



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

February 26 – March 4, 2014



Hamis security service operatives patrol the Israel-Gaza border to keep Gazans away from the area. Opposite them are IDF forces (Fatah Facebook page, March 1, 2014).

Overview

- This past week a young Israeli man was stabbed in the back at a gas station near the Geha Interchange east of Tel Aviv. The Israeli security forces detained a Palestinian from Nablus who claimed he had attacked the man in retaliation for Israeli security force actions against Palestinians. Stabbing attacks are a common modus operandi of the so-called "popular resistance."
- Israeli Air Force aircraft struck two terrorist squads in the Gaza Strip as part of Israel's efforts to prevent rocket fire. In one instance a squad was struck as it was making final preparation to fire rockets into Israel. This past week demonstrations of defiance were carried out by Gazans at the border security fence. The Palestinian media reported that that Hamas' security services did not allow the demonstrators to reach the fence.
- According to an initial report, an Egyptian court designated Hamas as a terrorist organization. The ruling has to be ratified by the Egyptian government.

The Situation in Israel's South

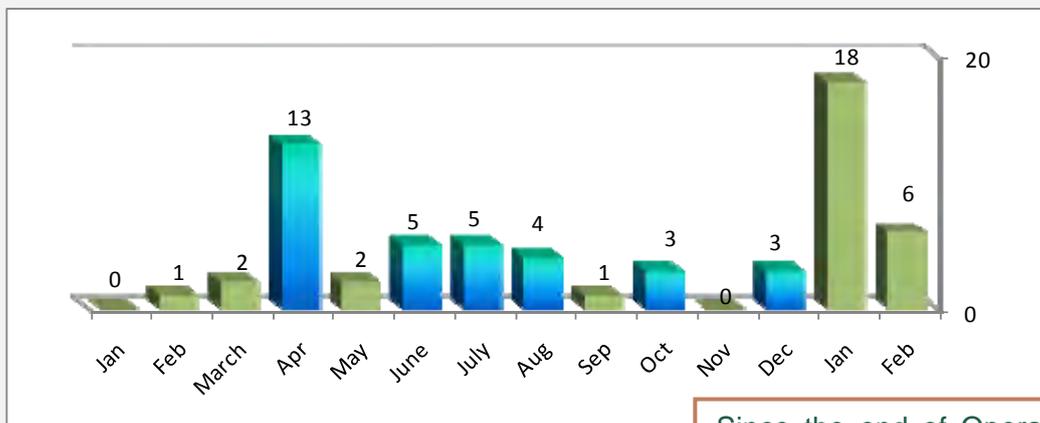
Israeli Stabbed by Palestinian from Nablus

■ On **March 2, 2014**, a young ultra-Orthodox Israeli man was stabbed in the back at a gas station near the Geha Interchange east of Tel Aviv. He was seriously injured and evacuated to a hospital. The initial investigation revealed that a group of ultra-Orthodox men walked past the gas station when suddenly a man stabbed one of them in the back and fled. The Israeli security forces apprehended a number of suspects. One of them, 34 years old, from Nablus, claimed he carried out the attack in retaliation for Israeli security force actions against Palestinians (Israeli news websites, March 2, 2014).¹

Rocket Fire

■ This past week there was no rocket fire from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory.

Rocket Hits in Israeli Territory since January 1, 2013²

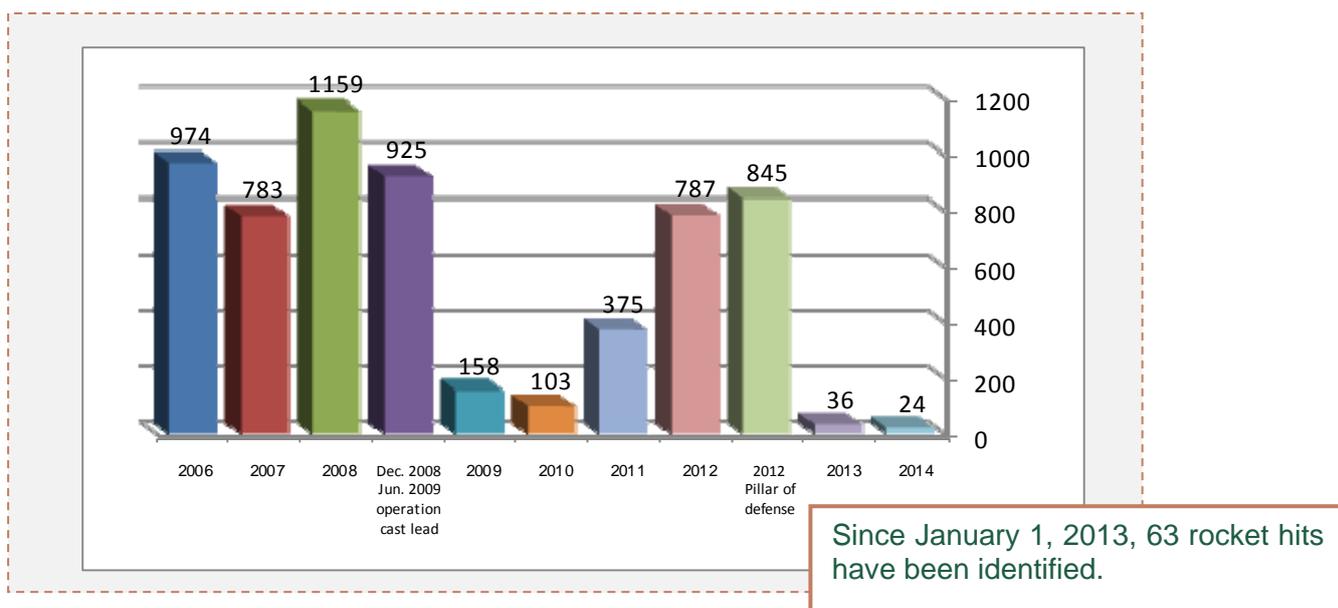


Since the end of Operation Pillar of Defense (November 2012), 63 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory, including eight rockets fired at the southern Israeli city of Eilat.

¹ For further information about stabbing attacks, see the November 19, 2013 bulletin ["The Fatal Stabbing Attack of an Israeli Soldier at the Afula Central Bus Station is a Widespread Modus Operandi that is Relatively Easy to Carry Out, Constituting Part of the Palestinian "Popular Resistance" Attacks. The PA and Fatah Support the "Popular Resistance", Presenting it \(Falsely\) as a Non-violent Struggle."](#)

² As March 4, 2014. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire and rocket hits inside the Gaza Strip.

Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire³



Preemptive Israeli Attacks

■ This past week Israeli Air Force (IAF) aircraft struck terrorist targets as part of Israel's measures to prevent rocket fire from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory:

- On the evening of **February 27, 2014**, IAF aircraft struck a terrorist target in the northern Gaza Strip (Ynet, February 27, 2014). The Palestinian media reported that an Israeli plane had attacked a field east of Beit Hanoun and that no one had been injured (Safa News Agency, Alresala.net website, Paltoday.ps, February 28, 2014).
- On **March 3, 2014**, IAF aircraft struck a terrorist squad in the northern Gaza Strip making final preparations to fire rockets into Israeli territory (IDF Spokesman, March 3, 2014). The Palestinian media reported that two Gazans had been killed in Beit Hanoun and a third had been wounded. **The picture of one of the Gazans killed, Musab Musa al-Za'anin, showed him dressed in the uniform of the Jerusalem Brigades, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)'s military-terrorist wing** (Safa News Agency, Paltoday.ps, Ma'an News Agency and Quds.net, March 3, 2014).

³ The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.



Musab Musa al-Za'anin, killed in the IAF strike, wearing the uniform of the Jerusalem Brigades, the PIJ's military-terrorist wing (Quds.net, March 3, 2014).

Friday Demonstrations on the Gaza Strip Border

- On Friday, **February 28, 2014**, as in past weeks, demonstrations of defiance were held by Gazans at several locations along the border fence between the Gaza Strip and Israel. During one demonstration dozens of Palestinians vandalized and then crossed the security fence east of Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip (Safa News Agency, February 28, 2014).
- According to reports, the security services of the de-facto Hamas administration put up roadblocks and deployed operatives in the region to keep demonstrators from reaching the border. It was also reported that Hamas had been sent a message by Egypt that the weekly demonstrations along the border with Israel violated the lull agreement (Paltoday.ps, February 28, 2014). **Islam Shahwan**, spokesman for the Hamas administration's ministry of the interior, said that the security services had prevented demonstrators from reaching the security fence because of concern for their lives, lest the Israeli forces shoot at them. However, he added that they did not keep them from expressing their opinions (Safa News Agency, February 28, 2014).

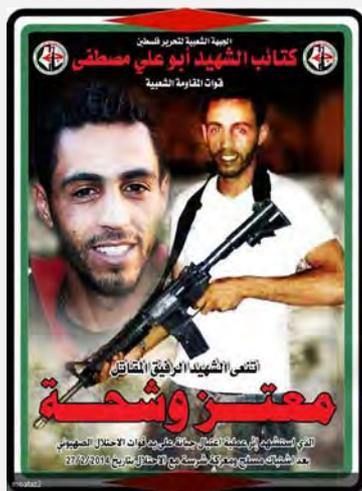


Hamis security services disperse a gathering of young Palestinians near an IDF post in the region of the village of Nahal Oz, east of Gaza City (Filastin Al-'Aan, February 25, 2014).

Judea and Samaria

Palestinian Suspected of Terrorist Activity Killed by Israeli Security Forces

- On the morning of **February 27, 2014**, Israeli security forces surrounded a building in the village of Beir Zeit (north of Ramallah) with the intention of detaining three Palestinians suspected of involvement in terrorist activities. Two of them were captured, while the third refused to exit the building. After several hours during which the suspect continued to remain inside, refusing to exit, the force opened fire and killed him (Ynet, February 27, 2014).
- The Palestinian media reported the death of **Mu'ataz Washha**, 25 years old, a Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) terrorist operative who had formerly been imprisoned in Israel. Hundreds of Palestinians attended his funeral. After the funeral there were clashes between Palestinians and the Israeli security forces the Atarot roadblock (north of Jerusalem), in which four Palestinians were wounded (Wafa and Safa news agencies, February 28, 2014).



Left: The PFLP's notice of Mu'ataz Washha's death (PFLP Facebook page, February 27, 2014).
Right: Muataz Washha's funeral. The red flags bear the insignia of the PFLP (Wafa News Agency, February 28, 2014).

■ The Palestinian Authority (PA) condemned the killing of Mu'ataz Washha, calling it "a new escalation, one that joins the series of killings" carried out by Israel. The PA called on the international community and human rights organizations to act responsibly and intervene to stop what it called Israel's so-called "escalation" (Wafa News Agency, February 27, 2014). **Husam Badran**, a Hamas spokesman, condemned the killing, which he called an "execution," and called for a response to the death and for an end to be put to Israel violations (Quds Press, February 27, 2014).



Al-Ayam's daily cartoon dedicated to the memory of terrorist operative Mu'ataz Washha. The caption reads "In the country of shaheeds...the shaheed Mu'ataz Washha" (Al-Ayam, February 28, 2014).

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. Friday riots were held at the traditional friction points (Bil'in, Ni'lin, Nebi Saleh, Qadoun, Beit Umar, etc.)
- The most prominent event occurred on **the Temple Mount** on **February 26, 2014**. Dozens of Palestinians, some of the masked, threw stones and small explosive detonators at the Israeli security forces. They also tried to burn the door leading to the Temple Mount and burned Israeli flags. The riot occurred after several dozen Palestinians reached the site during the night. They had brought with them the body of a Palestinian prisoner from east Jerusalem who died in a hospital while being treated for cancer. The police force securing the Temple Mount prevented them from entering the precinct and a riot broke out. There were no casualties and no suspects were detained (Ynet, February 27, 2014). The disturbances continued the following day (Friday) because as a result of the riot, Israel put restrictions on the age of Palestinians permitted to enter the Temple Mount to pray.



Left: Burning the Israeli flag (YouTube, February 26, 2014). Right: Confrontations between Palestinians and the Israeli security forces on the Temple Mount (Filastin Al-'Aan, February 27, 2014).



Palestinians throw stones at the Israeli security forces in east Jerusalem (Wafa News Agency, February 28, 2014).

■ Other events:

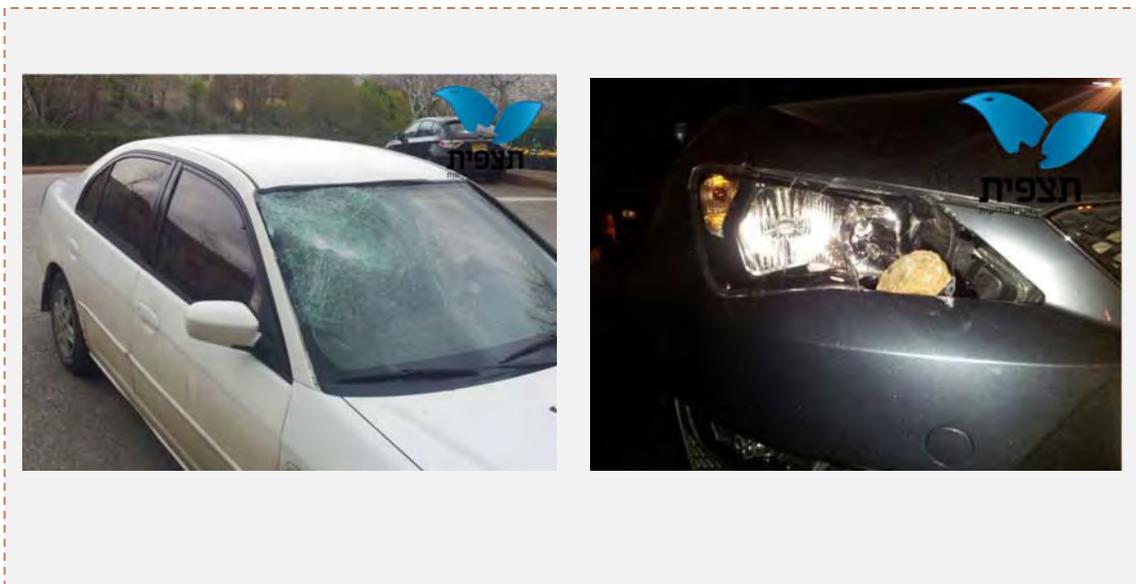
- **March 1, 2014** – The Israeli security forces took an M-16 assault rifle from a vehicle at the Te'enim crossing (near Tulkarm). The rifle had been dismantled and was on the back seat of the car. It was the second time this month that a weapon was seized at the Te'enim crossing (IDF Spokesman, March 1, 2014).



The rifle found in the car (IDF Spokesman, March 1, 2014).

- **March 1, 2014** – Palestinians threw stones at Israeli vehicles on Route 443 in the region of Atarot (north of Jerusalem), resulting in the closure of the road. A number of vehicles were damaged. The road was reopened after approximately 25 minutes (Tazpit News Agency, March 1, 2014).

- **February 27, 2014** – Palestinians threw stones at an Israeli vehicle near Luban al-Sharqia (Ramallah district). There were no casualties but the vehicle was seriously damaged.
- **February 26, 2014** – A Molotov cocktail was thrown at an Israel vehicle near the Jewish village of Izhar (south of Nablus). A few minutes later four Molotov cocktails were thrown at an Israeli bus and vehicle near the Jewish village of Megadlim (on the trans-Samarian highway). Two people were injured and the bus and vehicle were damaged. In a different attack, Palestinians threw stones at cars near the Arab village of Azoun (between Nablus and Qalqiliya). The car was seriously damaged (Tazpit News Agency, February 26, 2014).



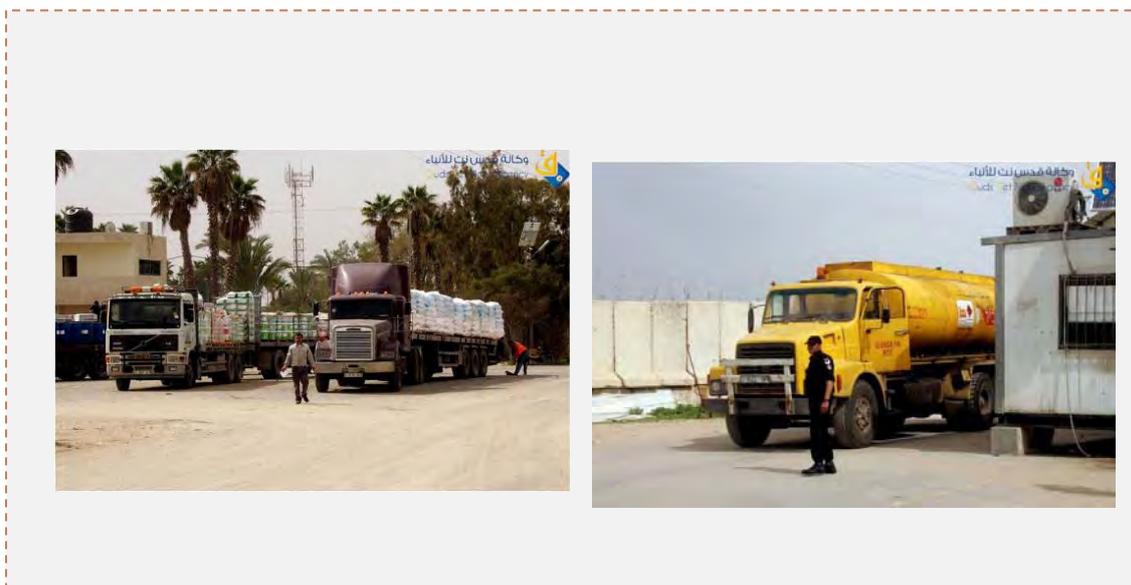
The cars hit by stones near Azoun
(Photo by Seraya Diamant for the Tazpit News Agency, February 26, 2014).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

The Rafah Crossing

- This past week the Rafah crossing was closed with the exception of **February 25, 2014**, when it opened for Palestinians entering the Gaza Strip, primarily pilgrims who had been delayed in Egypt (Ma'an News Agency, February 27, 2014). The Hamas administration's ministry of the interior called on Egypt to take responsibility, open the crossing immediately and keep it open, and not to participate in the so-called "siege" of the Gaza Strip. According to the announcement from the Hamas ministry of the interior, since the beginning of 2014 the Rafah crossing had been open for only nine days,

while the Erez and Kerem Shalom crossings, on the Israeli border, were almost continuously open (Al-Ra'i, March 2, 2014).



Operations at the Kerem Shalom crossing in the presence of activists from the Hamas administration's security services (Quds.net, February 25, 2014).

■ Protests against the closing of the Rafah crossing continued. On **February 28, 2014**, a mass prayer was held in front of the gate on the Gazan side. **Hamas spokesmen** reported that they would escalate their non-violent protests until the [so-called] siege was lifted (Ma'an News Agency, February 28, 2014). Hamas spokesmen appealed to the Egyptian authorities, saying the following:

- **Ghazi Hamed**, deputy minister of foreign affairs of the Hamas administration, said that Egypt had been displeased by the erection of the protest tent (Filastin al-Yawm, March 1, 2014). He criticized Egypt, saying that it was out of the question that the Rafah crossing be closed for 23 days straight, and demanded the Egyptian authorities take responsibility for the Gaza Strip (Shihab website, March 1, 2014)
- **Hamad al-Rakab**, Hamas spokesman for the Khan Yunis district, called on all the UN agencies and international institutions to stop the infringements of the Palestinians' rights and to take action on the ground to lift the "siege." He said Hamas demanded that the Egyptian authorities open the Rafah crossing in both directions and keep it open (Safa News Agency, February 28, 2014).



Mass prayers held in front of the closed Rafah crossing (Filastin Al-'Aan, February 28, 2014)

Egypt-Hamas Relations Deteriorate

- According to an initial report, **on March 4, 2014, an Egyptian court designated Hamas as a terrorist organization.** It was also reported that the ruling still has to be authorized by the government. If the ruling becomes law, all Hamas activities will be forbidden throughout Egypt and all its assets will be confiscated (Ynet, March 4, 2014).
- Before the court announced the ruling, **Hamas issued a formal statement in which it strongly condemned the discussions being held about the issue of designating it as a terrorist organization.** Hamas called the move "a precedent, a serious development and a deviation from all mutual international conventions and relations." Hamas accused Egypt of making a political move that sided with Israel ("Designating the Hamas movement as a terrorist organization is a Zionist classification"). The statement again strongly stated that all Hamas activity was directed exclusively against "the Zionist enemy" and that it had never interfered in Egypt's internal affairs (Hamasinfo.net, March 2, 2014).
- Senior Hamas figures strongly denounced the Egyptian move:
 - **Musa Abu Marzouq**, a member of the Hamas political bureau, said that the Egyptian court's designation of Hamas as a terrorist organization was the same as "a covenant with the Israeli occupation" (Filastin al-Yawm, March 2, 2014).
 - **Mahmoud al-Zahar** warned that if Hamas were designated as a terrorist organization, the movement would appeal to the courts (Quds.net, march 2, 2014).

- **Salah al-Bardawil**, a Hamas member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, said that Hamas had written a memorandum of 13 articles that refuted the Egyptian accusations against it. He said the memorandum would be presented to Arab and international legal authorities (Alresala.net, March 3, 2014).

Iranian-Palestinian Movie about the Abduction of Gilad Shalit

- It was recently made public that production of the Hamas ministry of culture's movie about the abduction of Gilad Shalit had stalled because of a serious budget cut (from \$2.5 million to \$320,000). **The cut was primarily the result of Iran's withdrawing its support for the project because of the crisis in Iran-Hamas relations.** However, the Hamas administration's minister of culture claimed that contacts between his office and Iran were ongoing and that they were engaged in a joint venture to produce a film about Operation Cast Lead (Agence France-Presse, February 28, 2014).

The Palestinian Authority

The Palestinian-Israeli Negotiations

- **Saeb Erekat**, head of the Palestinian negotiating team, again stated that the **Palestinians rejected any extension of the negotiations** beyond the final date agreed upon (end of April 2014). He said they had no intention of continuing the negotiations "by even one hour" if the Israel government continued "ignoring international law" (Agence France-Presse, February 27, 2014). Erekat said that the American leadership had not yet offered the PA a formal written document and that everything publicized so far had been "a trial balloon," generally made public by Israel (Al-Ayam, March 3, 2014). He said that if Netanyahu sabotaged John Kerry's efforts, there would be no choice but to establish an international mechanism like the Geneva Conference dealing with the issues of Syria and Iran to force Israel to abide by the principles of international law. Saeb Erekat went to Washington to meet with American Secretary of State John Kerry to make preparations for Mahmoud Abbas' meeting with President Obama, which is scheduled for March 17, 2014 (Voice of Palestine, March 3, 2014).



Extending the negotiations: The Hamas newspaper Felesteen sneers at the intention to extend the time frame of the peace negotiations with Israel (Felesteen, March 1, 2014)

The Northern Arena

- On the morning of **March 1, 2014**, two rocket hits were identified near an IDF post on **Mt. Hermon**. No organization claimed responsibility for the rocket fire. It is unclear who was behind it and whether it was deliberate fire against Israel or had leaked into Israel from the battles in Syria. However, the media reported that the rocket fire was Hezbollah's response to Israel's alleged attack on the Syrian-Lebanese border.

Propaganda Activities

Additional Military Funerals for Terrorist Operatives

- This past week additional military funerals were held for the remains of terrorist operatives transferred by Israel to the PA:
 - On **February 23, 2014**, Israel transferred to the PA the remains of **Muayed Muhammad Salah al-Din**, a Hamas terrorist operative. He was buried in the village of Hizma. His funeral was attended by representatives of the Palestinian organizations, including Hamas. There were also senior PA figures present (Ajnad-news.com, February 24, 2014). **Khaled Mashaal**, head of Hamas' political bureau, gave a speech transmitted by telephone (Palestine-info.info, February 26, 2014).

- On **February 26, 2014**, a funeral was held for the remains of terrorist operative and **suicide bomber Ragheb Jaradat**.⁴ He was buried in the village of Silat al-Harathia, in the Jenin district. The funeral was attended by the governor of the Jenin district, **Talal Dweikat**, who personally expressed Mahmoud Abbas' condolences to the family (Dunia Al-Watan and the Fatah website in Denmark, February 26, 2014).
- On **February 26, 2014**, a funeral with full military honors was held in the village of Tamoun, in the Tubas district, for terrorist operative **Sami Bashar**.⁵ The funeral was attended by **Rabih al-Khandaqji**, the governor of the Tubas district, and Fatah representatives. Rabih al-Khandaqji laid a wreath on the grave sent by PA chairman Mahmoud Abbas (YouTube and PNN TV, February 26, 2014).



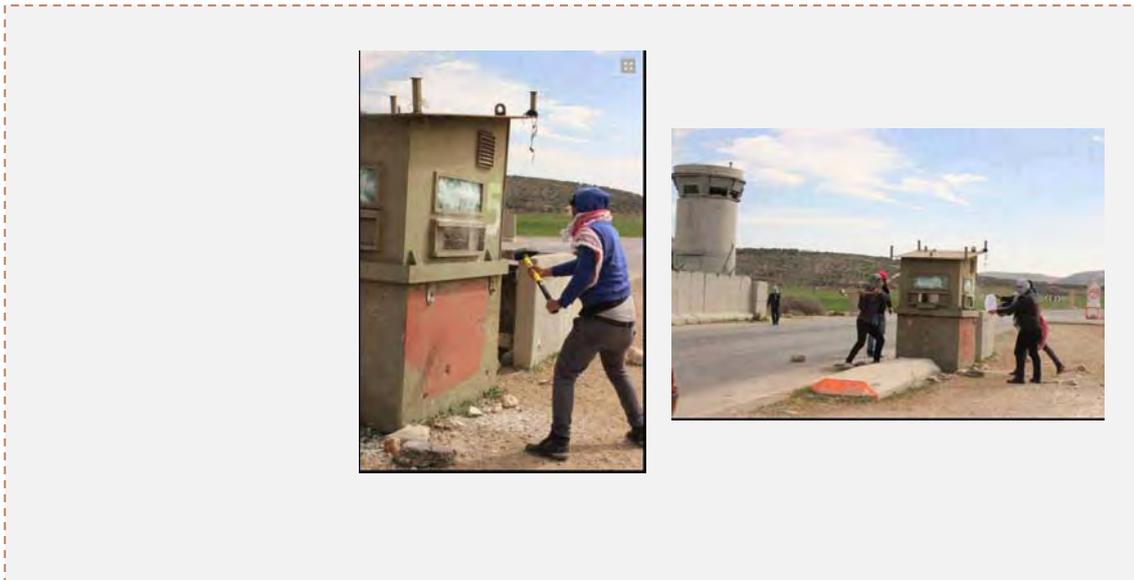
Flowers from Mahmoud Abbas for Palestinian terrorist operatives
(PNN TV and Dunia Al-Watan, February 26, 2014).

Act of Defiance: Destruction of the Beit Furik Roadblock

- On **March 1, 2014**, masked Palestinians destroyed some of the facilities of the Israeli roadblock at **Beit Furik** (east of Nablus). The organizers of the attack claimed that it was in retaliation for Israel's "confiscation of land and policy of [targeted] killing" (Ma'an News Agency, March 1, 2014).

⁴ **Ragheb Jaradat** was a suicide bomber and PIJ terrorist operative. In April 2003 he blew himself up at the Yagur junction (south of Haifa), **killing eight Israelis**.

⁵ **Sami Bashar** was a Fatah terrorist operative killed in an IDF action in the village of Tamoun in 2003.



Palestinians destroy the IDF post at the Beit Furik roadblock (Filastin Al-'Aan, March 2, 2014).

Incitement to Violence on Official Bil'in Facebook Page

- On **March 2, 2014**, a notice was posted on Bil'in's official Facebook page inciting to violence against Israel. The caption reads, "There is no point in freedom without blood...From Bil'in, land of struggle and sacrifice" (Official Facebook page of the village of Bil'in, March 2, 2014).

