



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

(February 24 – March 1, 2016)



The axe attack at the mall in Ma'aleh Adumim. Left: Sa'adi Ali Abu Hamad, a mall employee who carried out the attack, critically wounding the security guard (Facebook page of Al-Filistina TV, Ramallah, February 28, 2016) Right: A scene from the security camera video shows the Palestinian terrorist attacking the Israeli security guard with an axe.

Overview

- The Palestinian terrorist campaign continues. This past week there were prominent stabbing attacks in Beit El, Ma'aleh Adumim and Gush Etzion. A reserve IDF officer was killed by friendly fire during a stabbing attack in Gush Etzion. A security guard at a mall in Ma'aleh Adumim was critically wounded by an axe-wielding Palestinian mall employee. Thus the death toll in the current terrorist campaign now stands at 33.
- The Israeli security forces detained two brothers in Hebron who carried out a series of sniper attacks, shooting at Israeli civilians and soldiers in the Hebron area. One of them was affiliated with Hamas. They carried out the attacks between November 2015 and January 2016. They turned over the improvised sniper rifle they used in the attacks, which they had hidden in a mosque.

Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem

Terrorist Attacks and Attempted Attacks

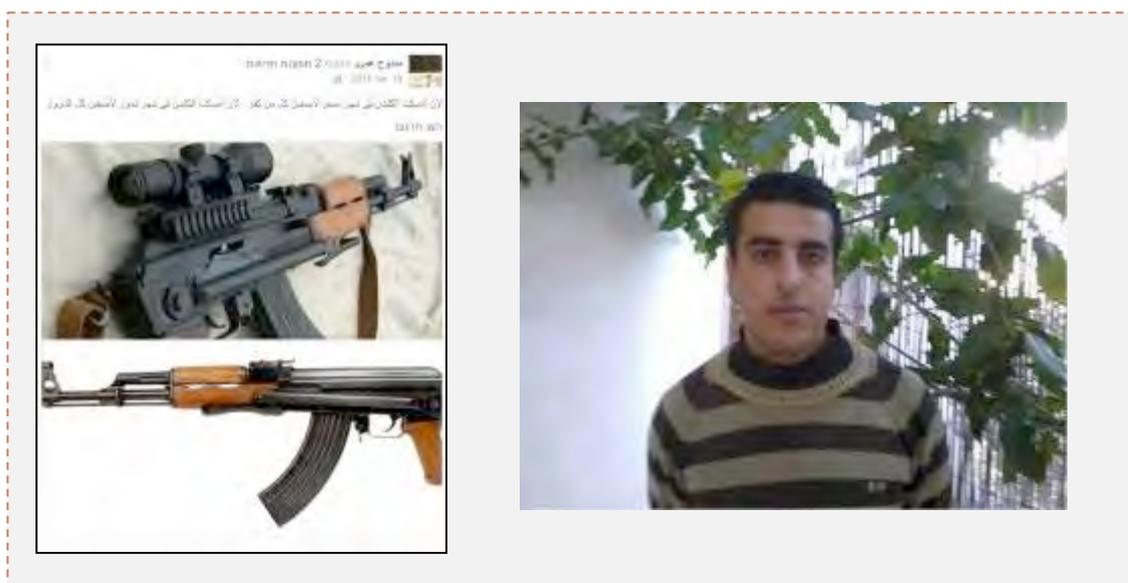
- February 26, 2016 – stabbing attack:** A Palestinian terrorist tried to stab IDF soldiers at a **junction near Beit El** (north of Ramallah). He was shot and killed. The Palestinian media reported he was **Mahmoud Muhammad Shaalan**, 17, from Deir Dibwan (east of Ramallah). He was a high school student and a member of the Deir Dibwan Unity Sports Club. According to the Palestinian media, he held American citizenship and returned from the United States three days before the attack. Both Hamas and Fatah issued death notices for him (Facebook page created to commemorate Mahmoud Shaalan, the Facebook pages of Hamas in Nablus and the Deir Dibwan Unity Sports Club, Finiq News, February 26, 2016).



The death notices issued for Mahmoud Shaalan. Left: The death notice issued by Hamas (Facebook page of Hamas in Nablus, February 26, 2016) Right: The death notice issued by Fatah in the Ramallah-Ai-Bireh district Facebook page created to commemorate Mahmoud Shaalan, February 26, 2016).

- February 26, 2016 – stabbing attack:** At around 1:15 a.m. on the night of February 25 a Palestinian terrorist used an axe to attack and critically wound a mall security guard in **Ma'aleh Adumim**. The attacker then fled the scene. A search of the path he took revealed an axe, apparently the one he used in the attack. Israeli security forces initiated a search for him. A day later the Israeli security forces detained **Sa'adi Ali Abu Hamad**, 21, from Azaria, after a relative turned him in. Sa'adi Ali Abu Hamad worked in the mall and was acquainted with the guard he attacked.
- February 24, 2016 – stabbing attack:**

- A Palestinian went to a **junction in Gush Etzion** and tried to stab an IDF reserve officer. IDF soldiers shot at the terrorist and mistakenly killed the officer. The terrorist was critically wounded.
- The Palestinian media reported the terrorist was **Mamdouh Yusuf Muhammad Amru**, 27, from Dura, south of Hebron (Shaab website, February 25, 2016). He taught mathematics in the village of Majd, south of Hebron (Quds Press, February 24, 2016).
- The terrorist had been active on Facebook until November 2015. He posted poems, pictures from family events, Qur'an verses, etc. In May 2015 one of his posts contained hate speech against "infidels" and Druze, and he expressed the desire to kill them with a Kalashnikov assault rifle.



Left: The May 2015 post of Kalashnikov assault rifles and the message, "If I held a Kalash[nikov] during the month of Safar [the second month of the Muslim calendar] I would have eliminated anyone who was an infidel. If I held a Kalash[nikov] in July I would eliminate all the Druze" (Facebook page of Mamdouh Amru, May 19, 2015) Right: Palestinian terrorist Mamdouh Amru (Filastin al-A'an, February 24, 2016).

Findings of the Investigation into the Stabbing Attack in Ashqelon

- About two weeks after the terrorist attack in Ashqelon, in which an IDF soldier was stabbed (February 7, 2016), it was revealed that the terrorist was a **Sudanese national**. He had been **inspired by ISIS** to carry out the attack. The terrorist was **Kamal al-Aziz Hassan Mohammed**, who had a smartphone with pictures of ISIS operatives in various locations around the globe.

Two Palestinians Detained, Carried Out Shooting Attacks in Hebron

■ According to the Israel Security Agency, Israeli security forces detained two brothers from Hebron on suspicion of having **carried out a series of sniper attacks targeting Israeli civilians and soldiers in the Hebron area**. Four Israelis were wounded in the attacks. The brothers are **Nasser Faisal Muhammad Badawi**, 23, **who is affiliated with Hamas**; and **Akram Faisal Muhammad Badawi**, 33.

■ **They gave up an improvised sniper rifle fitted with an improvised silencer. They customarily hid the rifle in a mosque.** They also had an improvised Karl Gustav submachine gun which they planned to use in future shooting attacks. They carried out most of the attacks from an empty apartment that was being renovated. They carried out the following shooting attacks in the Hebron area:

- **November 6, 2015** – A shooting attack targeting Jewish worshippers near the Cave of the Patriarchs; two people were wounded.
- **November 25, 2015** – A shooting attack targeting an IDF vehicle; the vehicle was damaged.
- **January 3, 2016** – A shooting attack targeting group of IDF soldiers; a woman soldier was critically wounded.
- **January 3, 2016** – A shooting attack targeting IDF soldiers at a junction south of Hebron; a soldier was wounded.
- **January 16, 2016** – A shooting attack carried out from a building in the Abu Sneina neighborhood of Hebron. There were no casualties. Akram Badawi carried out the attack alone. He had been detained on January 9, 2016 for questioning, and released. At the time his brother had already been detained.

■ Left: Hamas notice glorifying the two terrorists. The Arabic reads, "The prisoner Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades operative Nasser Badawi and the prisoner Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades operative Akram Badawi. May your hands be blessed, oh sniper. My nettle¹ tree [*nasham* in Arabic] has raised its head" (Facebook page of Paldf, February 29, 2016). Right: The sniper rifle used in the shooting attacks (Israel Security Agency media, February 29, 2016).

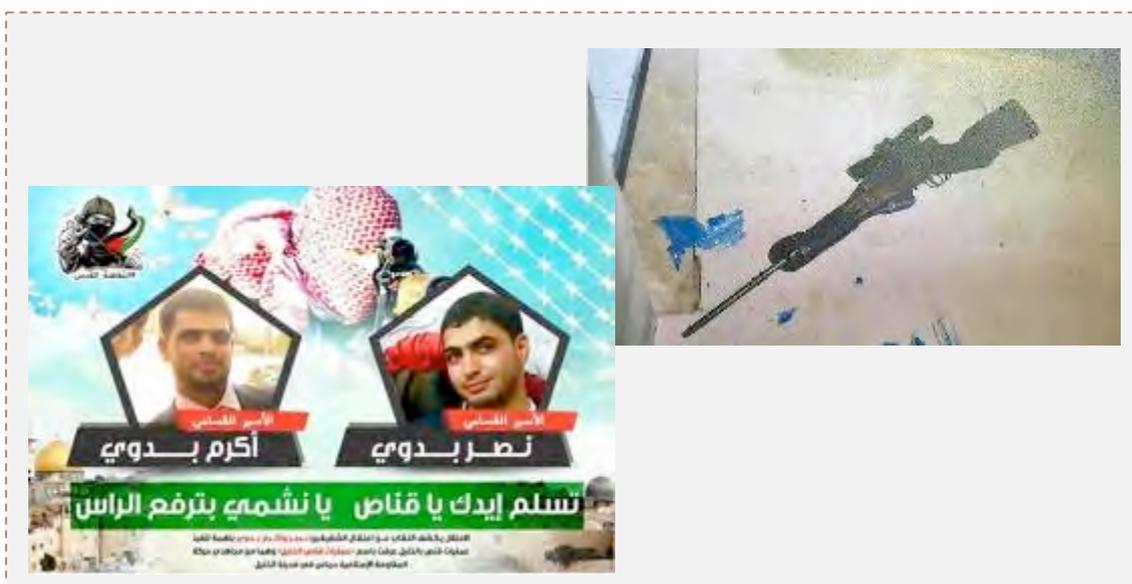
¹ The nettle is a sacred tree in Islam, and the subject of many fairy tales. It is believed to be the most effective means of exorcising djinn and a small piece of it can completely ward off the evil eye. Muslims customarily hang a small piece of the nettle tree on an infant's bed.

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. There were also a number of clashes between Palestinians and the Israeli security forces.

■ The more prominent events were the following (including terrorist attacks that were prevented):

- **March 1, 2016** – During an operation in **Nablus** the Israeli security forces discovered a workshop for the manufacture of weapons. A number of lathes and weapons were found (Israel Security Agency media, March 1, 2016).



Left: Some of the weapons found in the workshop in Nablus. Right: A lathe found in the workshop (Israel Security Agency media, March 1, 2016).

- **February 29, 2016** –
 - ✓ During the evening two IDF soldiers returning to their base took a wrong turn and in error entered **the Qalandia refugee camp** (near Ramallah). Palestinians who noticed them threw stones and Molotov cocktails at the car. One of the Molotov cocktails set the car on fire. The soldiers exited the car and separated. Israeli security forces searching for the two soldiers clashed with local residents.
 - ✓ A Palestinian was killed in an exchange of fire and four were wounded. One of the soldiers was located in a yard in the refugee camp. The other was located a short time later near the village of Kokhav Yaakov (southeast of Ramallah). The burned-out car was later removed from the refugee

camp. Five Border Policemen were injured. The Palestinian who was killed was **Iyad Omar Sajdia**, 21, from the Qalandia refugee camp, a student in his fourth year of communications studies at Al-Quds University. He also worked as a journalist at the Qalandia Communications Center (Facebook page of Iyad Sajdia, date, 2016).



Left: The soldiers' car, hit with a Molotov cocktail (Facebook page of Hamas in the Ramallah-al-Bireh district, February 29, 2016). Right: Masked Palestinians in the Qalandia refugee camp during the riot (Facebook page of Qalandia Refugee Camp First, March 1, 2016).

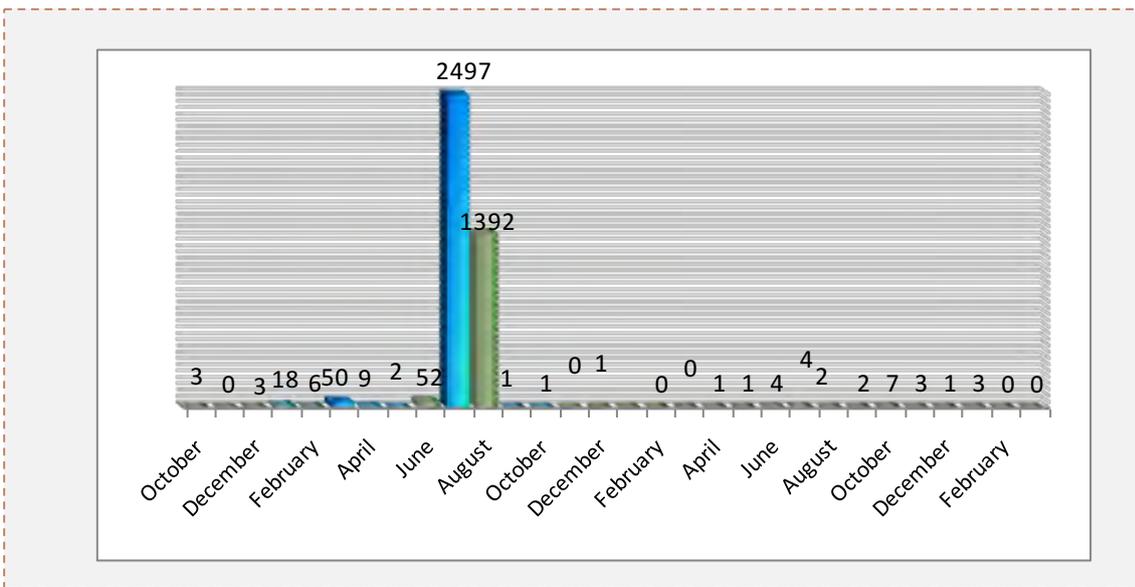
- **February 28, 2016** – A Border Policewoman was wounded in the head when stones and Molotov cocktails were thrown at Israeli forces during a security activity in **Issawiya**. On the previous day a Border Policeman was also wounded by stones in Issawiya (Facebook page of Red Alert, February 27 and 28, 2016).
- **February 27, 2016** – Palestinians fired shots at houses in the village of Beit El from one of the nearby villages. There were no casualties; several houses were hit (Facebook page of Red Alert, February 27, 2016).

Israel's South

Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire Attacking Israel

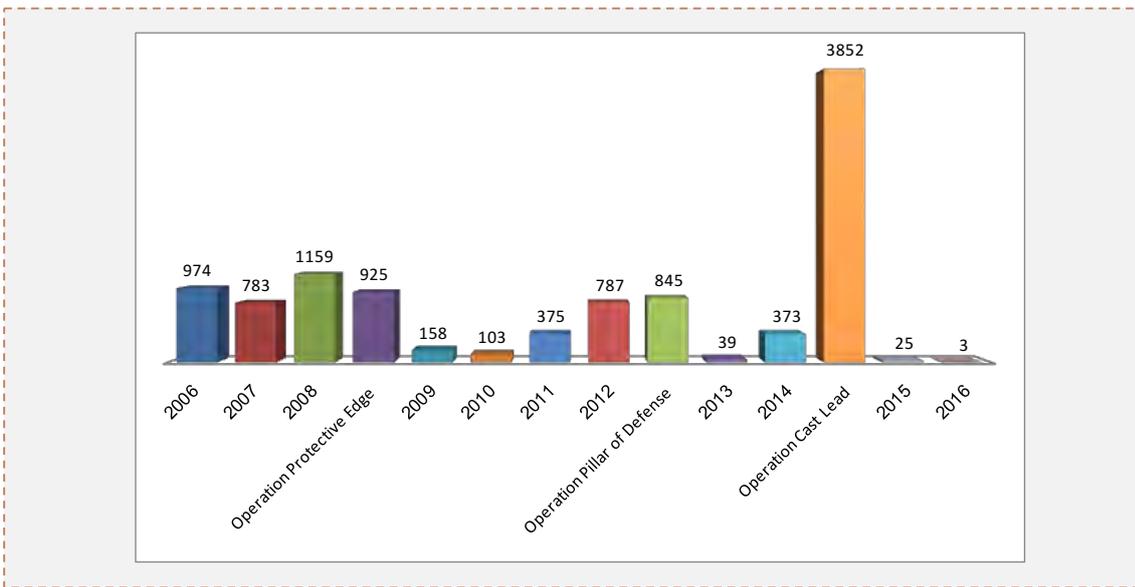
- This past week no rocket or mortar shell hits were identified in Israeli territory.

Monthly Distribution of Rocket Fire (2014 – 2016)²



*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 South³



² As of March 1, 2016. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire or rockets which misfired and fell inside the Gaza Strip.

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Attempts to Infiltrate Israeli Territory from the Gaza Strip

■ On the morning of February 27, 2016, three Palestinians were seen crossing the border security fence from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory under the cover of fog. The residents of the villages near the border were asked to stay inside their homes. After a number of hours the three Gazans were detained. They were unarmed. On February 28, 2016, Hamas restraint force operatives reportedly detained two Palestinian children, about 12 or 13 years old, east of Khan Yunis, who had tried to cross the border security fence into Israeli territory (Qudsnews, February 28, 2016).

Riots and Terrorist Attacks near the Border Security Fence

■ Gazans continue rioting near the border security fence in solidarity with the Palestinians in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem. Participation in the riots was low this past week, with a total of about 160 in four locations. Several Palestinians were reportedly wounded in clashes with IDF forces.



Palestinian rioters clash with IDF forces near the village of Nahal Oz, east of the Gaza Strip (Facebook page of Quds, February 26, 2016).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

Construction of a Port in the Gaza Strip

■ The Israeli and Palestinian media reported that during the Israeli-Turkish negotiations the issue of a port in the Gaza Strip was raised as a precondition for rehabilitating relations between the two countries. Senior Israeli security sources also

mentioned the construction of a port. The discourse led to mixed reactions in the internal Palestinian arena.

■ **Sources in the PA and Fatah opposed the idea:**

- **Issam al-Ahmed, a member of Fatah's Central Committee**, said every attempt to construct a port or a power plant, or hold negotiations that would be in opposition to Palestinian national interests, would be prevented.
- **Osama Qawasmeh, Fatah spokesman**, demanded Hamas clarify its position on statements made regarding a port constructed under Israeli supervision. He claimed Hamas' silence on the subject raised the question of how Hamas had agreed to the Israeli-supervised construction of a port while it refused to transfer control of the Rafah crossing to the Palestinian Authority (PA). He claimed it was obviously in Israel's interest and part of an attempt to isolate the Gaza Strip from the Palestinian territories (Ma'an, February 25, 2016).

■ **Musheir al-Masri, a senior Hamas figure**, claimed a regional move was under way to lift the siege of the Gaza Strip, including the construction of a port. He denied reports that Hamas was negotiating with Israel about construction of a port in return for a long-term lull in the fighting. He said constructing the port was the "right" of the Palestinian people, and claimed it was illogical for the Gaza Strip to remain closed off on land, sea and in the air. He said the solution would be either an explosion [in the situation in the Gaza Strip] or opening a[n overland] crossing to the Gaza Strip, which was preferable to the port alternative (Shams News, February 24, 2016).

Continued Tunnel Collapses in the Gaza Strip

■ Five operatives of Hamas' Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades were injured when a tunnel collapsed in the Al-Zeitoun neighborhood in the southern part of Gaza City. They were not seriously injured and were evacuated to a hospital where they were treated and released (Qudsnews, February 28, 2016). A Hamas source said that recently there had been a number of instances where tunnels of Hamas' military wing had collapsed, and some where there had been loss of life.

Hamas Rally in Support of Judea and Samaria

■ Hamas organized a rally in Rafah in a show of solidarity with Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem. Its slogan was "Our blood will light Al-Aqsa." During the rally **stabbing attacks and blowing up an Israeli bus were simulated**. Hamas also honored the Palestinian terrorists killed in the current terrorist campaign (Al-Aqsa TV, February 26, 2016). On stage was a large board on which was written, "We will not recognize Israel.

The intifada continues." There were also graffiti encouraging stabbing attacks (Alresala.net, February 26, 2016).



The rally in Rafah. Left: "Stabbing an IDF soldier." Right: Blowing up a bus (Alresala.net, February 26, 2016).

■ **Ismail Haniyeh, deputy head of Hamas' political bureau**, gave a speech in which he spoke about the terrorist attacks carried out in the last months. He claimed that what he called the "Jerusalem intifada" expressed a major change in the Palestinian people in recent years. He said what characterized the current intifada was that the younger generation was not afraid and was restoring the Palestinian cause to the head of its priority list (Palinfo, February 26, 2016).

■ During the rally a Soviet weapon was displayed. It was a GSh-23L (Gryazev-Shipunov) double-barreled 23 mm. automatic anti-aircraft cannon, developed for the Russian air force. During the past three years the guns have been widely used in Libya and were apparently smuggled to Hamas through the Sinai Peninsula (Al-Masdar, February 29, 2016).

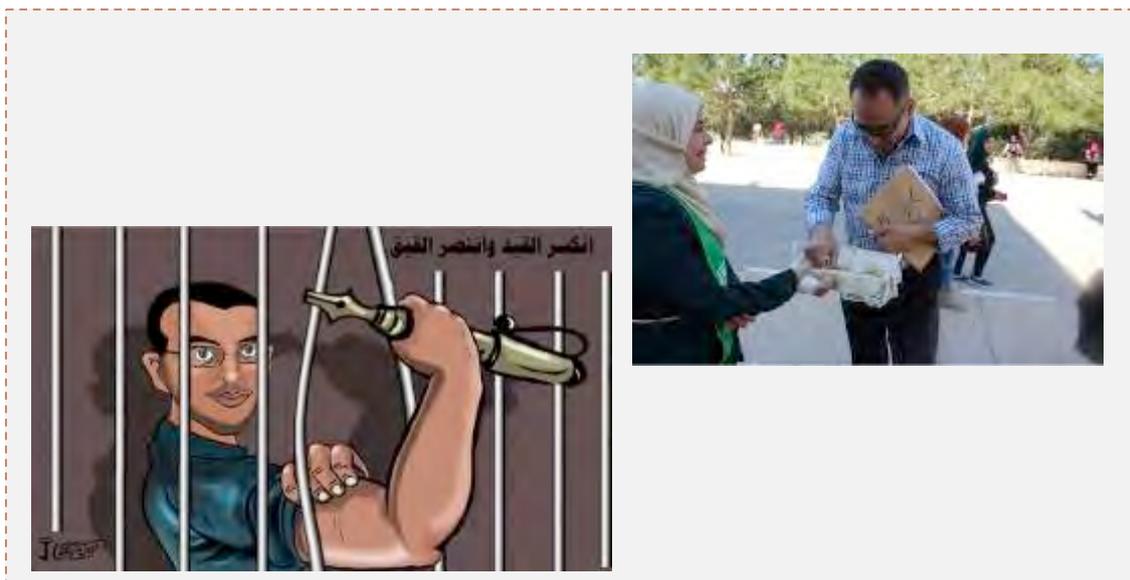


The anti-aircraft gun displayed by Hamas (Facebook page of QudsN, February 26, 2016).

The Palestinian Authority

Muhammad al-Qiq Ends Hunger Strike

■ On **February 26, 2016**, the family of administrative detainee Muhammad al-Qiq announced he had ended his hunger strike of 94 days in light of the decision not to renew his detention after May 21, 2016 (Palinfo, February 26, 2016). According to a statement from the Israel Security Agency, his detention will end on May 21, 2016, instead of June 17, 2016. If no new security information is received and there is no change in the circumstances, a new administration detention order will not be issued. Candy was distributed in a number of locations in Judea and Samaria in honor of his release and Facebook pages affiliated with Hamas posted notices glorifying his "victory" (Facebook pages of the Islamic Bloc in Bir Zeit, Hamas in the Nablus district and Hamas in Tulkarm, February 26 and 27, 2016).



Left: A cartoon from Hamas' Facebook page showing al-Qiq breaking through the bars of his jail cell. The Arabic reads, "Breaking the handcuffs and the victory of al-Qiq" (Facebook page of Hamas in Nablus, February 26, 2016). Right: Members of the Hamas-affiliated Islamic Bloc in Bir Zeit University give out candy in honor of al-Qiq's "victory" (Facebook page of the Islamic Bloc in Bir Zeit, February 27, 2016).

Senior Fatah Figure Involved in Clashes with the Israeli Security Forces

■ Every week there Palestinians riot in the village of Qadoum, west of Nablus, and clash with the Israeli security forces. They riot because of the blocking of a road which in the past was used as an exit from the village. Recently, **Mahmoud Walawil**, **secretary general of Fatah in Qalqilya** (who has served in the post since 2008), has been prominent at the riots. At the last riot he was seen marching at the head of the demonstrators to the main riot site, and even encouraged Palestinians to challenge the Israeli security forces stationed there (Wafa and the Facebook page of Qadoum, February 26, 2016).



Left: Mahmoud Walawil demonstrates with Palestinians holding stones (Wafa, February 26, 2016). Right: Mahmoud Walawil marching at the head of the demonstrators (Facebook page of Qadoum, February 26, 2016).

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

Palestinian Media Encouragement for the Terrorist Campaign

■ The social networks and websites, especially those affiliated with Hamas, recently launched a campaign to mark 150 days since the beginning of the current Palestinian terrorist campaign (called by Hamas the "Jerusalem intifada"). Many notices were posted encouraging its continuation. For example:



Left: The Arabic reads, "150 days and we continue" (Facebook page of Hamas' public activity network in the western Gaza Strip, February 27, 2016). Right: Hamas encourages stabbing attacks. The Arabic reads, "Continuing after 150 days. The intifada continues" (Facebook page of Paldf, February 19, 2016).

