was a state with two apparatuses and not a solution based on two states (Al-Ayam, February 16, 2014).
- **Nabil Abu Rudeina**, spokesman for the PA's presidential office, said that the framework for the agreement proposed by John Kerry had to include the following conditions: recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian state, gradual Israeli withdrawal from "the occupied Palestinian territories" within three to four years, and the PLO's recognition of Israel as part of the mutual recognition agreement of 1993 without the need to recognize Israel as a Jewish state (Al-Ayam, February 12, 2014).

³ For further information see the November 1, 2012 bulletin " [Hamas and Holocaust Denial.](#)"

Mahmoud Abbas Meets a Delegation of Israeli Students

■ On **February 16, 2014**, Mahmoud Abbas met a delegation of Israeli students in the Muqata'a in Ramallah. He spoke about the main issues and stressed the PA's commitment not to return to violence and bloodshed if the American efforts failed.



**Mahmoud Abbas meets with Israeli students in Ramallah
(Wafa News Agency, February 16, 2014).**

■ The following were the main issues he raised (Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda and Haaretz, February 17, 2014):

- **The negotiation process** – According to Mahmoud Abbas, any peace arrangement had to be based on international legitimacy, similar to that on which Israel was founded. He said that peace should not be allowed to slip through [Israel and Palestinian] fingers. However, he said, as far as he was concerned it was not necessary to extend the negotiations with Israel as long as there was a proposal that could serve as a genuine basis for a future arrangement.
- **The future of Jerusalem** – The Palestinians want Jerusalem to be recognized as the capital of the Palestinian state. However, Mahmoud Abbas did not see a reason to divide it again. He said a Palestinian municipality could be established in east Jerusalem, while there would be an Israeli municipality in west Jerusalem, and both would be subordinate to a higher body that would supervise and coordinate between the two.
- **The Palestinian refugees** – The solution would be in the spirit of the Arab initiative, that is an agreed-upon solution and not one imposed by force.

- **Recognition of Israel as a Jewish state** – According to Mahmoud Abbas, the demand presented a obstacle to peace. If Netanyahu wanted Israel recognized as a Jewish state, he should appeal to the UN. He added that Israel had not made that demand at Oslo or in the past to Egypt and Jordan when it signed peace agreements with them.
 - **Hamas participation** – Mahmoud Abbas explained that any future agreement would include the Gaza Strip. He said that the Hamas leadership had informed him that if an agreement were reached on Palestinian terms and with Palestinian consensus, Hamas would agree to it (**Note:** Hamas has repeatedly made it clear that Mahmoud Abbas does not represent it or its positions, and that it will reject any agreement reached by the PA.).
- In the Palestinian street criticism was heard against Mahmoud Abbas and the meeting. Before it was held dozens of Palestinians protested, waved signs condemning it and chanted slogans demanding Mahmoud Abbas not meet with "representatives of the occupation." The social networks were flooded with strong personal attacks on Mahmoud Abbas because of the meeting.



Criticism of the meeting posted by a Palestinian student on his Facebook page: "The four 'NOs' of the head of Fatah, the PLO and the PA [Mahmoud Abbas], who wants to follow the instructions of Uncle Kerry: 1- NO to the return of the refugees. 2- NO to Jerusalem. 3- NO to removing the settlements. 4- NO to the resistance" (Qudsnet website, February 17, 2014).

Removing the Notation of "Religion" on Palestinian ID Cards

- PA chairman Mahmoud Abbas said in an announcement that Palestinian ID cards would no longer state the religion of the bearer. **Hassan al-Alawi**, deputy PA minister

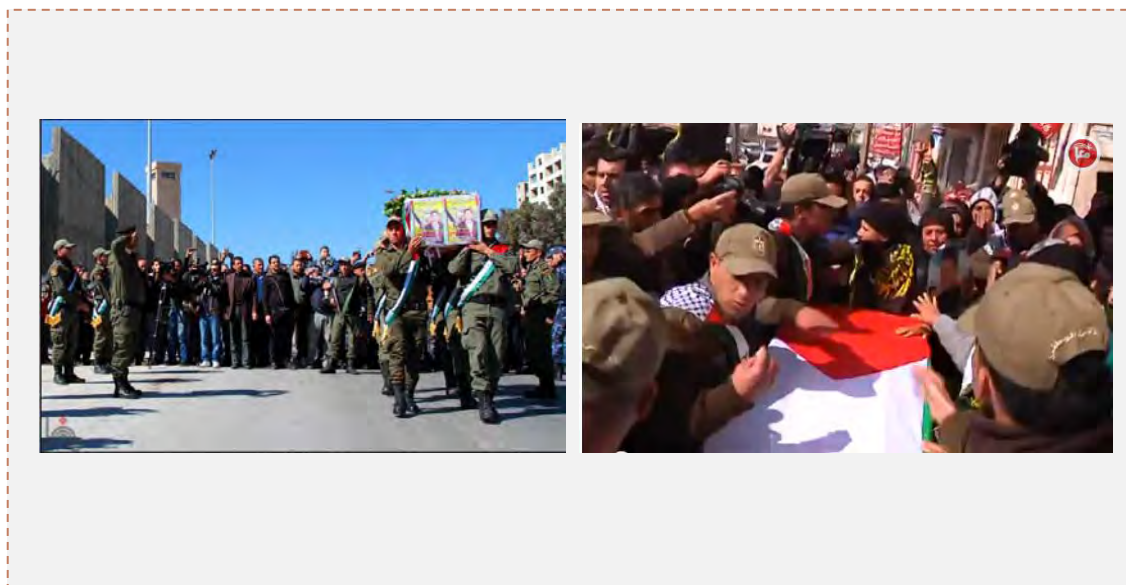
of the interior, said that the decision was in accordance with the law of fundamental equal rights (Ma'an News Agency and the Chinese News Agency, February 13, 2014).

■ **Muhammad Faraj al-Ghoul**, a Hamas member of the Palestinian Legislative Council and former minister of justice, said Hamas objected to the decision, calling it illegal and "a crime against the Palestinian people" (PalPress website, February 15, 2014).

More Remains of Terrorists Returned to the PA

■ As part of the Israeli Supreme Court's decision to return the remains of Palestinian terrorist operatives to the PA, this past week the remains of two more bodies were transferred to the PA:

- **Muhammad Mustafa Shahin** (al-Darabia'), PIJ terrorist operative, who carried out a terrorist attack in the yeshiva of Otniel (south Mt. Hebron) on December 27, 2002. He killed four yeshiva students and wounded nine. A military funeral was held for him in the village of Dura, attended by official PA representatives, among them the governor of Hebron and representatives of the Palestinian terrorist organizations. Hamas, Fatah, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and other flags were waved (Ma'an News Agency TV channel, February 17, 2014).
- **Habash Hanani**, terrorist operative, who killed three yeshiva high school students in the Jewish village of Itamar on May 29, 2002. A funeral with full military honors was held for him by the PA in the village of Bayt Furiq (near Nablus). It was attended by several hundred people, including the governor of Nablus and other senior figures. His coffin was draped with the Fatah flag, which was also waved at the funeral.



The funerals held for the two terrorist operatives. Left: The funeral of Habash Hanani in the village of Bayt Furiq (Wafa News Agency, February 17, 2014). Right: Operatives of Palestinian general security carry the coffin of terrorist operative Muhammad Shahin (Ma'an News Agency TV channel, February 17, 2014)

The Global Jihad

Terrorists Attack Tourist Bus in the Sinai Peninsula

- On the afternoon of **February 16, 2014**, there was an explosion on a tourist bus several dozen yards from the Taba terminal on the Egyptian side of the Israeli-Egyptian border. On the bus were 33 South Korean passengers en route from the Sinai Peninsula to Israel. **Three passengers and the bus driver were killed.** Thirteen passengers suffered injuries of various degrees.
- Immediately after the attack the **Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis** Tweeted that its operatives were responsible. The organization said in an announcement that foreigners in the Sinai Peninsula were to leave Egyptian territory within four days (Fars News Agency, Iran, February 16, 2014). The following day the organization issued a formal statement claiming responsibility for the attack, claiming it had been a suicide bombing attack.
- There is no verification for the organization's claim that it was in fact a suicide bombing attack. According to initial information, a bomb had apparently been introduced into the bus or placed alongside it. It is possible that the organization's announcement was intended to glorify the attack and gain prestige among the organizations affiliated with Al-Qaeda and the global jihad.



Left: The official announcement from Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis claiming responsibility for the attack (Al-Wafd, February 18, 2014). Right: The burned-out shell of the bus (DW Media Center, February 17, 2014).

■ The **Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis** is a Salafist-jihadi organization affiliated the global jihad and the most prominent terrorist organization operating in the Sinai Peninsula. **It has carried out many attacks** on the Egyptian security forces. In many instances it has also claimed responsibility for firing rockets from the Sinai Peninsula targeting Eilat, Israel's southernmost city (most recently the three rockets fired in January 2014).

The Battle for Hearts and Minds

Jibril Rajoub Calls for a Sports Boycott of Israel

■ On February 12, 2014, **Jibril Rajoub**, a member of Fatah's Central Committee and chairman of the Palestinian soccer association, held a press conference in Ramallah. He said that the Palestinian soccer association had appointed committees that would operate regionally and internationally to publicize Israel's so-called actions against Palestinian sports. He said that in preparation for the meeting of the youth and sports ministers of the Arab-Muslim world planned for April 2014, he intended to promote a program to boycott Israel in sports (Website of the Palestinian soccer association, February 12, 2014). It was not the first time Jibril Rajoub used his position as head of the Palestinian soccer association to attempt to boycott Israel in international sports.



Jibril Rajoub holds a press conference calling for boycotting Israel in sports
(Website of the Palestinian soccer association, February 12, 2014)

Israeli Products Boycotted at Al-Najah University Cafeteria in Nablus



A sign in the cafeteria in Al-Najah University claiming that no Israeli products are sold there
(Facebook page of the Islamic Bloc at Al-Najah University, Nablus, February 11, 2014).