



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

(December 31, 2014 – January 6, 2015)



Mahmoud Abbas signs Palestinian application to join twenty international conventions following the failure of the PA resolution to pass in the UN Security Council (Wafa.ps, December 31, 2014).

Overview

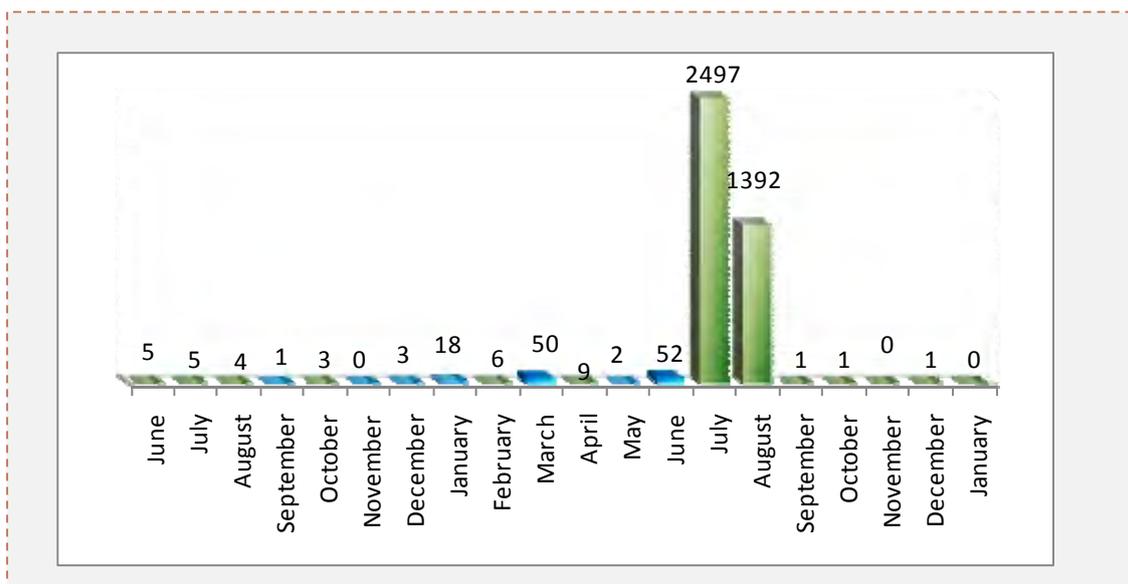
- This past week clashes continued along the Israel-Gaza Strip border. In Hebron an ISIS-affiliated terrorist squad was apprehended. One of its planned attacks was to kill an IDF soldier and steal his uniform and weapon and to use them in a shooting attack. In Judea, Samaria and east Jerusalem stabbing attacks and the throwing of stones and Molotov cocktails continued.
- The Palestinian Authority's proposed UN resolution failed to pass the Security Council vote. In response the PA formally filed applications to join twenty international conventions, including an application to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague. Hamas opposed the proposed resolution but supported the PA's plan to join the ICC.
- In response, Israel froze the transfer of 500 million shekels (\$126 million) in tax revenues collected for the PA. Palestinian public figures strongly condemned the Israeli decision. The United States opposed the Palestinian application to join the ICC but said freezing the revenues might increase tension, and called on both sides not to take unilateral action.

Israel's South

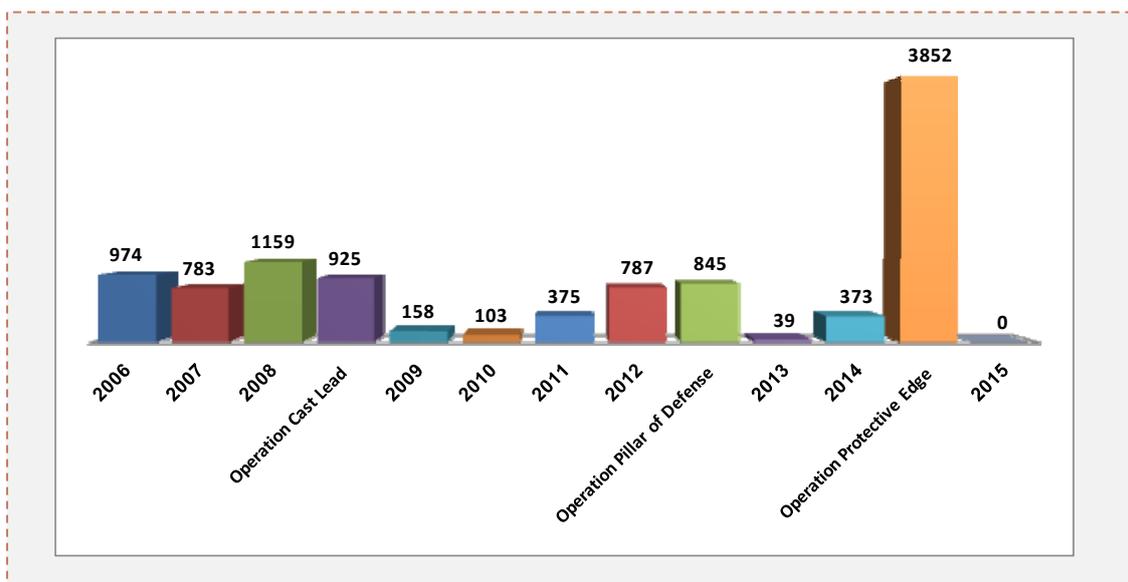
Rocket Fire Attacking Israel

- This past week no rocket or mortar shell hits were identified in Israeli territory.

Monthly Distribution of Rocket Fire (2013 – 2015)¹



Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire in Israel's South²



¹ As of January 6, 2015. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire or rockets which misfired and fell inside the Gaza Strip.

² The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.

Clashes on the Israel-Gaza Strip Border

- This past week clashes continued along the Israel-Gaza Strip border:
 - On **January 2, 2015** an estimated 50 Palestinians gathered near the security fence in the northern Gaza Strip. An IDF force fired shots to distance them. A Palestinian who approached the fence was shot in the leg and incurred minor wounds (Facebook page of Red Alert, January 2, 2015).
 - On **December 31, 2014**, IDF forces detained three Palestinians who had infiltrated into Israeli territory from the Gaza Strip. They were taken for questioning (Facebook page of Red Alert, December 31, 2014).

Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria

ISIS-Affiliated Terrorist Squad Apprehended in Hebron

- In November 2014 the Israeli security forces apprehended a terrorist squad ideologically and religiously inspired by ISIS. All the squad operatives were residents of Hebron. During interrogation one of them confessed that they had planned to establish an ISIS network to carry out terrorist attacks.
- One of their plans was to kill an IDF soldier and steal his uniform and weapon and use them in a shooting attack. Two of the operatives set out to execute the plan but returned after abandoning the idea. Another operative confessed that he had planned to kill an Israeli near Hebron and to steal his weapon. He also confessed he and another squad operative had manufactured a number of IEDs, one of which they threw at an IDF force (Shabak.gov.il, January 4, 2015).



Three of the four ISIS-affiliated terrorist squad (Shabak.gov.il, January 4, 2015)

So far only a few operatives in Judea and Samaria are known to have joined the ranks of the jihad organizations in Syria and Iraq or to have operated in their name. That is because Salafist-jihadi Islam is not significant in Judea and Samaria and the Salafist-jihadi organizations are not established and organized. Their operatives in Judea and Samaria are probably inspired by and receive information about jihadi organizations in Syria and Iraq from the Internet.

Prominent "Popular Resistance" Terrorism and Violence in Judea, Samaria and East Jerusalem

■ This past week the wave of violence and rioting continued, mainly involving the throwing of stones and Molotov cocktails. A number of stabbing attacks targeting Israeli security forces at roadblocks were prevented. The more prominent attacks were the following:

- On **January 5, 2015**, Border Police guards apprehended a Palestinian who tried carry out a stabbing attack at a roadblock in the Qalqiliya area. The Palestinian was about 20 years old and came from Qalqiliya (Facebook page of the Israel Police Force, January 5, 2015).
- On **January 3, 2015**, Palestinians opened fire at the Salem roadblock northwest of Jenin. There were no casualties. The building was damaged. IDF forces searched the area (Facebook page of Red Alert, January 3, 2014).
- On **January 1, 2015**, three Molotov cocktails were thrown at a residence in the neighborhood of Ras al-Amud in east Jerusalem. There were no casualties and no damage was reported (Facebook page of Red Alert, January 1, 2014).
- On **December 31, 2014**, Israeli policemen identified a masked Palestinian holding stones near the village of Ofra. They chased him and he threw a knife at them. When they caught up with him he turned out to be a girl.
- On **December 31, 2014**, Molotov cocktails were thrown at a security patrol at the Hebrew University on Mt. Scopus. They came from the direction of the village of Issawiya. There were no casualties. A parked vehicle was damaged (Facebook page of Red Alert, December 31, 2014).
- On **the night of December 31, 2014**, IDF forces operating in Jenin seized a number of weapons, among them an improvised handgun, improvised hand grenades, ammunition magazines and stolen IDF equipment. Two suspects were apprehended (IDF Spokesman, January 1, 2015).

- On **December 30, 2014**, Border Policemen at the Shuafat roadblock apprehended a Palestinian after having received information he was planning to attack civilians or security personnel. A knife was found in his possession (Facebook page of the Israel Police Force, December 30, 2014).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

The Crossings

The Rafah Crossing

■ The Rafah crossing remains closed. **Maher Abu Subha**, director of the border crossings administration in the Gaza Strip, said contacts were being held with the Egyptians to reopen the crossing, which has been closed for an extended period of time. He said Egypt had promised to reopen the Rafah crossing two days a week (Alresala.net, December 30, 2014).

■ **Maher Abu Subha** also said that so far nothing had changed regarding the transfer of control of the Gaza Strip crossings to the Palestinian national consensus government. Hamas spokesman **Sami Abu Zuhri** again accused the Palestinian government of shirking its responsibility for the Gaza Strip. He claimed the request of **Rami Hamdallah**, Palestinian government prime minister, for control of the crossings was an excuse because the crossings were not manned by workers of the former de-facto Hamas administration (Samanews.com, January 4, 2015). **Note:** In reality, Hamas does control the crossings and they are by operatives of Hamas-affiliated security forces.

The Erez Crossing

■ On January 4, 2015, Christian Palestinians returned to the Gaza Strip through the Erez crossing after having spent the holiday season in Bethlehem. Civilian Gazans also returned after having received medical treatment (Facebook page of PALINFO, January 4, 2015).



Palestinians return to the Gaza Strip through the Erez crossing (Facebook page of PALINFO, January 4, 2015)

The Reconstruction of the Gaza Strip

■ The reconstruction of the Gaza Strip is still proceeding slowly. To protest the lack of electricity, activists from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) demonstrated in front of the offices of the electric company in Jabaliya. They criticized the PA and Hamas and said they were responsible for the situation (Quds.net, January 5, 2015). On January 5, 2015, **Musa Abu Marzouq**, deputy head of Hamas' political bureau, met with senior PFLP figures to discuss the electricity crisis in the Gaza Strip and ways to resolve it (Paltimes.net, January 5, 2015).



Left: Musa Abu Marzouq meets with senior PFLP figures (Paltimes.net, January 5, 2015). Right: PFLP activists demonstrate in front of the offices of the electric company in Jabaliya (Quds.net, January 5, 2015).

■ **Ismail Haniya**, deputy head of Hamas' political bureau, criticized the functioning of the Palestinian national consensus government. He accused it of acting immorally toward the Gaza Strip and claimed Hamas had given up its rule to provide the Gazans with a better life (Samanews.com, January 4, 2015).

Aid from Oman Reaches the Gaza Strip

■ On December 30, 2014, a delegation from Oman arrived in Beit Hanoun in the northern Gaza Strip, bringing 1,000 caravans (Facebook page of PALDF, December 30, 2014).



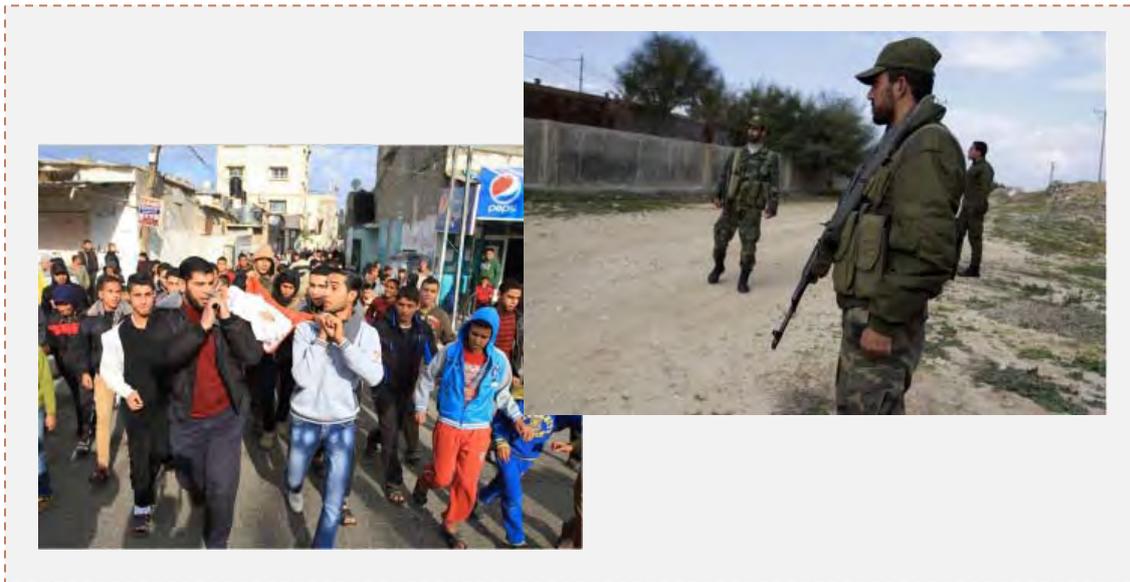
Left: One of the caravans bearing the Omani and PA flags. Right: The Omani delegation in Beit Hanoun (Facebook page of PALDF, December 30, 2014)

Palestinian Killed on the Egypt-Gaza Strip Border

■ On January 2, 2015, a Palestinian was killed and three others were detained by the Egyptian security forces when they tried to cross the border from the Gaza Strip into Egypt. **It was the first such occurrence since the Egyptian army established a buffer zone between Rafah and the Gaza Strip.** The Palestinian media reported the death of **Zaki Iyad al-Hubi**, 27. The Palestinians claimed he was shot while still on the Palestinian side of Rafah. Hamas condemned the event and even sent reinforcements from its security forces to the border (Facebook page of PALINFO, January 3, 2015).

■ **Iyad al-Bazam**, spokesman for the ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip, condemned the killing of al-Hubi, saying it was a dangerous development and indicated an excessive use of force. He claimed that crossing the border was motivated by poverty and the siege of the Gaza Strip. During the funeral held for al-Hubi mourners accused the Egyptian army of premeditated murder and called on

Egypt to open the Rafah crossing (PALINFO and the Facebook page of the ministry of the interior, January 2 and 3, 2015).



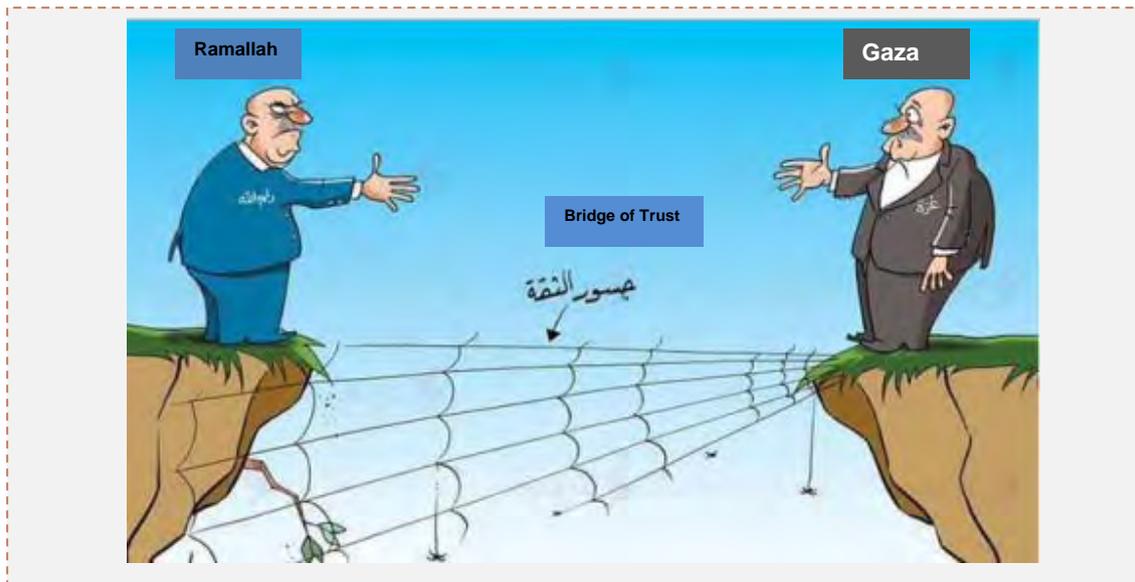
Left: The funeral held in Rafah for Zaki lyad al-Hubi. Right: Hamas security force operatives deployed to the Egypt-Gaza Strip border (Facebook page of PALINFO, January 3, 2015)

■ According to recent reports, the Egyptian security forces will extend the buffer zone along the border between Egypt and the Gaza Strip to a width of 2,000 meters and a length of 14 kilometers (1.25 miles and 8.7 miles) (Shorouknews.com, December 30, 2014). It was also reported that next week the evacuation of residents living in the region of the second phase would begin (Youm7.com, December 30, 2014). Egypt denied the reports (Dot Misr, January 4, 2015).

Delegation of Palestinian Ministers Shortens Visit to Gaza Strip

■ The delegation of PA ministers visiting the Gaza Strip shortened its visit from a week to four days. According to reports, the ministers left earlier than planned because of the strong disagreements between the sides and the hostile atmosphere accompanying the visit.

■ The delegation received a cool reception from the Gazans, accompanied by demonstrations, protests and the blocking of the delegates' movements. For example, a number of Hamas functionaries tried to keep the ministers from leaving their hotel and to keep them from entering government offices. The security forces kept the ministers from meeting with government staff (Maannews.net, December 31, 2014).



The lack of trust between Ramallah and Gaza (Facebook page of PALINFO, December 31, 2014)

The Palestinian Authority

The Failure of the Palestinian Bid in the UN Security Council

- The Palestinian resolution did not receive the necessary nine votes in the UN Security Council and failed to pass. The resolution included a call to hold negotiations for a year and then to signal the end of the so-called Israeli occupation at the end of 2017, while freezing construction in the settlements. It also included a reference to east Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian state and a solution to the issue of the refugees based on UN Resolution 194.
- **Eight members** of the Security Council **voted in favor** of the Palestinian resolution (France, Luxembourg, Russia, China, Chile, Argentina, Chad and Jordan). **Two voted against** (the United States and Australia) and **five abstained** (South Korea, Britain, Latvia, Ruanda and Nigeria) (AFP.com, December 30, 2014).
- Senior PA figures said they would join various international organizations and conventions and propose the resolution to the Security Council again in 2015:
 - **Mahmoud Abbas**, speaking at the opening of a display held in Ramallah called "Jerusalem in Memory," claimed the **Palestinians were determined to join many international organizations despite the sanctions and pressures**. He added that **the PA leadership was planning to appeal to the UN Security Council again, possibly within a week**, after consultations with Jordan (Palestinian TV, January 4, 2015).

- **Mustafa Barghouti** claimed the PA leadership had to keep its promise and sign an application to join the ICC in The Hague and other international agreements. He also called for an end to the security coordination with Israel.

- **Riyadh al-Maliki**, foreign minister in the Palestinian national consensus government, currently visiting Brazil, claimed that the objective of the new appeal to the UN Security Council was to get at least nine votes and to put the United States in an awkward position, where it would have to abstain or use its veto. He claimed the decision had been made to send him on a quick tour of a number of countries, among them France and other countries that would join the Security Council in the new year, to make certain they would vote the way the Palestinians wanted them to (Voice of Palestine, January 5, 2015).

- **Senior Hamas figures opposed the appeal to the Security Council.** **Sami Abu Zuhri** claimed that Hamas strongly rejected another PA appeal to the Security Council and said Hamas considered the measure "playing with the fate of the Palestinian nation" (Facebook page of Sami Abu Zuhri, January 5, 2015).

The PA Joins International Conventions

- Following the failure of the PA to have its resolution pass in the Security Council, Mahmoud Abbas **signed documents to join twenty international conventions. The most important were an application to join the ICC** and a letter to UN Secretary General committing itself to the Articles of the Rome Convention.

- **Mahmoud Abbas also signed applications** for the Convention of Women's Rights and the non-proliferation of nuclear and nonconventional weapons. He also signed a declaration stating that the Palestinian state was committed to the conventions and their international principles, and would change its laws to coordinate them with the conventions. **Saeb Erekat** claimed that the documents would become valid within 30 to 90 days from the day they were signed (AFP.com, December 31, 2014).



In the presence of the Palestinian leadership, Mahmoud Abbas signs applications to join twenty international conventions (Wafa.ps, December 31, 2014).

- **Saeb Erekat** claimed that before they joined the ICC the **Palestinians understood that if they did join they could also be brought to trial in the court. He said they were prepared for every consequence.** He claimed other Palestinian organizations had also signed the application to join the ICC, and that **Musa Abu Marzouq** had signed for Hamas. He claimed that **Khaled Mashaal** had said Musa Abu Marzouq was Hamas' representative and could sign (Palestinian TV, January 5, 2015).
- **Mahmoud Ashtiya**, a member of Fatah's Central Committee, claimed the ICC had notified them that the Palestinians would receive an answer within 60 days and that there were several courses open to the Palestinians. They included presenting indictments from the ICC against specific individuals in the State of Israel and not against the state itself (Malaf al-Yawm, January 4, 2015). In addition to signing an application, **Riyadh al-Maliki**, on orders from Mahmoud Abbas, met with the ICC general prosecutor to make the necessary preparations for investigating Israel's crimes (Voice of Palestine Radio, January 5, 2015).

Responses

Hammas

- **Hammas supported the PA's application to the Rome Convention** (as opposed to its objection to the PA move in the Security Council). According to Hammas spokesman **Fawzi Barhoum**, Hammas regards signing the Rome Convention as a correct political move. He called for a joint political program after the establishment of a temporary PLO leadership which would include Hammas. He also called on the PA to stop its security coordination with Israel, lift the siege of the Gaza Strip, reconstruct

the Gaza Strip, pay salaries to the Gazans and activate the Palestinian Legislative Council immediately (Facebook page of Fawzi Barhoum, December 31, 2014).

Israel

■ Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu held a meeting on January 1, 2015, to discuss Israel's response to the Palestinian application to the ICC. The decision taken was **to freeze the transfer of 500 million shekels** (approximately \$126 million) **in tax revenues collected by Israel for the PA**. The money was supposed to be transferred on January 2, 2015, part of regular transfers made by Israel at the beginning of every month. He said, "We expect the International Criminal Court to reject outright the Palestinian Authority's hypocritical act because the Palestinian Authority is not a state. It is an entity in alliance with a terrorist organization, Hamas, which perpetrates war crimes" (Website of the Israeli prime minister, January 1, 2015).³

■ Palestinian sources criticized the Israeli move and warned that if Israel punished the PA by withholding funds **the PA might end its security coordination with Israel:**

- **Saeb Erekat** claimed the move was "piracy" and collective punishment, and that it would have an influence on hospitals, schools, infrastructure projects and the payment of salaries in the PA (Al-ayyam.com, January 4, 2015). He also said that freezing the tax revenues continued the destruction of the PA. He claimed Israel did not fulfill its obligations (Palestinian TV, January 5, 2015).
- **Jamal al-Khudeiri**, chairman of the Popular Committee to Lift the Siege, called Israel's freezing of the tax revenues an "organized crime" against the residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip (Samanews.com, January 4, 2015).

The United States

■ The State Department spokesperson said, "We're deeply troubled by the Palestinian action regarding the ICC. Hard as it is, all sides need to find a way to work constructively and cooperatively together to lower tensions, reject violence, and find a path forward. This action is entirely counterproductive and does nothing to further the aspirations of the Palestinian people for a sovereign and independent state. It badly damages the atmosphere with the very people with whom they ultimately need to make peace."⁴

³ <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Spokesman/Pages/spokediyun010115.aspx>

⁴ <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2015/01/235595.htm#LEBANON>

■ Regarding the freezing of tax revenues, the State Department spokesperson said that the United States opposed any action that increased tensions. She called on Israel and the Palestinian not to take unilateral action that would worsen the confrontation, and said that the United States was examining the issue of financial aid to the PA (State Department website, January 5, 2015).

Fatah Marks Its 50th Anniversary

■ On January 1, 2015, Fatah marked its 50th anniversary. The theme of the ceremonies this year **was the path of Fatah as a movement of armed struggle** that had sacrificed many of its operatives for the sake of the Palestinian cause while being a **movement seeking peace**. Several events were held in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip, most of them modest. Mahmoud Abbas lit a torch at a festive ceremony in Ramallah (Al-ayyam.com, January 1, 2015). Several masked operatives of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades held a march in the Qalandia refugee camp. A similar military display was held in the village of Silwad. Palestinians gathered in east Jerusalem near the Nablus Gate and held a demonstration where they waved Palestinian flags and pictures of Yasser Arafat and Mahmoud Abbas (QNN, January 1, 2015).

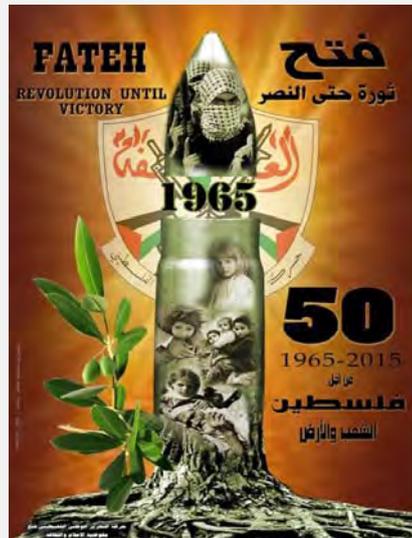


Left: Fatah operatives display a rocket at a rally in Tulkarm (Facebook page of PALINFO, January 1, 2015). Right: Mahmoud Abbas lights the torch in Ramallah marking the 50th anniversary of the founding of Fatah (Wafa.ps, December 31, 2014).

■ On January 2, 2015, Fatah held a rally in the Aida refugee camp in Bethlehem. It **was attended by dozens of masked Fatah terrorist operatives who carried guns and waved axes and clubs. During the rally they burned Israeli, American and British flags**, and shouted anti-Israeli and anti-American slogans (PNN.ps, January 2, 2015).



Left: Fatah terrorist operatives burn Israeli, American and British flags. Right: A masked terrorist operative holds an axe at a Fatah rally (PNN.ps, January 2, 2015).



Poster for Fatah's 50th anniversary stresses the armed struggle (Website of Fatah's information department, December 28, 2014)