



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

(July 25 – 29, 2017)



The aftermath of the stabbing attack in the community of Halamish northwest of Ramallah, where three members of a family were murdered by a Palestinian in retaliation for "the desecration of al-Aqsa mosque" (Twitter account of [alresala.net](#), July 21; al-Fajr channel, July 22, 2017).

Overview

- The shooting attack carried out by three Israeli Arabs, in which two Border Policemen were killed, turned into a crisis on the Temple Mount, threatening to spin out of control. The Palestinian religious and political leadership represented the installation of metal detectors at the entrance to the Temple Mount as a unilateral Israeli change in the status quo. Following the call of the religious leadership, Muslim worshippers avoided the Temple Mount, deepening the crisis.
- The events inspired several Palestinians to carry out terrorist attacks as a response to the so-called "desecration" of al-Aqsa mosque. The most serious attack was the murder of three members of a family by a terrorist who entered the community of Halamish (northwest of Ramallah). He wrote on his Facebook page that he was going to die for the sake of al-Aqsa mosque. There were also demonstrations, some of them turning into riots, at many locations in east Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip. Mahmoud Abbas announced he was stopping security coordination with Israel.
- In Amman, the capital of Jordan, a young Jordanian from a family originally from Hebron stabbed an Israeli security guard (possibly inspired by the events on the Temple Mount). The guard shot and killed him, accidentally killing another Jordanian who happened to be there at the time. That created another crisis; when it ended the Jordanians allowed the embassy staff, including the security guard, to return to Israel.
- On July 24, 2017, Israel's political cabinet decided to install an alternative technological system on the Temple Mount, making it possible to remove the metal detectors. However, the Jerusalem waqf still does not allow worshippers to enter the Temple Mount compound. In the meantime, appeals are heard to continue praying outside the Temple Mount. Palestinians used the social media to call on Muslims to reject alternative security measures. Hamas also advocates preventing any alternative Israeli security plan. Thus the potential exists for the ongoing crisis to continue.

Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem

- On the evening of **Friday, July 21, 2017**, a Palestinian terrorist entered the **community of Halamish (northwest of Ramallah)** by climbing over the fence around it. He entered one of the houses on the outskirts and **stabbed three family members to death: the father, his son and his daughter, who were at dinner**. His wife was wounded. His daughter-in-law and her five children were saved by the mother, who locked them in another room and called the police. A neighbor, a soldier on leave from the army, shot at the terrorist through a window. The terrorist was wounded and detained by Israeli security forces.
- Israeli security forces raided the terrorist's house in the village of Kobar, near Halamish. They imposed a closure on the village and detained Palestinians. The Israeli defense minister ordered the razing of the terrorist's house. Several dozen Palestinians clashed with the Israeli security forces at the entrance to the village. In the meantime, Israeli forces were increased in Judea and Samaria and detentions were carried out in other locations.
- The Palestinian media reported that the terrorist who stabbed the three Israelis to death was **Omar Abd al-Jalil al-Abd**, 20, from the village of Kobar. He was studying business administration at the al-Quds Open University, where **he was active in the Hamas student faction**. He worked in a quarry. He had been detained a number of times in the past by the Palestinian security forces. The last time was in April 2017 after information had been received that he was planning to carry out a terrorist attack. He was released after his intentions could not be proved (QudsN, July 22, 2017).
- During the initial interrogation he said **he had decided to carry out an attack because of the recent events on the Temple Mount**. He walked the 2.5 kilometers (about a mile and a half) from his house to Halamish. **While he was walking, less than two hours before the attack, he posted his "will" on his Facebook page**. He wrote, **"They desecrate al-Aqsa mosque and we sleep."** He wrote that **he was going to die for the sake of al-Aqsa, he was going to paradise and he was eager to meet Allah** (Twitter account of alresala.net, July 22, 2017)



Hamas operatives in the northern Gaza Strip celebrate the stabbing attack in Halamish (July 21, 2017), led by senior Hamas figure Fathi Hamad (Palinfo Twitter account, July 22, 2017).



Hamas notices after the terrorist attack. Left: The Arabic reads, "Who [owns] Jerusalem today?" Right: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pays the price for his determination to install metal detectors in the Temple Mount compound (Palinfo, July 22, 2017).

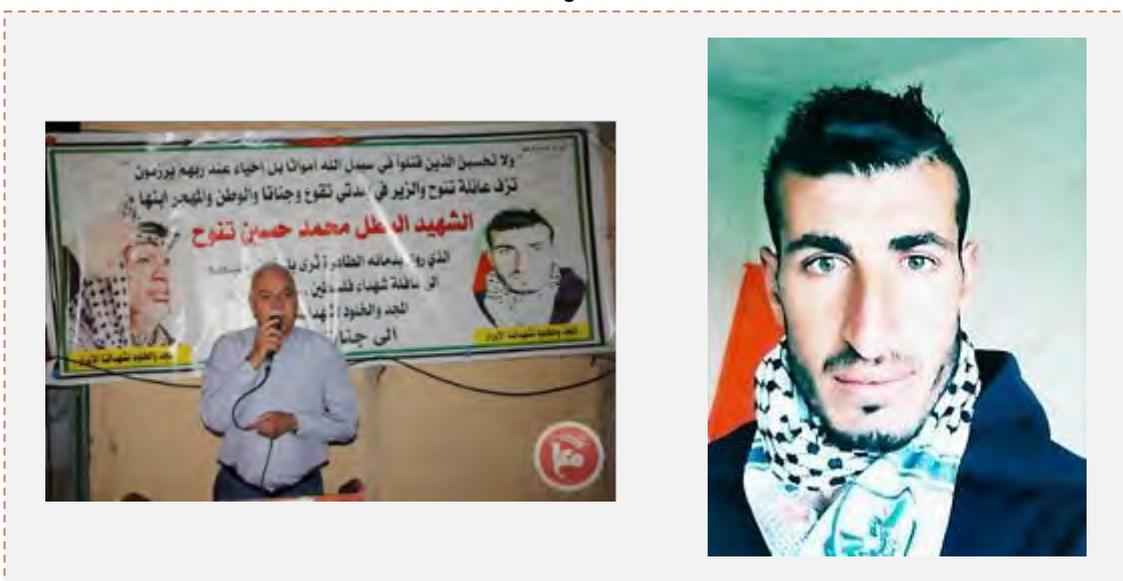
Israeli Security Guard Attacked in Jordan

■ A Jordanian went to the house of one of the members of the staff of the Israeli embassy in Jerusalem to exchange furniture. An Israeli security guard was stationed at the house. **The Jordanian crept up behind him and stabbed him with a screwdriver. The security guard shot and killed his attacker. The Jordanian owner of the house, who was there at the time, was wounded by a stray bullet and later died.** The security guard sustained minor wounds. In the opinion of the Israeli foreign ministry, the attack was inspired by the events on the Temple Mount.

- According to the Jordanian press, the man who stabbed the security guard was **Muhammad Zakaria al-Jawawdeh**, 17, a Palestinian who lived in Jordan and **whose family originated in the Hebron region**. He worked as a carpenter and went to the apartment [of the Israeli embassy staff member] to assemble a piece of furniture. The other Jordanian killed was **Bashar al-Hamarneh**, a doctor who owned the apartment.
- Immediately after the attack the wounded security guard went to the embassy and reported it. The Jordanians wanted to question him despite his diplomatic immunity. They refused to allow the Israeli security personnel to leave Jordan before an investigation had been held into the circumstances surrounding the death of two Jordanian civilians. The Israeli diplomats and security personnel were confined to the embassy for more than 24 hours.
- Israel tried to resolve the crisis through contacts with the Jordanian authorities. An Israeli cabinet meeting voted to send the head of the Israel Security Agency to Jordan. He met with the head of Jordanian General Intelligence and negotiated with him. They reached an agreement whereby the security guard would give a statement to the Jordanian police which would include a description of the event.

Other Terrorist Attacks

- On **July 20, 2017**, a Palestinian attempted a stabbing attack in Tekoa. (south of Bethlehem) targeting Israel soldiers at a check post. There were no casualties. The soldiers shot and killed the terrorist. The Palestinian media reported he was **Muhammad Hussein Ahmed Tanuh**, 26, from the village of Teqo'a. Fatah in Teqo'a issued a death notice for him and erected a mourning tent (Facebook page of Teqo'a al-'Aan, July 20, 2017). **Senior Fatah figure Sultan Abu al-'Einein, a member of Fatah's Central Council and advisor to Mahmoud Abbas**, went to Teqo'a to pay a condolence call on the terrorist's family (Ma'an, July 24, 2017). **Note: The condolence visit was an expression of Palestinian Authority (PA) support for popular terrorism, familiar from previous terrorist attacks.**



Left: Senior Fatah figure Sultan Abu al-'Einein, who went to Teqo'a to pay a condolence call on the terrorist's family (Ma'an, July 24, 2017). Right: Muhammad al-Tanuh (Facebook page of the Teqo'a municipality, July 20, 2017).

- On July 24, 2017, a Palestinian stabbed a man near the central bus station in Petah Tikva (central Israel). The man was an Israeli Arab from the town of 'Ar'ara (central Israel), and was seriously wounded. The Palestinian who stabbed him, 21, from Qalqilya, who was in Israel illegally, was detained and taken for questioning. **He said he had carried out the attack for the sake of al-Aqsa mosque.** According to the Israel Security Agency, between 2015 and 2016 the Palestinian had been in jail in Israel for involvement in popular terrorism.

Metal-Detector Crisis on the Temple Mount

- Metal detectors were installed at the entrance to the Temple Mount after a terrorist attack carried out from the Temple Mount compound killed two Border Policemen. The Palestinians and Muslims regarded their installation **as a unilateral change in the status quo carried out by Israel.** It led to a wave of **rage and protests from Palestinian religious and political leaders, and from the Palestinian street as well.** There were many protests posted on the social networks, where users stressed the importance of "a firm stance" in combatting the metal detectors. **Some of the posts called for terrorist attacks against Israel.**
- Sheikh Muhammad Hussein, the Mufti of the PA and Jerusalem, issued instructions forbidding Muslims to pass through the metal detectors to enter the mosque, saying anyone who did would be considered to have committed a sin. He called for prayers to be held in front of the gates leading to the entrance to the Temple Mount compound. His call had positive results, **motivating a large crowd to gather in front of the metal detectors but not enter the Temple Mount**

compound. Mass prayers were held near the entrance of the Temple Mount. Others Muslims went to the outskirts of the Old City and prayed there (Dar al-Ifta' website, July 23, 2017). Not entering the Temple Mount compound exacerbated the general unrest.



Left: Sheikh Muhammad Hussein, Sheikh Omar al-Keswani, director of al-Aqsa mosque, and Hatem Abd al-Qadr, senior Fatah figure in east Jerusalem, hold a protest prayer at one of the Temple Mount gates (Palinfo Twitter account, July 19, 2017). Right: Sheikh Muhammad Hussein delivers a speech near one of the gates to the Old City of Jerusalem (YouTube, July 22, 2017).

■ **Protest demonstrations were held at many sites in Jerusalem** (the Lions Gate, Issawiya, A-Tor, as well as the Qalqilya checkpoint), **Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip**. Several hundred protestors participated at each location, clashing with Israeli security forces. There were reports of several Palestinians killed and several hundred wounded. Several dozen demonstrators were detained. Several Israeli security force operatives were also injured. **In ITIC assessment, the extent of the demonstrations was greater than those held during the recent years of popular terrorism.** The demonstrations illustrated **the great sensitivity of the Palestinian street towards what was perceived as an slight to al-Aqsa mosque.**



Left: Palestinians clash with Israeli security forces in Hebron. Right: Palestinians throw stones and Molotov cocktails at Israeli security forces during a riot at the Qalandia crossing (Palinfo Twitter account, July 21, 2017).

Mahmoud Abbas Announces Stopping Security Coordination with Israel

■ Given the crisis on the Temple Mount, Mahmoud Abbas announced he was "freezing" **all levels of coordination between the PA and Israel. The freeze would remain in place until the metal detectors were uninstalled and Israel committed itself to preserving the historic and legal status of al-Aqsa mosque.** He also spoke with Jared Kushner, Donald Trump's advisor for Middle Eastern affairs. Mahmoud Abbas asked that the American president intervene urgently and make Israel retract its decision and remove the metal detectors. He said the situation was dangerous and if Israel did not remove them, events were liable to spin out of control (Wafa, July 21, 2017).

■ Two days later Mahmoud Abbas said the Palestinian leadership would never permit metal detectors to be installed at the entrance to al-Aqsa mosque. That was because **sovereignty over the mosque belonged to the Palestinians**, and they were responsible for overseeing it. He also said that the decision reached by the Palestinian government about stopping all levels of coordination with Israel, **including security coordination, had not been an easy one.** He said if Israel wanted security coordination, it would have to reverse its decision regarding the metal detectors (Wafa, July 23, 2017). In the meantime, **the Palestinian security forces were reportedly ordered to cut off contacts with Israel at all levels, including**

meetings and telephone conversations (Twitter account of Khabar 'Ajel, July 23, 2017). So far it is unclear how the order is being put into practice¹.

Israel Announces Removal of Metal Detectors – Initial Reactions to Announcement

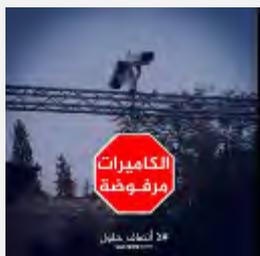
- On July 24, 2017, the Israeli security cabinet decided to install an alternative technological system suggested by the Israel Police Force which would replace the metal detectors at the entrance to the Temple Mount. The suggestion was reportedly to install eight systems of facial recognition cameras connected to a command center. The metal detectors and cameras currently installed on the Temple Mount were removed. Until the new system is installed there will be an increased deployment of police to ensure the safety of visitors to the Temple Mount.
- In response, the *waqf* in Jerusalem announced that Muslims were not to enter the Temple Mount compound until the situation had been evaluated once Israel had finished removing the system. Palestinians on the social networks claimed they would not agree to any form of monitoring or security measures, and they demanded a return to the status quo ante. In the meantime, calls continue for Palestinians to continue praying outside the Temple Mount compound. Palestinian activists launched hashtags rejecting all alternative forms of security measures, including cameras (Facebook page of QudsN, July 25, 2017).

¹ Mahmoud Abbas was criticized for his statement. The Palestinian press quoted a leaked document with the information that Mahmoud Abbas' statement did not include freezing security coordination, such as the coordination at the crossings, which will continue as usual (Majal Press, July 21, 2017). Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri said freezing contacts was meaningless if the sanctions on the Gaza Strip were not lifted, security coordination were not stopped and the resistance [i.e., the terrorist organizations] were not given a free hand to "struggle" against Israel (Twitter account of Sami Abu Zuhri, July 21, 2017).



Even after the Israeli cabinet decided to remove the metal detectors from the Temple Mount Muslim protests continued: morning prayers in an open space near the Lions Gate in the Old City of east Jerusalem (Palinfo Twitter account, July 25, 2017).

- **Hamas** issued a call to prevent Israel from carrying out any program or attempt to enforce a new situation on al-Aqsa mosque and its gates, and **to continue the campaign of rage against the installation of "smart cameras" or other security measures** (Facebook page of QudsN, July 25, 2017). **Fatah** also issued a statement rejecting any change in al-Aqsa's status quo, including alternative solutions (official Facebook page of Fatah, July 25, 2017).



Left: Palestinian hashtag rejects the installation of alternative security measures (Facebook page of QudsN, July 25, 2017). Right: Notice posted to the official Fatah Facebook page: "And Jerusalem was victorious" (Facebook page of Fatah, July 25, 2017).

Other Riots, Clashes and Popular Terrorism

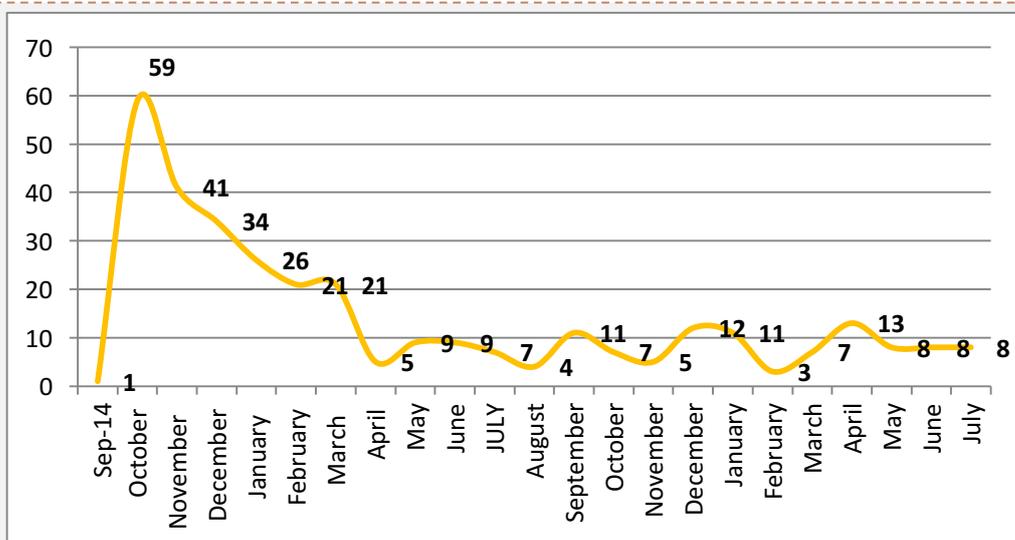
■ In the meantime, in addition to the riots throughout Judea and Samaria because of events on the Temple Mount, Palestinians continued throwing stones and Molotov cocktails. The Israeli security forces continued their counterterrorism activities throughout Judea and Samaria, detaining several dozen Palestinians suspected of terrorist activity and seizing weapons and objects used in riots. The more prominent occurrences were the following:

- **July 24, 2017** – Palestinians threw stones at an Israeli vehicle **near the Beit Hagai Junction (southern Mt. Hebron)**. There were no casualties. One of the vehicle's windows was shattered (Facebook page of Red Alert, July 24, 2017).
- **July 23, 2017** – During an operational activity near **Jerusalem**, Border Policemen saw a vehicle parked at the side of the road. Examining it they found two young men from east Jerusalem and boxes of the kind of fireworks used as weapons in riots (Facebook page of Red Alert, July 23, 2017).
- **July 23, 2017** – A resident of the Arab village of **al-E'izariya (near Ma'aleh Adumim)** was killed after having been wounded by an IED he was trying to throw at Israeli security forces (Facebook page of Red Alert, July 23, 2017).
- **July 22, 2017** – A young Palestinian from Hebron went to a roadblock near **the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron**. He aroused the suspicions of the Border Policemen stationed at the roadblock. While they were searching him a knife fell out of his clothing; he was detained and taken for questioning. During initial interrogation he claimed he had taken the knife to see if he could pass the security check without its being discovered (Facebook page of Red Alert, July 22, 2017).
- **July 22, 2017** – Palestinians fired shots at a synagogue in the community of **Avnei Hefetz in Samaria**. A search of the area revealed a shell casing. There were no casualties (Facebook page of Red Alert, July 22, 2017).
- **July 20, 2017** –The Israeli security forces detained a 25 year-old Palestinian woman from **the Israeli Arab village of Kafr Qassem** (central Israel) who had recently moved to east Jerusalem. She was planning to carry out a terrorist attack in the Jerusalem region (Facebook page of Red Alert, July 20, 2017).



Side window of an Israel vehicle smashed by stones thrown by Palestinians on route 443, west of Ramallah (Palinfo Twitter account, July 22, 2017).

Significant Terrorist Attacks in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem since September 2015²



Israel's South

Rocket Fire Attacking Israel

■ This past week **two rocket hits were identified in Israeli territory**. Another rocket was launched but **fell inside the Gaza Strip**:

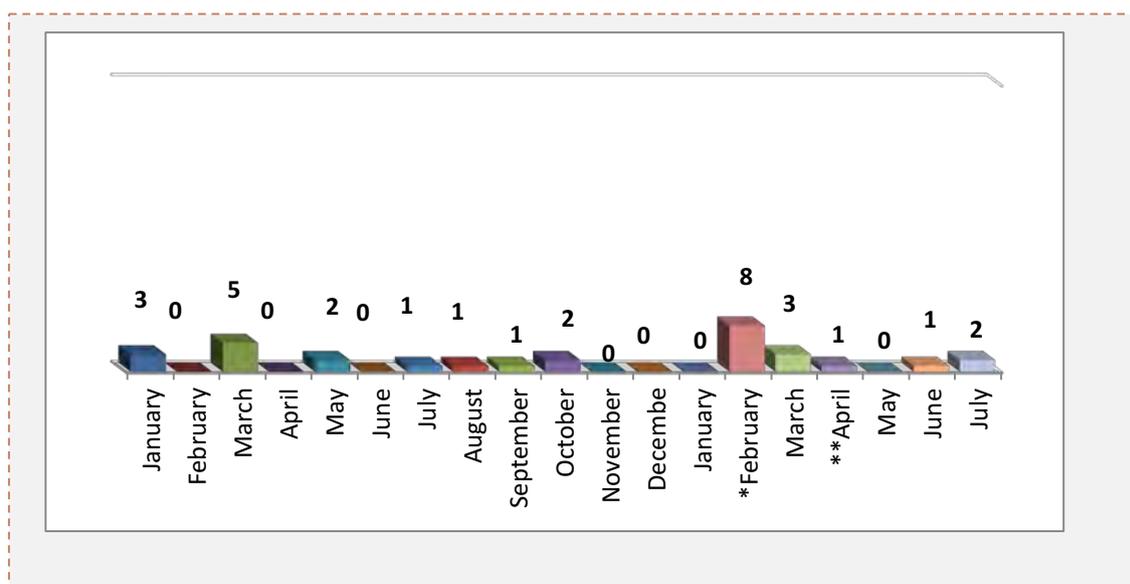
- **On the night of July 23, 2017, a rocket hit was identified in an open area in the western Negev**. There were no casualties and no damage was reported. In

² A significant attack is defined by the ITIC as involving shooting, stabbing, a vehicular attack, the use of IEDs, or a combination of the above. Stones and Molotov cocktails thrown by Palestinians are not included.

response Israeli Air Force aircraft attacked Hamas posts in the southern Gaza Strip.

- **On July 23, 2017, a rocket hit was identified in an open area in the western Negev** . There were no casualties and no damage was reported.
- **On July 21, 2017, a rocket was fired from the Gaza Strip at Israeli territory. The Palestinian media reported it fell on a house in the Gaza Strip** (Twitter account of Ghaza al-'Aan, July 21, 2017).

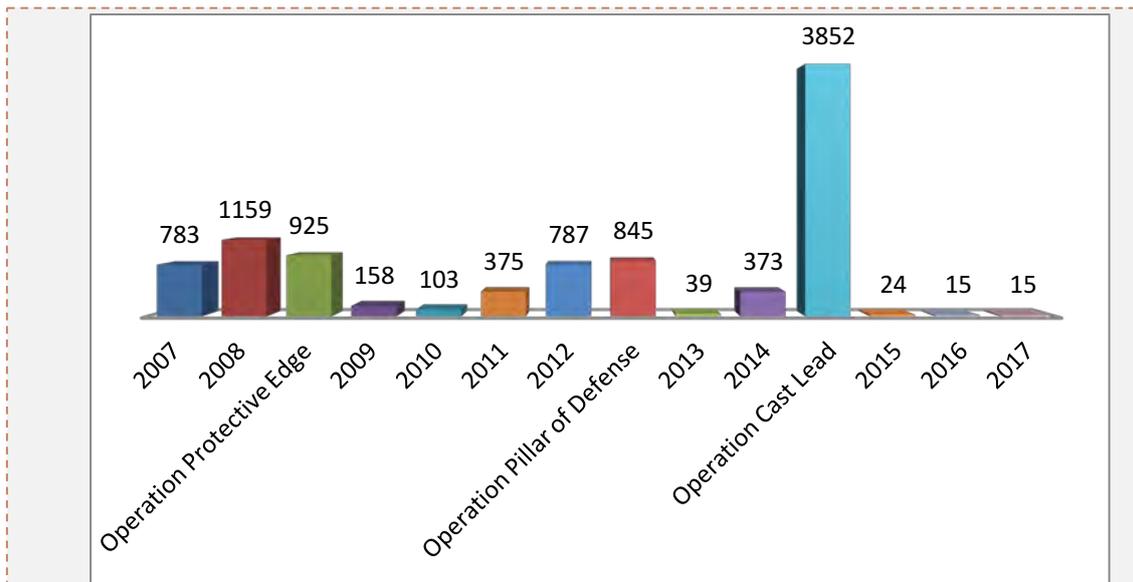
Monthly Distribution of Rocket Hits in Israel since January 2016



*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.

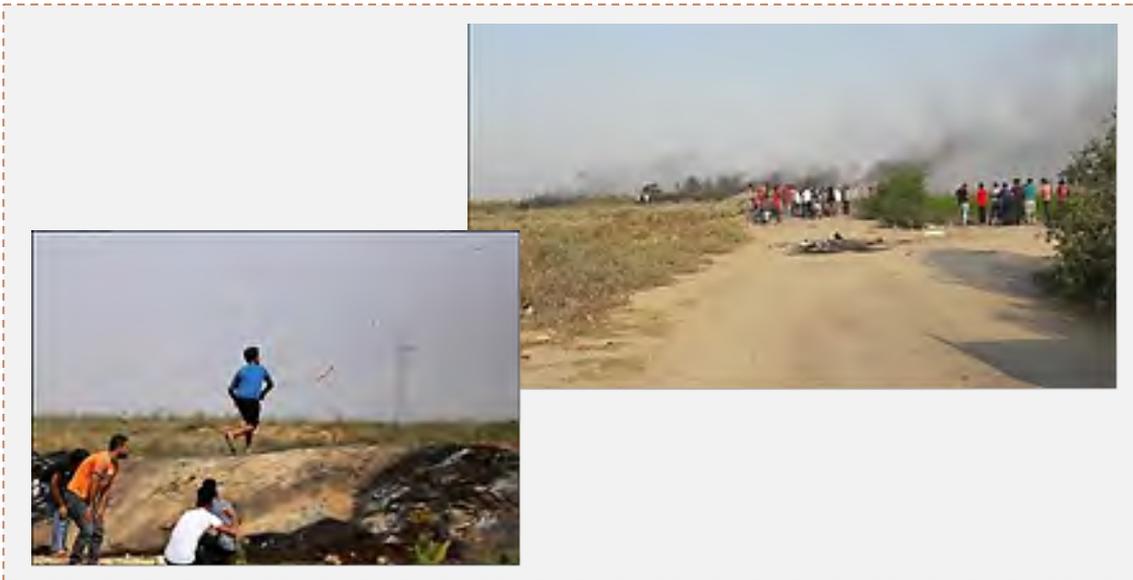
Annual Distribution of Rocket Hits in Israel's South³



Violence at the Gaza Border Security Fence

■ **Palestinians rioted along the Gaza Strip border with Israel in solidarity with al-Aqsa mosque.** Marches were also held throughout the Gaza Strip. The riots were held at the usual friction points, among them eastern Jabalia, the eastern part of Gaza City, east of the al-Bureij refugee camp and east of Khan Yunis. The Palestinian media reported two Palestinians had been wounded by IDF fire east of the al-Bureij refugee camp and that about 30 Palestinians were suffering from tear gas inhalation (Shehab and the Facebook page of the spokesman for the ministry of health in the Gaza Strip, July 27, 2017)

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



Palestinians riot along the Israel-Gaza Strip border (Palinfo and QudsN Twitter accounts, July 21, 2017).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

The Humanitarian Crisis

- **Khalil Shaqfa**, head of the Gaza Strip Petroleum Committee, said that 400,000 liters (a little less than 106,000 gallons) of fuel had arrived from Egypt and had been delivered to the local market for sale to residents. He said preparations were being made to import 700,000 liters (about 185,000 gallons) of fuel from Egypt for the power plant (Filastin al-Yawm, July 20, 2017).

Military Display of Hamas' Military-Terrorist Wing

- **The al-Sajaiya Battalion of Hamas' military wing held a military display in the Sajaiya neighborhood** in the eastern part of Gaza City to mark the third anniversary of Operation Protective Edge. The display was exploited to express solidarity and support al-Aqsa. The Palestinian and military wing's media highlighted **the exposure and first showing of a new rocket**.

- At the end of the display **Khalil al-Haya, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, made a speech in which he said the rocket power of the military wing would amaze Israel. He said, "There are rockets whose power, capabilities and range the occupation is familiar with, and there are those [the Izz al-Din] Qassam [Brigades] has concealed for the next rounds (Twitter account of Hamas' military-terrorist wing and the Facebook page of al-Sajaiya's media network, July 21, 2017)



New rockets displayed by Hamas' military wing in the eastern part of Gaza City. The rocket at the left bears the inscription, "Oh Jerusalem, we are coming" (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades website and Twitter account, July 21, 2017).

The Palestinian Authority

Palestinian Cartoons about the Events on the Temple Mount

■ The events on the Temple Mount inspired Palestinian cartoonists, who called on Palestinians to disobey Israel security measures and carry out terrorist attacks. For example:



Left: Hamas cartoon calling for Palestinians to break the metal detectors: "No metal detectors" (Palinfo Twitter account, July 20, 2017). Right: Notice published in al-Hayat al-Jadeeda, the PA's official organ, calling for Palestinians to damage the metal detectors in the Temple Mount compound. The metal detector spells "Jerusalem is for us" (al-Hayat al-Jadeeda, July 24, 2017).



Left: Cartoon by Ismail al-Bazam from the Gaza Strip, calling for Palestinians to attack IDF soldiers: "Show your rage" (Facebook page of Ismail al-Bazam, July 22, 2017) Right: Cartoon by Hamas-affiliated Omayya Joha inciting Palestinians to carry out suicide bombing attacks for the sake of al-Aqsa mosque: "With our souls and blood we will redeem you, oh al-Aqsa..." (Facebook page of al-Risalah, July 20, 2017).



Left: Cartoon in the Palestinian daily paper al-Quds shows Israel [the IDF helmet] "enforcing" measures on the Dome of the Rock (al-Quds, July 22, 2017). Right: Cartoon by Hamas-affiliated Omayya Joha encouraging Palestinians to disobey security measures in the Temple Mount compound: "The Palestinians taunt the steps taken by the occupation in al-Aqsa," "[It is] our al-Aqsa [mosque], not your Temple" (Palinfo Twitter account, July 19, 2017).