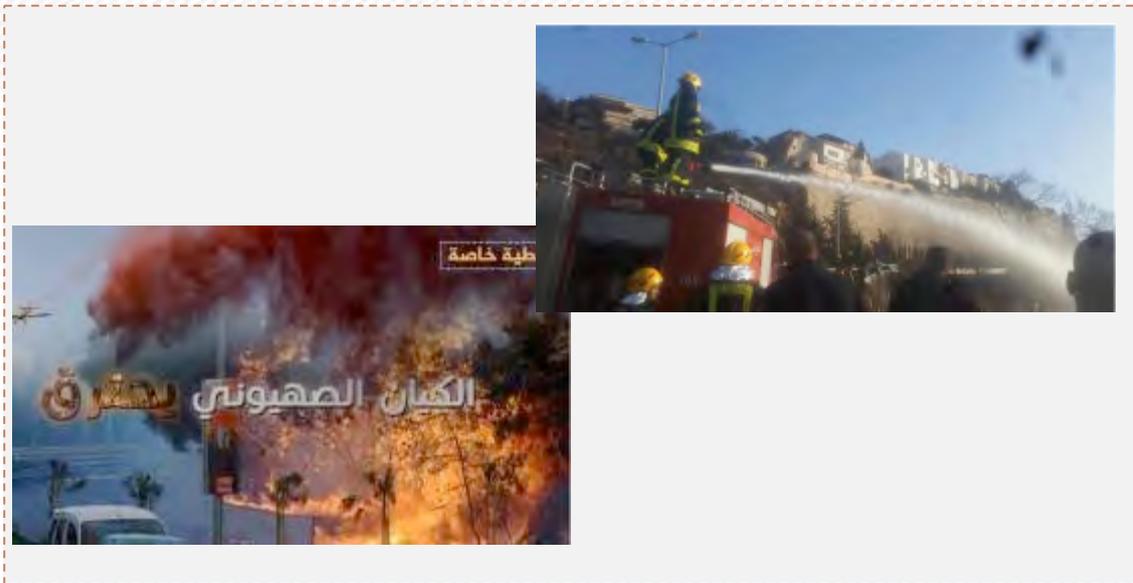




News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

(November 23-29, 2016)



Left: Hamas Tweet reading, "The Zionist entity is burning" (Twitter account of Palinfo, November 25, 2016). Right: Palestinian Authority fire fighters help put out a fire in Haifa (Huriya Post, November 26, 2016)

Overview

- This past week there were two major attacks of Palestinian popular terrorism: a drive-by shooting at an IDF post near Ofra (northeast of Ramallah) and the attempted stabbing of an Israeli security guard at the Shuafat roadblock (north of Jerusalem).
- Fires raged throughout Israel and the Benjamin and Judea districts for six days, causing substantial property damage and destroying extensive wooded areas. The Palestinian Authority (PA) sent eight fire engines and 41 firemen to help put out the blazes. The Israeli prime minister thanked Mahmoud Abbas for his help, while posters to the Palestinian social networks expressed Schadenfreude and harshly criticized the PA and the Arab states for sending aid to Israel during the fires.
- According to initial and partial information, only a minority of the fires were caused by arson. The majority were caused by negligence and/or the spread of fires from one location to another. Despite the joy and exaggerated descriptions posted of damage by Hamas and users of the social networks, so far no campaign has been initiated calling directly on Palestinians to set fires.

Palestinian Reactions to the Wave of Fires¹

- For six days, between November 22 and 27, 2016, fires raged through extensive areas of Israel and the Benjamin and Judea districts. According to reports from the Israeli police force, **there were more than 90 fires**. The most serious were along the Carmel mountain ridge (Haifa and Zichron Ya'akov), and the series of fires in communities and open areas in the Judean mountains. There were no casualties but about 40,000 dunams (about 1,000 acres), most of them wooded areas, went up in flames. The extremely low humidity and unusually strong winds prevalent in Israel at the time helped spread the fires.
- During the wave of fires, regional and international support was sent to Israel, including planes, fire engines and firemen. **Prominent was the PA, which sent eight fire engines and 41 firemen, who fought the fires along with the Israeli teams in Haifa and the Judean mountains**. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called Mahmoud Abbas and thanked him for his help. The Palestinian media represented it as "humanitarian aid." The Palestinian foreign ministry said in a statement that the help extended to Israel was based on "PA principles" and given despite the "historical injustice" perpetrated by Israel on the Palestinian people.
- Palestinian reactions to the wave of fires were the following:
 - **The Hamas media** exaggerated the damages, described the fires as the "fire intifada" (à la the "Jerusalem intifada") and represented arson as a Palestinian weapon.
 - Most of the users of **the Palestinian social networks** expressed **Schadenfreude**, and some (using the Qur'an for reference) claimed the fires were **Israel's punishment for the proposed "muezzin law."** The Palestinian social networks also exaggerated the extent of the fires ("Israel is burning," "the Zionist entity is burning").
 - Many posters to the social networks were **harshly critical of the aid the PA and Arab states gave Israel**, calling it "a betrayal of the Palestinian people." There were also **those who supported it** (on the grounds that the fires endangered Arab-Israeli villages and harmed "the land of Palestine").

¹ A detailed analysis will shortly be available on this website.

- The **Salafist-jihadists in the Gaza Strip** represented the fires as punishment from Allah, condemned the PA and Turkey for the aid they gave Israel, and called on Allah to burn all those who helped the Jews.

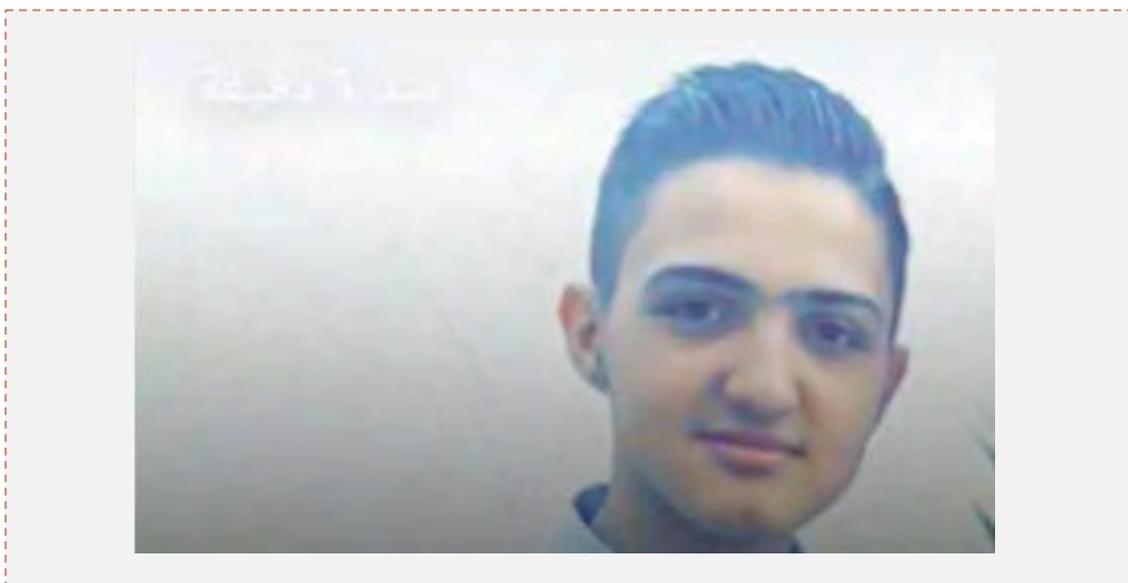
■ **Initial, partial information** indicates that most of the fires were the result of negligence and/or the spread of fires from one location to another. Only **a minority were the result of arson**. Police sources reported that 30 suspects were detained on suspicion of arson, seven of them were released and **23 remain in custody. Those 23 can be linked to 15 fires**. Most of them are Israeli Arabs, the rest are Palestinians.² Apparently some of the fires were set by copycat arsonists influenced by reports of the damage done by the fires and the dryness and high winds that helped spread them. So far no media campaign has been initiated calling directly on Palestinians and Israeli Arabs to set fires, as is the case of a direct, blatant incitement accompanying Palestinian popular terrorism (direct calls for stabbing, vehicular, stone-throwing and Molotov cocktail-throwing attacks).

Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem

Terrorist Attacks and Attempted Terrorists Attacks

- On **November 28, 2016**, shots were fired from a passing car at an IDF post **near Ofra (northeast of Ramallah)**. There were no casualties. The car drove away. A search was instituted to find the shooters.
- On **November 25, 2016**, a Palestinian terrorist armed with a knife went to the **Shuafat roadblock (north of Jerusalem)** and tried to stab an Israeli security guard. He was shot and killed. The Palestinian media reported he was **Muhammad Nabil Salam**, 16. His family was originally from Bir Nabala but lived in the Shuafat refugee camp (Palinfo, November 25, 2016).

² Information updated to November 27, 2016.



Muhammad Nabil Salam, who attempted a stabbing attack at the Shuafat roadblock (QudsN, November 25, 2016)

■ In response to the attempted stabbing attack and the death of the Palestinian, **Munir al-Jaghoub**, chairman of Fatah's information committee, issued a statement condemning Israel. **It condemned the "organized assassinations" of young Palestinians carried out by Israeli soldiers at the roadblocks and checkpoints.** According to the statement, the so-called "assassinations" would not break the Palestinians' resolve or prevent the people and their youths from "resisting the occupation" [i.e., from carrying out terrorist attacks].

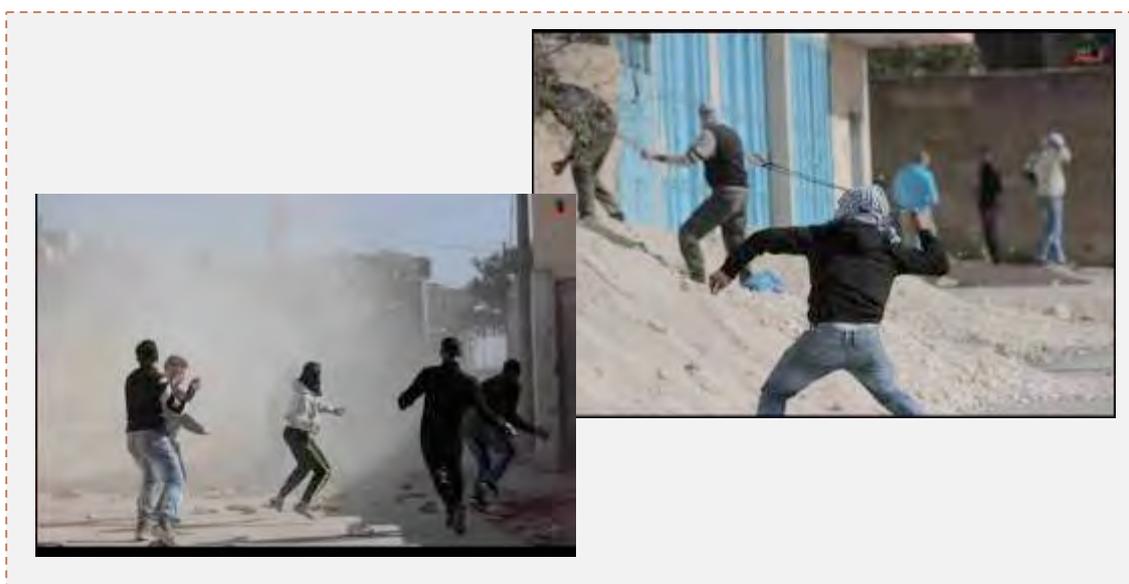
Riots, Clashes and Popular Terrorism

■ In the meantime, popular terrorism continues Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem. This past week Molotov cocktails were prominent, causing fires. Palestinians continued throwing stones, including at teams of firefighters.

■ The more prominent events were the following:

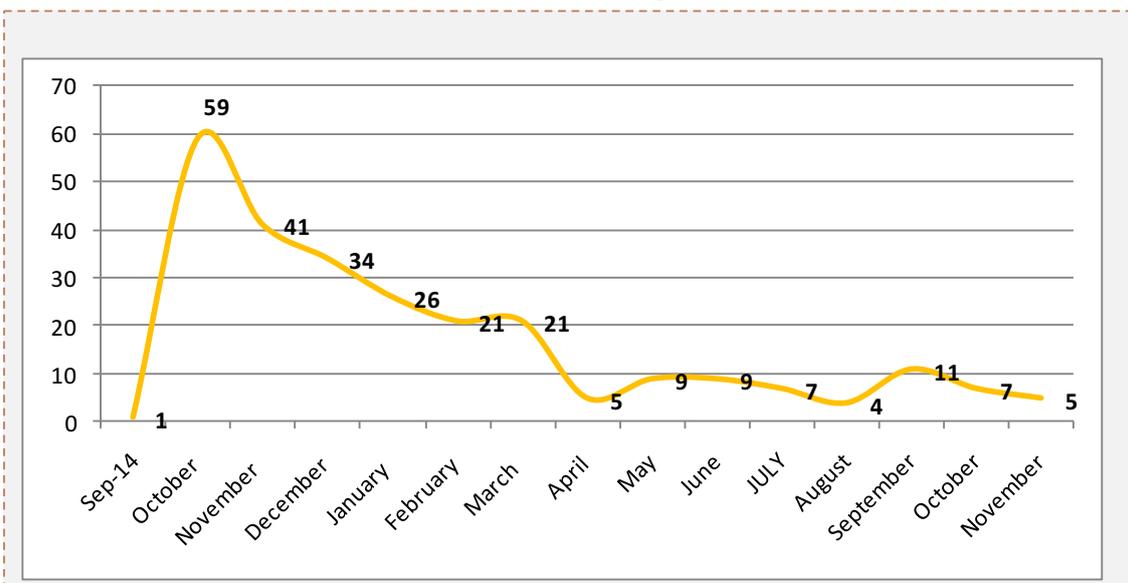
- **November 27, 2016** – Palestinians threw Molotov cocktails at Israeli vehicles near al-Khader on **the Gush Etzion-Jerusalem road**. There were no casualties and no damage was reported (Facebook page of Red Alert, November 27, 2016).
- **November 27, 2016** – Palestinians threw stones at an Israeli bus on **the road between Nebi Elias and Azoun in Samaria**. There were no casualties. The front windshield of the bus was damaged (Facebook page of Red Alert, November 27, 2016).

- **November 25, 2016** – Palestinians threw four Molotov cocktails at a house in **Beit El (north of Ramallah)**. There were no casualties. Several hours previously Palestinians threw a Molotov cocktail at the community's front gate, causing a fire (Facebook page of Red Alert, November 25 2016).
- **November 25, 2016** – Palestinians threw a Molotov cocktail near the community of **Har Adar (west of Jerusalem)**, causing a fire (Facebook page of Red Alert, November 25, 2016).
- **November 25, 2016** – Palestinians threw stones at firefighters near the community of **Yizhar (west of Nablus)** (Facebook page of Red Alert, November 25, 2016).
- **November 25, 2016** – Palestinians threw stones at an IDF force during a riot at the **Hizma crossing (north of Jerusalem)**, wounding a soldier (Facebook page of Red Alert, November 25, 2016).
- **November 24, 2016** – Palestinians threw stones at an Israeli vehicle at the **Gush Etzion Junction**. There were no casualties. The vehicle was damaged (Facebook page of Red Alert, November 24, 2016).
- **November 24, 2016** – Palestinians threw stones at an Israeli vehicle at the **Fuar Junction in Mt. Hebron**. There were no casualties. The vehicle was damaged (Facebook page of Red Alert, November 24, 2016).



Fatah's Facebook page reported that its operatives had rioted in clashes with the Israeli security forces during the weekly demonstration in the village of Qadoum (Facebook page of Fatah, November 25, 2016)

Significant Terrorist Attacks in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem since September 2015

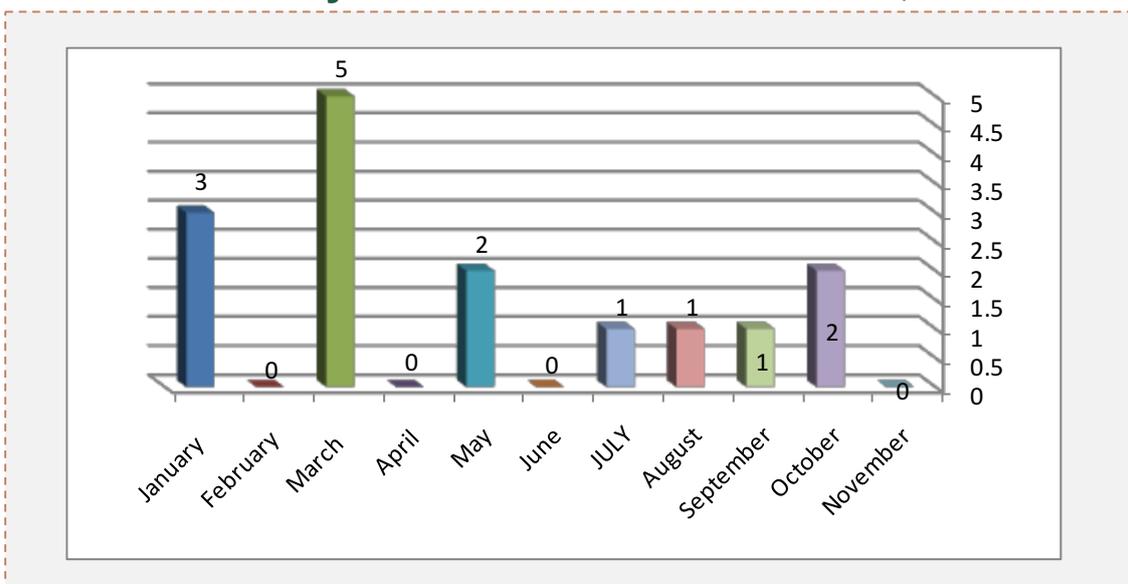


Israel's South

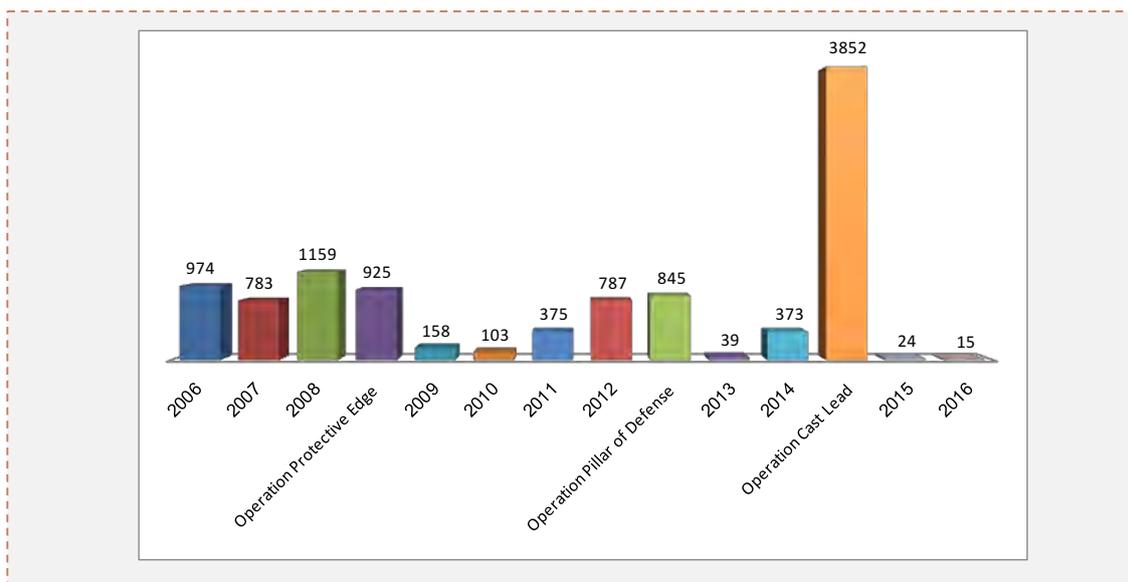
Rocket Fire Attacking Israel

- 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



Incidents at the Border Security Fence

■ This past week there were a number of incidents along border security fence between Israel and the Gaza Strip:

- **November 26, 2016** – Two unarmed Palestinians crossed the fence from the Gaza Strip into the western Negev. They were detained and taken for interrogation. They claimed they had not planned to carry out a terrorist attack but wanted to find work in Israel. The same day two other Palestinians crossed the border security fence. They were also detained by IDF forces and taken for interrogation (Facebook page of Red Alert, November 26, 2016).
- **November 25, 2016** – Rioting Palestinians clashed with IDF forces east of Gaza City near the border security fence in the security forces. The Palestinian media reported that a Palestinian was injured by IDF fire (Twitter account of Gaza al-Aan, November 25, 2016).

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



Rioting Palestinians clash with IDF forces west of the community of Nahal Oz
(Twitter account of QudsN, November 25, 2016)

Smuggling of Contraband Iron Beams into the Gaza Strip Prevented

- Representatives of the Israeli coordination and liaison administration for the Gaza Strip in collaboration with representatives of the crossings authority in the Israeli defense ministry and the Israel Security Agency prevented Palestinians from smuggling contraband iron beams through the Kerem Shalom crossing. They were on a truck that whose date of entrance into the Gaza Strip had been coordinated in advance and whose contents were described as shelves destined for stores in the Gaza Strip (Spokesman for the Israeli coordinator for government activities in the territories, November 28, 2016).



Contraband iron beams prevented from being smuggled into the Gaza Strip (Spokesman for the Israeli coordinator for government activities in the territories, November 28, 2016)

Developments in the Gaza Strip

Gazan Killed in Sinai Peninsula

■ On November 27, 2016, the Salafist-affiliated Ibn Taymiyyah Media Center in the Gaza Strip reported the death of **'Abd al-Rahman Ahmed Abu Mughsib**, aka **Abu Bakr the Gazan**. He was a Hamas operative and came from the village of al-Maghraqa in the central Gaza Strip. He was killed in the Sinai Peninsula when ISIS attacked an El Arish control roadblock. In 2015 a warrant was issued for him by a court in the Gaza Strip for crimes against public safety (dawaalhaq, November 26, 2016).



Left: The warrant issued by Hamas for 'Abd al-Rahman Ahmed Abu Mughsib (Haq, November 27 2016). Upper right: The death notice issued for 'Abd al-Rahman Ahmed Abu Mughsib. Lower right: 'Abd al-Rahman Ahmed Abu Mughsib as an operative in ISIS's Sinai Province (dawaalhaq, November 26, 2016).

Remarks from Senior Hamas Figures about al-Aqsa Mosque

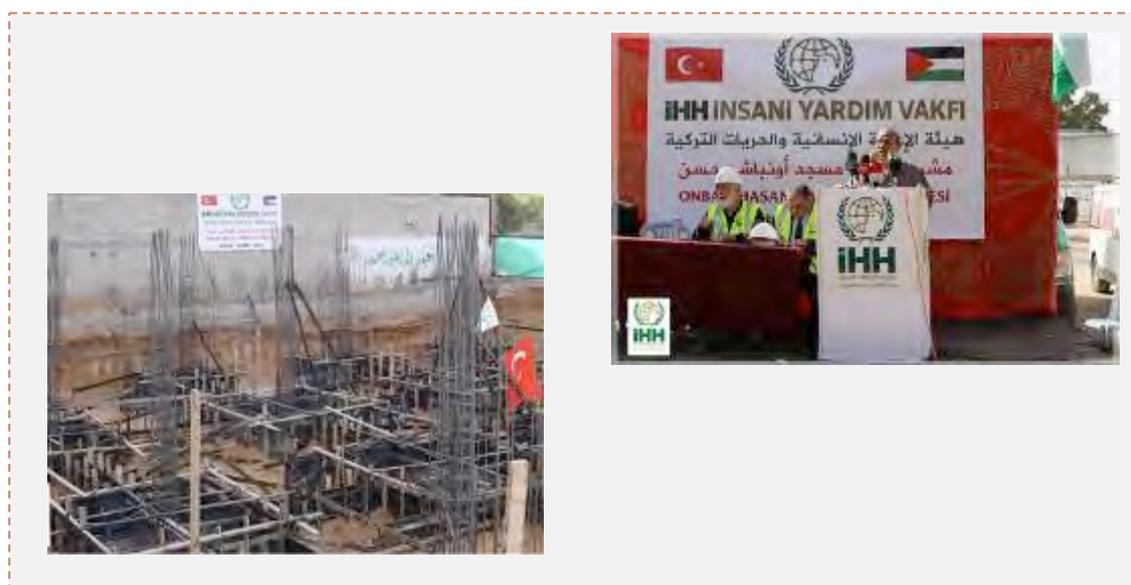
■ **Khaled Mashaal**, head of Hamas' political bureau, gave a speech at the Jamaat-e-Islami convention held in Karachi, Pakistan.⁴ He said the [so-called] Jerusalem intifada had defeated the so-called "Israeli plan" to divide al-Aqsa mosque [compound] and made Israel give it up partially. However, he claimed, Israel was still determined to implement its plan. He appealed to the Muslims of Pakistan not to forget the Gaza Strip, Jerusalem and al-Aqsa mosque, which were symbols of Islam (alresala.net, November 27, 2016).

⁴ **Jamaat-e-Islami** is an Islamic political organization and social movement founded in 1941 in British India by Muslim theologian Abd Allah Maududi. Along with the Muslim Brotherhood, is it considered as one of the most influential, conservative organizations in the Muslim world.

■ **Musa Abu Marzouq, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, Tweeted that al-Aqsa mosque belonged exclusively to the Muslims, **without partners** (i.e., without a Jewish presence at the Temple Mount compound). He said the men and women in Jerusalem would continue to defend the mosque to the best of their ability (Twitter account of Musa Abu Marzouq, November 26, 2016).

Turkish IHH Constructs Mosque in the Gaza Strip

■ The Turkish IHH, the organization behind the *Mavi Marmara* flotilla, held a ceremony to lay the corner stone for a mosque in the western part of Gaza City, to be built with Turkish funding. According to **Muhammad Kaya, director of the IHH branch in the Gaza Strip**, the mosque will cost \$400,000 and its construction will take a number of months. He said the plans to construct the mosque had been drawn up three years ago but the [so-called Israeli] closure of the Gaza Strip and the lack of building materials kept it from being built. Senior Hamas figure Mahmoud al-Zahar was present at the laying of the corner stone (turkey-post.net and the Facebook page of IHH in the Gaza Strip, November 24, 2016).



Left: Foundations of the new mosque in the Gaza Strip. Right: Mahmoud al-Zahar speaks at the laying of the corner stone of the new mosque in the Gaza Strip (Facebook page of IHH in the Gaza Strip, November 24, 2016).

The Palestinian Authority (PA)

The 7th Fatah Conference

■ The 7th Fatah conference began on November 29, 2016, and chose Mahmoud Abbas as the Fatah movement's chairman. Mahmoud Abu al-Hija, spokesman for the conference, said ten Arab and international delegations had arrived, including

delegates from Jordan, Egypt, Tunisia, Kuwait, Iraq, Kurdistan and Sudan (Wafa, November 27, 2016). He said the conference would last for five days and after each session there would be a press conference. The opening and closing sessions would be public. **Adnan al-Damiri, spokesman for the PA's security forces**, reported that Palestinian security forces were taking all the necessary precautions to secure the conference.

■ **Hamas spokesmen Fawzi Barhoum and Abd al-Latif al-Qanua said Hamas had accepted Fatah's invitation to attend the opening session** and that the organization's representatives would be activists from Judea and Samaria. Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) representatives also agreed to participate in the opening session (Twitter account of Dunia al-Watan, November 27, 2016)

PA Activity in the International Arena

■ **Riyad al-Maliki, Palestinian foreign minister**, said that in the near future **the Palestinians would propose a resolution to the UN Security Council to condemn the Israeli settlements**. Their objective is to have the resolution voted on before the New Year. He said deliberations and consultations were continuing with the Arab states to receive their support for the resolution. He said the block of unaligned nations, nations of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and nations "friendly" to the Palestinian people had promised they would vote for the resolution (Wafa, November 28, 2016).

■ **Saeb Erekat, security of the PLO's Executive Committee**, said serious deliberations were being held about the resolution to condemn the settlements. He said the Arab Quartet⁵ would meet in the near future to discuss the issue. He said he hoped the Security Council would vote on the resolution during the next month (Paltoday, November 24, 2016).

PIJ Operative on Hunger Strike

■ On November 24, 2016, **Anas Shadid**, a PIJ terrorist operative and an administrative detainee, was moved to an intensive care ward after his hunger strike entered its 63rd day. There is concern lest his condition deteriorate. **Daoud Shehab, senior PIJ operative**, claimed Israel was responsible and warned Israel not to "play with the lives of the prisoners in its jails, especially with the lives of those on hunger strikes" (Paltoday, November 27, 2016).

⁵ The Arab Quartet's members are Egypt, Jordan, the UAE and Saudi Arabia. It deals mainly with finding solutions for internal Palestinian issues.

The Northern Arena

First ISIS-IDF Clash in Southern Golan Heights

- An IDF force lying in ambush in the southern Golan Heights was shot at from the direction of Syria. The attack came from a heavy machine gun mounted on a pickup truck. The soldiers returned fire. Somewhat later mortar shells were fired at the area from Syria. Israeli Air Force aircraft attacked the source of the mortar shell fire. Four terrorist operatives were reportedly killed (Israeli media and Palmedia News, November 27, 2016). In response to the rocket fire IAF aircraft attacked an ISIS installation in the Syrian southern Golan Heights (IDF spokesman, November 27, 2016). The Arab media reported that the IAF attacked targets in the Yarmouk Basin and Quneitra areas (Zaman al-Wasl, November 28, 2016).
- The terrorist operatives who were killed belonged to the **Shahada al-Yarmouk Brigade**, part of an umbrella network called the **Khaled Bin al-Walid Army, which is affiliated with ISIS**. The network is the result of the union of three organizations with links to ISIS operating in the Yarmouk Basin area and in the area where the borders of Syria, Jordan and Israel meet.