



May 18, 2015

During the past year there has been an increase in the number of vehicular attacks in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria. The attacks, which are sometimes deadly, are supported by Fatah, not condemned by the Palestinian Authority and considered a part of the so-called "popular resistance."



Site of the vehicular attack at the Alon Shvut junction in Gush Etzion (Photo released by the spokesperson of the Regional Council, Samaria; from Tazpit.org.il, May 15, 2015).

## Overview

1. At around noon on **May 14, 2015**, a Palestinian drove a taxi with an Israeli license plate to the junction at the entrance of the village of **Alon Shvut** in Gush Etzion. The driver swerved out of the lane, rammed into youths waiting at the bus stop and sped away. Four young men were injured, one seriously; the others suffered minor injuries.
2. Searches for the driver were conducted in the area around the town of Halhul and the villages north of Hebron. On the evening of May 14, 2015, a Palestinian was detained on suspicion of having carried out the attack. He was **Muhammad Irfa'iyat Abu Sneineh**, 22, from Hebron. **He was released from an Israeli jail last year after having been imprisoned for throwing stones and carrying a non-specified cold weapon.**



**Left: The scene of the vehicular attack at the Alon Shvut junction in Gush Etzion (ZAKA spokesman, May 14, 2015). Right: The car used in the vehicular attack (Facebook page of PALDF, May 14, 2015).**



**The terrorist operative who carried out the vehicular attack, Muhammad Irfa'iyat Abu Sneineh (Facebook page of PALDF, May 14, 2015).**

**3. So far the Palestinian Authority (PA) has not issued an official response.** A picture of the terrorist appeared on Fatah's official Facebook page with the information that he had carried out the attack. Comments from surfers on the Fatah and Hamas-affiliated social media praised the vehicular attack. Many encouraged and supported the perpetrator. They called him a "hero," and said "May Allah protect you," "May Allah defend you, give you a long life and strengthen you in the presence of your enemies," "May Allah be with you and may your hands be blessed" (Official Facebook page of Fatah, May 14, 2015). The comments were not taken off Fatah's Facebook page. In response to the false claim on Fatah's Facebook page that one of the victims had died of his injuries, comments were posted expressing joy and

encouragement, including "Allah is great," "May there be more [deaths] if Allah so wishes," "[May the Jews] go to hell and may [their] fate be bitter" (Official Facebook page of Fatah, May 14, 2015). Those comments remained as well.



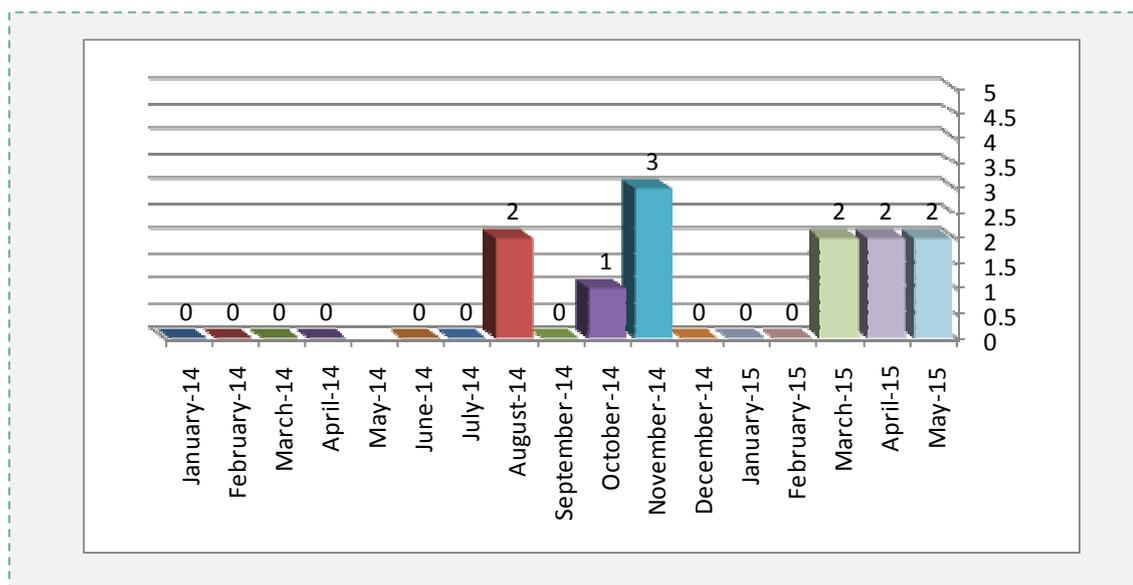
The official Fatah Facebook posting of a picture of the terrorist operative who carried out the vehicular attack, with comments at the left (Official Facebook page of Fatah, May 14, 2015).

## Increase in the Number of Vehicular Attacks

4. During the past year there has been an increase in the number of vehicular attacks carried out in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem, and they have become a frequent modus operandi of the campaign the PA and Fatah call the "popular resistance." The campaign takes many forms, including the throwing of Molotov cocktails, rocks and stones, and stabbing and vehicular attacks. **It enjoys the support of the PA and Fatah** (See below).

5. Since the beginning of 2015 there have been **six vehicular attacks and/or attempted vehicular attacks**; one Israeli civilian was killed and ten injured, eight of members of the Israeli security forces. **Three attacks took place in Jerusalem and three in Judea and Samaria.** The number of vehicular attacks **began rising in the second half of 2014**; during the year there were twelve vehicular attacks, half of them in Jerusalem (compared with two such attacks in 2013).

## Vehicular Attacks Carried Out and Attempted, 2014 – 2015<sup>1</sup>



6. **Vehicular attacks are usually the personal initiatives of lone terrorists** who do not belong to an established terrorist organization (even if an organization does claim responsibility or issue praise). Some of the terrorist operatives served prison terms in Israel in the past for security or criminal felonies. Some of them carry Israeli ID cards.

7. **Vehicular attacks do not require precise planning** or specific weapons, and the terrorists can easily flee the scene. Generally speaking, **vehicular attacks are carried out spontaneously with the terrorist's own vehicle or in several instances with heavy equipment, such as a tractor or a front loader.** Most of the attacks resulted in injuries and sometimes in deaths.

## Encouragement for Vehicular Attacks within the "Popular Resistance"

8. **Vehicular attacks are encouraged and supported by Fatah.** Senior PA figures also regard them as legitimate attacks within the so-called "popular resistance." They do not condemn the attacks, and give the perpetrators moral and political support. **They consistently accuse Israel of responsibility for the situation and blame it for "escalation."** Hamas and the other terrorist organizations also glorify the vehicular attacks and their perpetrators, and call for more anti-Israeli terrorism. They urge the so-called "popular resistance" be turned into a military campaign, the so-

<sup>1</sup> According to Israel Security Agency data.

called "third intifada." The violence within the "popular resistance" continues despite the ongoing preventive activities taken by the PA's security forces and its security coordination with Israel.

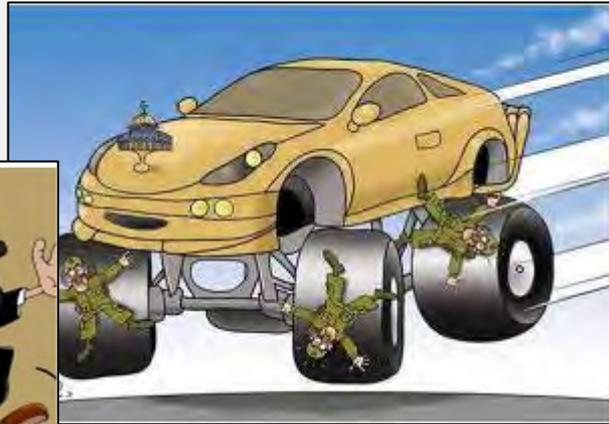
9. However, Senior PA figures, led by Mahmoud Abbas, publicly encourage the "popular resistance." For example, on Nakba Day (May 15, 2015), **Mahmoud Abbas**, in Italy at the time, issued a statement stressing that **the non-violent protest activities against the so-called Israeli occupation would continue.**

10. During a recent telephone interview with the Huna Al-Quds TV channel, **Amin Maqboul**, chairman of Fatah's Revolutionary Council, said that **the Palestinian leadership supported the "popular resistance" against Israel, and even fomented it.** He said they "praised, encouraged and strove to strengthen our brothers in Jerusalem who confront the Israeli forces in the streets of Jerusalem." He said the Palestinian leadership called for and supported the "popular resistance" clashes in Jerusalem and in all the Palestinian cities (Quds.net, April 26, 2015).

11. Hamas and its affiliated organizations also praise and congratulate vehicular attacks. On March 1, 2015, the Islamic Bloc at Al-Najah University in Nablus launched an exhibition about Jerusalem. One of the displays was a "vehicular attack" (Facebook page of the Islamic Bloc at Al-Najah University and the Facebook page of PALDF, March 1, 2015).



**Display of a vehicular attack. Next to the car is the blood-covered body of an Israeli; above the vehicle are pictures of the Palestinian terrorists who carried out vehicular attacks in Jerusalem during the past year (Facebook page of the Islamic Bloc at Al-Najah University, March 1 2015).**



Left: A cartoon by Hamas-affiliated Omayya Joha captioned "The weapon of terror" (PALDF forum, November 11, 2014). Right: Cartoon from the Hamas Facebook page encouraging vehicular attacks against IDF soldiers (Facebook page of PALDF, April 26, 2015).



Facebook profile picture from an account affiliated with Hamas' student factions in Judea and Samaria, promoting vehicular attacks. The Arabic reads, "Run over [Israelis] for the sake of Jerusalem."

## Appendix

### Vehicular Attacks, 2015

#### Israeli Border Police Base, North Jerusalem

1. On **March 6, 2015**, a car drove to the Border Police base on the **northern outskirts of Jerusalem**. As it approached the base the driver swerved onto the sidewalk, **rammed into five people standing there, four of them members of the Israeli security forces**, and drove away. Shots were fired at the car from the Border Police base and the driver exited the vehicle **holding a meat cleaver**. Israeli security forces shot at and overcame him. Critically wounded, he was evacuated to a hospital. **Note: A similar vehicular attack was carried out nearby in November 2014, killing a Border Police officer and wounding 13 other people.**

2. The terrorist operative was **Muhammad Salima**, 22, from **Ras al-Amoud, east Jerusalem**; he had a criminal record. According to the Israeli media, he was not known to the Israeli security forces as terrorist organization operative. The Palestinians claimed the attack was motivated by reports issued by the social media that Muslim worshippers on the Temple Mount had been harmed. The day before the attack, he posted a picture of himself on his Facebook page, showing him wrapped in the Palestinian flag, next to which he wrote, "Soon for the sake of Allah and the homeland."



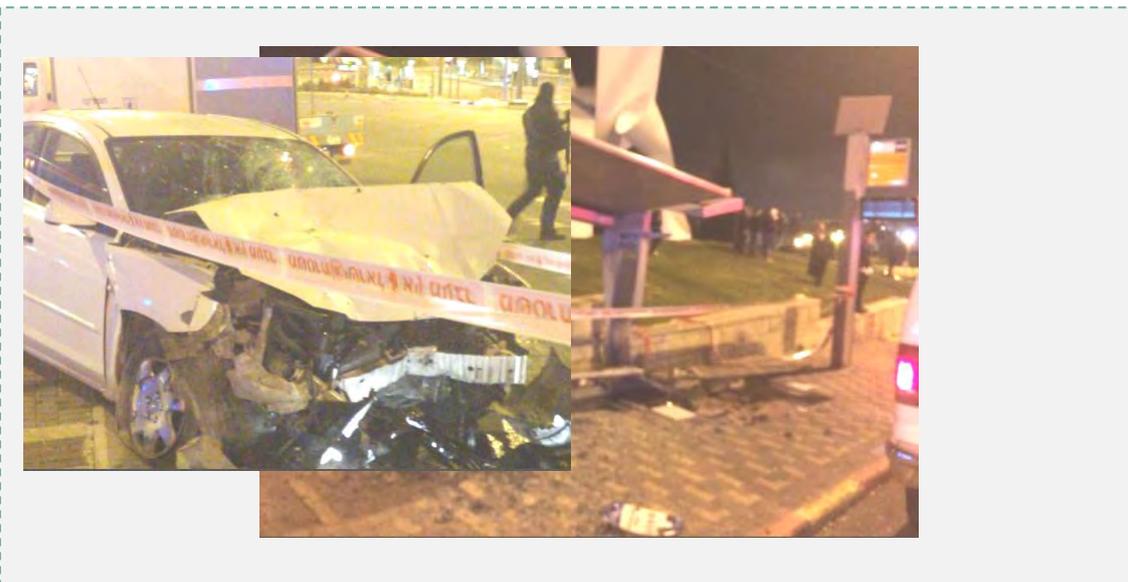
The site of the vehicular attack in Jerusalem where five people were injured (Photo by David Diamant for Tazpit.org.il, March 6, 2015).

## Attempted Attack at the Gush Etzion Junction

3. On **March 17, 2015**, a Palestinian attempted to run over an IDF soldier at the **Gush Etzion junction (south of Jerusalem)**. There were no casualties and no damage was reported. The vehicle was later located near **Halhul** (near Hebron) and the driver was taken for questioning (IDF Spokesman, March 17, 2015).

## French Hill Junction, Jerusalem

4. In the evening hours of **April 16, 2015**, an **Israeli man and woman standing at a bus stop at the French Hill junction were the victims of a vehicular attack**. A car driven by a Palestinian sped towards the French Hill area, swerved out of its lane and rammed into the two civilians. The 25 year-old Jerusalem civilian was fatally injured and later died at the hospital; the woman was critically injured. The driver, **Khaled Quteina**, 37, from the village of **Anata**, suffered minor injuries. He was detained and questioned. Interrogation revealed he had carried out a terrorist attack and not a traffic accident.



The vehicular attack at the French Hill junction. One man was killed and a woman was critically injured. Left: The car involved in the vehicular attack. Right: The scene of the attack (Fire and Rescue spokesperson, April 16, 2015).

## Border Police Roadblock in East Jerusalem

5. On the evening of **April 25, 2015**, a vehicle speeding on a main street in east Jerusalem (near A-Tur and the Mt. of Olives) rammed into **Border Police soldiers**. Four of the soldiers were injured: a female soldier was seriously injured and three

soldiers suffered minor injuries. Border Police soldiers stationed at the roadblock shot at the car but it sped away. A search located the vehicle but the driver escaped.

6. Following the attack there were clashes between Palestinians and the Israeli security forces. Palestinians threw stones at the ambulances that came to evacuate the wounded and at Israeli security forces. The vehicle of the mayor of Jerusalem was stoned and damaged. On April 26, 2015, after an Israeli intelligence action, a Palestinian suspected of carrying out the attack was detained. He was **Fadi Majdi Muhammad Saleh**, 31, from the **Shuafat refugee camp**, carrier of an Israeli ID card (Israel Police Force, April 26, 2015).

7. Interrogation of the suspected terrorist and evidence collected at the scene indicated that after the attack he abandoned the vehicle and went into hiding. The following day he turned himself in to the Israeli police and was taken for questioning. Interrogation revealed that the vehicular attack had been premeditated for one of a number of possible sites (such as the ultra-Orthodox Jewish neighborhood of Mea Shearim or Ashdod or elsewhere in Jerusalem). He spontaneously decided on the French Hill in Jerusalem when he saw a group of Israeli policemen at the roadblock.



**Fadi Majdi Muhammad Saleh, from the Shuafat refugee camp, who carried out the vehicular attack at the roadblock in east Jerusalem (Facebook page of PALDF, April 26, 2015)**

## **Attempted Attack near Hebron**

8. On **May 9, 2015**, patrolling Israeli policemen noticed a vehicle that aroused their suspicions. The driver did not heed their call to halt, sped up and hit a policeman standing next to the patrol car. The following day two Palestinians from Hebron were detained on suspicion of involvement in the attack (Facebook page of the Israel Police Force, May 10, 2015).