



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

(May 10 –16, 2017)



Palestinians riot in clashes with Israeli security forces. At the right Jamal Hawil, a Fatah member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, slings stones at the Beit El roadblock, near Ramallah. With him was journalist Muhammad al-Laham, a member of Fatah's Revolutionary Council (Facebook page of Jenin al-Hadth, May 14, 2017)

Overview

■ Popular terrorism continued this past week with a stabbing attack targeting an Israeli policeman in the Old City of Jerusalem. The terrorist, a Jordanian tourist, was shot and killed. The policeman sustained minor wounds. The Jordanian government strongly condemned Israel. The Israeli prime minister's office responded that a security video clearly showed the Jordanian tourist using a knife to stab the Israeli policeman, and that the time had come for Jordan to stop playing a double game. **Note:** In September 2016 another Jordanian tourist attempted to carry out a stabbing attack at the Nablus Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem, and was also shot and killed.

■ Palestinians throughout Judea and Samaria held demonstrations and rioted in solidarity with the hunger-striking Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails and to mark Nakba Day. A total of several thousand people participated in the demonstrations (most of the events were attended by several hundred Palestinians). In some locations rioters were wounded in violent clashes with Israeli security forces. The Arabic and Palestinian media reported some criticism of the poor turnout at activities held in support of the prisoners.

Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem

Terrorist Attacks and Attempted Terrorists Attacks

■ May 13, 2017 – Stabbing attack in the Old City of Jerusalem

- A pedestrian **near the Lions' Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem** attacked a policeman with two knives. The policeman shot and killed him. He sustained minor wounds and was evacuated to a hospital. The terrorist was **Muhammad Abdallah Salim al-Kasaji**, 57, a Jordanian, married and father of four, an accountant. He came to Israel as a tourist about a week before the attack, entering through the crossing east of Beit She'an. **It was the second terrorist attack during the past year carried out by a Jordanian.**¹



Muhammad al-Kasaji, 57, a Jordanian, who carried out the stabbing attack (Palinfo Twitter account, May 13, 2017).

- After al-Kasaji was killed **the Jordanian government strongly criticized Israel. Muhammad al-Momani, minister of information and spokesman for the Jordanian government**, claimed Israel bore responsibility for the killing of the Jordanian citizen because was attacked because it was the occupying force. He said Jordan condemned Israel's "heinous crime" and demanded Israel provide all the details (Jordanian News Agency, May 13, 2017). **Hamas spokesman Husam Badran** praised the Jordanians who, he said, displayed

¹ On September 16, 2016, a Jordanian went to the Nablus Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem holding two knives and shouting "Allahu akbar." He ran towards Border Policemen securing the site and tried to stab them. Police who saw him ordered him to halt. When he did not obey they shot and killed him. The Palestinian media reported the attacker was **Saeed Hail Alamro**, 28, a Jordanian from Karak who worked at the Jordanian Water Authority in the city. He entered Judea and Samaria via the Allenby bridge crossing on September 15, 2016, to visit the area (Ma'an, September 17, 2016).

courage when they defended the "sanctity of the Arab and Muslim nations" (alresalah.net, May 13, 2017).

- Muhammad al-Kasaji's brother also blamed Israel for his death. He said he and his family were proud of Muhammad, who had died the death of a martyr in Jerusalem (Shehab website, May 13, 2017). He demanded the Jordanian government contact Israel and ask for the return or Muhammad's body to his family (al-Ra'i, May 13, 2017).
- In response, the Israeli prime minister's office said in an announcement that it was infuriating to hear the support the spokesman for the Jordanian government had provided for a terrorist attack in the Old City. According to the announcement, **a security video clearly showed the Jordanian stab the Israeli policeman**. In addition, the time had come for Jordan to stop playing its double game (Website of the Israeli prime minister's office, May 13, 2017; ITIC translation).

Riots, Clashes and Popular Terrorism

- In the meantime, demonstrations, clashes and riots continued throughout Judea and Samaria, mainly involving the throwing of stones and Molotov cocktails. **The events were held in solidarity with the hunger-striking terrorist prisoners in Israeli jails and to mark Nakba Day.**² A total of several thousand Palestinians participated in the violence (most of the individual events were attended by several hundred people). In some locations the Palestinians clashed with the Israeli security forces, and a number of rioters were wounded.

² Nakba Day is marked every year on May 15 to commemorate the catastrophe visited upon the Palestinians in the 1948 war.



Palestinians riot against Israeli security forces at the northern entrance to al-Bireh (Wafa, May 15, 2017).

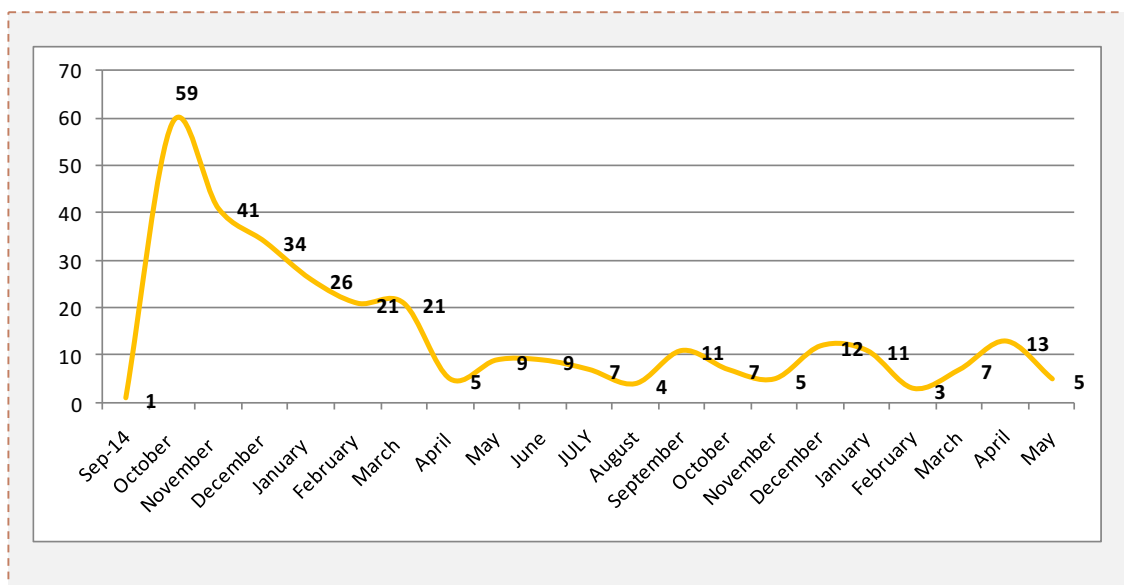
- The more prominent occurrences were the following:
 - **May 14, 2017** – The Palestinian media reported that a young Palestinian had been wounded by Israeli security force fire during a riot in **the Jenin refugee camp** (Palinfo, May 14, 2017).
 - **May 14, 2017** – Israeli Border Policemen **near the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron** detained a Palestinian woman with a knife. She was taken for interrogation. (Facebook page of Red Alert, May 14, 2017).
 - **May 13, 2017** – Pipe bombs were thrown at Israeli security forces operating in **Abu Dis (east Jerusalem)**. There were no casualties (Facebook page of Red Alert, May 13, 2017).
 - **May 11, 2017** – Palestinians reported that a young Palestinian had been killed in a clash between Israeli security forces and local residents in the village of **Nebi Saleh (near Ramallah)**. The clash was part of the weekly riot held at the entrance to the village (Palinfo, May 11, 2017). It was held in solidarity with the hunger-striking Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails.
 - **May 10, 2017** – A Palestinian from Jenin went to the guard booth at the entrance to the military court in Samaria **near the village of Salem**. He aroused the suspicions of the security force stationed there. He was asked to produce identification but did not have an identity card. A body search revealed two pipe bombs hidden in his clothing. He was taken for interrogation (Ynet, May 10, 2017).

- **May 10, 2017** – A Palestinian from the village of **Rabud (near Dahariya)** was photographed by a security camera shooting a gun several times next to an Israeli vehicle **south of Hebron**. Israeli soldiers at the scene detained him. He claimed he was shooting in self defense (Ynet, May 10, 2017).

Israel Security Agency Report of Terrorist Attacks in April 2017

■ According to the Israel Security Agency, during April 2017 there were 116 terrorist attacks in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem (similar to the number carried out in March). Most of the attacks (96) involved Molotov cocktails.³ One attack was carried out inside Israel (Tel Aviv, four wounded). Two people were killed in terrorist attacks in April: a member of the Israeli security forces (killed in an attack in Ofra, April 6, 2017) and a British exchange student (killed in a stabbing attack in the Old City of Jerusalem, April 14, 2017). In addition, 13 Israelis were wounded, eight civilians and five members of the security forces (Israel Security Agency, April 2017).

Significant Terrorist Attacks in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem since September 2015⁴



Israel's South

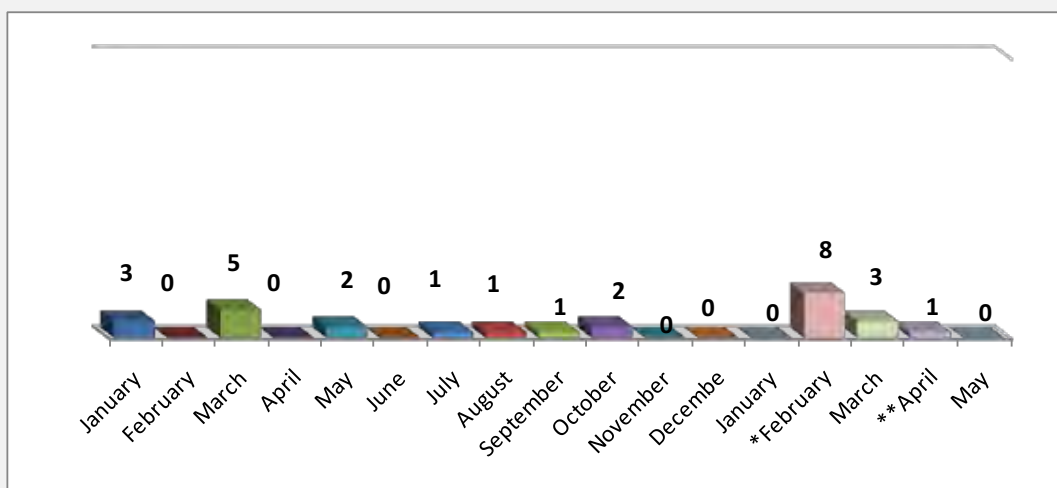
Rocket Fire Attacking Israel

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

³ The report did not include the dozens of stone-throwing attacks carried out every month.

⁴ A significant attack is defined by the ITIC as involving shooting, stabbing, a vehicle, the use of IEDs, or a combination of the above. Stones and Molotov cocktails thrown by Palestinians are not included.

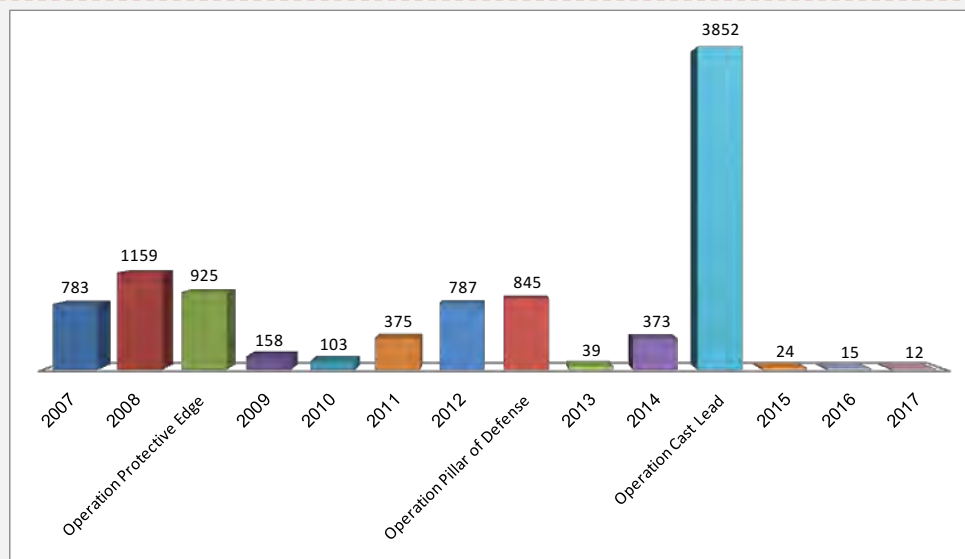
Monthly Distribution of Rocket Hits in Israel since January 2016



*Six of the rockets fired in February 2017 were launched from the Sinai Peninsula at Israeli territory, apparently by ISIS's Sinai Province.

** The rocket fired in April was launched from the Sinai Peninsula by ISIS's Sinai Province.

Annual Distribution of Rocket Hits in Israel's South⁵



⁵ The statistics do not include mortar shell fire or rockets which misfired and fell inside the Gaza Strip.

Developments in the Gaza Strip

Hamas Claims Apprehension of Mazen Fuqahaa's Killer

■ On May 11, 2017, **Ismail Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau**, held a press conference attended by **Yahya al-Sinwar, head of Hamas' political bureau in the Gaza Strip**. Haniyeh announcement that after "intensive work" the security forces had detained Mazen Fuqahaa's⁶ assassin who, according to Haniyeh, had been acting "on orders from Israeli officers." He called finding the killer "a historic moment" and a "strategic accomplishment." He claimed that the assassination indicated Israel had struck a hard blow to both Hamas' security and strategy (al-Aqsa, May 11, 2017).



Ismail Haniyeh announces the apprehension of the killer of Mazen Fuqahaa (Twitter account of the Hamas movement, May 11, 2017).

■ According to "a source involved in the investigation," the killer was **Ashraf Abu Layla**, 30, from the Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip. In the past he had been an operative in the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades and involved in killing Fatah activists during 2007. He was expelled from the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades in 2008 for "moral crimes and excessive use of force." He then joined networks affiliated with ISIS (al-Quds, May 11, 2017). According to the source, Abu Layla was only one of the members of a ten-man Israeli network allegedly handled by the Mossad, all of whose operatives had been caught by the Hamas security forces (arabi21.com, May 12, 2017).

⁶ **Mazen Fuqahaa** was a senior Hamas terrorist operative who was killed on March 24, 2017, in the parking lot near his house



Left: Cartoon held after the press conference revealing the apprehension of Ashraf Abu Layla, who is accused of killing Mazen Fuqahaa. The Arabic reads, "Exposure and detention of shaheed Mazen Fuqahaa's killer" (Felesteen, May 12, 2017). Right: Ashraf Abu Layla, (Ra'i, May 13, 2017).

■ **Fadhli al-Dily, deputy military attorney general in the Gaza Strip**, said initial deliberations had begun in the military court regarding Ashraf Abu Layla. He added that the issue of two other suspects, whose identity had not been divulged, would be deliberated separately. After two meetings the fate of the accused would be decided (Safa, May 15, 2017).

■ Rallies and marches were held throughout the Gaza Strip to celebrate the apprehension of Mazen Fuqahaa's killer (al-Aqsa, May 12, 2017). At a mass gathering held near Mazen Fuqahaa's house, attended by operatives of Hamas' military-terrorist wing, a speech was given by **Iyad Abu Fanuna, one of the Palestinian terrorists released in the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal**. He claimed the arrest of Mazen Fuqahaa's killer sent the message to Israel that **"the resistance will strike [Israel] in revenge, and make Tel Aviv and Jerusalem tremble."** He added that the "resistance" [i.e., the terrorist organizations] in the West Bank would do what was expected and avenge Fuqahaa's death (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades website, May 12, 2017).



Left: Hamas celebratory march in Rafah (Website of the al-Ahrar Movement, May 12 2017). Right: Mass gathering near Mazen Fuqahaa's house in Gaza City (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades website, May 12, 2017).

The Palestinian Authority

Mahmoud Abbas' Visit to Russia

■ After speaking in Moscow with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Mahmoud Abbas said **he welcomed Putin's suggestion to hold a summit meeting in Moscow attended by Russia, Israel and the Palestinians**. He claimed the Palestinians were prepared for the meeting at any designated time (al-Quds, May 11, 2017). From Moscow Mahmoud Abbas went to visit New Delhi



Mahmoud Abbas meets in Moscow with Russian President Putin (Wafa, May 11, 2017).

Egyptian and Jordanian Foreign Ministers Meet with Saeb Erekat

■ **Sameh Shoukry, the Egyptian foreign minister, and Ayman al-Safadi, the Jordanian foreign minister, met in Jordan with Saeb Erekat, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee.** The three emphasized that the only way to bring peace was through the two-state solution, according to which an independent Palestinian state would be established alongside Israel with the 1967 borders and east Jerusalem as its capital. According to the Jordanian foreign minister, the election of a new American president was a positive event for the Palestinian cause, which should be exploited to motivate the renewal of direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. Saeb Erekat claimed the Palestinians were interested in peace and that peace was their strategic choice (Facebook page of the Jordanian foreign ministry, May 14, 2017).

Demonstrations in Support of the Hunger-Striking Palestinian Prisoners

■ **The hunger strike of the Palestinian security prisoners in Israeli jails continues past its 30th day.** The so-called national committee to support the prisoners' hunger strike encouraged the Palestinian public to hold protest demonstrations and marches. It called for a "day of escalation" on May 14, 2017, during which Palestinians would confront Israeli security forces (Ma'an, May 14, 2017). **Fatah's Central Committee** called on call the security prisoners who belonged to Fatah to join the hunger strike (Wafa, May 11, 2017).

■ On May 14, 2017, **Jamal Hawil, a Fatah member of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) from the Jenin district,** was documented by the Palestinian media throwing tones at Israeli security forces during a riot at the Beit El roadblock. With him was **journalist Muhammad al-Laham, a member of Fatah's Revolutionary Council** (Facebook page of Jenin al-Hadth, May 14, 2017). Jamal Hawil, 46, is from the Jenin refugee camp. He was one of the heads of Fatah's Shabiba movement, along with Marwan Barghouti. During Operation Defensive Shield (2002) he was one of the Jenin refugee camp's commanders. He was detained and imprisoned in Israel until 2009. In 2006, while still in prison, he was elected as Fatah's representative for the Jenin district in the PLC. He was one of the founders and commanders of Fatah's Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades in the second intifada, and of the "black panther squads" in the first intifada (QudsN website, July 25, 2013).



Palestinians clash with the Israeli security forces to protest the prisoners' hunger strike. Left: Clash in Bethlehem. Right: Clash at the Beit El roadblock (Paldf Twitter account, May 11, 2017).

■ **Ismail Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau**, spoke with the families of the prisoners, among them with the wives of Marwan Barghouti and Ahmed Sadat. He said he fully supported the prisoners' struggle (alresalah.net, May 14, 2017).

■ **In the meantime, there was some criticism of the poor public turnout at the activities held in support of the prisoners.** For example, young Palestinians used Dumpsters and burning tires to block the main roads in the Ramallah district to protest the small public response (aljazeera.net, May 14; Sama, May 15, 2017). **Wasfi Kabaha, senior Hamas figure in Judea and Samaria**, who was released three weeks ago from an Israeli jail, said the Fatah movement was divided on the issue of support for the prisoners' strike. He said supporters of Marwan Barghouti were leading the strike, and that those who were loyal to Mahmoud Abbas or [Fatah's] Central Committee did not support it. He also said that **the extent of the Palestinian leadership's support for the prisoners' strike was "disgraceful and saddening"** (alresalah.net, May 11, 2017).



Protesting against the poor turnout at events in support of the prisoners. Left: Blocking the Bir Zeit University junction (Paldf Twitter account, May 14, 2017). Right: Blocking the Aboud-Ramallah road (QudsN, May 14, 2017).

Marking Nakba Day

■ Nakba Day was marked in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip with a series of events. In Judea and Samaria a number of demonstrations were held, attended by hundreds of participants. Many businesses closed. Hamas prevented Fatah activists from holding Nakba Day events in the Gaza Strip (Wafa, May 14, 2017). In the northern Gaza Strip a rally was held near the Erez crossing (Safa, May 15, 2017).

■ Various organizations issued announcements for Nakba Day:

- **Fatah's** announcement emphasized that **the Palestinian refugees were entitled to the "right of return"** and that Fatah regarded the right as a **national goal**. Fatah also called on Britain to "atone" for the mistakes it made by recognizing the historic right of the Palestinian people to the homeland of Palestine and with recognition of a Palestinian state with the 1967 borders and east Jerusalem as its capital (Wafa, May 14, 2017).

- **Hamas** issued a statement stressing the "right" of the Palestinian people to return to their lands. According to the statement, the "resistance" [i.e., the path of violence and terrorism] was the only way to end the Israeli "occupation" (al-Aqsa, May 15, 2017).

- **Senior Hamas figure Musheir al-Masri** stressed the sanctity of the "right of return," which, he said, could never become obsolete. He claimed the only way to get rid of the Israeli "occupation" was through "jihad and fighting." **Senior Hamas**

figure Khalil al-Haya said Hamas objected to any alternative solution for the refugees and any normalization with the "occupation" (al-Aqsa, May 15, 2017).

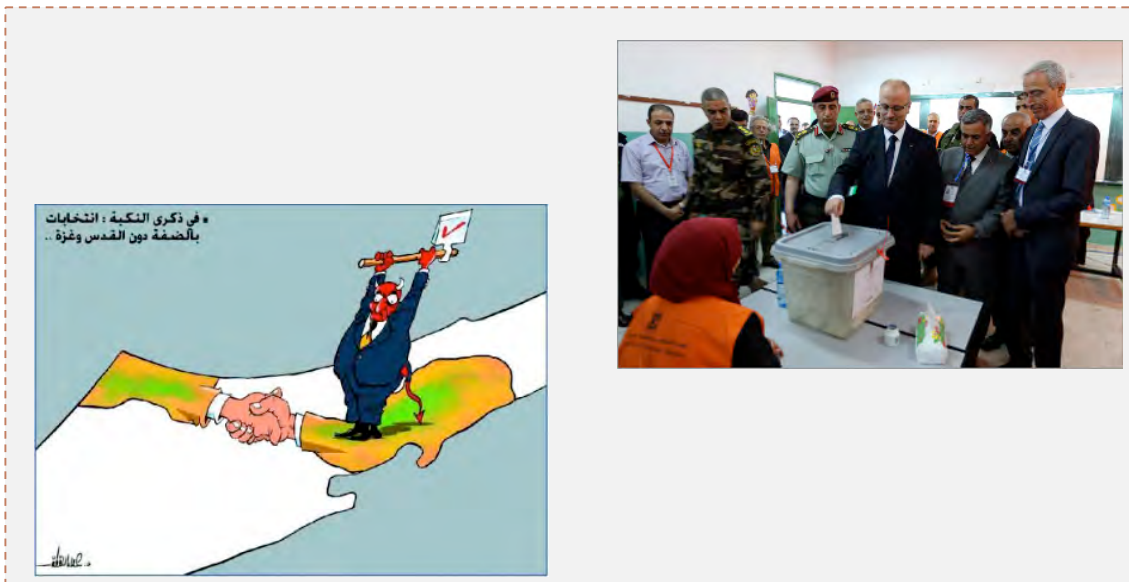
- **Ramadan Shallah, secretary general of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)**, called for the intifada to become active and escalate to defend Jerusalem and al-Aqsa mosque. He said the PIJ would not lay down its arms, not recognize a Zionist existence on the land of Palestine and not give up any part of it (Filastin al-Yawm, May 15, 2017).

Local Elections in Judea and Samaria

■ On May 13, 2017, elections were held in Judea and Samaria for 145 local authorities and councils. **Hana Nasser, chairman of the election committee**, said the election process had a number of stages and that about 700,000 voters had participated. He claimed **the voter turnout was 53.4%, similar to the 2012 elections** (Wafa, May 13, 2017). According to initial official results, confirmed by the committee, **the independent lists won 65% of the seats, while the party lists, that is, Fatah, won 35%.**

■ Hamas, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the PIJ boycotted the elections. However, Hamas called on its supporters in Judea and Samaria to vote for the most capable and deserving candidates to serve them (Hamas movement website, May 9, 2017).

■ **Senior Hamas figure Sami Abu Zuhri** condemned the elections. He claimed their objective was to isolate the Gaza Strip, proving that as far as the PA was concerned, only the West Bank was the Palestinian homeland. **Senior Hamas figure Ismail Radwan** said holding elections only in the West Bank deepened the rift and strengthened political separation. He said elections had to be held throughout the country, i.e., in the Gaza Strip as well (Dunia al-Watan, May 13, 2017).



Left: Hamas cartoon criticizing the elections, held only in Judea and Samaria. The Arabic reads, "On the occasion of Nakba Day, elections in the West Bank without Jerusalem and Gaza..." (Felesteen, May 14, 2017). Right: Rami Hamdallah, prime minister of the Palestinian national consensus government, votes in the town of 'Anabta (east of Tulkarm) (Wafa, May 13, 2017).

Elections at Bir Zeit University

- In the student council elections held in Bir Zeit University, the Hamas-affiliated Islamic Bloc retained its power. It won 25 seats (similar to last year). The Fatah-affiliated Shabiba won only 22 seats. It was the third victory in a row for the Islamic Bloc in the student council elections in Bir Zeit University.



Hamas' Islamic Bloc celebrates its win in the student council election in Bir Zeit University (Facebook page of the Islamic Bloc at Bir Zeit University, May 11, 2017).