



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

(December 7- 13, 2016)



Left: Hamas' military-terrorist wing displays weapons in Khan Yunis to mark the 29th anniversary of the organization's founding (Facebook page of Shehab, December 11, 2016). Right: Hamas march in the northern Gaza Strip marking the anniversary (Twitter account of Shehab, December 8, 2016).

Overview

- This past week Palestinians attempted to carry out two terrorist attacks (a vehicular attack and a stabbing attack). Popular terrorism continued unabated in Judea and Samaria with the throwing of stones and Molotov cocktails. The Israeli security forces recently exposed several terrorist squads, two in east Jerusalem and one in the Hebron region. The terrorists planned to carry out shooting attacks in Jerusalem and other locations, and to abduct Israelis to exchange for Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails.
- With the growing tension in the Gaza Strip between Hamas and the Salafi jihadist organizations, Hamas sources revealed that in recent weeks they had detained about 350 operatives. According to a Hamas report, ISIS operatives in the Sinai Peninsula were planning to impose restrictions on Hamas and prevent smuggling from the Sinai Peninsula to the Gaza Strip through the tunnels. The detention of the Salafi jihadist operatives was intended to provide a response to Hamas' security and governance challenges, and at the same time send a positive message to Egypt.

Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem

Attempted Terrorists Attacks

■ **December 13, 2016** – A Palestinian woman drove to the **Qalandia crossing (north of Jerusalem)** and sped towards the security forces manning the site. The security forces stopped the car. The driver exited the vehicle unharmed, holding a knife and shouting "Allahu akbar." The security forces overcame and detained her. The Palestinian woman who tried to carry out the attack was 30 years old and lived in east Jerusalem.

■ **December 8, 2016** – A Palestinian took a bus to the Tapuah Junction in Samaria and walked towards Border Policemen stationed at the site. They called to him to stop but he continued towards them, holding a knife. They shot and killed him. The Palestinian media reported the death of **Muhammad Jihad Hussein Harb**, 19, from Qalqilya. Hamas claimed he was one of their operatives (Palinfo, December 8, 2016). On November 24, 2016, Muhammad Harb wrote on his Facebook page that he was happy about the fires raging in the Haifa region. He asked Allah to burn the Jews, sow fear in their hearts, get rid of them for [the Palestinians]. He also posted pictures of Palestinian terrorists who were killed, wrapped in the Hamas flag (Facebook page of Mohamad J Miskawe, November 24, 2016).



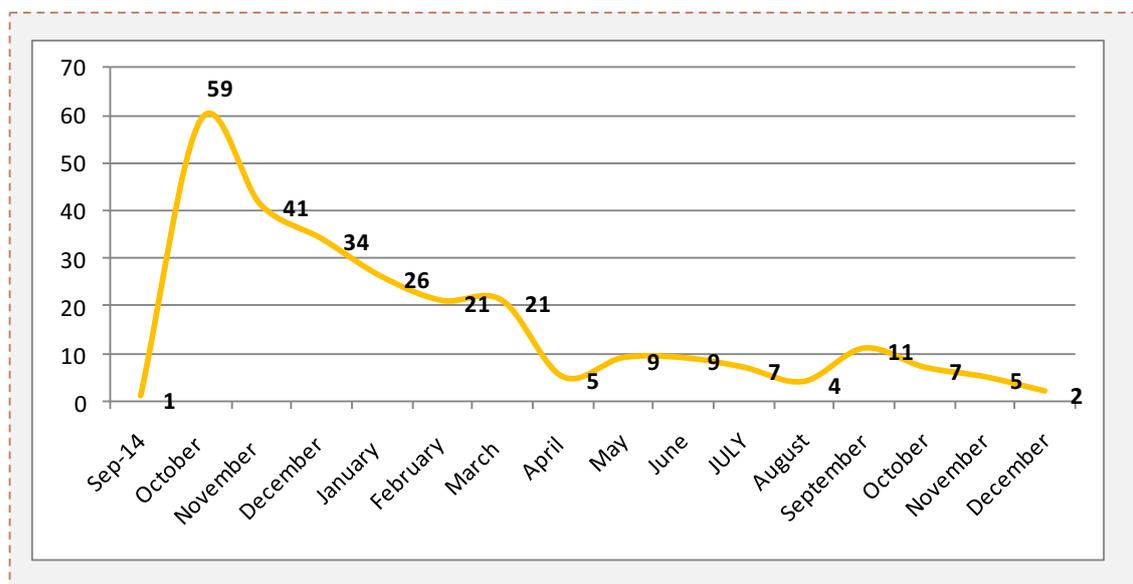
Left: Posting by Muhammad Harb to his Facebook page expressing Schadenfreude at the fires in Israel (Facebook page of Mohamad J Miskawe, November 24, 2016). Right: Death notice issued by Hamas in the Qalqilya district for Muhammad Harb (al-Aqsa Radio website, December 9, 2016).

Riots, Clashes and Popular Terrorism

■ In the meantime, routine popular terrorism continued unabated (the throwing of stones and Molotov cocktails), without exceptional event. The more prominent occurrences were the following:

- **December 12, 2016** – Palestinians threw a pipe bomb at the compound of the **Tomb of Rachel in Bethlehem**. There were no casualties (Facebook page of Red Alert, December 8, 2016).
- **December 10, 2016** – A young Palestinian woman, masked and wearing men's clothing, went to the **Eliahu crossing (south of Qalqilya)** and tried to force her way into a forbidden area. She apparently intended to have the security guards shoot her. She was **Nawras Ali al-Zamari**, 16, from Qalqilya. She was apparently motivated by personal problems (al-Fajr channel, December 10, 2016)
- **December 8, 2016** – Palestinians threw three Molotov cocktails at an Israeli vehicle on **route 443** (the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv road) near a gas station. There were no casualties. A search was conducted to locate the perpetrators (Facebook page of Red Alert, December 8, 2016).
- **December 8, 2016** – Palestinians threw stones at Israeli vehicles near **Hizma (near Pisgat Ze'ev in east Jerusalem)**. There were no casualties; the vehicles were damaged (Facebook page of Red Alert, December 8, 2016).

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



Terrorist Attacks, November 2016¹

■ In November 2016 there was a significant decline in terrorist attacks carried out in Judea, Samaria and particularly Jerusalem. There were a total of 93 terrorist attacks (151 in October). Eight-four of the attacks were carried out in Judea and Samaria (103 in October) and nine in Jerusalem (48 in October). Most of the attacks (72) involved Molotov cocktails. Seventeen involved IEDs and four were shooting attacks using light weapons.

Exposure and Prevention

Terrorist Squad Exposed in East Jerusalem

■ The Israeli security forces exposed a terrorist squad composed of **eight civilians, residents of the Sur Bahr and Sheikh Jarrah neighborhoods** of east Jerusalem, all of them holders of blue Israeli ID cards. They planned to carry out **shooting attacks in Jerusalem, including a shooting attack at an IDF base on Mt. Scopus near the Hebrew University.**

■ In 2015, while they were serving jail terms for rioting, they organized to carry out shooting attacks in Jerusalem. One of their targets was an IDF base on Mt. Scopus. Some of them carried out surveillance after they were released from jail, observed the base and examined possibilities of putting the plan into action. Some also participated in riots in the Old City of Jerusalem and on the Temple Mount (Facebook page of Red Alert, December 9, 2016).

Hamas Squad Exposed in Surif

■ An Israeli security force operation led to the detention of a squad of Hamas terrorist operatives from Surif (west of Hebron) and Hebron. The operatives planned various types of attacks, including **shooting attacks and the abduction of Israelis to bargain for the release of terrorists imprisoned in Israel.** In preparation for the attacks they carried out surveillance of IDF forces in the Surif region. A large quantity of weapons was found in their possession.

■ One of the squad handlers was **Ibrahim Abdallah Ghanimat**, 58, from Surif, who is serving a life sentence for involvement in a series of terrorist attacks during the 1990s

¹ Statistics from the Israel Security Agency. The statistics do not include the scores of incidences of stone-throwing.

(among them the abduction and murder of IDF soldier Sharon Edri²). Two of the squad members were Ibrahim Ghanimat's sons and one was his son-in-law. Also detained was a merchant suspected of supplying the squad with weapons. Large quantities of weapons and ammunition were seized (Israel Security Agency website, December 8, 2016).

Detention of Terrorist Squad Which Carried Out Shooting Attacks

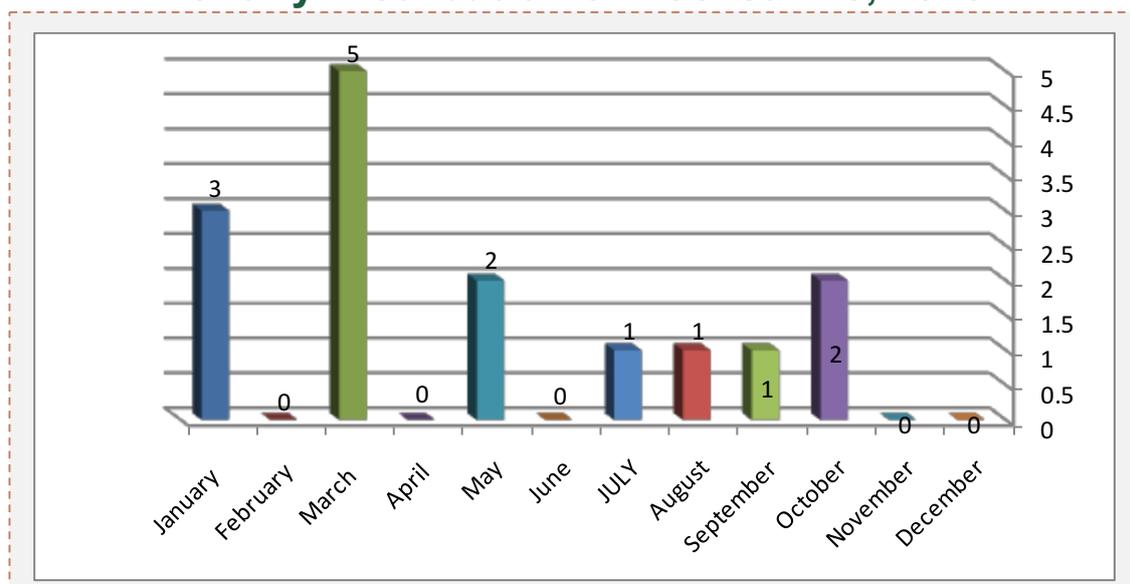
■ The Israeli security forces detained a terrorist squad composed of three Palestinian minors who carried out **four shooting attacks targeting an IDF post near Ofra (Binyamin region)** in October and November 2016. They used improvised weapons. Weapons were seized, as was the vehicle used to carry out the attacks. Relatives who hid the weapons were also detained (Walla, December 7, 2016).

Israel's South

Rocket Fire Attacking Israel

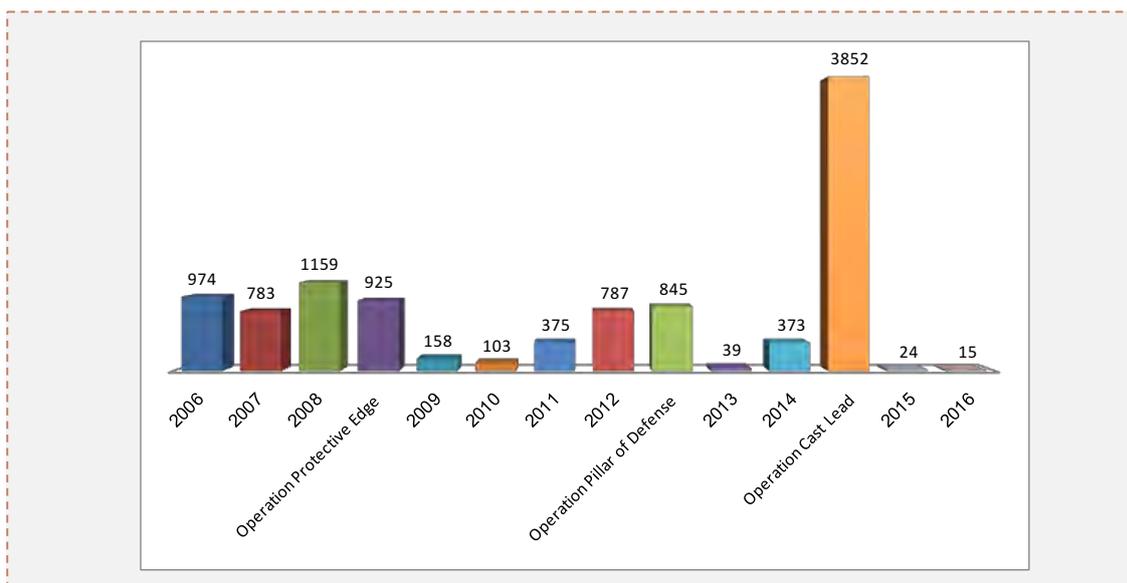
■ This past week no rocket hits were identified in Israeli territory.

Monthly Distribution of Rocket Fire, 2016



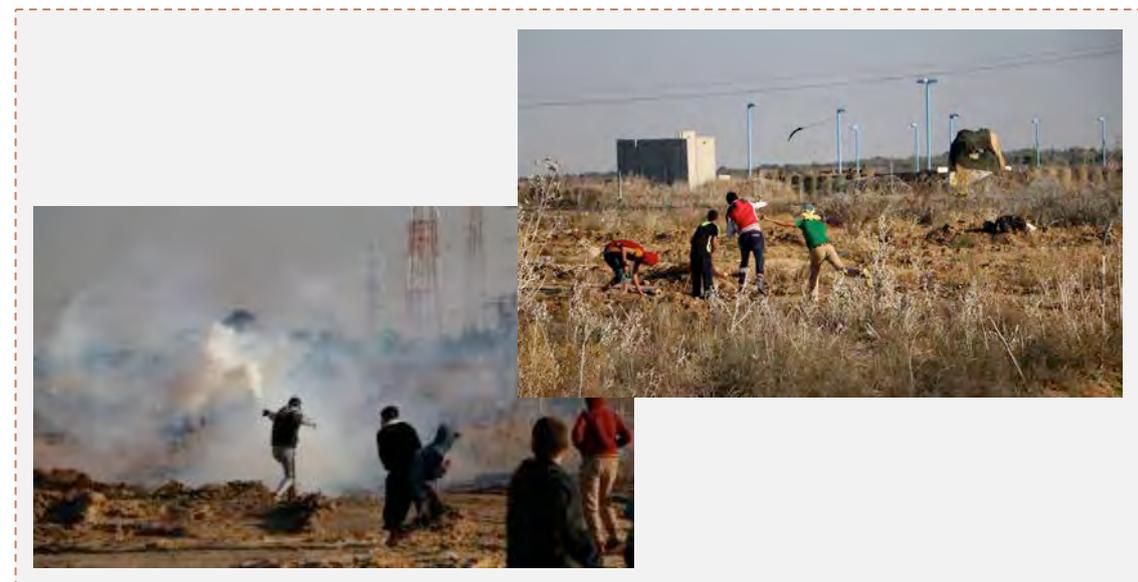
² IDF soldier Sharon Edri was abducted on September 9, 1996, by a squad of terrorist operatives when he got into their car near Tsrifin (central Israel). A few minutes after he entered the car they shot and killed him.

Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire in Israel's South³



Riots at the Border Security Fence

- On December 9, 2016, Palestinians rioted against IDF forces east of the al-Bureij refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip. The Palestinian media reported that one Palestinian was injured (Facebook page of Shehab, December 9, 2016).



Young Palestinians riot against IDF forces (Facebook page of Shehab, December 9, 2016)

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

Developments in the Gaza Strip

The Rafah Crossing

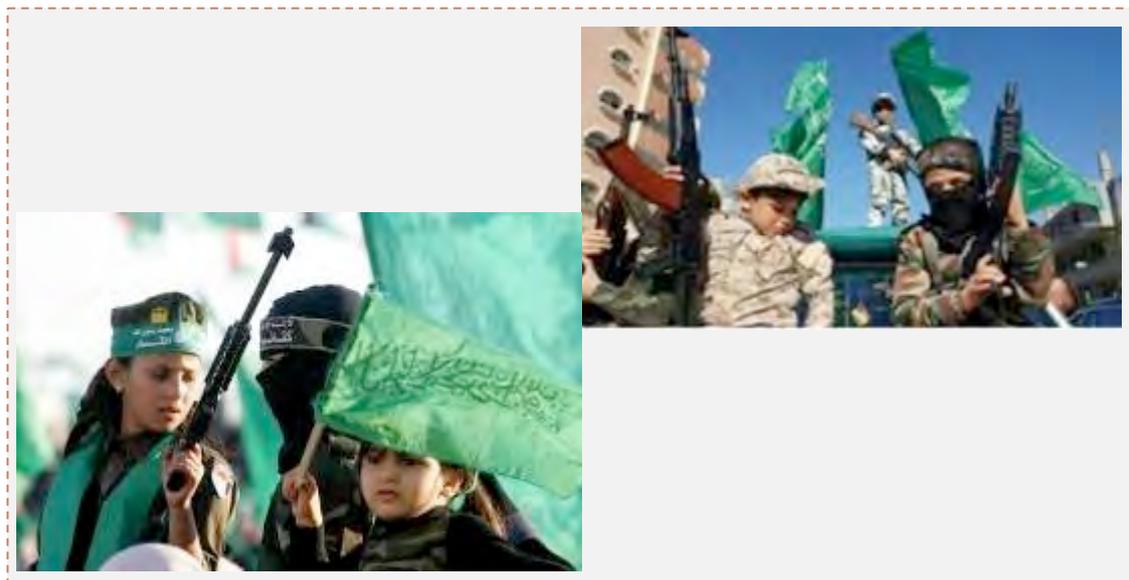
■ On December 10, 2016, the Rafah crossing opened for three days. The ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip reported that 2,053 Palestinians had exited the Strip and 1,502 had entered. One hundred and sixty Palestinians were turned away after Egypt prevented them from entering its territory. Several thousand tons of cement were delivered to the Gaza Strip. According to the Facebook page of the ministry of the interior, during 2016 the Rafah crossing was open for a total of 35 days (Facebook page of the ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip, December 13, 2016).

Hamas Marks Its 29th Anniversary

■ Hamas marked the 29th anniversary of its founding with the slogan, "Jerusalem is ours, [it is] a promise," and with series of mass-participation events throughout the Gaza Strip. On the previous day the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military-terrorist wing, organized events in the Jabalia refugee camp, Beit Lahia and Beit Hanoun, during which they displayed weapons (alresala.net, December 9, 2016).



Left: Event marking Hamas' 29th anniversary in Khan Yunis (Twitter account of Shehab, December 8, 2016) Right: Hamas march in the northern Gaza Strip (Facebook page of QudsN, December 9, 2016).



Children participate in Hamas marches in Khan Yunis (left) and the northern Gaza Strip (right) (Facebook page of Shehab, December 11, 2016).

■ The anniversary events were an opportunity for senior Hamas figures to indulge in belligerent rhetoric and threaten Israel:

- Interviewed by al-Jazeera, **Khaled Mashaal, head of Hamas' political bureau**, claimed that as long as it had existed, Hamas had not changed its strategy or concepts. He said Hamas still adhered to its vision of "resistance" to the Israeli enemy. He said that without an "armed resistance" [i.e., terrorism], there was no way to realize national rights (al-Jazeera, December 9, 2016).
- **Khalil al-Haya, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, gave a speech at a rally in the northern Gaza Strip where he said Hamas had forced Israel to lose the significant strength it had amassed during the wars. He called on Israel to prepare itself for a staggering blow and threatened that **Hamas would attack from every direction: above ground, through the tunnels, from the sea and from the sky**. He said Hamas was committed to finding ways to liberate all the prisoners, and supported the "intifada of knives," calling for mass participation (YouTube, December 9, 2016).

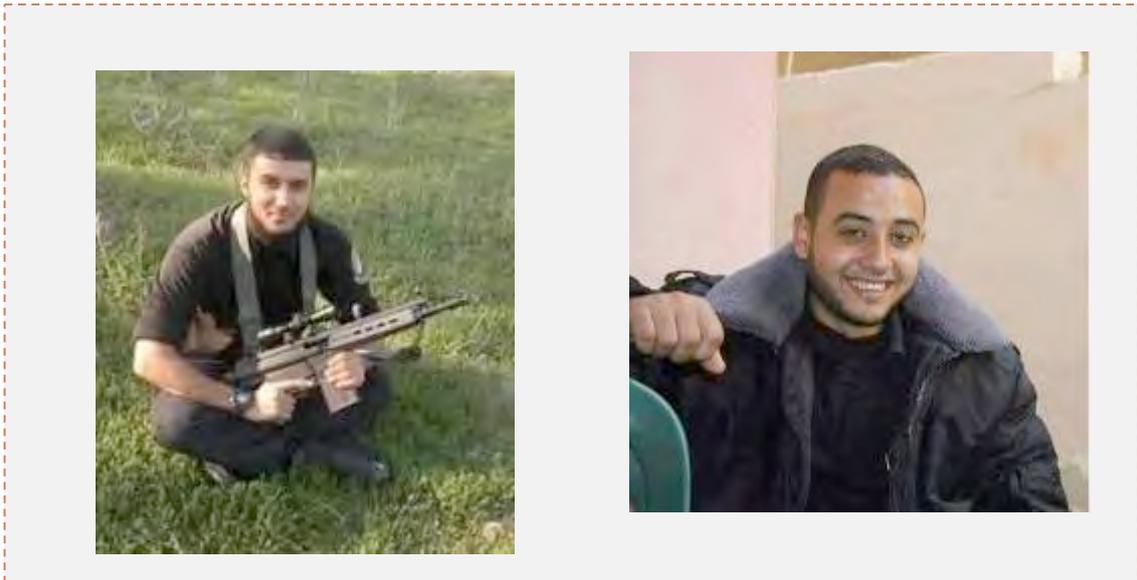


Khalil al-Haya speaks at a Hamas rally, flanked by senior Hamas figures (Hamas website, December 9, 2016).

- **Senior Hamas figure Fathi Hamad** said Hamas was willing to export rockets developed by its military wing to the armies of Arab states to use them to fight against Israel. He said Hamas military wing had manufactured rockets similar to those manufactured in foreign military installations (Safa, December 10, 2016).
- **Senior Hamas figure Mahmoud al-Zahar**, speaking at a rally in Khan Yunis, said Hamas carried on its shoulders the message of its military wing, which had become a role model. He said the Palestinian people were prepared to suffer difficulties and sow destruction at Israel's military bases.

Another "Work Accident:" Two Terrorists Killed in Tunnel Collapse

- Another "work accident" occurred in the Sajaiya neighborhood of Gaza City when two terrorist operatives were killed in a tunnel collapse. They were **Ismail Abd al-Karim Shimali**, 27, an MA student, and **Rami Munir al-Ararair**, 24, a student of Islamic law, married with one child. Both of them lived in Sajaiya (al-Aqsa, December 7, 2016).



Left: Ismail Abd al-Karim Shimali. Right: Rami Munir al-Ararair (Facebook page of Gaza al-A'an, December 7, 2016).

Hamas Anti-Salafist Activity

■ Hamas sources reported that in recent weeks Hamas had carried out **one of its largest operations against Salafist-jihadists** to restrain their activities in the Gaza Strip, its security forces **detaining about 350 operatives** (al-Sharq al-Awsat, December 12, 2016). In response ISIS operatives in the Sinai Peninsula **decided to impose restrictions on Hamas and prevent smuggling from the Sinai Peninsula into the Gaza Strip through the tunnels**. They threatened the tunnel owners that anyone caught smuggling merchandise to the Gaza Strip would be executed. They also threatened to carry out terrorist attacks (Paldf, December 11, 2016; Karamah Press, December 10, 2016).

Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) Delegation Visits Iran

■ A delegation of senior PIJ figures headed by **Ramadan Shallah, PIJ secretary general, and Ziad al-Nakhleh, deputy head of the organization**, paid a formal visit to Iran. They met with Hashemi Rafsanjani, chairman of the Iranian Expediency Discernment Council, Mohammad Javad Zarif, foreign minister, and Ali Shamkhani, secretary general of the national security council (Filastin al-A'an, December 11, 2016). Meeting with Shamkhani, Ramadan Shallah said that **Iran was the only country in the world that supported the Palestinian cause and did to recognize the Zionist entity**. Shamkhani said that the Palestinian cause and the liberation of Jerusalem headed the Islamic world's list of priorities and that any deviation from the path of

struggle against the Zionist entity was a betrayal of Muslims (al-Ra'i, December 11, 2016).

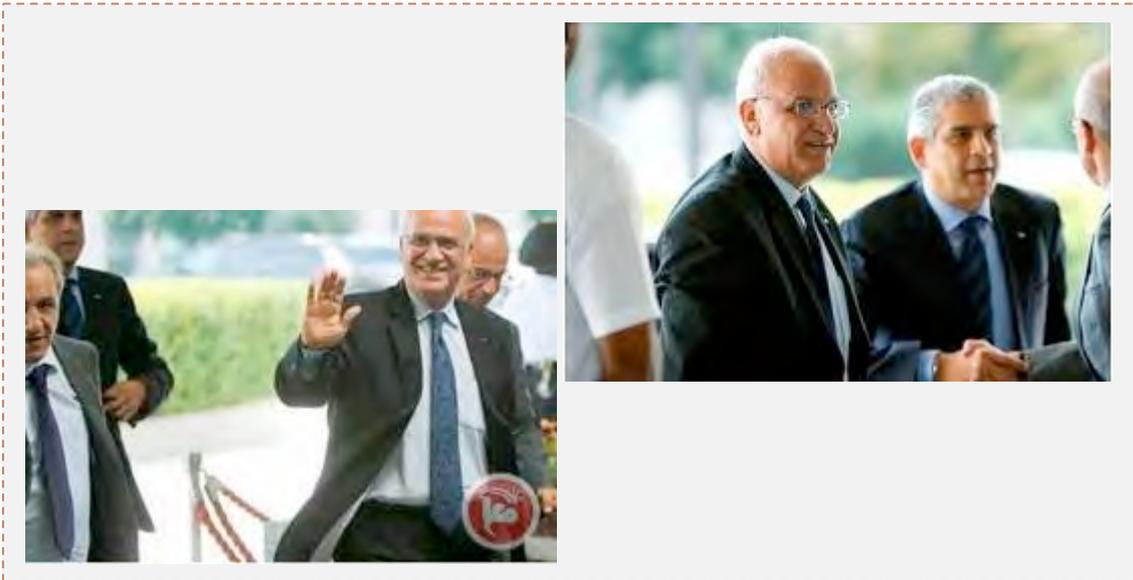


Left: Ramadan Shallah meets with Hashemi Rafsanjani (al-Wefaq, December 12 2016). Right: Ramadan Shallah meets with the Iranian foreign minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif (Fars, December 12, 2016).

The Palestinian Authority

PA Delegation Visit to the United States

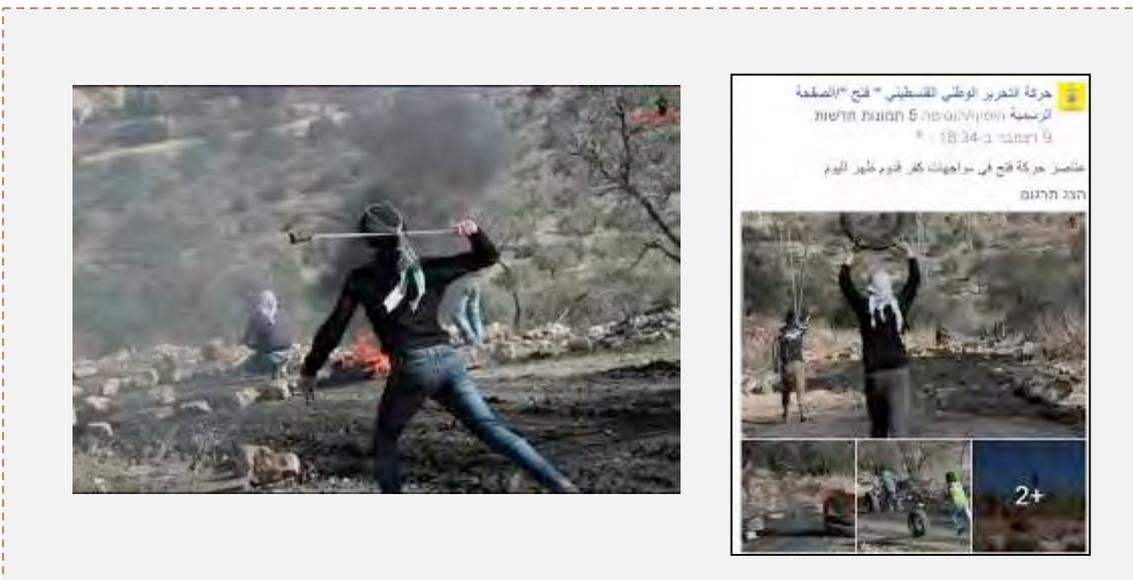
■ A Palestinian delegation headed by **Saeb Erekat, chairman of the PLO's Executive Committee, and chief negotiator, and Majid Faraj, head of Palestinian general intelligence**, paid a visit to the United States. **The delegation met with John Kerry, the American secretary of state**, and discussed security and political issues. Later the delegation held meetings in the White House with other senior administration figures. According to Saeb Erekat, the Palestinians initiated the visit and plan to meet with the president-elect's transition team (Facebook page of Saeb Erekat, December 12, 2016).



PA delegation visits the United States (Facebook page of Saeb Erekat, December 12, 2016)

Fatah Documents Confrontations with Israeli Security Forces

- The Fatah Movement posted pictures to its Facebook page documenting Palestinians rioting against the Israeli security forces in Kafr Qadoum. The posting noted that Fatah members participated in the riots (Facebook page of Fatah, December 9, 2016).



Posting to Fatah's Facebook page of pictures from the weekly riot in Kafr Qadoum notes participation of Fatah members (Facebook page of Fatah, December 9, 2016)