



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

(December 14-20, 2016)



Left: The Facebook page of Fatah posts thanks to the countries that voted in favor of UN Security Council Resolution 2334 (Facebook page of Fatah, December 23, 2016). Right: Fatah cartoon of the UN Security Council Resolution stabbing the Israeli settlement project (Facebook page of Fatah, December 24, 2016).

Overview

- This past week news focused on UN Security Council Resolution 2334, which dealt mainly with the issue of the Israeli settlements, over which there is broad international consensus. The weight of terrorism in the resolution was relatively light. The paragraphs relevant to terrorism were generally vague and may allow the Palestinians to claim that the terrorism and violence referred to were Israeli, not Palestinian.
- The resolution was regarded by the Palestinians as a significant achievement and "historic victory," and was supported by the entire spectrum of Palestinians. Even Hamas and other terrorist organizations which generally do not praise Mahmoud Abbas for his diplomatic moves supported the resolution, while stressing that the "resistance" [i.e., terrorism] would continue even if it meant "convoys of shaheeds."
- On the ground nothing is new. Popular terrorism and violence continue in Judea and Samaria, with stabbing attacks, shooting attacks, Molotov cocktails and the throwing of stones. In the meantime, Hamas continues its efforts to establish networks to carry out military-type terrorist attacks. This past week it was reported that a large network of Hamas terrorist operatives was uncovered which had been planning suicide bombing attacks in Haifa and Jerusalem, and shooting attacks in Judea and Samaria.

Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem

Terrorist Attacks and Attempted Terrorists Attacks

- **December 26, 2016** – Palestinians carried out a drive-by shooting at the **Jalameh crossing near Jenin in Samaria**. There were no casualties. Israeli security forces searched the area for the shooters (Facebook page of Red Alert, December 26, 2016).
- **December 25, 2016** – Palestinians carried out a drive-by shooting at the **community of Beit El**. There were no casualties and no damage was reported. A number of shell casings were found. The shooters escaped.
- **December 23, 2016** – There was a stabbing attack in the **community of Efrata** (south of Bethlehem). A Palestinian terrorist stabbed a local resident in the stomach and neck several times and fled. The Israeli was seriously wounded and evacuated to a hospital.
- **December 23, 2016** – A Palestinian woman holding what appeared to be a knife approached Israeli security force members at the Hospice Junction in the Old City of Jerusalem. She was detained. A knife was found in her handbag. The Palestinian media reported the detention of a 35 year-old woman from Jerusalem (Sada, December 24, 2016).

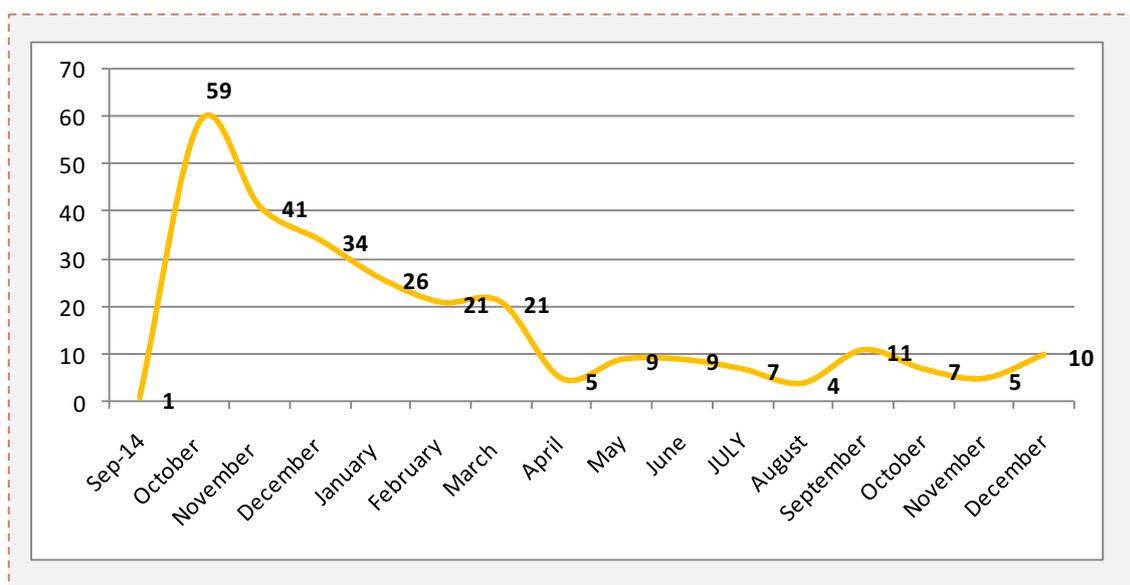


Left: Knife found in the possession of the Palestinian woman from east Jerusalem (Sada, December 24, 2016). Right: Casing from a bullet fired at the community of Beit El (kolalnastv, December 25, 2016)

Riots, Clashes and Popular Terrorism

- In the meantime, clashes, riots and public disturbances continue. Prominent this past week were the throwing of stones and Molotov cocktails in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem. The more prominent events were the following:
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 - **December 26, 2016** – Palestinians threw stones at an Israeli vehicle at **the Gush Etzion Junction**. One man was injured by flying glass (Facebook page of Red Alert, December 26, 2016).
 - **December 26, 2016** – Palestinians threw a pipe bomb at the site of **the Tomb of Rachel in Bethlehem**. There were no casualties (Facebook page of Red Alert, December 26, 2016). **December 15, 2016** – Palestinians threw stones at an Israeli vehicle **near the Yitzhar Junction, in the Hawwara region**. The windshield was damaged (Facebook page of Red Alert, December 15, 2016).
 - **December 24, 2016** – Hundreds of Palestinians threw stones and burned tires during a riot in **Bayt Ummar near Hebron**. Three members of the Israeli security forces were injured. The riot began after the funeral of a terrorist operative who carried out a vehicular attack two months ago, whose body was returned to his family.
 - **December 23, 2016** – Palestinians fired shots at Israeli security forces during an action in the **Balata refugee camp in Nablus**. One Israeli soldier was wounded.

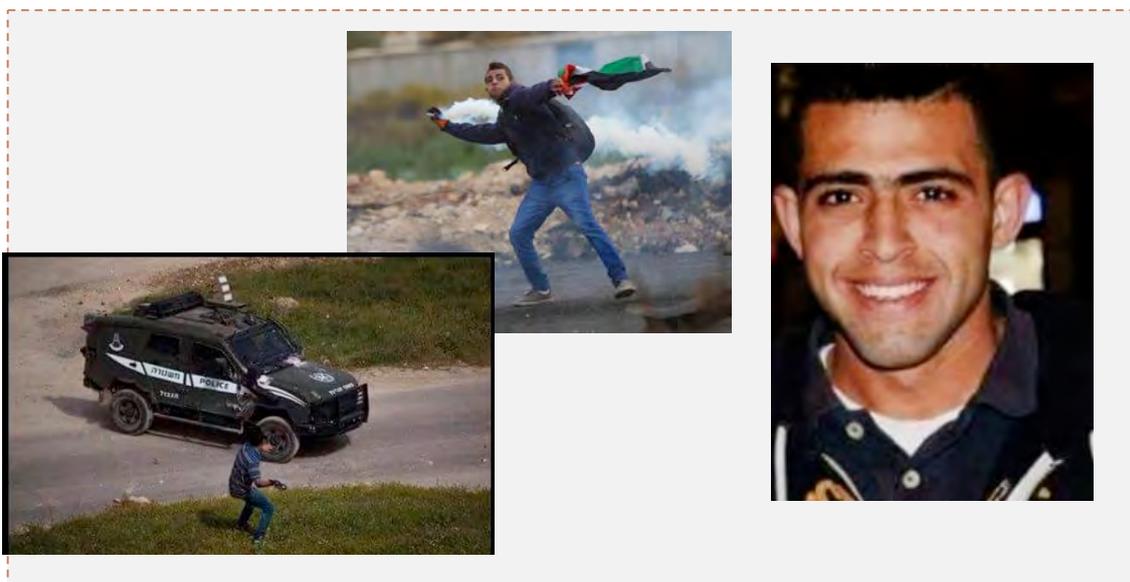
Significant Terrorist Attacks in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem since September 2015



Destruction of Terrorist Operative's House

■ In accordance with instructions from the political leadership, on the night of December 21, 2016, IDF forces destroyed the house of Palestinian terrorist **Musbah Abu Sabih** in the **village of Aqab**. On October 9, 2016, he carried out a combined vehicular-shooting attack at Ammunition Hill in Jerusalem, killing two Israelis. During the activity Palestinians shot at the Israeli security forces and threw IEDs. Palestinians also rioted against Israeli security forces **near the Qalandia refugee camp**; during the riot a young Palestinian was killed (Gaza al-A'an, December 22, 2016).

■ The Palestinian media reported the Palestinian was **Ahmed Nashat Othman al-Kharoubi**, 19, from al-Bireh. He had participated in previous riots (Twitter account of Palinfo, December 22, 2016). **Mahmoud Abbas called his father to express his condolences** (Wafa, December 25, 2016).



Left: Ahmed al-Kharoubi during recent clashes with Israeli security forces (Twitter account of Palinfo, December 22, 2016). Right: Ahmed al-Kharoubi, killed in a riot near the Qalandia refugee camp (Shasha News, December 22, 2016).

■ During the razing of the house the Israeli security forces detained the terrorist operative's brother on suspicion of being in **contact with Khaled Mashaal, head of Hamas' political bureau, and other Hamas operatives abroad**. The contact was made immediately after the death of the brother.

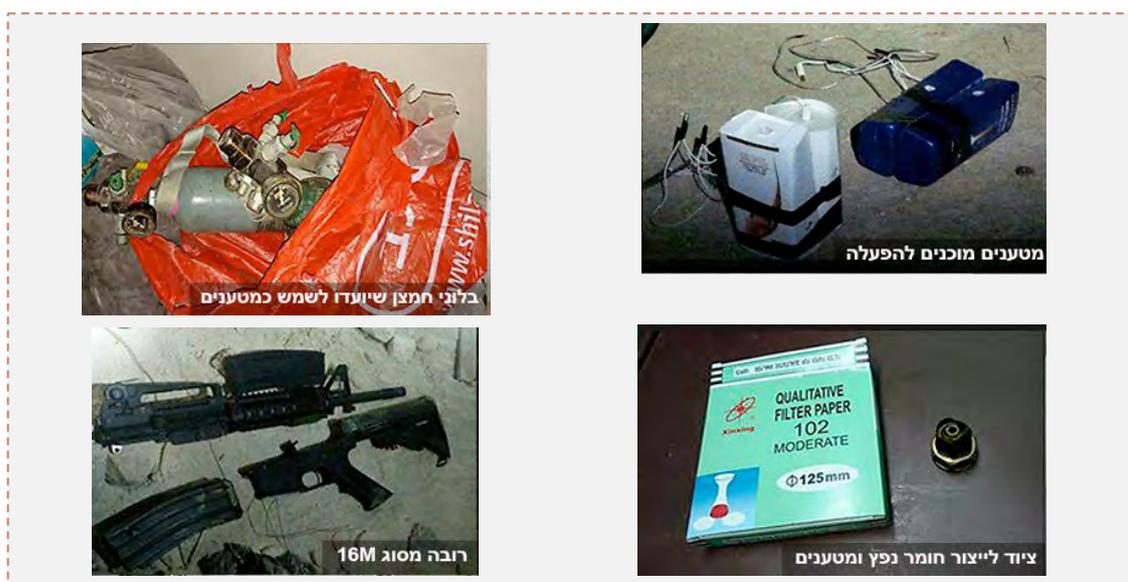
■ **Hamas spokesman Husam Badran** said he supported the Palestinians rioting against the Israeli security forces who broke into Aqab and into the Qalandia refugee camp to destroy Musbah Abu Sabih's house. He said they had sent a message to Israel that Palestinian youth adhered to its promise to the shaheeds and the

"resistance" not to give up until it achieved its objectives and liberated its land (Hamas website, December 22, 2016).

Exposure of Hamas Terrorist Network Planning Attacks in Israel

■ The Israeli security forces exposed a large network of Hamas terrorist operatives in the Nablus region planning to carry out suicide bombing attacks in crowded locations in Haifa and Jerusalem, and shooting attacks in Judea and Samaria. More than 20 operatives were detained, most of whom had previously served terms in Israeli jails for involvement in terrorist attacks and terrorist activity against Israeli. The operatives were supported by a large net of supporters that helped them manufacture, purchase and hide weapons, transfer funds for terrorist activity and hide wanted terrorists.

■ During interrogation the terrorists said that between May and August 2016 they had set up a workshop in Nablus where they manufactured about seven kilograms (about 15 lbs) of triacetone triperoxide (TATP) explosives. With the material they made IEDs they were planning to use in suicide bombing attacks in Jerusalem and Haifa, and to blow up bus stops frequented by soldiers. They also acquired M-16 assault rifles to use in shooting attacks. They also recruited four operatives who were supposed to strap the IEDs to their bodies and carry out suicide bombing attacks in Jerusalem and Haifa (Israel Security Agency website, December 22, 2016).



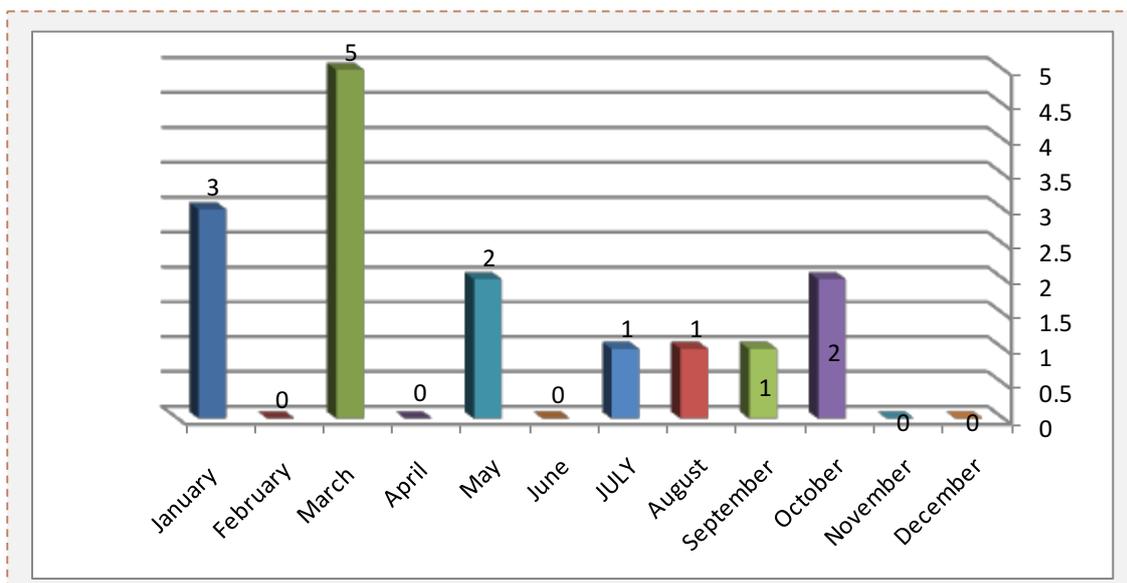
Equipment found in the possession of the Hamas network in Nablus (Israel Security Agency media, December 23, 2016).

Israel's South

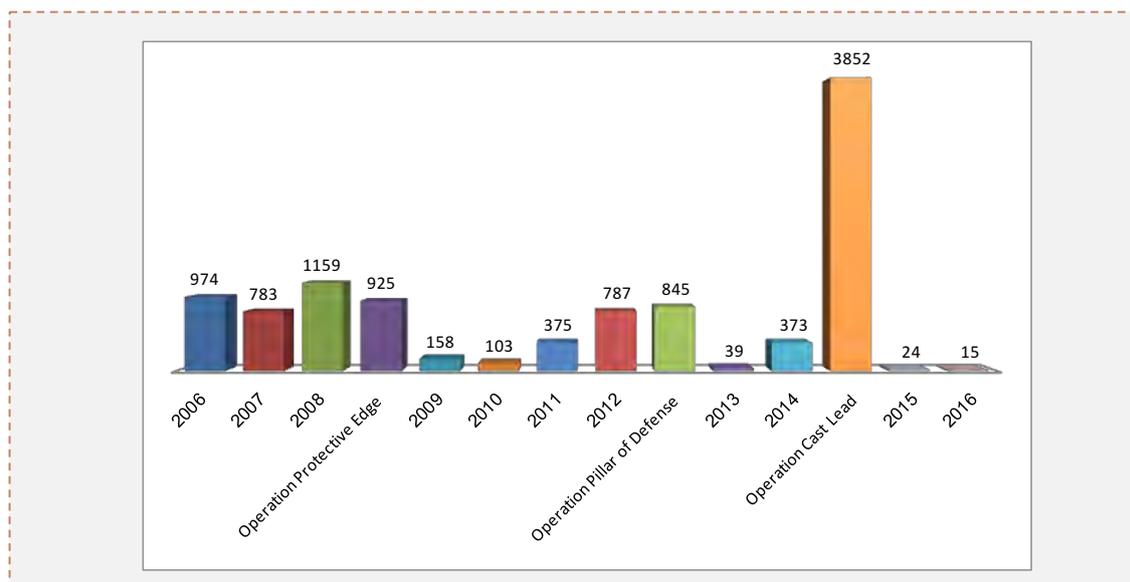
Rocket Fire Attacking Israel

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

Monthly Distribution of Rocket Fire, 2016



Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire in Israel's South¹

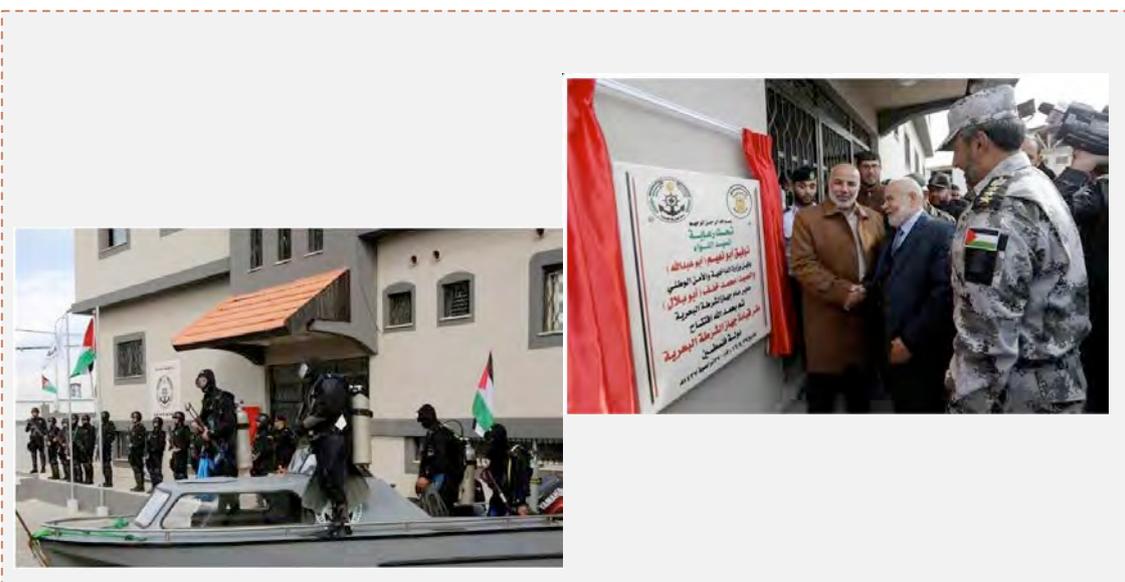


¹ The statistics do not include mortar shell fire or rockets which misfired and fell inside the Gaza Strip.

Developments in the Gaza Strip

Hamas Establishes a Coastal Security Force

■ The Hamas ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip announced the establishment of a **new force responsible for securing the Gaza Strip coast. It will belong to the naval police.** A new naval police headquarters in the western part of Gaza City was opened in a formal ceremony attended by senior figures. As part of its duties the naval force will reinforce existing security locations, prevent smuggling and regulate fishing. **Iyad al-Bazam, spokesman for the ministry of the interior,** said the number of naval police was currently 600 and the number of various security force employees in the Gaza Strip was 18,000 (Gaza al-A'an and the website of the ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip, December 22, 2016).



Ceremony opening of naval police headquarters in Gaza. Present were Ahmed Bahar, deputy head of the Hamas faction of the Palestinian Legislative Council, and Tawfiq Abu Na'im, commander of the security forces in the Gaza Strip (Website of the ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip, December 22, 2016).

Since Operation Protective Edge (July-August 2014) Hamas has seriously reinforced its naval force (as have the other terrorist organizations), for both offensive and defensive purposes. The order of combat of naval commandos has been enlarged (today probably several hundred), operatives undergo intensive training, and large quantities of diving equipment and weapons for underwater warfare have been purchased and smuggled into the Gaza Strip. The new coastal security force, as the security forces in general, may be used by Hamas' military-terrorist wing when Hamas deems it necessary (as has been the case in previous conflicts with Israel).

Mahmoud al-Zahar: Iran Is Palestinians' True Supporter

■ During an interview **senior Hamas figure Mahmoud al-Zahar** spoke about Hamas elections and the movement's leadership. Regarding himself as a candidate to replace Khaled Mashaal, he is establishing a bloc inside Hamas to ensure his election. He attacked the policies of Khaled Mashaal and Ismail Haniyeh, who, he said, had abandoned the principles on which and for the sake of which Hamas had been established, and accused them of supporting Qatar. **He stressed that Iran was the true supporter of Palestinians, because it always gave them assistance and arms for the "resistance" against Israel** (Watan24, December 22, 2016).

Crisis in Hamas-ISIS Sinai Province Relations

■ The al-Sharq al-Awsat news website posted an article about **the crisis in relations between Hamas and ISIS's Sinai Province**. It stated the following reasons for the crisis: the improving relations between Hamas and the Egyptian government, which included the Egyptian demand that Hamas cut off its relations with ISIS; and Hamas' series of detentions Salafi jihadist operatives in the Gaza Strip. In response, ISIS operatives prevented merchants and ISIS operatives from smuggling weapons, ammunition and materials for making explosives to Hamas' military wing in the Gaza Strip. They have also prevented the smuggling of non-military merchandise (al-Sharq al-Awsat, December 21, 2016).

Gazan ISIS Operative Killed Carrying Out a Suicide Bombing Attack in Syria

■ The Palestinian media reported that on December 22, 2016, ISIS posted pictures of an operative named **Abu Osama the Gazan**, who carried out a suicide bombing attack targeting Turkish army forces in the town of al-Bab (north of Aleppo). According to the report, he came from the Gaza Strip; his suicide bombing attack killed 14 Turkish soldiers (Ma'an, December 22, 2016).



Abu Osama the Gazan, ISIS operative from the Gaza Strip, who carried out a suicide bombing attack targeting Turkish army forces in al-Bab (Ma'an, December 22, 2016).

Youth Military Display

■ On December 24, 2016, Hamas' security forces held a military display for students of the al-Futuwwa program (para-military studies for school children in the Gaza Strip). Five hundred students from high schools participated. Their slogan was "March of Futuwwa Palestine in the footsteps of jihad fighters." The student march began at two locations in the Gaza Strip and ended at a security force training site in the center of the city, where a rally was held. The students wore uniforms and carried guns. Senior figures from the ministry of the interior watched the marches (Website of the Hamas-controlled ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip, December 24, 2016).



Uniformed al-Futuwwa students hold weapons at a rally held after the march (Website of the Hamas-controlled ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip, December 24, 2016).

The Palestinian Authority

UN Security Council Resolution 2334

On December 23, 2016, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 2334 dealing mainly with the Israeli settlements in Judea and Samaria, around which there is a large international consensus. The resolution was proposed by New Zealand, Senegal, Venezuela and Malaysia after Egypt withdrew its original draft resolution. Fourteen members of the Security Council voted in favor; the United States abstained, and thereby allowed the resolution to pass.

- The operative sections of the resolution were the following (ITIC emphasis):²
 - **"The establishment by Israel of settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, has no legal validity** and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-State solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace;"
 - "[The Security Council] reiterates its demand **that Israel immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory**, including East Jerusalem, and that it fully respect all of its legal obligations in this regard;"
 - ["The Security Council] underlines that it **will not recognize any changes to the 4 June 1967 lines**, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations;"
 - [The Security Council] calls for **immediate steps to prevent all acts of violence against civilians, including acts of terror, as well as all acts of provocation and destruction...**"
- The resolution is a declaration of intent and does not change the legal status of the settlements, whose existence is considered by the international community as a violation of international law (according to the Fourth Geneva Convention, which forbids an occupying power from transferring its nationals to the occupied territory). The resolution contains no provision for its enforcement, sanctions or other consequences. However, the PA's success in getting the resolution passed **will**

² UN.org

encourage it and various countries and international institutions to advance existing decisions regarding the settlements (such as an investigation by the International Criminal Court) and to initiate the passage of new measures.

- The Palestinians have already noted the steps they are planning to take:
 - **Saeb Erekat, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee**, said that based on Resolution 2334, the Palestinian leadership **would appeal to the International Criminal Court (ICC)**.
 - **Jibril Rajoub, a member of Fatah's Central Committee**, who was also chairman of the Palestinian soccer organization, said the resolution strengthened the Palestinian position to exclude from FIFA activities all Israeli soccer teams from the settlements. **He said the Palestinians planned to appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) if FIFA did not vote to exclude such Israeli teams**. He also said the Palestinians would continue their campaign until they realized their rights (al-Ayam, December 25, 2016).
 - **Ziad Abu Ziyad, Fatah spokesman to the international media**, congratulated the Palestinian people and the Palestinian team in the UN. He said the next step would be **an appeal to the ICC and other international institutions**. He said the Palestinians **would present files condemning all connections to the settlements** as well as **charges against Israeli political leaders and military figures with connections to the settlements**. He said it would be a unilateral measure in response to the policies of Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu (Ma'an, December 24, 2016).

Israel condemned the resolution. Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu called it an "**unbalanced resolution that is very hostile to the State of Israel**, and which the Security Council passed in an unworthy manner..." He said Israel would do "whatever is necessary so that Israel will not be damaged by this shameful resolution..." (Website of the prime minister's office, December 25, 2016).



The UN Security Council votes on Resolution 2334 (UN website, December 23, 2016)

Initial Palestinian Reactions to the Passage of the Resolution

The PA

Senior Palestinian figures expressed satisfaction. The PA regards it as a diplomatic victory, historic achievement, broad international recognition of a Palestinian state and way to pressure Israel into stopping construction in the settlements. Senior Palestinian figures said they hoped that in the wake of the resolution measures would be taken against Israel.

- There were a number of spontaneous demonstrations of joy in Judea and Samaria. Palestinians posted their satisfaction the social networks and said they hoped the resolution would lead to the end of Jewish construction in the Palestinian territories. Some of the postings condemned the Egyptian president for withdrawing the original proposal and praised the countries that lodged it. Others said they were concerned that in response Israel would harm the Palestinian population.
- The **Bethlehem-based Ma'an News Agency** held a public opinion poll on its website. According to the results, 75% of the respondents said the resolution was of no significance and would not be implemented; 20% called it "historic" and 4.9% said it signaled a new stage in the conflict with Israel (Ma'an, December 26, 2016).

■ **Speaking at a Christmas event in Bethlehem, Mahmoud Abbas** praised the resolution and called on Israel to come to the negotiating table. He said he hoped the international conference to be held in France on January 15, 2017, would establish basic principles for a peace process, including a timetable for its implementation, and that an international body would be appointed to oversee the peace talks (Wafa, December 24, 2016).



Mahmoud Abbas praises the UN Security Council resolution during a visit to a Christmas event in Bethlehem (Facebook page of QudsN, December 25, 2016).

■ Other Palestinian responses were the following:

- **Rami Hamdallah, prime minister of the Palestinian national consensus government**, said the resolution was born of the Palestinian people's ongoing struggle and the victory of its will to realize its rights.
- **Saeb Erekat, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee**, called the resolution "historic" and a victory for the Palestinian people, and claimed it would lead to the end of the "settlement project." He thanked the world for its support. He called for an investigation of the implementation of resolutions dealing with Palestine and on the issue of the settlements. He said the UN bore the heavy responsibility of investigating the settlements (Palestinian TV, December 25, 2016).
- **Nabil Abu Rudeina, spokesman for Mahmoud Abbas' office**, said the resolution and international support for the Palestinians were a blow to Israeli policy and support for the two-state solution.
- **Riyad al-Maliki, foreign minister of the national consensus government**, called the resolution "historic" because it returned the Palestinian cause to the

top of the Security Council's agenda and because 36 years had passed since the last resolution on the issue. He credited Palestinian diplomacy with the passage of the resolution. He said the Palestinians had strategically planned the steps leading up to it by creating pressure in the Security Council over the "settlement file" (Palestinian TV, December 25, 2016).

- **Riyad Mansour, Palestinian representative to the UN**, called the resolution a very important and encouraging step in preparation for the international conference in Paris. He congratulated the Palestinian people and thanked them for their firm stance in their daily struggle against the occupation, which had inspired the Palestinian leadership to take significant diplomatic steps in the international arena (Dunia al-Watan, December 24, 2016).

Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)

Despite the passage of the resolution, which is considered a diplomatic achievement for the PA and Mahmoud Abbas personally, **senior Hamas and PIJ figures** said they approved of it because it strengthened the international position of the "resistance" to Israeli policies. They called for more resolutions supporting the Palestinian position and the end of the [so-called] Israeli occupation. At the same time, Hamas stressed its determination to continue the path of "resistance" [i.e., terrorism] until the "liberation" of Palestine.

- **Khaled Mashaal, head of Hamas' political bureau**, said the resolution was a step in the right direction towards the recognition of the Palestinian people and correcting America's mistaken policies. He said it was an important step and would be influential because it was the first time the UN had opposed the settlements and shown the world their inherent danger. However, he claimed more was necessary and said that **every plan that did not restore the land to the Palestinian people**, and did not restore Jerusalem and al-Aqsa mosque, was unworthy. He also said that the path to victory and liberation was the "resistance" even if it included "masses of dead Palestinians " (al-Aqsa, December 25, 2016).

- **Senior Hamas figure Musheir al-Masri** said the resolution was especially important and that it stressed international opposition to rem, to the crimes of the Zionist occupation and especially to the settlements. He claimed UN opposition to the settlements would encourage the Arab states to take responsibility for the Palestinian cause and reject the Zionist enemy (al-Mayadeen, December 24, 2016).

- **Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum** praised what he called an important development supporting the rights of the Palestinians, and thanked the countries that

had voted in favor of the resolution. He called on the rest of the world to pass similar resolutions supporting the Palestinian cause and for the end of the Israeli occupation (Hamas website, December 23, 2016).

■ **Senior PIJ figure Daoud Shehab** said there was an international consensus against Israel and its policies, and that a genuine opportunity had present itself to isolate and boycott Israel, and to try it in the ICC for its crimes (Shehab24, December 24, 2016).



Hamas cartoon; the Arabic reads, "The Security Council and the resolution to stop the settlements" (Twitter account of Palinfo, December 24, 2016).

PIJ Terrorist Operatives End Hunger Strike

■ **Anas Shadeed** and **Ahmed Abu Fara**, both **PIJ terrorist operatives** who were under administrative detention and went on a 90-day hunger strike in protest, announced they had ended the strike, after having reached an agreement with Israel (Palestine Online, December 22, 2016). Abd al-Majid Shadeed, brother of Anas Shadeed, said the court had decided to extend the order for administrative detention by four months, to January 31, 2017, at which time they would be released (Sawa, December 22, 2016).

■ A rally was held for the two in Gaza City (Quds.net, December 22, 2016). **Senior PIJ figure Daoud Shehab** praised the two terrorists, claiming the end of their hunger strike was a victory of "empty stomachs" (Paltoday, December 22, 2016). **Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem** praised the two in the name of the Hamas movement on their "victory," saying it was proof of the Palestinian people's ability to win their freedom from the occupation by force (Paltoday, December, 2016).

