



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

(June 14 –20, 2017)



Palestinians carried out a combined terrorist attack in two locations near the Nablus Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem. A female Israeli Border Policewoman was stabbed to death. Left: The knife used to stab the Border Policewoman. Right: The improvised "Carlo" sub-machine gun used in the attack (Facebook page of the Shehab news agency, June 15, 2017).

Overview

- This past week Palestinian terrorist events focused on a simultaneous combined terrorist attack carried out at two locations in east Jerusalem (the Nablus Gate and the nearby Cave of Zedekiah). A Border Policewoman was killed. The three terrorists who carried out the attack came from the village of Deir Abu Mash'al, near Ramallah. Two of them were affiliated with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the third with Hamas. According to their Facebook pages, their motivation was religious ("Allah, end our deeds with a righteous accomplishment so that through it we may meet you.").
- Hamas and the PFLP both reported that operatives affiliated with their movements had carried out the attack. **ISIS issued a false statement claiming responsibility.** Fatah, as usual, accused Israel of "war crimes" without mentioning the terrorist attack or the death of the Border Policewoman.
- The energy authority in the Gaza Strip reported that Israel had begun reducing the amount of electricity it supplied. A Hamas spokesman warned the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Israel about the measure's destructive consequences. The Hamas-affiliated "national authority to break the siege on the Gaza Strip" **called on Gazans to demonstrate near the border and clash with the IDF to protest the cut in electricity.**

Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem

Terrorist Attacks and Attempted Terrorists Attacks

Combined Terrorist Attack near the Nablus Gate in East Jerusalem

■ In the early evening of June 16, 2017, three Palestinian terrorists armed with knives and an improvised sub-machine gun went to **the area near the Nablus Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem** and carried out two simultaneous attacks:

- **One attack was carried out at in front of the Cave of Zedekiah on Sultan Suleiman Street.** Two terrorist operatives, one armed with an improvised sub-machine gun ("Carlo") and the other with a knife, tried to attack Israeli security forces stationed there. The police shot and killed them.
- **The other attack was carried out near the Nablus Gate** (a few hundred yards from the first). A Palestinian mortally stabbed a Border Policewoman. She was evacuated to a hospital and later died. Another Border Policeman suffered minor wounds and two civilians were wounded by gunfire. The terrorist was shot and killed by Israeli security forces.

■ **The attacks were carried out by a local three-man terrorist squad** whose operatives were 18-19 years old, **all of them from the village of Deir Abu Mash'al (west of Ramallah). Two of them were affiliated with the PFLP and one with Hamas.** They did not have permits to enter Israeli territory. Two of them had been detained in the past by the Israeli security forces for participating in riots and had served short prison sentences. According to the initial investigation, they had been planning the attack for weeks and apparently were not handled by any organization.

■ According to the investigation, the quick response of the Border Policemen and the fact that the machinegun misfired **prevented a much more serious attack.**



Communication between the three terrorists on Facebook. On April 17, 2013, Usama 'Atta, one of the terrorists, virtually told the other two operatives of the squad he was planning to end his life with a "righteous accomplishment" so that he could meet Allah. His friends, 'Adel 'Ankush and Baraa 'Atta responded that they fully agreed. Usama 'Atta's answer to them reads as follows: "We pass through life and the world is not ours. One day we will pass [away] and leave everything behind us. Allah, end our deeds with a righteous accomplishments so that through it we may meet you." 'Adel Ankush answered, "by Allah, amen." Baraa' Saleh ('Atta) answered, "Amen" (Facebook page of Usama 'Atta, April 13, 2017).



An old picture of the three terrorists (Palinfo Twitter account, June 18, 2017).

■ Personal information about the three terrorists:

- **Baraa' Ibrahim Saleh 'Atta** – 19 years old, reportedly a PFLP operative. He was detained in 2015 for throwing stones and Molotov cocktails and imprisoned in Israel for a year. His Facebook name was Baraa' Saleh; only his Facebook friends could view his page.

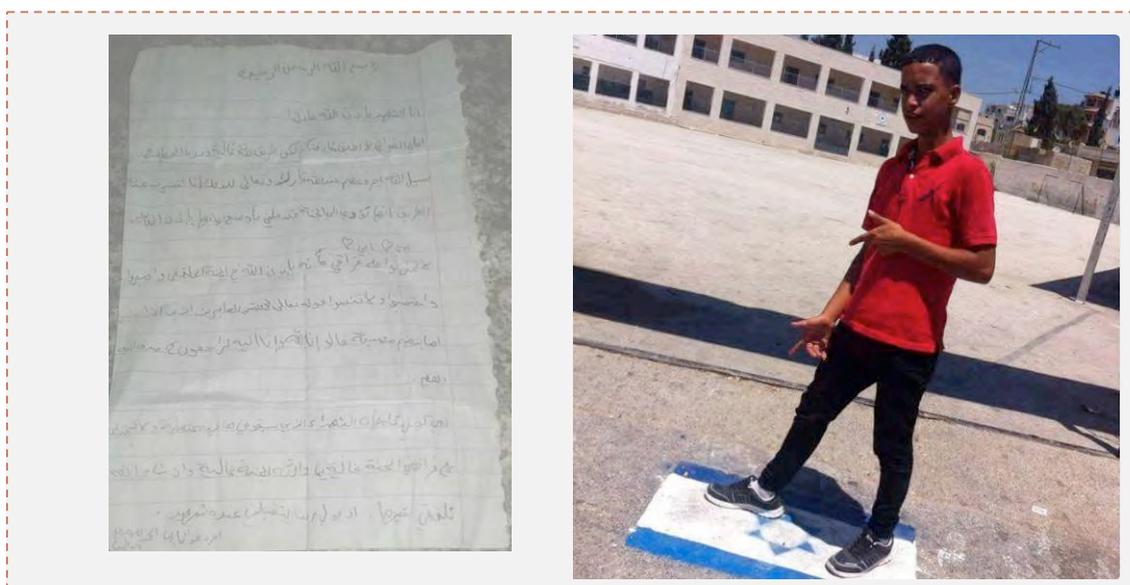
- **Usama Ahmed Mustafa 'Atta** – 19 years old, reportedly a PFLP operative. He was detained in 2014 for throwing stones and Molotov cocktails at Israeli vehicles and imprisoned in Israel for a number of months. His father was detained during the first intifada and sentenced to five years in prison. With his release he was deported to the Gaza Strip. When the Palestinian Authority was established the father returned to his village. Usama's older brother Muhammad was sentenced to a year and a half in prison. His younger brother Mansour, 14 years old, was detained two months ago and is awaiting trial (al-Araby al-Jadeed, June 17, 2017). **Usama's Facebook page contains a great deal of Islamic religious material including, verses and entire pages from the Qur'an, and "shared" sections of Islamic sermons. In May 2017, about a month before the attack, he went to Mecca** (Facebook page of Usama 'Atta, May 18, 2017).



Usama 'Atta at the Kaaba in Mecca (Facebook page of Usama 'Atta, May 18, 2017).

- **'Adel Hassan Ahmed 'Ankush** –
 - ✓ Eighteen years old, reportedly a Hamas operative. His brother Tareq was imprisoned in Israel for throwing Molotov cocktails at Israeli vehicles. 'Adel's Facebook homepage has the inscription, " 'Adel 'Ankush, at your orders, al-Aqsa." He says he hopes Allah will be satisfied with him. His Facebook page is full of religious material, including quotations from Muslim sermonizers and an anti-abortion video. There are also pictures of Hamas terrorist operatives, including **Bassem al-Takroui** who carried out a suicide bombing attack on the French Hill in Jerusalem in May 2003 (Facebook page of 'Adel 'Ankush).

✓ His mother said he was determined to pray at al-Aqsa mosque and always complained of the restrictions Israel placed on Muslims who wanted to go there (Watan channel, June 17, 2017). Before he left for the terrorist attack in Jerusalem he left a "will" for his parents. In it he praised the path of jihad for the sake of Allah and the great rewards that accompanied it. He asked his family not to mourn him because he would be paradise. He asked his mother to behave like the mothers of other shaheeds, to be patient and understanding, and not to be sad because paradise was of high value (Nablus News, June 20, 2017).



Left: The "will" 'Adel 'Ankush left for his parents before he left to carry out the terrorist attack in Jerusalem (Nablus News, June 20, 2017). Right: 'Adel Ankush stands on the Israeli flag (Palinfo Twitter account, June 17, 2017).

■ Three terrorist organizations claimed responsibility for the attack:

- **ISIS** – ISIS's Amaq agency, posting on a number of ISIS-affiliated websites, claimed the attack in Jerusalem had been carried out by "the lions of the Caliphate," calling the three Abu al-Baraa' al-Maqdisi, Abu Hassan al-Maqdisi, and Abu Rabah al-Maqdisi. The ISIS announcement threatened it was not the last "action" and that the Jews could expect their country to be destroyed by the "soldiers of the Caliphate." It was the first time ISIS had claimed responsibility for an attack carried out in Israeli territory in general and Jerusalem in particular. **ITIC assessment the announcement was baseless.** The ITIC has no information about any link, either operative or ideological, between the terrorists who carried out the attack and ISIS, or even the possibility that they may have been inspired by ISIS. However, their families and the residents of Deir Abu

Mash'al denied any connection between the terrorists who had carried out the attack and ISIS (Facebook page of Ramallah al-Akhbariya, June 16, 2017)

- Hamas – Senior Hamas figure Izzat al-Rishq** tweeted that the three "heroic shaheeds of the action in Jerusalem" had no ties to ISIS and belonged to the PFLP and Hamas. He added that **the action had been carried out as a "private initiative"** (Twitter account of Izzat al-Rishq, June 16, 2017). **Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri** said ISIS's claim was an attempt to blur the facts and that the action had been carried out by two Palestinians from the PFLP and one from Hamas (Paldf Twitter account and Hamas website, June 16, 2017). **Senior Hamas figure Taher al-Nunu** said Hamas' objective was to have such actions continue and that ISIS's announcement had been forged by Israeli intelligence (Dunia al-Watan, June 18, 2017).
- The PFLP –** The PFLP confirmed that two of its operatives had carried out the attack. They called it **"Operation Promise of al-Buraq."**¹ According to the organization's announcement, they would continue fighting Israel until the liberation of Palestine (Paldf Twitter account, June 16, 2017). **Maher al-Taher, a member of the PFLP's political bureau,** said the attack was the fruit of collaboration between the PFLP and Hamas, and that it was a call to the military wings of all the organizations to collaborate (al-Mayadeen, date, 2017).



Left: Hamas cartoon published after the terrorist attack in Jerusalem: "Operation Promise of al-Buraq" (Palinfo Twitter account, June 17, 2017). Right: Notice issued by the PFLP reporting the deaths of two of its operatives, released prisoners Baraa' and Usama 'Atta; it also mentions 'Adel 'Ankush (Twitter account of Voice of the PFLP, date, 2017)

¹ **Al-Buraq** is the name of the mythological horse that carried Mohammad to heaven from al-Aqsa mosque. According to later Islamic tradition, Mohammad tethered al-Buraq to the West Wall when they arrived at al-Aqsa mosque from Mecca.

■ The PA and Fatah, as usual, did not condemn the terrorists who carried out the attack. On the contrary, **Fatah condemned the "occupation forces" in Jerusalem and the "war crimes"** Israel had carried out against three young Palestinians. Fatah spokesman **Usama al-Qawasmeh** said in a statement that the silence of the international community regarding the on-going occupation and its crimes encouraged Israel to spill Palestinian blood. He added that the crime Israel carried out in cold blood and the lives Israel had taken of three young Palestinians were proof of that (Wafa, June 16, 2017). **His announcement made no mention of the terrorist attack the three had carried out and the murder of the Border Policewoman.**

■ To celebrate, **residents of Deir Abu Mash'al held a march** to the houses of the three terrorists and distributed candy. The local Facebook page commemorated them and changed its theme picture to a picture of all three, adding, "To you. [You deserve] congratulations and all the purity of the sky. You are here and there and everywhere. May peace be upon your souls" (Facebook page Deir Abu Mash'al, June 18, 2017).



Left: The Facebook page of Deir Abu Mash'al commemorates and glorifies the three terrorists operatives who carried out the terrorist attack in east Jerusalem. Right: Spontaneous outbreak of joy: a celebratory march to the houses of the three terrorist operatives in Deir Abu Mash'al (Facebook page Deir Abu Mash'al, June 18, 2017).

Israel's Response

■ In response to the attacks Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu held a meeting to evaluate the situation. It was decided to cancel permission for Palestinians to enter Israel during Ramadan. However, Palestinians who wanted to pray on the Temple Mount could continue to enter the country as usual.

■ The IDF and the Israeli security forces carried out activities in the village of Deir Abu Mash'al (where the terrorists lived). A closure was imposed on the village and relatives of the terrorists were forbidden to enter Israel. The security forces seized illegal vehicles, documents and personal items, and detained suspects for interrogation. Hundreds of Palestinians clashed with the Israeli security forces and the Palestinian media reported that three Palestinians had been wounded (Palinfo Twitter account, June 17, 2017).

Other Terrorist Attacks

■ On June 17, 2017, a Palestinian stabbed an Israeli near the community of **Alon Shvut (in Gush Etzion)**, inflicting minor wounds. The Palestinian was detained and taken for interrogation.

Riots, Clashes and Popular Terrorism

■ This past week demonstrations, clashes and riots continued throughout Judea and Samaria, primarily involving the throwing of stones and Molotov cocktails. The Israeli security forces detained a number of Palestinians suspected to terrorist activity. The more prominent occurrences were the following:

- **June 18, 2017** – Palestinians tried to barricade themselves on **the Temple Mount**. Three Israeli policemen were wounded. Two Palestinians who tried to attack a policeman were detained (Jerusalem Police spokesman's unit, June 18, 2017). Palestinian sources condemned what they called "Israel's escalation against al-Aqsa mosque" (Filastin al-Yawm, June 18, 2017). **Note:** For the approaching last Friday of Ramadan, Muslim clerics, among them Sheikh Muhammad Hussein, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, and the PA, are enflaming Palestinian emotions and encouraging the Palestinians to go en masse to al-Aqsa mosque (Palinfo Twitter account and IINA News, June 19, 2017)
- **June 18, 2017** – Palestinians threw a pipe bomb at Israeli security forces operating in the region of **Abu Dis (east of Jerusalem)**. There were no casualties and no damage was reported (Facebook page of Red Alert, June 18, 2017).
- **June 17, 2017** – Palestinians fired shots in the region of the **Tekoa Junction (Gush Etzion)**. The Israeli security forces searched the area and found a number of shell casings. The shooters escaped (Facebook page of Red Alert, June 17, 2017).

- **June 16, 2017** – The Israeli security forces detained six Palestinians who threw stones and Molotov cocktail in the region of **Kokhav Hashahar (northeast of Ramallah)**. In addition, two vehicles were seized and found to be carrying stones and Molotov cocktails (Facebook page of Red Alert, June 16, 2017).
- **June 15, 2017** – Palestinians threw stones at an Israeli vehicle near **Anata (east of Jerusalem)**. A woman was injured and evacuated to a hospital (Facebook page of Red Alert, June 15, 2017).
- **June 15, 2017** – Two Palestinians tried to throw a Molotov cocktail at the security fence around **Kiryat Arba (near Hebron)**. They were unsuccessful, and fled (Facebook page of Red Alert, June 15, 2017).



Stone thrown by a Palestinian at an Israeli vehicle near the village of Husan, west of Bethlehem (Facebook page of the Shehab news agency, June 15, 2017).

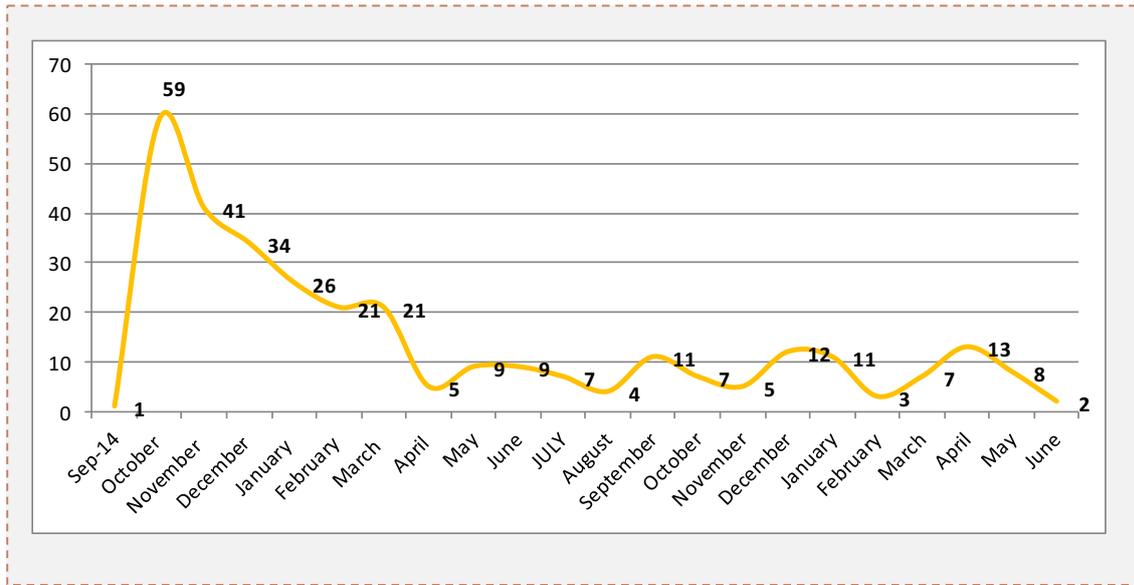
Summary of Terrorist Attacks, May 2017²

■ According to statistics provided by the Israel Security Agency, during May 2017 the number of terrorist attacks increased, compared with April 2017. In May there 142 terrorist attacks were carried out (116 in April). Of them, 113 were carried out in Judea and Samaria, 29 in Jerusalem, and one deep inside Israel in Netanya. Most of the attacks (121) involved Molotov cocktails. Eleven involved IEDs, two were stabbing attacks, three were shooting attacks using light arms, and six were arson attacks.³ Two Israelis were wounded, both members of the Israeli security forces (in a stabbing attack in Jerusalem, May 13, 2017, and in a stabbing attack in Netanya, May 23, 2017).

² Data from the Israel Security Agency website

³ The data do not include the hundreds of incidents of Palestinian stone-throwing.

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



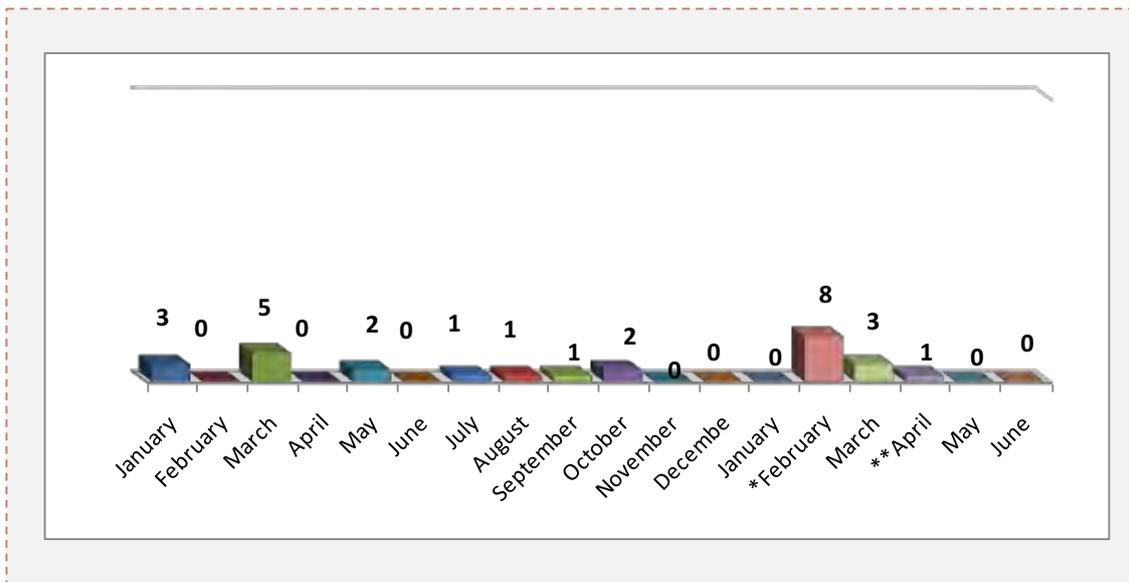
Israel's South

Rocket Fire Attacking Israel

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

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.

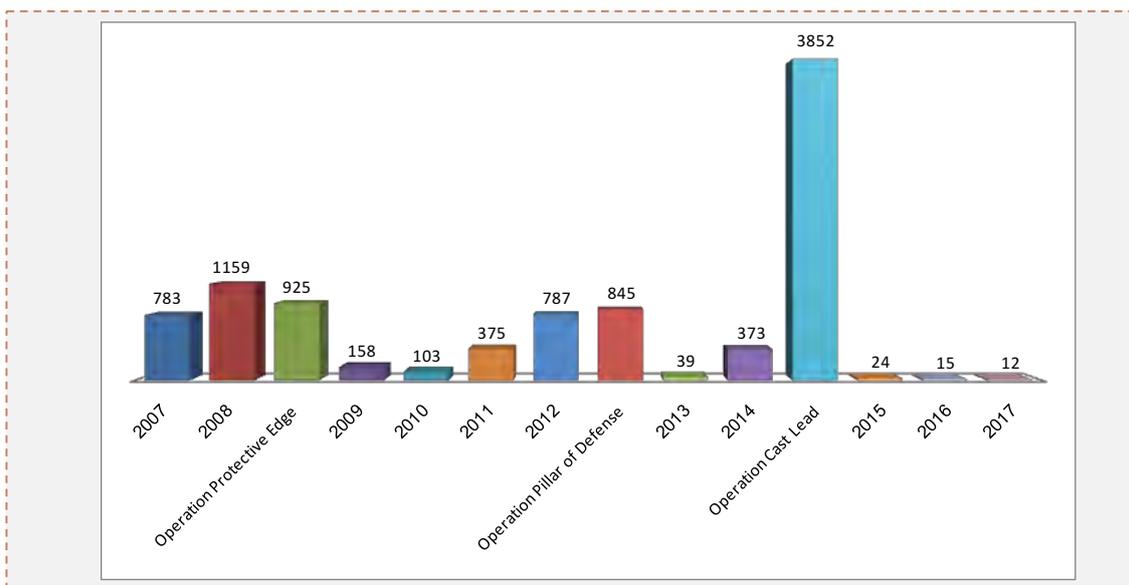
Monthly Distribution of Rocket Hits in Israel since January 2016



*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.

Riots at the Border Security Fence

■ **This past week demonstrations and riots organized by Hamas continued** along the border security fence with Israel, held to protest Mahmoud Abbas' decision to reduce resources directed towards the Gaza Strip. On Friday, June 16, 2017, demonstrations were held at four sites, with **several hundred Palestinians participating in each**. The Palestinian media reported that a number of Gazans were wounded in clashes with the IDF in the eastern Gaza Strip (Wafa, June 16, 2017).



Left: A Palestinian slings a stone at IDF forces east of the al-Bureij refugee camp (Facebook page of Shehab, June 17, 2017). Right: Demonstrators wave Palestinian and Qatari flags during a riot near the border security fence (Palinfo Twitter account, June 16, 2017).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

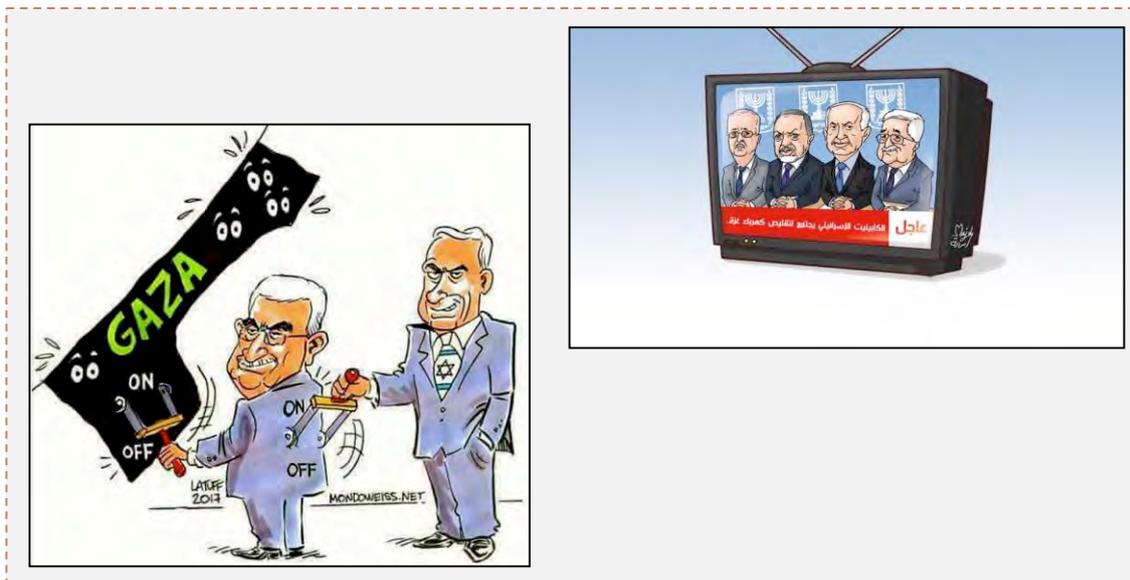
The Electricity Crisis

■ On June 19, 2017, the Energy Authority in the Gaza Strip reported that **Israel had begun to reduce the amount of electricity it supplied to the Gaza Strip by eight megawatts (of the 120 supplied until now)**. According to the authorities in the Gaza Strip, that will reduce the flow of electricity to the residents by **45 minutes (from four hours a day to 3 1/4 hours a day)**. The effects will be most severely felt in **Gaza City and the Khan Yunis region**.

■ **Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum** warned that the consequences of the cut in electricity would be disastrous, and **accused the PA and Israel of responsibility**. He said the reduction in electricity would **"hasten the coming explosion"** (Hamas website, June 19, 2017). **The Hamas-affiliated "national authority to break the siege on the Gaza Strip" called on Gazans to demonstrate near the border and**

clash with the IDF to protest the cut in electricity and confront the "enemy" (i.e., the IDF) at the friction points along the Gaza Strip (Zone Press and Ma'an, June 20, 2017).

■ A report prepared by the Palestinian **al-Mezan Center** warned of a coming **"ecological catastrophe"** along the 42-kilometer (26-mile) Gazan coast. According to the report, the lack of fuel and ensuing lack of electricity prevent the operation of sewage purification plants, **forcing many municipalities to dump their waste into the sea**. Every day, 100 thousand cubic meters (about 26.5 million gallons) of waste are poured into the sea from the Gaza Strip' 23 sewage purification plants. The Gazan ministry of health and ecological authority have found a very high level of pollution in the sea water (Ma'an, June 20, 2017).



Left: Hamas cartoon of Benjamin Netanyahu using Mahmoud Abbas to cut off electricity to the Gaza Strip (Facebook page of al-Risalah, June 16, 2017) Right: Hamas cartoon of Mahmoud Abbas, Rami Hamdallah and Israel working together to worsen the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip. The TV newsflash reads, "The Israeli cabinet meets to reduce electricity to the Gaza Strip" (alresalah.net, June 15, 2017).

Turkish Sends Ship with Aid for the Residents of the Gaza Strip

■ The Turkish deputy prime minister said that following instructions received from President Erdogan, preparations were being made to send a Turkish ship with humanitarian aid for the Gaza Strip. It set sail from the southern Turkish port of Mersin. He said Turkey hoped the humanitarian aid aboard the ship would strengthen the Palestinian people (Shehab, June 17, 2017).

■ **Fa'ed Mustafa, PA ambassador to Turkey**, reported that on June 17, 2017, **the ship had sailed from Mersin en route to [Israel's southern] port of Ashdod**, carrying humanitarian aid for the Gaza Strip, which he said would be distributed to needy families for Eid al-Fitr (which falls on June 25, 2017 this year). It will be the third Turkish ship to unload its cargo at the port of Ashdod since the reconciliation between Israel and Turkey (alresalah.net, June 18, 2017).



The Turkish ship anchored in the southern Turkish port of Mersin (Palinfo Twitter account, June 19, 2017).

Khalil al-Haya Statements at a Press Conference

■ **Senior Hamas figure Khalil al-Haya** held a press conference and addressed various issues (al-Aqsa TV, June 18, 2017)"

- He claimed **humanity's real enemy was Israel** and that genuine terrorism was organized by Israel (the "Zionist entity"). He claimed the easy normalization of relations of a number of Arab states with Israel was dangerous and harmed the Palestinians.
- He claimed the measures taken against the Gaza Strip by Mahmoud Abbas, as difficult as they were, **would not make the Palestinians abandon the "resistance"** [i.e., terrorism]. They would rather unite the Palestinian people both inside and outside the Gaza Strip. Not providing electricity, he said, was like not giving medicine to a sick person.
- He claimed **Hamas did not initiate wars with Israel and did not expect one to break out in the near future**. However, he warned that the continuing "siege" of the Gaza Strip **might lead to an "explosion."** He informed the Israeli defense

minister that **Hamas would not give up "the weapon of resistance" but would only develop and strengthen it.**

■ **Fatah spokesman Usama al-Qawasmeh** condemned the statements made by Khalil al-Haya. He said there were internal contradictions in Hamas' political document whose aim was to appease Israel and the Western world. He added that **Hamas was responsible for the difficult humanitarian conditions in the Gaza Strip because Hamas prevented the Palestinian national consensus government from operating.** He said Hamas was determined to control the crossings and was destroying the private sector (Wafa, June 18, 2017).

Criticism of Hamas' Conduct during Operation Protective Edge

■ **Interviewed** by the Persian Gulf's "The National" news site, **Mohammed al-Falahi, head of the UAE's Red Crescent, says Hamas "betrayed and sacrificed" the Red Crescent during Operation Protective Edge.** He said that during the operation the Red Crescent has set up a field hospital in the Gaza Strip to reinforce the local health system, which was under heavy pressure because of the large number of wounded. He said the hospital's location had been made known to the Israeli authorities by the Red Cross.

■ "While we were in the field hospital that the UAE built," he said, "we were surprised someone from Hamas instigating Israeli forces by launching locally made rockets from the field hospital," he said. Inevitably, the Israelis hit back. "This shows their [Hamas's] wicked intentions and how they sacrificed us," Fa'ed al-Falahi said. "They always claim that the enemy targets humanitarian envoys but the betrayal came from them"⁶ (The National, June 12, 2017).

The Palestinian Authority

Payments to Palestinian Terrorist Prisoners

■ Three different aspects of the issue of payments to Palestinian terrorist prisoners were raised this week:

- **Israel legislation** – The ministerial committee for legislation confirmed a proposal for **a bill that would balance the salaries prisoners and their families receive from the PA by cutting the taxes Israel transfers to the PA.**

⁶ <http://www.thenational.ae/uae/red-crescent-chief-tells-of-hamas-betrayal-while-delivering-aid-in-gaza>

At its weekly meeting the Palestinian national consensus government condemned the law. The Palestinian government stressed that the funds in question belonged to the PA and not Israel, and therefore it was theft of public Palestinian money. That, he said, reflected Israel's decision to deliberately violate former agreements and international law (Wafa, June 18, 2017).

- **The diplomatic arena –**

- ✓ **Rex Tillerson, the American secretary of state**, told a hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the Palestinian leadership had made a U-turn on payments to the families of convicted Palestinian attackers. He said, "**They have changed that policy and their intent is to cease the payments to the families of those who have committed murder or violence against others.**" He continued, "**We have been very clear with them that this [practice of paying terrorists] is simply not acceptable to us.**" The decision was made, he said, after Donald Trump's hosting of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in the US. and a visit with him in the West Bank city of Bethlehem (website of the American State Department, June 16, 2017).

- ✓ At a press briefing held on June 15, 2017, **State Department spokesman Heather Nauert** was asked, "Secretary Tillerson told Congress the other day that Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas or the authority have agreed not to make payments to the families of prisoners and martyrs, as they call them. And then yesterday [Mahmoud Abbas] basically backtracked. Could you clarify this for us?" She answered, "**The Secretary addressed this yesterday, and he said this type of thing is not acceptable to the American people**; it is certainly not appropriate. I think those are very clear comments. We have a certain set of expectations, and the expectation is that that should, in fact, stop. **Last month the Palestinian Authority announced that it was stopping payments to some Hamas-affiliated prisoners**, but this step we consider to be inadequate to talk about – to address our concerns" (Newsweek and other American media outlets, June 14, 2017).

- **The decision taken by the PA –** The PA decided to stop paying the salaries of 277 Hamas prisoners released to the Gaza Strip, in view of the dispute between Hamas and the PA (al-Quds, date, 2017).

