



# News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

(March 2 – 8, 2016)



**Left: Letter of condolence sent by Mahmoud Abbas to the village of Husan (west of Bethlehem) and the family of Palestinian terrorist Amani Husni Jowad Sabatin (Facebook page of Bethlehem Al-Hadath, March 6, 2016). Right: Amani Husni Jowad Sabatin, 34, from the village of Husan, who carried out a vehicular attack at the Gush Etzion Junction (Palinfo, March 4, 2016).**

## Overview

- This past week the current Palestinian terrorist campaign continued, with varying degrees of intensity. Palestinians carried out stabbing, shooting and vehicular attacks at Nablus Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem, the Gush Etzion Junction (both focal points for terrorist attacks), the Jordan Valley and Samaria. **Note:** On the evening of March 8, 2016, after this bulletin was written, three shooting and stabbing attacks were carried out in Jerusalem, Jaffa and Petah Tikva. One man was killed and 14 were wounded.
- The Egyptian regime continues claiming  **Hamas is involved in supporting terrorism and subversion in Egypt**. This past week the Egyptian minister of the interior accused Hamas of supporting the Muslim Brotherhood in the assassination of Egyptian Attorney General Hisham Barakat in June 2015. Hamas rejected the accusation. Fatah justified Egypt.
- A jihadist operative from the Gaza Strip fighting in the ranks of ISIS in Syria strongly criticized the collaboration between ISIS's Sinai Province and Hamas while Hamas oppressed the jihadists in the Gaza Strip. The extensive collaboration between ISIS and Hamas includes ISIS's smuggling weapons to the Gaza Strip, Hamas' manufacturing weapons for the Sinai Province, Hamas' logistic support and visits of senior Sinai Province operatives to the Gaza Strip.

## Terrorist Attacks and Attempted Attacks

■ **March 8, 2016 – stabbing attack:** A Palestinian woman attacked a group of Israeli Border Policemen who were engaged in securing the area of **Hagai Street (near the Nablus Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem, a popular site for terrorist attacks)**. She took out a knife and tried to stab the soldiers. She was shot, mortally wounded and later died. She was **Fadwa Abu Tir**, 51, from the neighborhood of Umm Tuba (south of Jerusalem).

■ **March 6, 2016 – vehicular attack:**

- A Palestinian woman drove her car to the **Gush Etzion Junction**. She drove up on the sidewalk and rammed into an IDF soldier, wounding him. She was shot and killed by soldiers at the junction. **A knife was found in the car.**

- The Palestinian media reported the terrorist was **Amani Husni Jowad Sabatin** 34, from the village of Husan, west of Bethlehem. She was married and had four children. Her husband was a construction worker in Israel. Raghda, her eldest daughter, said her mother had followed the news and **was strongly influenced by the killing of Palestinian shaheeds and Israel's actions, especially on the Temple Mount and in Jerusalem**. The day before the attack she said her mother made cookies and told her she would eat them on Friday (Palinfo, March 4, 2016). Interviewed by Israeli TV, her relatives denied she had tried to carry out a vehicular attack.

- **Mahmoud Abbas sent a letter of condolence to the village of Husan and the Sabatin family** via the Palestinian embassy in Jordan (Facebook page of Bethlehem Al-Hadath, March 6, 2016). It is unclear why he chose that particular channel (Facebook page of Hamas in Bethlehem, March 4, 2016).



Left: The death notice issued by Hamas in Bethlehem for Amani Husni Jowad Sabatin (Facebook page of Hamas in Bethlehem, March 4, 2016). Right: The knife found in the car belonging to Palestinian terrorist Amani Husni Jowad Sabatin (Facebook page of Paldf, March 5, 2016).

- **March 3, 2016 – stabbing attack:** A Palestinian girl stabbed an Israeli policeman in the shoulder. He was directing traffic near a fallen tree **on Route 90 near the village of Al-Auja in the Jordan Valley**. She was detained and taken for questioning. She was **Hudaya Ibrahim Arinat**, 14 (Facebook pages of Quds and Paldf, March 3, 2016).



Left: The scene of the attack (Facebook page of Paldf, March 3, 2016). Right: The knife found at in the terrorist attack (Facebook page of Quds, March 3, 2016).

- **March 3, 2016 – shooting attack:** Palestinians shot at an Israeli police vehicle at a junction east of Ariel. There were no casualties; bullet holes were found in the car.

■ **March 2, 2016:**

- **Two Palestinians armed with clubs** entered the village of **Eli Shomron (south of Nablus)** and lay in wait outside one of the houses. When a man left the house the two attacked him. He struggled with them and they fled, hiding in the yard of the community's *mikveh* (ritual bath). An IDF force searched the area, found the two and killed them. **A knife and improvised gun were found** near the scene of the attack.
- The Palestinian media reported the two terrorists were **Labib Khaldoun Anwar A'zem** and **Muhammed Hashem Ali Zaghlawan**, both 17 from the village Qaryut, south of Nablus (near Eli Shomron). They were good friends and went to the local high school. The night before the attack they prayed together in the mosque and did not go home. **Labib Khaldoun Anwar A'zem was named for his uncle, a Hamas suicide bomber, who blew himself up on a number 20 bus in Ramat Gan in 1995** (Palinfo, March 2, 2016).
- Hamas issued a death notice for the two, claiming they died during "a heroic stabbing attack" (Facebook page of Paldf, March 3, 2016). The two were buried together in the village of Qaryut, in accordance with their will (Facebook page of Paldf, March 3, 2016).
- Both had Facebook pages, neither of which was particularly active. However, **they were both Hamas sympathizers**. They posted many pictures documenting Hamas' military activities in the Gaza Strip. Both were apparently religiously observant.



Left: The death notice issued by Hamas for Labib Khaldoun Anwar A'zem and Muhammed Hashem Ali Zaghlawan (Facebook page of Paldf, March 3, 2016). Right: A picture of the two terrorists (Facebook page of Paldf, March 2, 2016).

- **March 2, 2016 – stabbing attack:** Two Palestinians went to an IDF post in the village of **Har Bracha near Nablus**. They stabbed two IDF soldiers and fled. The wounded soldiers were evacuated to hospitals. **Husam Badran**, a Hamas spokesman, praised the attack and claimed that in the coming days "many surprises can be expected." He boasted that the next stage of the so-called "Al-Quds intifada" would strike fear into the hearts of the settlers and undermine their security (Hamas website, March 3, 2016).



Hamas picture encouraging stabbing attacks and mentioning recent attacks. The Arabic reads, "Stabbed...Nablus takes revenge...Qaryut shines in the glory of its heroes and takes its revenge at close range" (Facebook page of Hamas in Nablus, March 3, 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. There were also a number of clashes between Palestinians and the Israeli security forces.

■ The more prominent events were the following:

- **March 8, 2016** – A Palestinian woman who came to the **Qalandia crossing** aroused the suspicions of the Israeli security forces. They found a knife in her bag. During questioning she said she was planning to carry out a stabbing attack.
- **March 7, 2016** – Palestinians threw stones at a group of tourists near the **Lions' Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem**. A woman tourist suffered minor injuries.
- **March 7, 2016** – A Palestinian woman who aroused the suspicions of Border Policemen at a **roadblock near Abu Dis** was detained. A knife was found in her bag. She said she planned to stab Israeli soldiers (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, March 7, 2016).
- **March 6, 2016** – A number of pipe bombs were thrown at an IDF post near the **Tomb of Rachel in Bethlehem**. There were no casualties.
- **March 5, 2016** – A Palestinian was detained near **the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron**. A knife was found in his possession. The Palestinian media reported the detention of **Rami Izzat Qandahi**, 19, from Ramallah (Facebook page of Paldf, March 5, 2016).

## Resident of Qabatiya Detained, Established Terrorist Network in Egypt

■ The Israeli security forces detained **Mahmoud Nazal** from Qabatiya in Samaria. He was an operative in a faction that split off from Fatah's military-terrorist wing. In 2007 he studied and lived in Cairo. **There he contacted Hamas headquarters in the Gaza Strip. Hamas instructed him to recruit Palestinian students from Judea and Samaria who were studying in Egypt.** The recruits went to the Gaza Strip for military training and were then sent back to Judea and Samaria to establish a military-

terrorist network. Mahmoud Nazal was detained at the Allenby Bridge when he returned from Egypt through Jordan (Haaretz, March 8, 2016).

## Two Israeli Arabs Detained, Planned Terrorist Attacks, Inspired by ISIS

■ Two Israeli Arabs were indicted on charges of belonging to an illegal organization and contacting a foreign agent. The two were **Bahaa al-Din Ziyad Hassan Masarwa**, 19, from Yafia; (near Nazareth), a student in Jenin; and **Ahmed Nabil Ahmed Ahmed**, 21, from Nazareth. They were accused of expressing support for ISIS's ideology and planning to acquire weapons to carry out terrorist attacks. Iman Kanjo from Shfaram, a female cousin of Bahaa Masarwa, was detained a year ago and indicted for attempting to join ISIS.

■ According to the investigation, during the past few months the two customarily went to Al-Aqsa mosque to pray. They planned to carry out a **shooting attack** targeting Israeli security forces. **They also planned to carry out attacks in the northern city of Afula and at the Jalameh crossing** (between Israel and northern Samaria). They put aside money to buy a weapon. According to the indictment, Masarwa was in contact with an ISIS operative and used the Internet to spread ISIS materials (Israel Security Agency, March 6, 2016).

## Israel Security Agency Monthly Report on Terrorist Attacks (February 2016)<sup>1</sup>

■ In February 2016 there was a decrease in the number of terrorist attacks carried out in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem, a total of 153 attacks compared with 166 in January 2016. Most of the attacks (116) involved Molotov cocktails. The data are the following:

- **Location of the attacks** – 107 were carried out in **Judea and Samaria** (compared with 126 in January 2016); 42 in **Jerusalem** (39 in January); four **inside the Green Line** (two in Ramle, one in Rahat and one in Ashqelon), compared with one inside the Green line in January.

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<sup>1</sup> Israel Security Agency website.

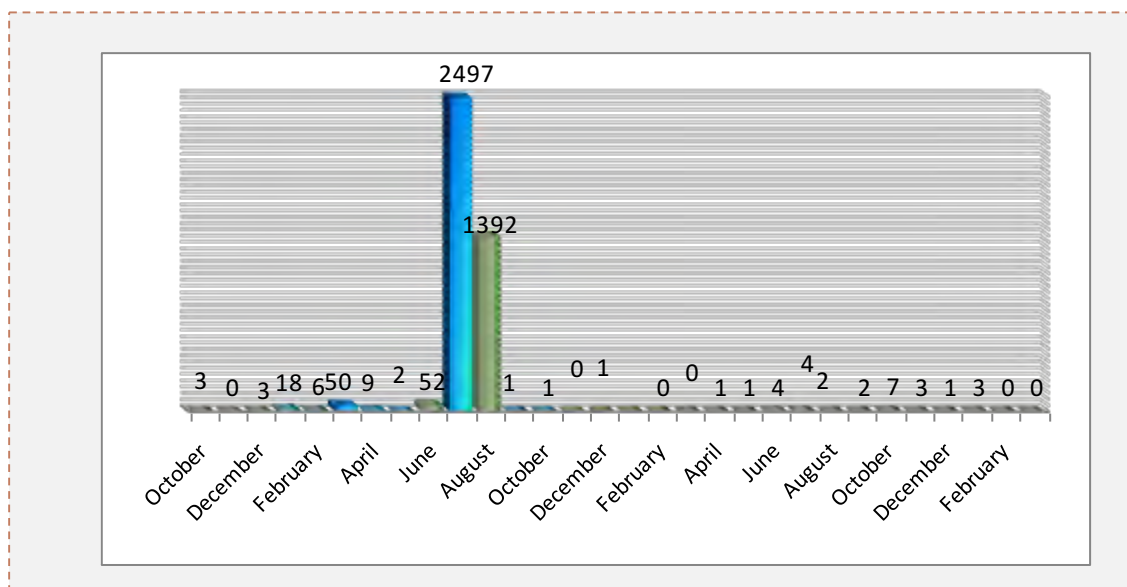
- **Casualties** – In February 2016 three Israelis were killed and 11 wounded (eight civilians and three members of the Israeli security forces, most of them wounded in stabbing attacks).
- **Modus operandi of the attacks** – Most of the attacks (116) involved Molotov cocktails; 39 were carried out in Jerusalem. There were five stabbing attacks (one in Jerusalem), 18 attacks involving IEDs, ten shooting attacks with light arms (two of them in Jerusalem).
- **Jewish terrorism** – One attack was carried out involving an axe thrown at a Palestinian car near the community of Karnei Shomron.

## 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)<sup>2</sup>

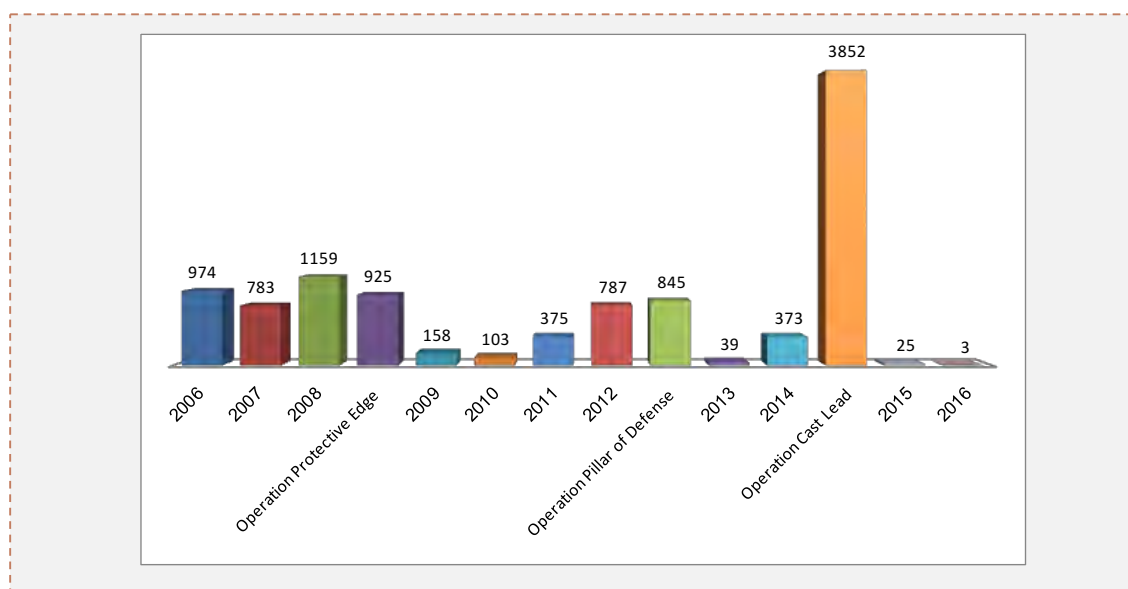


\*The data include the three rockets launched by ISIS's Sinai Province from the Sinai Peninsula in July by ISIS's Sinai Province.

<sup>2</sup> As of March 8, 2016. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire or rockets which misfired and fell inside the Gaza Strip.



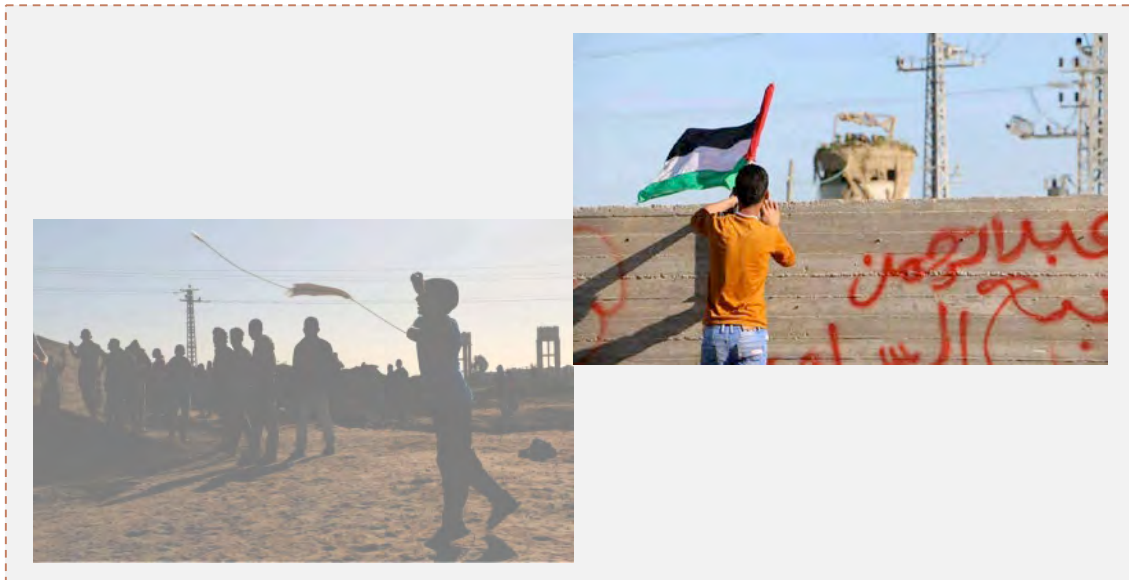
## Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire in Israel's South<sup>3</sup>



## Riots and Terrorist Attacks near the Border Security Fence

■ Gazans continue rioting near the border security fence in a show of solidarity with the Palestinians in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem. This past week relatively few Gazans participated, continuing the trend of the past few weeks. On March 4, 2016, Palestinians clashed with IDF forces near Nahal Oz, east of Gaza City. On March 6, 2016, a riot developed four kilometers from Kissufim, east of the Al-Maghazi refugee camp (Facebook pages of Gaza al-A'an, March 4, and Palinfo, March 6, 2016).

<sup>3</sup> The statistics do not include mortar shell fire or rockets which misfired and fell inside the Gaza Strip.



Palestinians riot near Nahal Oz (Facebook page of Gaza al-A'an, March 4, 2016).

## Developments in the Gaza Strip

### Another Tunnel Collapses in the Gaza Strip

■ Another operative of Hamas' military-terrorist wing was reported killed when a tunnel collapsed east of Khan Yunis. He was **Muhammad Musa Ahmed al-Astal**, 31. Five other terrorist operatives were wounded. Pictures posted by the military-terrorist wing to commemorate him indicated he belonged to the Khan Yunis brigade of the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades website, March 3, 2016). A funeral was held for him in Khan Yunis, attended by **Ismail Haniyeh**, deputy head of Hamas' political bureau (Facebook page of Paldf, March 3, 2016).



Muhammad Musa Ahmed al-Astal, killed in a tunnel collapse (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades website, March 3, 2016).

## Hamas Rejection of the French Initiative

■ In the near future the French foreign minister is expected to arrive in Egypt to present the French initiative to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A spokesman for the Egyptian foreign ministry said Egypt welcomed the initiative. However, **Hamas said it rejected the initiative and that it would harm the Palestinian people** because it was an attempt to renew the negotiations with Israel, and circumvent the Al-Quds intifada. According to Hamas, the initiative does not realize the "right" of the Palestinian people to Jerusalem or the so-called "right of return" of the Palestinian refugees (Hamas website, March 2, 2016).

## Deterioration of Hamas-Palestinian Authority (PA) Relations

■ **Majdi Abd el-Ghaffar**, the Egyptian minister of the interior, **accused Hamas of responsibility for the assassination of Egyptian Attorney General Hisham Barakat in June 2015**. He said Hamas had aided the Muslim Brotherhood operatives who carried out the assassination (Al-Youm Al-Sabaa, March 6, 2016). Hamas rushed to reject the accusation. Fatah justified Egypt.

■ Senior Hamas figures strongly denied responsibility for the assassination:

- Hamas spokesman **Sami Abu Zuhri** condemned the Egyptian accusations. He claimed they were untrue and unlikely, considering the efforts Hamas had invested in developing its ties with Egypt. He called on Egypt to take responsibility and not involve the Palestinians in its internal conflicts (Hamas website, March 6, 2016).



Left: Hamas cartoon mocking the Egyptian minister of the interior. The Arabic reads, "The Egyptian minister of the interior: Hamas is involved in the assassination of the attorney general..." (Facebook page of Paldf, March 8, 2016). Right: Sami Abu Zuhri's announcement rejecting the Egyptian accusations (Hamas website, March 6, 2016).

- **Musheir al-Masri** called the accusations of the Egyptian ministry of the interior "unfounded and baseless" (Paltoday, March 6, 2016).
- **Ahmed Yusuf**, advisor to the head of Hamas' political bureau, claimed Egypt's accusations had sent shock waves through the Gaza Strip because Hamas was continuously trying to improve relations with Egypt and invested all its efforts to that end (Paltoday, March 6, 2016). He also denied any organizational connection between Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt (Ma'an, March 7, 2016).

## Collaboration between ISIS's Sinai Province and Hamas

■ **Abu Abdallah al-Muhajer**, an ISIS operative from the Gaza Strip who joined the ranks of ISIS in Syria, sent an open letter to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. In it he protested the collaboration between ISIS's Sinai Province and Hamas, manifested by the following:

- **Smuggling weapons** – ISIS operatives smuggle weapons to the Gaza Strip for Hamas. The weapons come from **Libya and Sudan**.
- **Manufacturing weapons** – Hamas helps arm the Sinai Province. The weapons workshops of Hamas' military wing manufacture weapons and explosives for the Sinai Province.

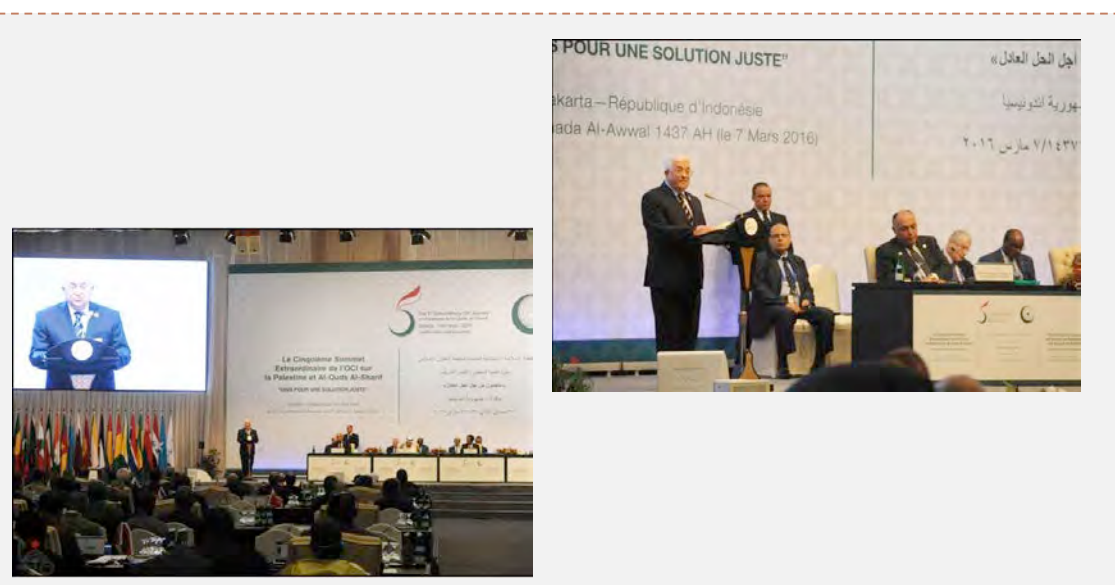
- **Logistic support** – Hamas provides the Sinai Province with logistic support, including the hospitalization of ISIS wounded in Gaza Strip hospitals and the provision of communications equipment.
- **Mutual visits** – Senior Sinai Province operatives customarily visit the Gaza Strip and meet with the senior leaders of Hamas and its military operatives to coordinate their collaboration.

■ According to Abu Abdallah al-Muhajer, there is no justification for the ties between ISIS and Hamas, not even for operational needs. That is because Hamas is an "infidel" movement which oppresses ISIS supporters in Gaza Strip (Al-Bawaba, March 3, 2016).

## The Palestinian Authority

### Islamic Summit Meeting about Palestine

■ On March 6, 2016, a summit meeting was held in Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia, devoted to the issue of Palestine and Jerusalem. **Mahmoud Abbas**, chairman of the PA, attended the meeting (Ma'an, March 5, 2016). Other attendees were **Javad Zarif**, the Iranian foreign minister, **Sameh Shoukry**, the Egyptian foreign minister, and **Adel al-Jubeir**, the Saudi Arabian foreign minister. Mahmoud Abbas gave a speech in which he said that Jerusalem and the holy places had never been in as much danger as they were today (Wafa, March 7, 2016).



Mahmoud Abbas speaking before the Islamic summit meeting in Jakarta (Wafa, March 6, 2016).

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

### Hamas Broadcast with Instructions for Terrorists Carrying Out Attacks

■ Since the beginning of the current Palestinian terrorist campaign, Hamas-affiliated Al-Aqsa TV has been encouraging the continuation of attacks. It recently broadcast a how-to video showing **how an attacker can cover his tracks and hide his identity after the attack**. The methods included destroying security cameras and setting fire to vehicles. The Palestinian public was instructed to spread garbage in the streets to sow fear in the hearts of Israelis, who might think it contained IEDs (Al-Aqsa TV).

