



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict¹

(September 21 – 27, 2016)



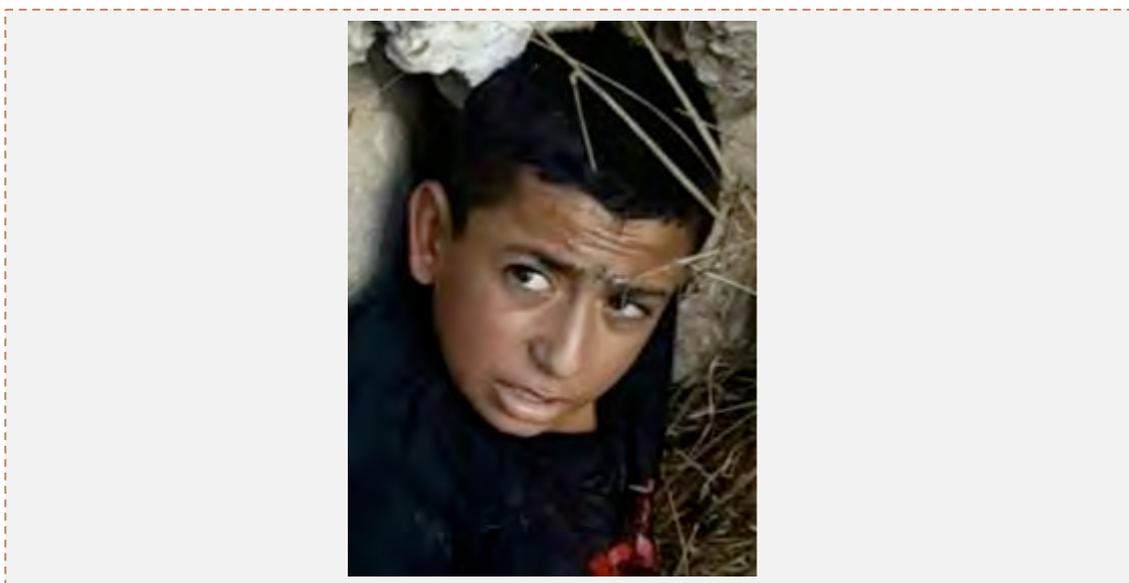
Facebook closed several Palestinian pages because they contained incitement to violence, after which Palestinians posted cartoons linking Facebook to Israel. Left: The Facebook icon prays as the Western Wall. The Arabic reads, "Facebook agreed to let Israel use the site to deal with 'incitement' " (Palinfo, September 24, 2016). Right: Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg in an IDF uniform (Facebook page of Mesh Heq since closed, September 24, 2016).

Overview

- The wave of population terrorism that reemerged last week continues, although with waning intensity. Prominent this past week was a stabbing attack at the entrance to Kiryat Arba. In addition, the Palestinian Authority security forces detained a young Palestinian girl on her way to a stabbing attack at Ma'aleh Adumim (east of Jerusalem).
- Mahmoud Abbas gave a speech before the UN General Assembly in which he strongly attacked Israel. He accused Israel of causing the peace process to fail, of evading participation in the French initiative and of violating the UN's 1947 partition resolution (Resolution 181). He particularly dwelled on condemning the Israeli settlements. He claimed the Palestinians planned to propose a resolution to the Security Council regarding the issue and said he hoped "no country" (i.e., the United States) would veto it.

Terrorist Attacks and Attempted Terrorist Attacks

■ On **September 23, 2016**, a 15 year-old Palestinian boy brandished a knife at a bus stop at the entrance to **Kiryat Arba**. The Israeli security force securing the location shot and critically wounded him. The Palestinian media reported he was **Osama Murad Mari' Zidat**, 15, from the town of Bani Na'im, north of Hebron (Facebook page of Bani Na'im and Ma'an, September 23, 2016).



Osama Murad Mari' Zidat, from Bani Na'im (Facebook page of Bani Na'im, September 23, 2016)

■ On **September 21, 2016**, a young Palestinian girl holding a bag went to the crossing reserved for cars near **Alfei Menashe (the Eliahu crossing)**. The security guards ordered her to halt. When she did not obey the warning they shot and wounded her in the leg. There was nothing in the bag. **In the initial interrogation she said, "I came to die."** She was **Baraa' Ramadan Awissi**, 13, from Qalqilya. She was related to **Risha Muhammad Awissi**, a 23 year-old woman from Qalqilya, who was killed at the same location under similar circumstances on November 9, 2015.² She was released after being interrogated.

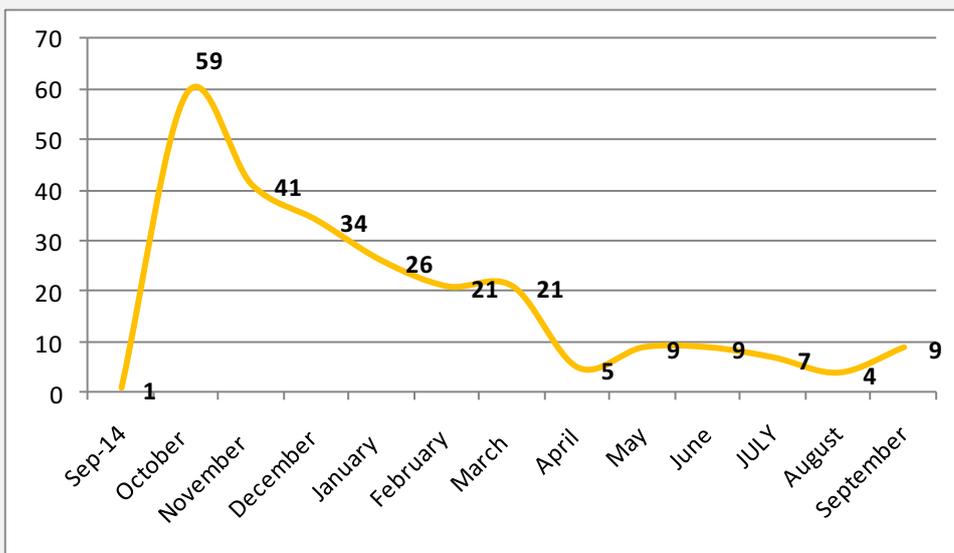
² **Risha Muhammad Awissi** walked to the crossing. Despite the calls of the security guards to halt she continued towards them. Even after they fired warning shots in the air she did not stop. She drew a knife from her bag and the security guards shot and killed her (Facebook page of QudsN, November 9, 2015). A suicide note was found in her bag in which she said she was "defending the homeland."

Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem

Riots, Clashes and Popular Terrorism

- In the meantime, riots, the throwing of stones, Molotov cocktails and pipe bombs and light-arms fire continue in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem.
- The more prominent events were the following:
 - **September 26, 2016** – Palestinians threw an IED at **the precinct of the Tomb of Rachel**. There were no casualties (Facebook page of Red Alert, September 26, 2016).
 - **September 23, 2016** – Palestinians threw Molotov cocktails at an Israeli security force post in **Beit El**. There were no casualties (Facebook page of Red Alert, September 23, 2016).
 - **September 23, 2016** – Palestinians threw three Molotov cocktails near the **Mt. of Olives in east Jerusalem**. There were no casualties. The police searched for them (Facebook page of Red Alert, September 23, 2016).
 - **September 23, 2016** – Palestinians threw stones at **a road block in Hebron**, inflicting minor wounds on a policeman (Facebook page of Red Alert, September 23, 2016).
 - **September 23, 2016** – Several dozen Palestinians threw stones at IDF soldiers **near Tekoa in Gush Etzion**. The soldiers responded with tear gas and rubber bullets, wounding several Palestinians (Facebook page of Red Alert, September 23, 2016).
 - **September 22, 2016** – Palestinians threw stones at Israeli vehicles near the **Yitzhar Junction in Samaria**. There were no casualties. A number of cars were damaged (Facebook page of Red Alert, September 22, 2016).
 - **September 21, 2016** – Palestinians threw six Molotov cocktails at Israeli security forces near **Issawiya in east Jerusalem**. There were no casualties (Facebook page of Red Alert, September 21, 2016).

Monthly Distribution of Terrorist Attacks in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem

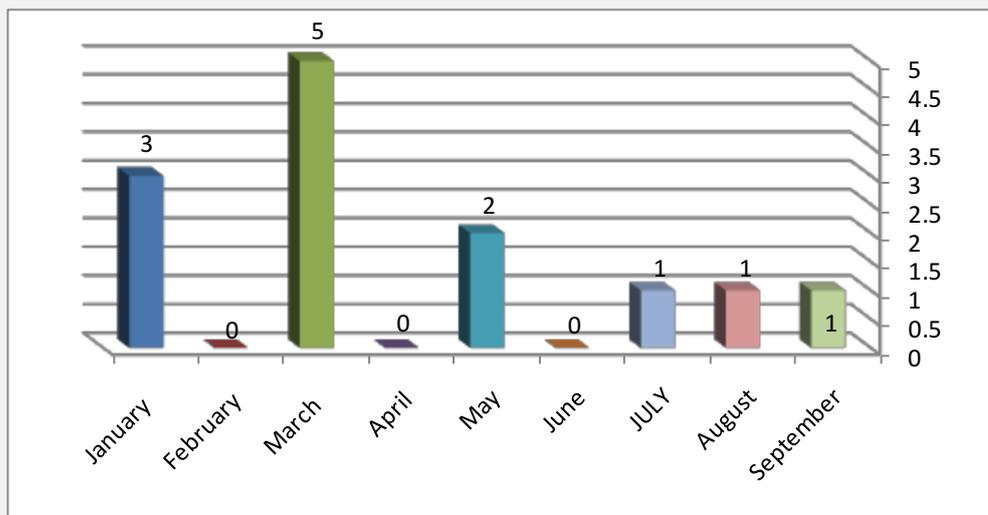


Israel's South

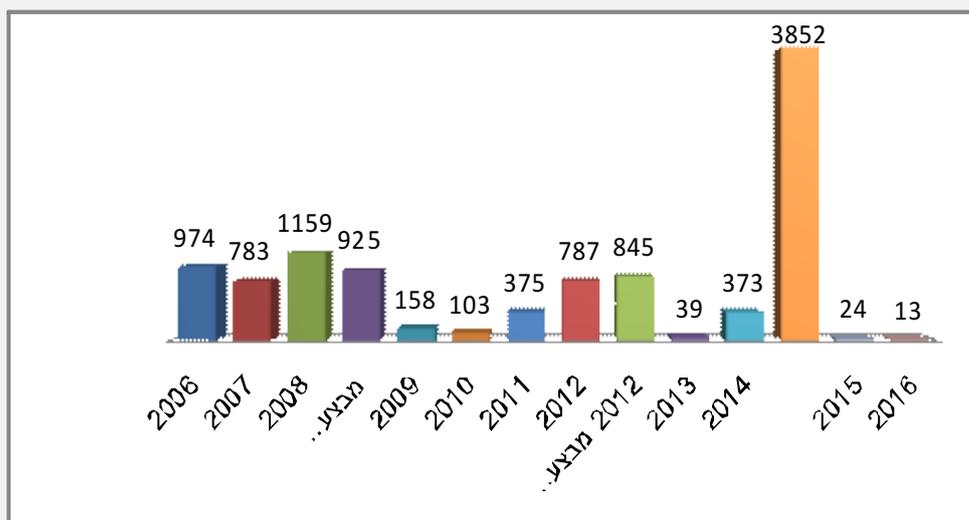
Rocket Fire Attacking Israel

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

Monthly Distribution of Rocket Fire, 2016



Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire in Israel's South³



Violence at the Border Security Fence

■ During the past week there were a number of violent clashes between Gazans and Israeli soldiers near the border security fence. The Gazans set tires on fire and threw stones. At a clash across from the community of Nahal Oz in the southern Gaza Strip, IDF forces shot at the rioters, wounding one (Facebook page of Red Alert, September 23, 2016).



Clashes between Gazans and the Israeli security forces near of the border security fence near the al-Bureij refugee camp (Facebook page of QudsN, September 23, 2016).

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

Hamas UAV Intercepted

■ On the morning of September 20, 2016, Israeli Air Force aircraft intercepted a Hamas UAV near the Gaza Strip shore. It did to enter Israeli airspace but was airborne for several minutes (IDF spokesman, September 20, 2016).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

The Rafah Crossing

■ On September 24, 2016, the Egyptians closed the Rafah crossing after the third and last group of pilgrims entered the Gaza Strip. During the three days the crossing was open 2.290 pilgrims passed through. Exit or entrance permits were given exclusively to pilgrims, not for any others wishing to leave the Gaza Strip (Website of the ministry of the interior international he Gaza Strip, September 22-24, 2016).



Pilgrims return to the Gaza Strip through the Rafah crossing (Website of the ministry of the interior international he Gaza Strip, September 22, 2016).

Khaled Mashaal Boasts about Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades Weapons

■ **Khaled Mashaal, head of Hamas' political bureau**, gave a speech at a conference held in Doha, Qatar, which met to discuss "Changes in the Islamic Movements." **He claimed Hamas' military wing had far more weapons than it had possessed before Operation Protective Edge** (Al-Aqsa, September 24, 2016).⁴

⁴ For further information about Hamas' military buildup after Operation Protective Edge, see the September 12, 2016 bulletin, "Two Years After Operation Protective Edge: Security along the Israeli-Gazan border."

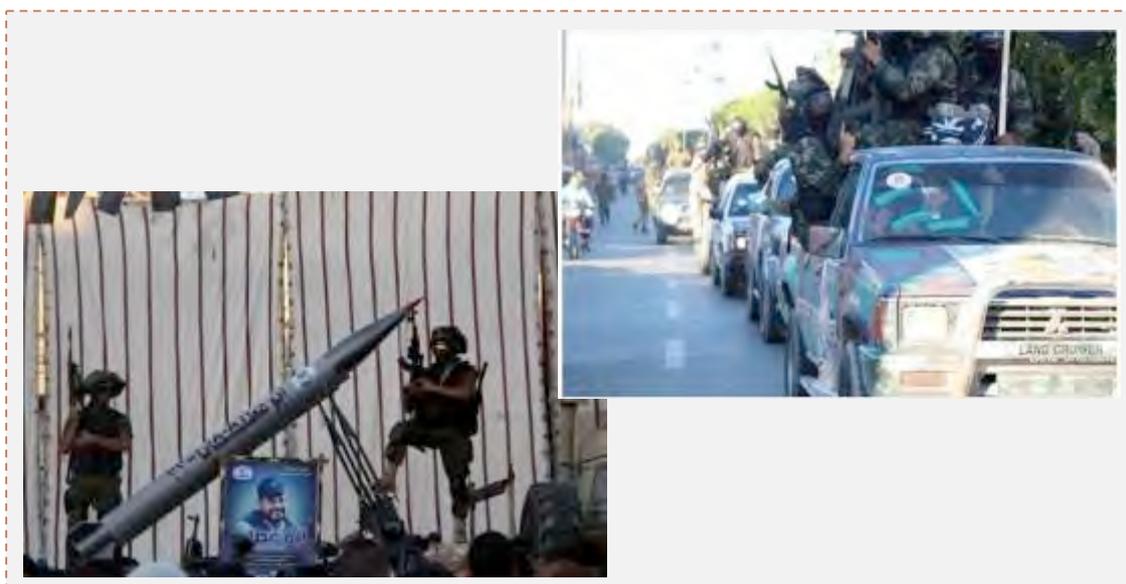
- Khaled Mashaal Tweeted that he would be replaced by a new political bureau head elected in internal elections held in the coming year (September 24, 2016).



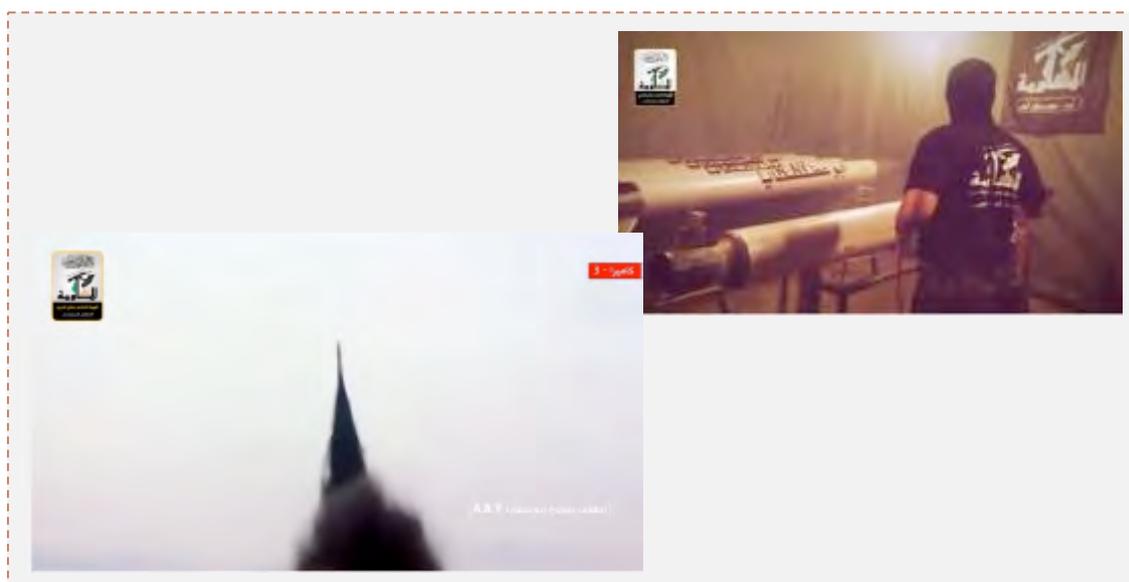
Khaled Mashaal gives a speech in Doha (YouTube, September 24, 2016).

The Popular Resistance Committees Hold a Military Display

- The **al-Ansar Salah al-Din Battalions**, the military-terrorist wing of the **Popular Resistance Committees (PRC)**, held a military display to mark the 17th anniversary of the organization's founding. It was held in the area between Khan Yunis and Rafah, and unveiled a new rocket, which the organization claimed had recently been added to their arsenal. The rocket is called the A-AT, for Jamal Ataya Zaid Abu Samhadana, aka Abu Ataya, who founded the PRC and was killed in an Israeli air strike in 2006 (PRC website, September 26, 2016). On the same day the PRC posted a video to YouTube showing rocket manufacture and a trial firing (YouTube, September 26, 2016).



Left: The A-AT rocket, unveiled at the PRC military display. Right: The PRC military display (Palsawa, September 26, 2016)



Scenes from the PRC video. Right: Test firing of the rocket. Right: Manufacturing the rocket (YouTube, September 26, 2016).

ISIS Operative from the Gaza Strip Killed in Syria

■ According to jihadist sources, **Ahmed Mahmoud Abu Issa**, a 28 year-old Gazan from the al-Shati refugee camp, was killed in a clash with the Syrian army. He was a Salafist-jihadist operative who left the Gaza Strip and went to Syria. According to the announcement, he had been subjected to Hamas security force "harassment" in the Gaza Strip (Haq, September 23, 2016).



Ahmed Mahmoud Abu Issa, killed in a clash with the Syrian army (Haq, September 23, 2016).

EU Discusses Removing Hamas from its List of Terrorist Organizations

■ After deliberating a ruling handed down by the EU's court of justice, the EU's council of ministers advised that Hamas be removed from the list of terrorist organizations. **Eleanor Sharpston**, one of ten legal advisors to the court, said **she recommended removing Hamas from the list**. She claimed the justifications for retaining the 2001 Hamas listing were "not sufficient." **The final ruling is liable to take several months.**⁵ **Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri welcomed the recommendation** (Hamas website, September 23, 2016).

The Palestinian Authority

Mahmoud Abbas' Speech at the UN General Assembly

■ **Mahmoud Abbas gave a speech before the UN General Assembly in which he strongly attacked Israel.** Among his statements were the following:⁶

- Regarding **construction in the Jewish communities**, he said "[Israel] must cease all of its settlement colonization activities and aggressions [as well as] its policies of collective punishment and its demolition of Palestinian homes, [and] its extrajudicial executions and cease the arrest of our people, and must release the thousands of our prisoners and detainees." He added that "Israel's racial discrimination...continues to privilege the Israeli settlers on our occupied land,

⁵ <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.743661>

⁶ www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/READ-Full-text-of-PA-president-Abbass-speech-to-UN-General-Assembly-468466

including by granting them permits for residential construction." The Palestinians, he said, **"will therefore continue to exert all efforts for a Security Council resolution on the settlements and the terror of the settlers, and we are undertaking extensive consultations with the Arab countries and other friendly countries on this matter. We hope no one will cast a veto."**⁷

- Regarding **the holy sites and the Jewish religion**, he said, "The continuation of the Israeli aggressions against our Muslim and Christian holy sites is playing with fire," adding that "there is no conflict between us and the Jewish religion and its people. Our conflict is with the Israeli occupation...We respect the Jewish religion..."

- Regarding **the peace process**, he accused Israel of "clear grave breaches under international law." The Palestinians, he said, "will never accept to forgo their national institutions and achievements." He claimed that **"Israel today also continues its attempts to evade an international conference** for peace, which has been proposed by France and which has received the support of the majority of the world's countries." He called on the General Assembly to **"declare 2017 as the international year to end the Israeli occupation."**

- Regarding the **Balfour Declaration**, he condemned it and its negative consequences for the Palestinians. **He called on Britain to apologize to the Palestinians and for the world to recognize the state of Palestine.** He noted that "Palestine" had recognized Israel in 1993, but that it was not "a gratuitous recognition. Israel must reciprocate with recognition of the State of Palestine..."

- Regarding the **UN partition plan**, he said that " Israel...has [violated] United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181 [1947]...which called for the establishment of two States on the historic land of Palestine according to a specific partition plan. Israeli forces seized more land than that allotted to Israel, constituting a grave breach...of the United Nations Charter...[The] Security Council is not upholding its responsibilities to hold Israel accountable for its seizure of the territory allotted to the Palestinian State according to the partition resolution..."

⁷ According to senior Palestinian figures, the resolution will probably be proposed to the Security Council after the American presidential elections and before the new president is sworn in (i.e., between November 8, 2016, and January 20, 2017). That would be done to avoid an American veto in the Security Council (Al-Hayat, September 24, 2016).



Mahmoud Abbas delivers a speech before the UN General Assembly (Wafa, September 11, 2016).

■ Interviewed on the sidelines of the UN by al-Mayadeen TV, Mahmoud Abbas claimed **Palestine would not drop the legal suits it had brought against Israel in the International Criminal Court**. That was because, he said, the Security Council and the powers had failed to achieve justice for the Palestinians. He said the goal of his appeal to the ICC was to expose Israel and the violations it committed against the Palestinians (Ma'an, September 24, 2016).

The Battle for Hearts and Minds

Hamas' Campaign against Facebook

■ **On the night of September 23, 2016, Facebook blocked several dozen popular Palestinian Facebook pages.** They were closed because they incited to violence and hatred, and called for terrorist attacks. The pages that were closed had millions of followers, and were mostly **affiliated with Hamas**. They included:

- The **page of Mesh Heq**, which posted comments and cartoons and had 200,000 followers. Apparently it was recently reopened in the United States.
- The **page of Gaza al-Aan**, a news page operating from the Gaza Strip. It had 600,000 followers. It had been closed by Facebook before.
- Also closed were a **Hamas forum** and the personal pages of the heads of webmasters of **Shehab and al-Quds al-Akhbariya**.

■ The **Palestinian Journalists' Syndicate** condemned Facebook and described its closing the pages as "a gross violation of the freedom of expression, and surrender to and collaboration with Israel's policy of oppression" (Shasha News, September 24,

2016). In response, the Hamas-affiliated media launched a campaign called "Stop publishing!" It called for the temporary boycott of Facebook for its "violation of the freedom of the individual, suppression of free speech and collaboration with Israel." Its objective was "stop Facebook's agreements with Israel" (Facebook page of the Hamas-affiliated Gaza al-Aan, September 24, 2016).



Left: Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg as an IDF soldier preventing a Palestinian from passing through a roadblock shaped like the Facebook icon (Facebook page of the Hamas movement in Qalqilya, September 24, 2016) Right: A Facebook-Israel handshake of collaboration (Facebook page of QudsN, September 23, 2016).

The Women's Flotilla to the Gaza Strip

- The boat *Zaytouna* reached the port of Messina, Italy, with 13 women passengers from Arab and other countries (Facebook page of the Freedom Flotilla Coalition, September 27, 2016). It anchored there for a number of days and set sail for the Gaza Strip on September 27, 2016.
- The Freedom Flotilla Coalition announced that the *Amal 2*, which was supposed to join the *Zaytouna*, had also reached the Messina harbor. According to the flotilla organizers, the *Amal 2* was acquired to replace the *Amal*, which was grounded by a technical failure. **Essam Youssef**, head of the **Popular International Committee to Support the Gaza Strip**,⁸ welcomed the acquisition of the new boat, claiming it showed the determination of the Freedom Flotilla Coalition and of its international activists to go forward with the women's flotilla (Safa, September 25, 2016).

⁸ **Essam Youssef** is deputy chairman of Interpal, a British foundation which in the past played a central role in transferring funds to Hamas. He has been active in sending convoys and flotillas to the Gaza Strip for a long time.



**Left: The Amal 2, purchased as a replacement for the Amal (which was grounded by a technical failure), anchored in the port of Messina (Website of the Women's Flotilla to Gaza, sept 25, 2016).
Right: TheZaytouna leaves Messina en route to the Gaza Strip (Facebook page of the Freedom Fleet Coalition, Sept 27, 2016).**