



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

(May 17 – 24, 2016)



Israeli bus after a shooting attack near Tekoa (Gush Etzion) (Facebook page of QudsN, May 21, 2016).

Overview

- This past week a stabbing attack was prevented at the Ras Bidu roadblock north of Jerusalem. There was also a drive-by shooting at a bus near the village of Tekoa (Gush Etzion). Palestinians rioted against Israeli security forces in Jabel Mukaber in east Jerusalem during the funeral of a terrorist who carried out a vehicular attack in Jerusalem and whose body was returned to the Palestinian Authority (PA).
- The appointment of Avigdor Lieberman to the post of Israeli defense minister drew many public responses throughout the PA and Gaza Strip. The Palestinian foreign ministry exploited it to defame Israel. Senior Hamas figures recalled threats made by Lieberman, but stressed that Hamas was not concerned by his appointment ("If he wants to prove his masculinity, let him come to Gaza...")

Terrorist Attacks and Attempted Attacks

■ **May 23, 2016** – A female Palestinian terrorist went to the **Ras Bidu roadblock (north of Jerusalem, near Givat Ze'ev)**. She aroused the suspicion of the Israeli security forces. They called to her to halt, firing warning shots in the air. She continued towards them and when she was close took a knife from her bag and threatened them with it. They shot and killed her. The Palestinian media reported she was **Susan Ali Daoud Mansour**, 17, from the village of Bidu northwest of Jerusalem (Facebook page of Paldf, May 23, 2016).

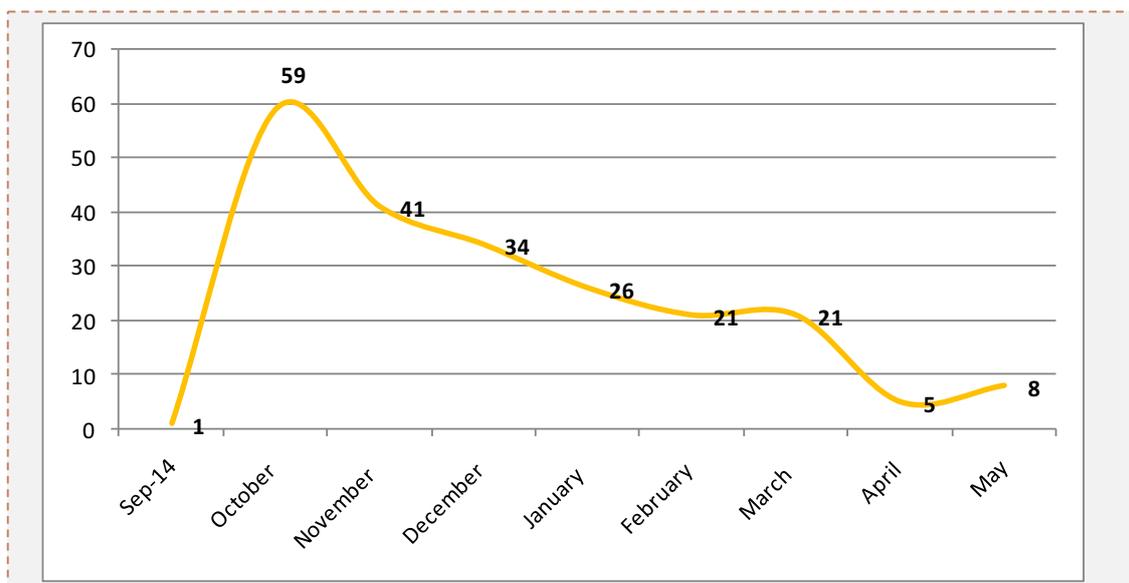


Susan Ali Daoud Mansour (Twitter account of Palinfo, May 23, 2016).

■ **May 21, 2016** – Palestinians shot at an Israeli bus in a drive-by shooting near **the village of Tekoa in Gush Etzion**. A car driving on the road overtook and shot at the bus. There were no casualties. There was a bullet hole in the front windshield. The terrorists escaped.

■ **May 18, 2016** – Palestinians shot at an Israeli security force vehicle at the **Qalandia crossing**. There were no casualties. The terrorists escaped.

Monthly Distribution of Terrorist Attacks in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem since the Beginning of the Current Terrorist Campaign



Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem

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. **Prominent were clashes and riots during the funeral held for Palestinian terrorist Alaa' Abu Jamal in Jabel Mukaber in east Jerusalem.** Abu Jamal carried out a vehicular attack in Jerusalem on October 13, 2016, and his body was returned to the Palestinians for burial. The funeral turned into a mass demonstration where Palestinians shouted anti-Israel slogans and clashed with Israeli security forces.¹

¹ About 200 Palestinians from east Jerusalem gathered outside the cemetery shouting "Allahu akbar" and "With spirit and blood we will redeem you, shaheed." Israeli Border Police forces prevented them from entering the cemetery and joining the funeral. The gathering and riot took place despite agreements reached with Israeli police forces that funerals would be held for terrorists only with the participation of family members and without incitement (Ynet, May 24, 2016).



The gathering at the funeral held for Palestinian terrorist Alaa' Abu Jamal in Jabel Mukaber (Facebook page of Mukabernet, May 23, 2016).

- The more prominent terrorist events were the following:
 - **May 23, 2016** – Palestinians threw stones at an Israel vehicle **near Huwwara (south of Nablus)**. There were no casualties. The vehicle was damaged (Facebook page of Red Alert, May 23, 2016).
 - **May 22, 2016** – Palestinians threw stones and bottles of paint at IDF and civilian vehicles between **the Tunnel roadblock and Har Gilo** (north of Bethlehem). There were no casualties. Both vehicles were damaged (Facebook page of Red Alert, May 22, 2016).
 - **May 22, 2016** – A Palestinian boy about ten years old was detained by the Israeli security forces after he threw stones at the light railway on the **Shuafat** line. There were no casualties and no damage was reported (Facebook page of Red Alert, May 22, 2016).
 - **May 22, 2016** – Palestinians threw stones and Molotov cocktails at an IDF force near **Kiryat Arba**. Palestinians threw two Molotov cocktails at a roadblock near **the Cave of the Patriarchs in Bethlehem**. There were no casualties (Facebook page of Red Alert, May 22, 2016).
 - **May 22, 2016** – Palestinians threw ten Molotov cocktails at Israeli police and Border Police forces conducting operational activities in **Issawiya (east Jerusalem)**. There were no casualties (Facebook page of Red Alert, May 22, 2016).

- **May 19, 2016** – Israeli security forces operating in the **Beit Hanina area** noticed a Palestinian about 16 years old who aroused their suspicions when he got on a bus in Shuafat in the direction of the Nablus Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem. He was detained and a knife was found in his possession. During interrogation he confessed he was planning to attack Israeli policemen (Facebook page of Red Alert, May 19, 2016).



Left: Israeli vehicle damaged by stones thrown near al-Khadr, west of Bethlehem (Facebook page of Paldf, May 17, 2016). Right: Knife found in the possession of a Palestinian who got on a bus going to the Nablus Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem (Israel Police Force Spokesman's Unit, May 19, 2016).

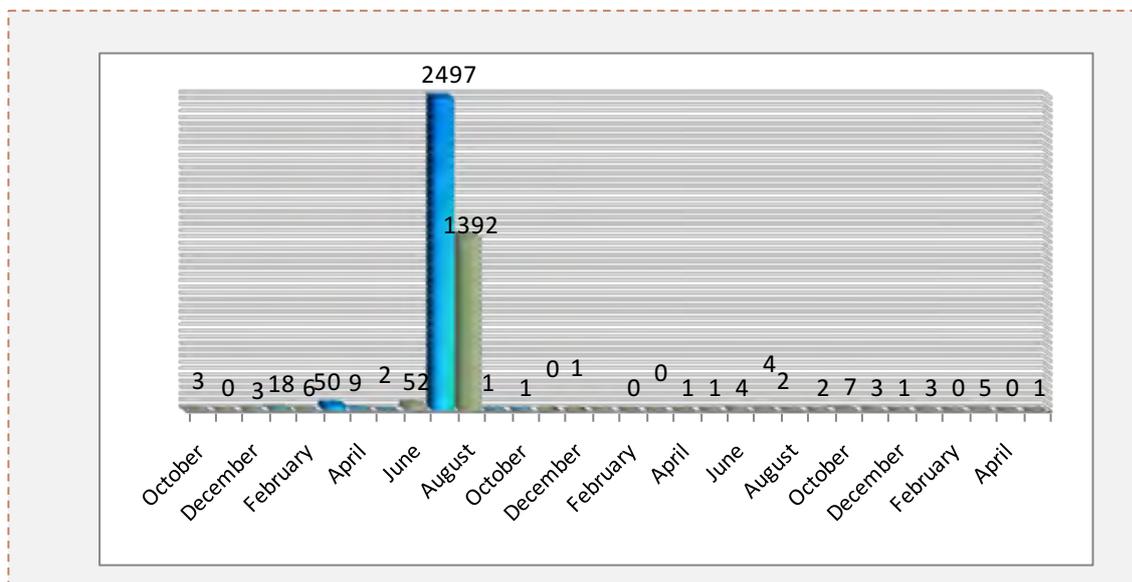
- **May 17, 2016** – Palestinians threw stones at an Israeli vehicle **near the gas station on Route 443** (between Modi'in and Jerusalem). There were no casualties. The windshield of the car was damaged. The suspects escaped (Facebook page of Red Alert, May 17, 2016).
- **May 17, 2016** – Palestinians threw stones at Israeli vehicles on the road **between al-Khadr and the Tunnel roadblock (north of Bethlehem)**. The windshields of two vehicles were damaged (Facebook page of Red Alert, May 17, 2016).
- **May 17, 2016** – Israeli police forces detained a Palestinian in the **village of al-Za'im** (east Jerusalem) following information about his intention to carry out a terrorist attack (Ynet, May 17, 2016).

Israel's South

Rocket Fire Attacking Israel

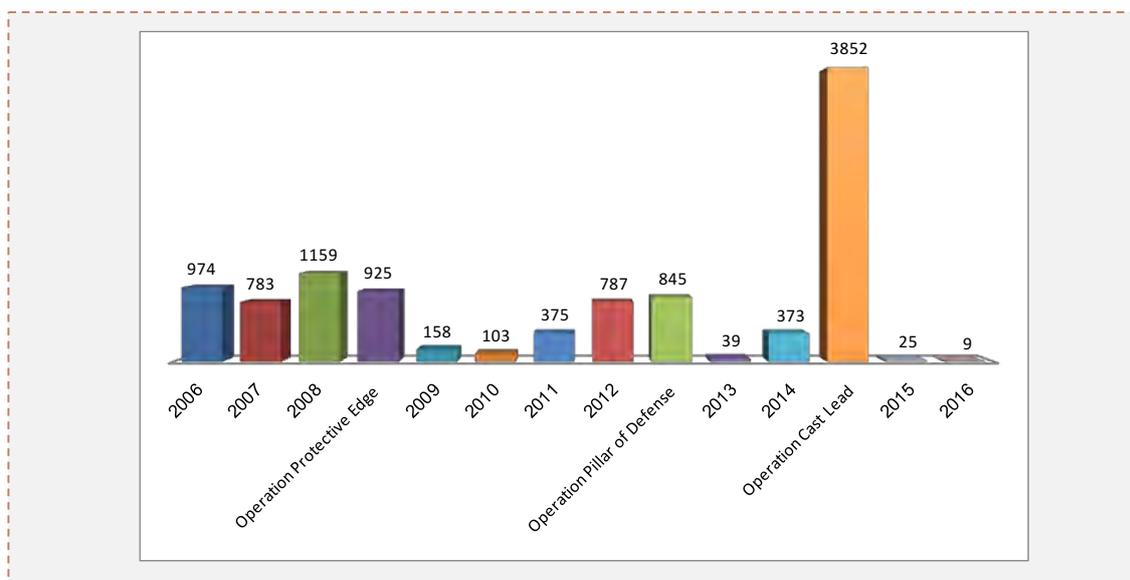
- This past week no rocket hits were identified in Israeli territory.

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 May 24, 2016. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire or rockets which misfired and fell inside the Gaza Strip.

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Smuggling from the Gaza Strip Prevented

■ On May 18, 2016, the Israeli security forces prevented the smuggling to the Gaza Strip of 60,000 springs for hand grenades. They had been hidden in a storage facility in the agricultural community of Ami'oz in the western Negev. They were loaded onto a vehicle that was supposed to bring them to the Gaza Strip. The police detained a resident of the southern Bedouin city of Rahat who remained in the storage facility after he loaded the springs. During interrogation he said he had planned to deliver 500,000 springs to the Gaza Strip (Israel Police Force Spokesman's Unit, May 19, 2016).



The springs that were supposed to be smuggled from Israel to the Gaza Strip (Israel Police Force Spokesman's Unit, May 19, 2016).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

Import of Cement Allowed to the Gaza Strip

■ On May 23, 2016, the import of cement from Israel for the private sector in the Gaza Strip was renewed. It was cancelled at the beginning of April 2016 after Hamas tried to transfer some of the cement to its own purposes, probably to the tunnel-construction project. Import was renewed after contacts between Israel and Nikolay Mladenov, the UN special envoy to the Middle East. Mladenov assured Israel that the building materials would not reach Hamas. Before that, Hamas activist Imad al-Baz was fired. He served as general manager of the Hamas-controlled ministry of the economy and was active in cement commerce (Walla! News, May 22, 2016).

■ Nikolay Mladenov praised the decision, saying that all sides had to ensure that the cement reached the people who needed it and would be used exclusively for civilian needs (Twitter account of Nikolay Mladenov, May 23, 2016). **Hatem Aweida, the general manager of Hamas' ministry of the economy**, claimed the ministry would make sure the cement was delivered to its proper destination and action would be taken against anyone who raised prices. **Jamal al-Khudari, head of the Popular Committee against the Siege**, claimed it was an important step but not enough to supply the amount of cement necessary to rebuild the Gaza Strip (Quds Press, May 23, 2016). **It can be assumed that despite the declarations and assurances, Hamas will find the way to get its hands on all the cement it needs for its military buildup.**



Trucks bring cement into the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom crossing (Facebook page of Paldf, May 23, 2016).

Hamas Rally

■ The Hamas movement in western Gaza City held a rally in support of the "Al-Quds intifada" and to mark Nakba Day. The events were attended by senior Hamas figures, among them Ismail Haniyeh, deputy head of Hamas' political bureau and Fathi Hamad, a member of Hamas' political bureau and former minister of the interior in the de facto Hamas administration. Fathi Hamad gave a speech in which he said Hamas' military wing had created a new equation and Hamas would not allow the IDF to enter the Gaza Strip. However, he said Hamas did not want a war, but if Israel began one Hamas would be prepared (Al-Wataniya, May 20 2016).



Hamas rally in western Gaza City. Participants burned pictures of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, outgoing Defense Minister Moshe Yaalon, incoming Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman, and IDF Chief of Staff Gadi Eizenkot (Facebook page of Paldf, May 20, 2016).

Hamas Activity against Salafist-Jihadists in the Gaza Strip

■ Palestinian sources reported clashes in Rafah (southern Gaza Strip) between Salafist-jihadists who had barricaded themselves inside their homes, and Hamas' security forces. A large Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades force raided a house where Salafist operatives were entrenched and detained four of them. One of the detainees was **Muhammad Shahin**, who had been wanted by the Hamas security forces for a long time. Another was wearing an explosive belt to carry out a suicide bombing attack, but did not succeed in detonating it. **Apparently the Salafist-jihadi operatives were on their way to the Sinai Peninsula and planned to enter through one of the tunnels** (Al-Masdar, May 18, 2016).

Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) Delegation Visits Egypt

■ A PIJ delegation headed by organization secretary general Ramadan Shallah and his deputy Ziyad al-Nakhalah arrived in Cairo. According to PIJ spokesman Daoud Shihab, they expect to meet with the head of Egyptian General Intelligence and senior members of the Egyptian government. The Rafah crossing was opened especially to allow the delegation to enter Egyptian territory.] According to Palestinian and Egyptian sources, senior Fatah and Hamas figures are supposed to meet in Cairo at the beginning of June 2016, and Mahmoud Abbas will meet with Khaled Mashaal (Quds.net, Ma'an and Safa, May 21, 2016).

The Palestinian Authority

Palestinian Responses to the Appointment of Avigdor Lieberman as Israeli Defense Minister

■ **The appointment of Avigdor Lieberman to the post of defense minister was widely commented on in the PA and Gaza Strip.** The Palestinian media recalled past threats he had made against Hamas and the Gaza Strip, but Hamas claimed it was not concerned. His appointment was also exploited to defame Israel. The social networks expressed concern over a possible escalation and difficult period for the Gaza Strip. However, for foreign ears Hamas reiterated that it was not worried. Some of the comments were the following:

- According to **the Palestinian foreign ministry**, the entrance of Israel Beitenu [Avigdor Lieberman's party] into the Netanyahu government proved that Israel was not a genuine partner for peace. The decision, claimed the ministry, was Netanyahu's response to the French, international and regional efforts to renew the peace process. It showed the world that Israel preferred its extremist policies and the perpetuation of the "occupation" to peace (Wafa, May 19, 2016).
- **Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri** claimed that without a doubt the appointment of Avigdor Lieberman as defense minister would have an extreme influence on the Palestinian arena. However, he also claimed Hamas was not concerned by the appointment (Quds.net, May 19, 2016).
- **Senior Hamas figure Mahmoud al-Zahar** claimed he invited Lieberman to present his new security concept. He added that if Israeli soldiers approached the Gaza Strip border they would fall into the traps Hamas had set for them. He said that "if Lieberman wants to prove his masculinity, let him come to Gaza" (Al-Wataniya, May 19, 2016). On another occasion Mahmoud al-Zahar claimed that Lieberman's threats to assassinate senior Hamas figures were nothing more than media and sectarian propaganda.
- **Fathi Hamad, minister of the interior in the former de facto Hamas administration**, claimed that Lieberman's threats did not scare Hamas. He claimed Hamas did not want a war but was fully prepared if one should be forced on it.



Cartoons in response to the appointment of Avigdor Lieberman as defense minister. Left: From the Palinfo Twitter account (May 23, 2016). Right: From Hamas' weekly Al-Risalah (May 23, 2016).

The Battle for Hearts and Minds

Palestinian Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah Meets with the Palestinian National Committee to Investigate Operation Protective Edge

- **Rami Hamdallah, prime minister in the Palestinian national consensus government, met in his office in Ramallah with Farid al-Jalad, formerly a judge and currently the chairman of the Palestinian national committee to investigate Operation Protective Edge.** Hamdallah updated him about the committee's activity and the reports it had prepared so far. He praised the committee's efforts to expose Israel's actions against the Gazan population during the operation in 2014 (Facebook page of Rami Hamdallah, May 23, 2016).
- The Independent National Committee for Investigation, whose main office is in Ramallah, was established by a presidential edict issued by PA chairman Mahmoud Abbas in July 2015. The committee is headed by former judge Farid al-Jalad. The objective of the committee, as defined by the edict, is to investigate human rights violations committed by Israel during Operation Protective Edge, and to present its findings to an international commission of enquiry (Website of the Independent National Committee for Investigation, May 23, 2016). At the beginning of May 2016 the committee paid a three-day visit to the Gaza Strip, meeting with senior Hamas figures. The objective was to receive materials and documents from the time of Operation Protective Edge that could support the committee's work (Al-Hayat al-

Jadeeda, May 8, 2016). **It may be assumed the committee will be exploited to defame Israel in the international arena.**



Left: The logo of the committee to investigate Operation Protective Edge (Website of the Independent National Committee for Investigation, May 23, 2016). Right: Rami Hamdallah meets with the head of the committee (Facebook page of Rami Hamdallah, May 23, 2016).

Flotilla of Women to the Gaza Strip

■ **Zaher Birawi**,⁴ executive director of the **International Committee for Breaking the Siege of Gaza**, announced the inauguration of a campaign to enlist donations and support for a women's flotilla to the Gaza Strip. According to Birawi, the campaign will include events in the Gaza Strip and various countries around the globe. The women's flotilla will be led by the Freedom Coalition and is expected to leave from a European port in September 2016 (Palinfo, May 20, 2016).

⁴ **Zaher Birawi** is a Hamas-affiliated activist. He comes from the village of Asira al-Shimaliya north of Nablus. He currently lives in Britain, where he went in the early 1990s to study. In Britain he participates in activities affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood but is careful not to publicly present himself as a Hamas or Muslim Brotherhood activist. On his Twitter account he represents himself as a British Palestinian, journalist and broadcaster.



The logo of the campaign to enlist donations and support for the women's flotilla to the Gaza Strip (Facebook page of the International Committee for Breaking the Siege of Gaza, May 23, 2016)