



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

(December 30, 2015 – January 5, 2016)



The site of the shooting attack on Dizengoff Street in Tel Aviv
(Photo by Reuven Erlich, January 2, 2016)

Overview

- This past week the current Palestinian terrorist campaign continued, with stabbing, vehicular and shooting attacks inside Israel and in Judea and Samaria. The most prominent attack was **a shooting attack at a pub in Tel Aviv**, carried out by an Israeli Arab, who in the past had been convicted of attacking a soldier and trying to snatch his weapon. **Three Israelis were killed**, two in the pub and a taxi driver later probably killed by the terrorist as he escaped. The Israeli security forces are hunting for the terrorist, so far without success.
- Four rockets were fired from the Gaza Strip at the western Negev, two of which fell in Israeli territory. A (fictitious) network probability affiliated with the global jihad claimed responsibility for the rocket fire. Israel Air Force (IAF) aircraft struck four Hamas targets in response. **In 2015 twenty-five rockets fell in Israeli territory, the lowest number since Israel disengaged from the Gaza Strip in 2005.**

Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem

Terrorist Attacks and Attempted Attacks

- **January 5, 2016 – stabbing attack:** A Palestinian terrorist got out of his car at the **Gush Etzion Junction**, walked up to one of the soldiers securing the site and stabbed him. An IDF force shot and killed the terrorist. The soldier was not seriously wounded. The terrorist was **Ahmed Yunis al-Kawazbah**, 17, from Sa'ir (north of Hebron), the son of senior Hamas operative **Yunis al-Kawazbah**, who in the past was imprisoned in Israel and detained by the Palestinian Authority (PA) preventive security forces.
- **January 4, 2016 – attempted stabbing attack:** Police securing **Haim Bar-Lev Boulevard [Route 60] in Jerusalem** noted a young Palestinian who aroused their suspicions. When they went to examine his documents he pulled out a knife and tried to stab one of them. He then ran away. The police shot him in the leg. A 15 year-old girl incurred minor wounds indirectly caused by the gunfire at the terrorist.



The knife used by the terrorist in the attempted stabbing attack in Jerusalem (Facebook page of PALDF, January 4, 2016).

- **January 3, 2016 – shooting attack:** An IDF soldier was wounded in the leg in a shooting attack at a junction **south of Hebron**. He was standing near a guard post when he was **hit by sniper fire**.
- **January 3, 2016 – shooting attack:** A woman soldier was **shot by sniper fire** while standing next to the stairs leading to the **Cave of the Patriarchs**. The shots were fired from the direction of buildings inhabited by Palestinians. She was evacuated to a hospital in moderately serious condition. Israeli security forces instituted a search for the Palestinian sniper (who has not yet been caught).



Left: Notice congratulating the Hebron sniper and encouraging shooting attacks (Facebook page of QudsN, January 4, 2016). Right: The scene of the sniper attack near the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron (Facebook page of QudsN, January 3, 2016).

■ **January 3, 2016 – attempted stabbing attack:** An Israeli was wounded in a stabbing attack in the **Armon Hanatziv neighborhood of Jerusalem**. A Palestinian terrorist went to a bus stop, pulled out a knife and tried to stab an Israeli man standing there. He then fled. Israeli police forces called to the scene of the attack located and detained the terrorist.

■ **January 1, 2016 – two-part shooting attack:**

- **Three people were killed and seven wounded in a two-part shooting attack that began on Dizengoff Street in Tel Aviv.** A terrorist armed with a submachine gun opened fire at the patrons of a pub on Dizengoff Street and fled the scene. He was identified on security camera footage from neighboring stores and seen preparing for the attack. **He shot and killed two people in the pub and wounded seven more.** He also sprayed nearby businesses with bullets. He then fled north, got in a taxi and drove away. Close to the seaside Mandarin Hotel (north of Tel Aviv) **he shot and killed the taxi driver**, left the body, took the taxi and drove several hundred meters. He then abandoned the taxi and escaped. **Israeli security forces are conducting an extensive search**, but so far the terrorist has not been found.

- The terrorist is **Nashat Milhem, 29, an Israeli Arab** from the village of Ara in the center of the country. He was identified by his father from the security camera footage shown on TV. **Nashat Milhem spent five years in prison, indicted in 2007 for attacking an IDF soldier and trying to snatch his weapon.** His brother was detained as an accessory to murder. Later his father and two

cousins were detained on the same charge. The Israeli media also reported that a resident of east Jerusalem had been detained on suspicion of aiding and abetting Milhem.

- **Senior Hamas figure Musheir al-Masri** praised the killings. He said they proved Israel was under attack by the "resistance" and that all its attempts to end the intifada had failed. He called on the PA security forces to end their security coordination with Israel, saying that "all the paths of resistance" were open to the Palestinian people (Alresala.net, January 1, 2016).

■ **December 31, 2015 – vehicular attack:**

- A Palestinian terrorist tried to run over a number of IDF soldiers checking Palestinians at a roadblock in the **Huwwara region (south of Nablus)**. One soldier was injured. The terrorist was shot and killed. He was **Hassan Ali Bazour al-Silawi**, 22, from the village of Raba (southeast of Jenin), a student at the American University in Jenin. During the past six months he posted many pictures of Hamas military-terrorist operatives on his Facebook page.
- Hamas issued a death notice for him, calling him its "son, the heroic shaheed." Hamas spokesman **Husam Badran** posted praise for the attack, and the Facebook page of the Islamic Movement in Jenin called him a "son of Hamas" (Facebook pages of Quds, Hassan al-Silawi, the village of Raba, the Islamic Movement in Jenin and Hamas, December 31, 2015).



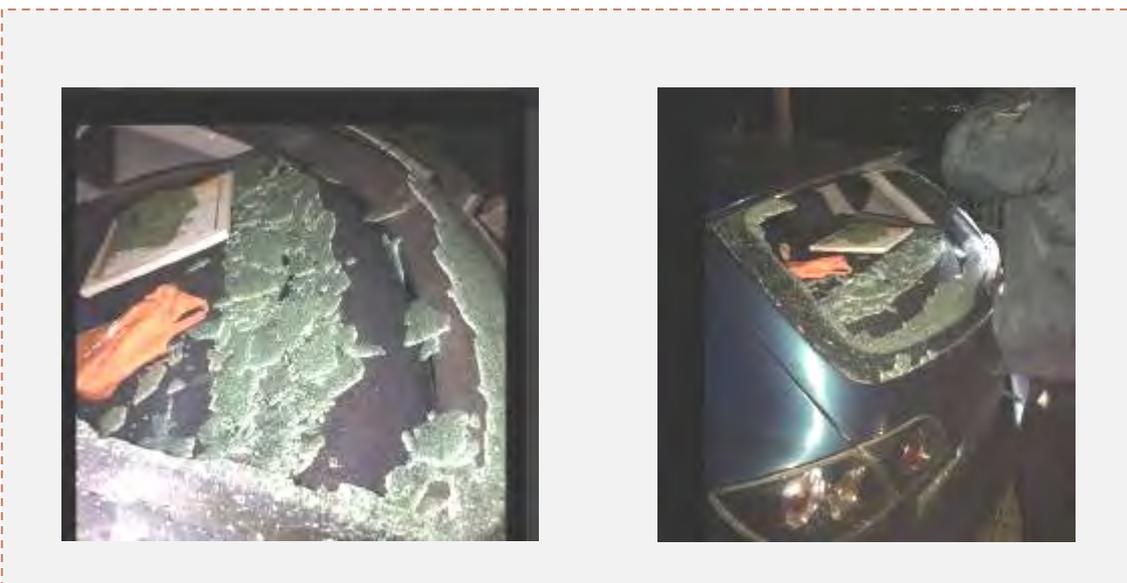
Left: The death notice issued by Hamas for Hassan al-Silawi (Facebook page of Raba, December 31, 2015). Right: Hassan al-Silawi on the Temple Mount (Facebook page of Hassan al-Silawi, July 9, 2015).

Terrorist Attack Foiled at a Hotel in Eilat

- The Israeli State Attorney's Office issued indictments for two Palestinians, both **residents of east Jerusalem, who planned to plant a bomb in a hotel in Eilat**, Israel's southern tourist city. The attack was prevented by the awareness of hotel employees. The accused worked and lived in Eilat. They had no security record and were not affiliated with any terrorist organization. They had become acquainted at work.
- About two months ago they met at one of their homes and decided to carry out a terrorist attack. At first they discussed a stabbing attack but decided instead to plant a bomb in a hotel in Eilat. They carried out surveillance of the hotel and followed a group of Israelis staying there. On November 30, 2015, one of them went to the hotel to gather information. He represented himself as a potential patron interested in renting a room for an extended stay, asking to see various possible rooms. The detailed questions he asked made the hotel employees suspicious, eventually leading to the detention of the two Palestinians. **They claimed they had been influenced by Hamas websites** (Ynet, January 2, 2016).

Riots, Clashes and Popular Terrorism

- In the meantime, demonstrations, protest marches, riots, and the throwing of stones, Molotov cocktails and pipe bombs continue in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem. In some instances PA security forces prevented Palestinian demonstrations. There were clashes between students and Israeli security forces at the American University in Jenin (Samaa, December 30, 2015). **The funerals of Palestinian terrorists whose bodies were transferred to the PA by Israel were sites of mass demonstrations attended by thousands, including public figures.** On the other hand, the events marking the establishment of Fatah, held on January 1, were poorly attended.
- Some of the more prominent incidents and foiled attacks were the following:
 - **January 4, 2016** – A Palestinian roused the suspicions of Border Policemen at the **Tapuah Junction** (Samaria). They ordered him to halt but he continued towards them. A search revealed he had a concealed knife. He was taken for questioning (Facebook page of Red Alert, January 4, 2016).
 - **January 4, 2016** – Palestinians threw stones at an Israeli vehicle near **Oranit (in Samaria, east of Rosh Ha'ayin)**, shattering the rear windshield. Several people were treated for shock at the site of the attack (Facebook page of Red Alert, January 4, 2016).



The damage done to the car near Oranit (Facebook page of QudsN, January 4, 2016).

- **January 4, 2016** – Palestinians threw three Molotov cocktails at a junction near **Hebron**. There were no casualties (Facebook page of Red Alert, January 4, 2016).
- **January 2, 2016** – A Palestinian was seriously wounded by IDF fire during a riot in the **Dheisheh refugee camp**, in the Bethlehem region (Facebook page of Red Alert, January 2, 2016).
- **December 31, 2015** – Palestinians threw stones at an Israeli vehicle and police car on Route 443 (which links Modi'in to Jerusalem), near **the Beit Horon Bridge**. There were no casualties and no damage was reported (Facebook page of Red Alert, December 31, 2015).
- **December 31, 2015** – Two Palestinian children, aged 12 and 13 from the village of Aqab (north of Jerusalem), were caught in the center of Jerusalem with knives in their possession. In police assessment they were planning to carry out a stabbing attack (Facebook page of Red Alert, December 31, 2015).



The knives found in the possession of the two children

- **December 29, 2015** – A Border Policeman was wounded during a riot in **Bituniya** (Ramallah region) (Facebook page of Red Alert, December 29, 2015).

Israel's South

Rocket Fire Attacking Israel

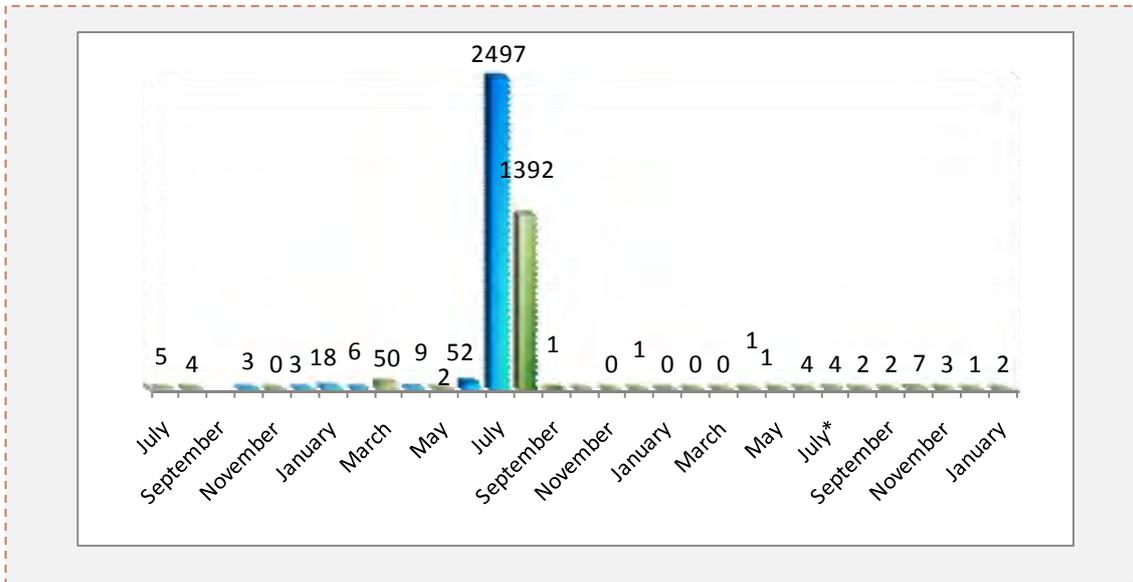
- **On the evening of January 1, 2016, four rockets were fired at Israel from the Gaza Strip.** Two fell in the western Negev; there were no casualties and no damage was reported. Two fell inside the Gaza Strip.
- **A fictitious jihadist network calling itself the "Troops of Jerusalem"** (*ajnad bayt al-maqdis*) and probably affiliated with the global jihad, claimed responsibility. According to the statement, it was just one of many planned attacks (Twitter account of the network, January 1, 2016).



The claim of responsibility issued by the "Troops of Jerusalem"
(Twitter account of the network, January 1, 2016).

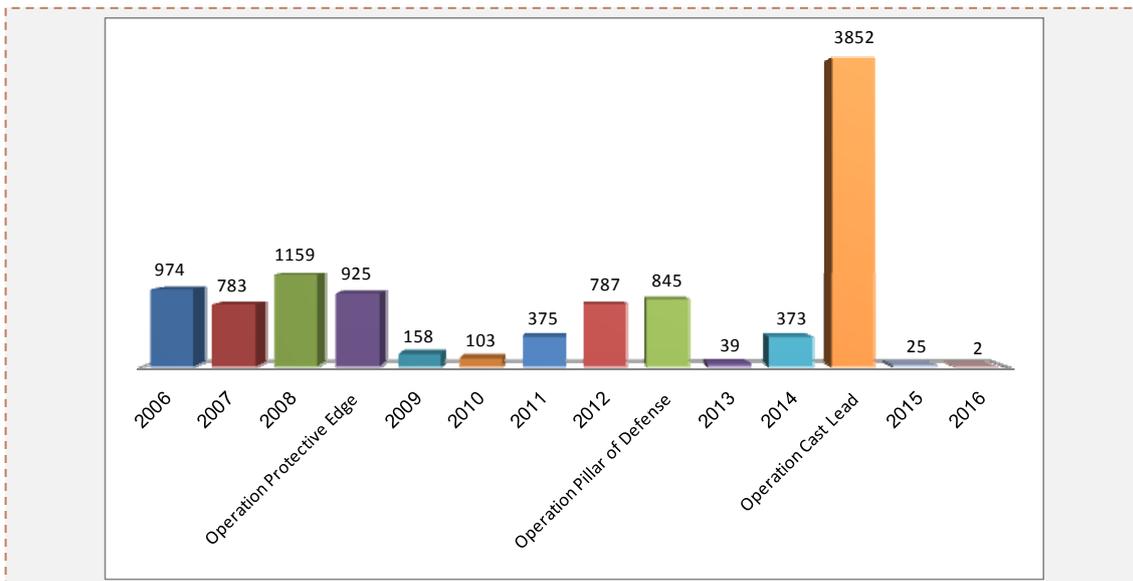
■ In response to the rocket fire, **IAF aircraft attacked four Hamas terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip**. Among them were a Hamas naval police facility in the northern Gaza Strip and an Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades (Hamas' military-terrorist wing) post in the central Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman and Ynet, January 2, 2016). The Palestinian media reported that Israeli attack helicopters struck a number of Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades posts, including one west of Gaza City and one east of Beit Hanoun, the airport east of Rafah and areas in the central Gaza Strip. No casualties were reported (Hamas website, January 2, 2016).

Monthly Distribution of Rocket Fire (2014 – 2015)¹



*The data include the three rockets launched by ISIS's Sinai Province from the Sinai Peninsula in July by ISIS's Sinai Province.

Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire in Israel's South²



*Three of the rockets that hit Israeli territory in 2015 were launched in July by ISIS's Sinai Province.

¹ As of December 29, 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 or rockets which misfired and fell inside the Gaza Strip.

Developments in the Gaza Strip

Riots and Terrorist Attacks near the Border Security Fence

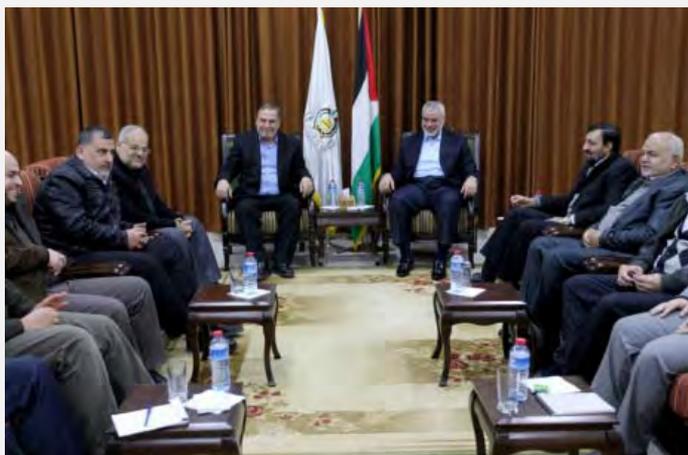
■ **Gazans continue rioting near the border security fence** in solidarity with the Palestinians waging the terrorist campaign in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem. However, there has been a **significant decline in the number of rioters**. This past week there were several dozen rioters, most of them young, at a limited number of locations. Two young Gazans were reportedly wounded by IDF fire east of the Jabaliya refugee camp (Paltoday, January 1, 2016). On December 29, 2015, Gazans threw stones at an IDF jeep near the border security fence in the central Gaza Strip. An IDF force fired into the air and the rioters ran away (Facebook page of Red Alert, December 29, 2015).

The Rafah Crossing

■ **Despite intensive internal Palestinian activity, the issue of the Rafah crossing has not yet been resolved.** Currently on the agenda is an initiative of the Palestinian organizations to which Hamas has not yet agreed. A PLO Executive Committee delegation is supposed to visit the Gaza Strip to examine the initiative. The delegation has reportedly been authorized by the PA national consensus government to discuss a mechanism for implementing the initiative (Samaa, January 2, 2016).

Hamas-Palestinian Islamic Jihad Meeting

■ On December 29, 2015, a Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) delegation met with a Hamas delegation headed by **Ismail Haniya**, deputy chairman of Hamas' political bureau. They discussed ways to deal together with the crisis in the Gaza Strip (electricity and the crossings). At the end of the meeting **the delegations issued a joint statement supporting the current Palestinian terrorist campaign**, noting it was a source of strength for the Palestinian people (Hamas, December 29, 2015).



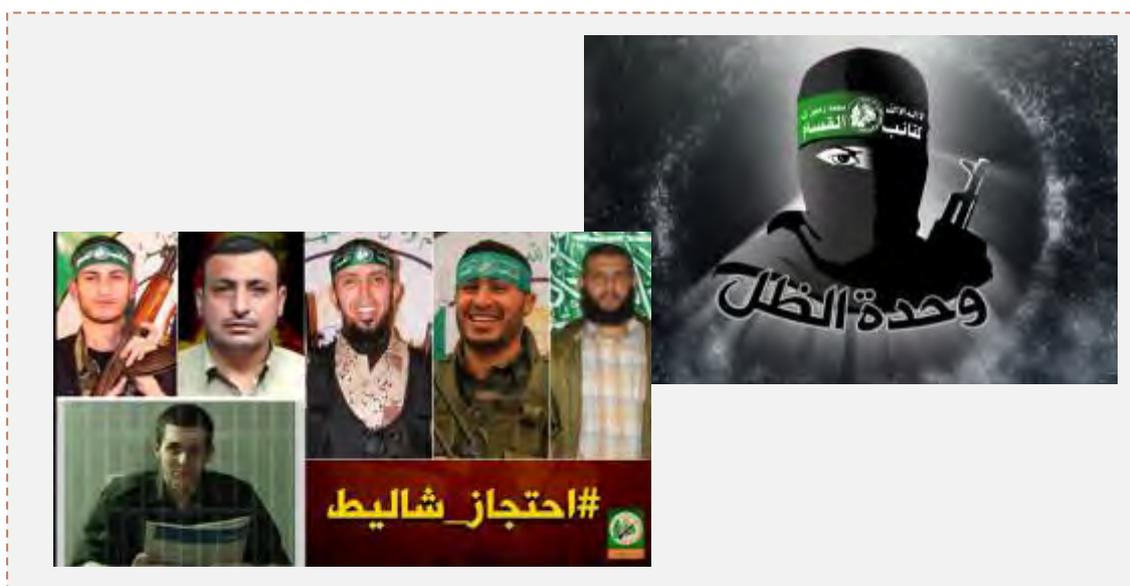
Hamas Reveals Information about the Abduction of Gilad Shalit

■ The Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military-terrorist wing, **posted the names and pictures of five of its operatives on its website, who, according to Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades claims, participated in the abduction of Gilad Shalit and his captivity.** The five were killed in recent years in a number of events. One of those named was **Abd al-Rahman al-Mubasher**, who was killed last week when a tunnel collapsed. Following the publication of the names spontaneous parades were held in Khan Yunis near the houses of three whose names were given. Hamas-affiliated Radio Al-Aqsa devoted its broadcasts to the subject, **calling for more abductions.** According to the Hamas media, those who participated in abducting and guarding Gilad Shalit were:

- **Sami Muhammad al-Hmeide** – Born in 1975, lived in the al-Shaboura refugee camp in Rafah, served as a battalion commander in the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, and participated in many terrorist attacks on the IDF. Killed in 2008 during Operation Cast Lead.
- **Abdallah Ali Lubad** – Born in 1968, lived in the Shati refugee camp (west of Gaza City), battalion commander in the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, joined Hamas during the second intifada and specialized in the manufacture of explosives. Killed in an attack in April 2011, along with two other Hamas terrorist operatives.
- **Khaled Abu Bakra** – Born in 1990, lived in Khan Yunis, battalion commander in the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, was responsible for placing IEDs near the

border security fence near Khan Yunis, digging terrorist tunnels and placing bombs. Killed on October 31, 2013, in a tunnel attack.

- **Muhammad Rashid Daoud** – Born in 1987, lived in Khan Yunis, operative in the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades' artillery unit. Killed on October 31, 2013, in a tunnel attack.
- **Abd al-Rahman Saleh al-Mubasher** – Born in 1986, lived in Khan Yunis, participated in a number of terrorist attacks against the IDF, killed on December 28, 2015, in a tunnel collapse.



Left: The abductors and captors of Gilad Shalit: Sami Muhammad al-Hmeide, Abdallah Ali Lubad, Khaled Abu Bakra, Muhammad Rashid Daoud and Abd al-Rahman Saleh al-Mubasher.
Right: The so-called "shadow unit," whose role is to guard Israeli captives
(Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades website, January 2, 2016).

- During the memorial service held for Abd al-Rahman al-Mubasher senior Hamas figure Musheir al-Masri boasted that dozens of Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades operatives were working day and night above and below ground [i.e., in the tunnels] to plan the next battle. He claimed the significance of the lull in the fighting for Hamas was training and preparing for the next battle (Gaza al-A'an, December 30, 2015).

The publication of information about the Gilad Shalit's captors and the statement made by Musheir al-Masri were in all probability meant to glorify the activities of Hamas' military-terrorist wing. The timing was significant because now the Palestinians are waging a terrorist campaign in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem while Hamas continues maintaining quiet in the Gaza Strip, exposing itself to criticism from its opponents for not taking action against Israel.

Iran-PIJ Relations

■ Palestinian sources reported that **Iran had again stopped sending funds to the PIJ in the Gaza Strip**, despite the fact that the flow of money was partially renewed a number of months ago. According to the sources, the reason was the PIJ's continuing refusal to toe the Iranian line and express support for the Houthi rebels in Yemen. It was also reported that Iran was continuing to transfer support to smaller organizations in the Gaza Strip (Al-Quds, December 28, 2015).

The Palestinian Authority

Statements by Mahmoud Abbas

■ In a speech given to mark the anniversary of the founding of Fatah, **Mahmoud Abbas claimed that the "popular awakening" was a reaction to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land, the settlements and the damage to the holy sites.** He also claimed it was a reaction to the lack of a "political horizon," which frustrated Palestinian youth.

■ He appealed to the Israeli public, claiming the government of Israel was leading it astray, did not want peace and was using all the means at its disposal to "extend the time of the occupation of the lands of Palestine." He demanded that Israel "get out of Palestinian life" and from the places sacred to Christians and Muslims. He called on Palestinian youth not to sink into despair but to turn their frustration into positive energy for building the homeland and its society (Wafa News Agency, January 1, 2016).

Israel Transfers Bodies of Palestinian Terrorists to the PA

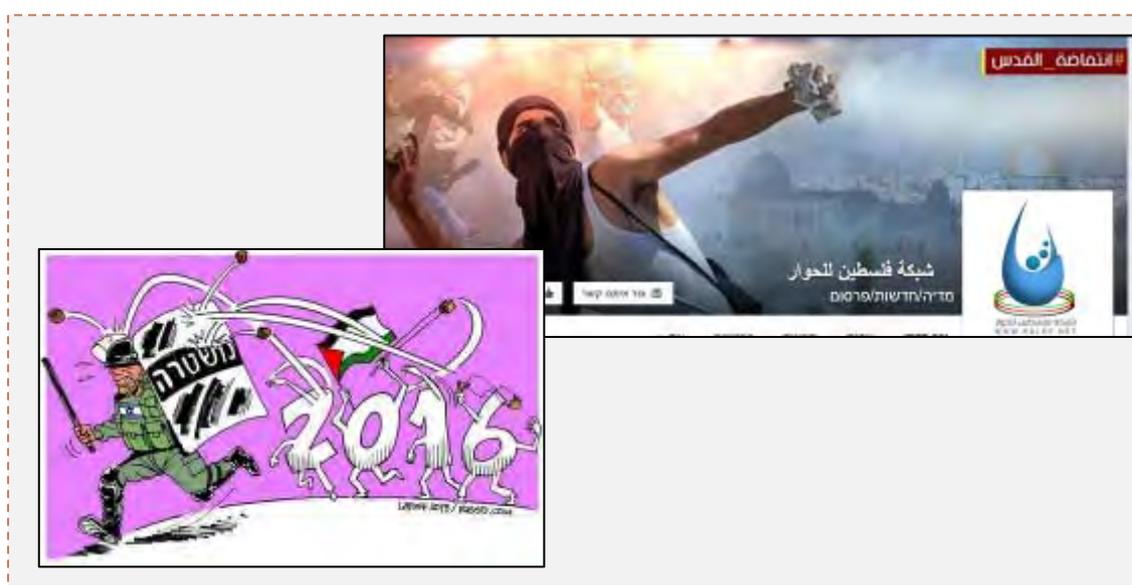
■ **Israel transferred the bodies of 17 Palestinian terrorists to the PA, most of them from Hebron** who had recently carried out attacks against Israel. Mass funerals were held for them, attended by senior PA figures. The PA subsequently autopsied all the bodies. That occurred after **the Palestinian attorney general, as ordered by Mahmoud Abbas, instructed that detailed reports of the autopsies and the conclusions drawn be presented to the International Criminal Court (ICC).**

■ According to **Dr. Sabar al-'Alul**, director of the Palestinian forensic medicine institute, the bullets found in the bodies were of a new, lethal type that caused great damage. He claimed they had been fired "point blank." He also claimed the condition of the bodies indicated they had not been "respected." He claimed that Israel had planned to harvest organs from the bodies but that he had not found organs missing, and it was

possible that had occurred in bodies that had not been autopsied (Al-Quds, January 4, 2016). **Dr. al-'Alul's allegations were meant to defame Israel and can be expected to serve as raw material for a new political-propaganda-legal campaign against Israel.**

The Battle for Hearts and Minds: Palestinian Media Encouragement for the Current Terrorist Campaign

■ The websites and social networks **continue to glorify the Palestinian terrorists who carry out attacks against Israel, blacken Israel's name and issue calls and post notices encouraging terrorist attacks and the continuation of violence and stone throwing. Hamas is in the forefront of encouraging terrorist attacks.** Examples follow.



Left: A cartoon for the new year encouraging violence against the Israel Police Force (Facebook page of PALDF, January 1, 2016). Right: The homepage of Hamas' PALDF website (January 4, 2016).

The Northern Front

Hezbollah Attacks IDF Vehicles with a Bomb

■ In the early afternoon of **January 4, 2016**, a powerful IED exploded between two IDF vehicles, one of them a heavy engineering vehicle. The explosion took place near Nahal Sion in Mt. Dov, on the slopes of Mt. Hermon. There were no casualties. One of the vehicles was damaged. Engineering corps soldiers carried out an examination to ascertain there were no additional IEDs present in the area. In response to the attack IDF soldiers fired artillery into the eastern sector of south Lebanon. The Lebanese media reported the IDF had fired at the village of Al-Wazani and the Sheba Farms, claiming that a Lebanese army base had been hit (Almayadeen, January 4, 2016).

■ **Hezbollah was quick to claim responsibility for the attack.** It announced a **squad named for Shaheed Commander Samir Kuntar had detonated a large IED on an Israeli patrol near the Sheba Farms (Al-Ahed, January 4, 2016).** According to Lebanese sources, **it was only the beginning of the response to the killing of Samir Kuntar (Al-Nashra, January 4, 2016).** At this stage it is unclear if Hezbollah has settled accounts with Israel or if it is planning more attacks.



Left: The IDF response to the attack (Ma'an News Agency, January 4, 2016). Right: Hezbollah's claim of responsibility for the attack (Al-Manar, January 4, 2016)