



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

(July 26 – August 1, 2017)



Muslims enter the Temple Mount en masse after Israel removed its security installations (Wafa, July 27, 2017).

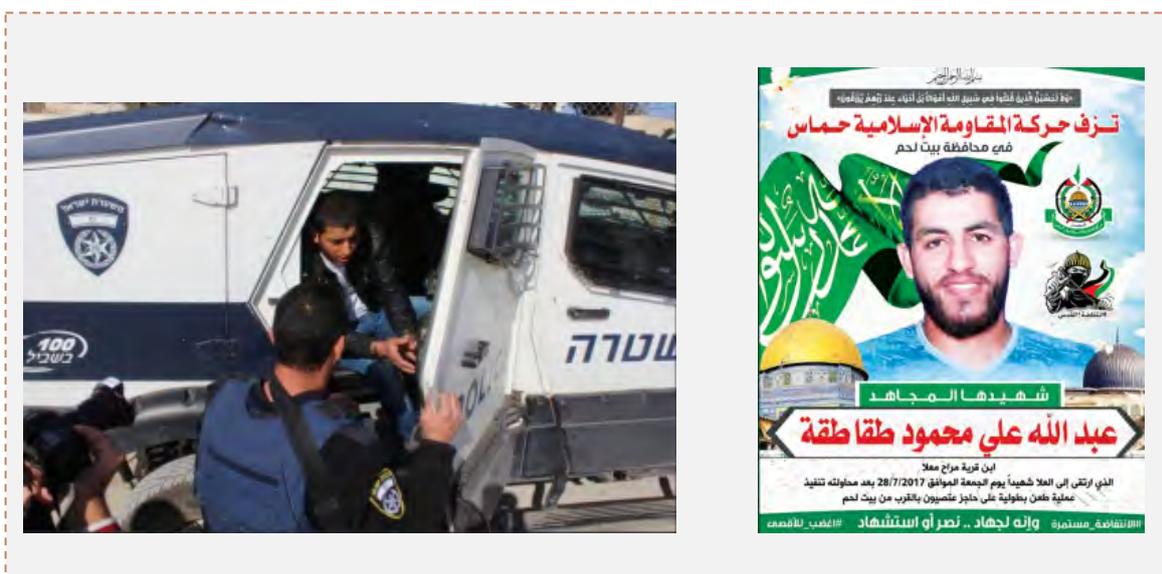
Overview

- After two weeks, the Temple Mount crisis came to an end. It ended after Israel removed the security installations out in place after a shooting attack on the Temple Mount (in which Palestinians shot and killed two Border Policemen). Muslim clerics in Jerusalem reported the status quo ante had been restored and allowed the public to return to pray on the Temple Mount.
- Before the afternoon prayers on July 27, 2017, a large number of flag-waving Palestinians broke into the Temple Mount compound and clashed with Israeli security forces. About 50 Palestinians were injured.
- The Palestinians view the removal of the security installations as an important victory over Israel. Nevertheless, the Palestinian Authority (PA) has not restored its ties with Israel, and its senior figures announced that the PA leadership's decision to stop security coordination with Israel remained in force.
- Riyad al-Maliki, PA foreign minister, reported that Fatou Bensouda, the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, had interrupted her vacation to receive a formal Palestinian referral regarding the settlements. Nabil Shaath, a senior PA figure, said the Palestinians were making preparations to join 25 additional international organizations.

Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem

Terrorist Attacks and Attempted Terrorists Attacks

■ On **July 28, 2017**, a Palestinian armed with a knife ran towards IDF soldiers standing near **the Hebron Junction** and tried to stab them. He was shot and killed. The Palestinian media reported he was **Abdallah Ali Mahmoud Taqatqa**, 24, from the village of **Marah Ma'la, south of Bethlehem**. Hamas issued a death notice for him (Twitter account of Shehab, July 28, 2017). According to reports, Taqatqa had been detained by the Israeli security forces in the past for participating in a clash at the northern entrance of Bethlehem (Palinfo Twitter account, July 28, 2017).



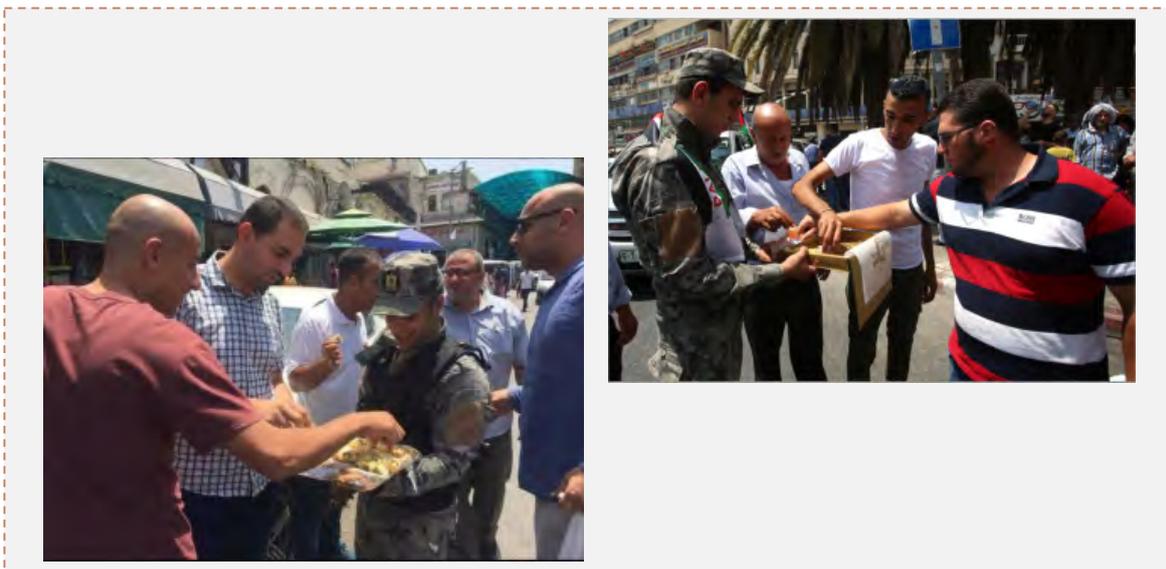
Left: Archive picture of Abdallah Taqatqa, detained by the Israel security forces during a clash at the northern entrance to Bethlehem (Palinfo Twitter account, July 28, 2017). Right: Death notice issued by Hamas for (Twitter account of Shehab, July 28, 2017).

End of the Temple Mount Crisis¹

■ After Israel removed the security installations it had put in place at the entrances to the Temple Mount, Muslim religious authorities in Jerusalem issued a statement **accepting Israel's action, calling the public to pray again on the Temple Mount**. The PA leadership held a meeting, after which Mahmoud Abbas called for the noon prayer to be held inside the mosque (Palestinian TV, July 27, 2017). **The mufti of Jerusalem announced that the situation had returned to the status quo ante** and called on Muslims to return to al-Aqsa mosque to pray (Twitter account of al-Arabi al-'Ajel, July 27, 2017).

¹ For further information about the Temple Mount crisis, see the July 27, 2017 bulletin, "The Crisis on the Temple Mount, Overview, updated to the afternoon of July 27, 2017."

■ Before the prayers Palestinians protested because Bab al-Hitta, a gate near the Lions' Gate, remained closed. Once it was opened they entered the Temple Mount compound, many of them waving Palestinian flags. When the prayers ended Palestinians clashed with Israeli security forces both inside and outside the Temple Mount. About 50 Palestinians were wounded. In the main cities of Judea and Samaria, PA security forces' operatives handed out candy to passersby in celebration (Wafa, July 27, 2017).



Left: An operative of the PA security forces hands out candy in Jenin (Facebook page of Fatah, July 27, 2017) Right: An operative of the PA security forces in Nablus hands out candy (Wafa, July 27, 2017).

■ On July 28, 2017, the Friday prayers were held on the Temple Mount with relative calm. About 5,000 Muslims participated in the prayers. Only Palestinians fifty years and older were permitted to enter the compound. Several thousand Palestinians gathered to protest the age limitations, holding prayers nearby.



Palestinians on the Temple Mount after the security installations were removed (Wafa, July 27, 2017).



Muslims hold the Friday prayer outside the Temple Mount compound, unable to enter because of the age limitation imposed by the Israel Police Force (Wafa, July 28, 2017).

■ In Judea and Samaria several hundred Palestinians clashed with the Israeli security forces in various locations, including **Bethlehem (the Tomb of Rachel), Hebron and Ramallah**. The clashes continued on Saturday, July 29, 2017. Demonstrations were held in the Gaza Strip.

■ **Sheikh Omar al-Kiswani, the director of al-Aqsa mosque**, said the status of the mosque had been restored to that of July 14, 2017. He said during the late afternoon and the evening prayer on Friday, July 28, about 60 thousand Muslims had come to pray. In addition, the sources of religious authority appointed a technical committee to examine the damages, if any, done to the Temple Mount compound (Radio Ajjal, July 29, 2017).

■ **Taysir Jaradat, deputy Palestinian foreign minister**, sent a check for \$100 thousand to the ministry of Muslim endowments and religious affairs in the PA foreign ministry in Ramallah. The money was a gift from the Islamic Solidarity Fund for the renovation of al-Aqsa mosque (Ma'an, July 27, 2017).

■ **The Palestinians regarded the removal of the security installations from the Temple Mount as an important victory over Israel:**

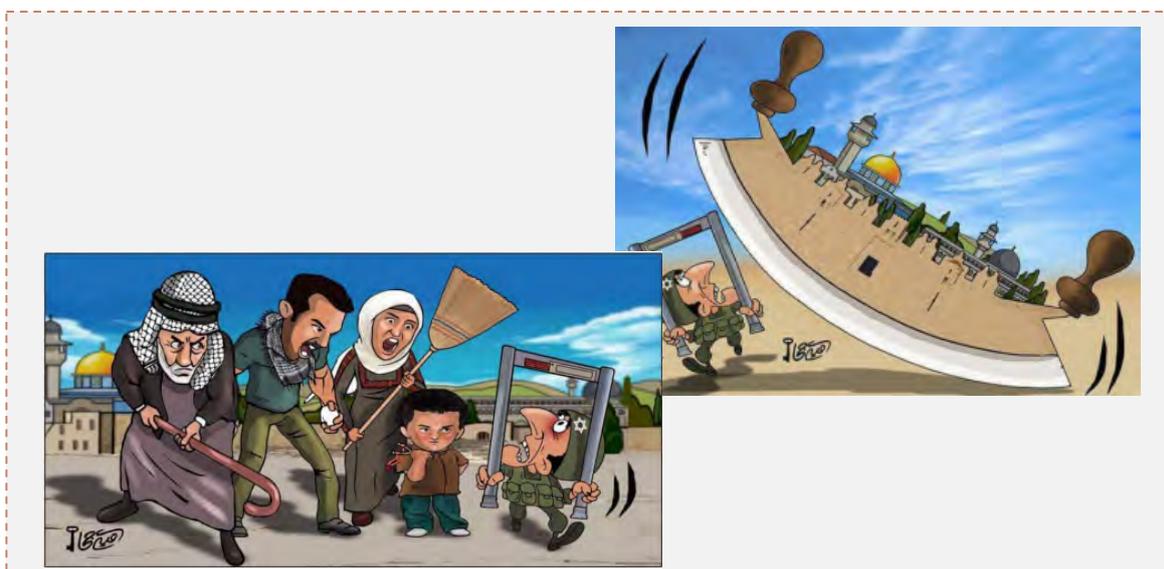
● **Rami Hamdallah, prime minister of the Palestinian national consensus government**, said the firm stance of the Palestinian people, its unity and non-violent resistance proved that Jerusalem would remain their symbol and capital forever. He also said that the Palestinian people would refuse to allow any change in Jerusalem and would not agree to any measures that would replace or influence control of al-Aqsa mosque (Wafa, July 29, 2017).

● **Ismail Haniyeh, head of the Hamas' political bureau**, said the struggle of the Palestinian public on the Temple Mount was a "certificate of honor" and that Israel had been defeated when it removed the security installations. He said the events had proved that despite the imbalance of forces, the Palestinian public was capable of realizing its rights (al-Aqsa TV, July 27, 2017).

● **Mahmoud al-Zahar, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, said the Palestinian people had won without the use of weapons. He stressed the firm stance of the Palestinian people on the issue of al-Aqsa mosque, an indication of [what would happen in] the next campaign (Majal Press, July 27, 2017).

● **Musa Abu Marzouq, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, said that the victory of the Palestinian residents of Jerusalem and their redefining the situation at al-Aqsa mosque had given the [Israeli] occupation a stinging slap in the face (Hamas news website, July 27, 2017).

● **The Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)** said the victory of al-Aqsa mosque had been won by the patience, sacrifice, firm stance and unity of the Palestinian people. He added that the Palestinian people had to continue that path (Filastin al-Yawm, July 27, 2017).



Two cartoons by Hamas-affiliated Omayya Joha about the victory over the Israeli security forces (Palinfo Twitter account, July 29, 2017).



Hamas cartoon of the victory over the Israeli security forces (Twitter account of al-Risalah, July 27, 2017).

Security Coordination with Israel

■ Despite the fact that Israel removed the security installations and prayers were renewed on the Temple Mount, **the PA decided not to renew security coordination with Israel**. According to **Ahmed Majdalani, a member of the PLO's Executive Committee**, the decision made by the Palestinian leadership during the Temple Mount crisis to stop security coordination with Israel was still in force. He said the Palestinian leadership was examining its relations with Israel (Dunia al-Watan, July 29, 2017). **Nabil Shaath, advisor to Mahmoud Abbas for foreign affairs and international relations**, said security coordination and political relations with Israel

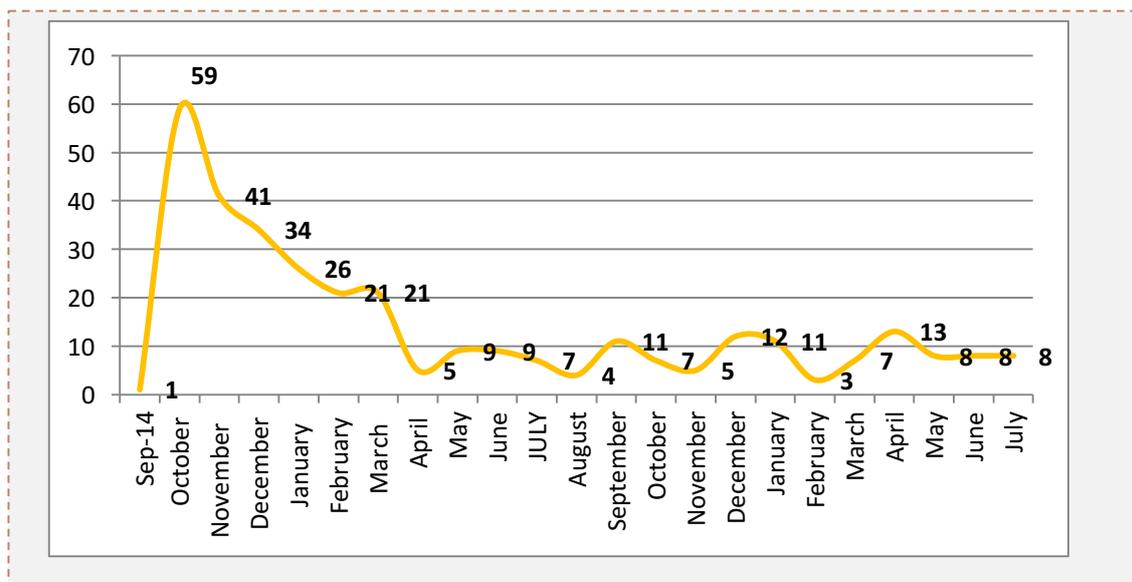
had been stopped and would not be restored until Israel revoked all the measures it had taken (Dunia al-Watan, July 31, 2017).

Riots, Clashes and Popular Terrorism

■ In the meantime, this past week demonstrations, clashes and riots inspired by the events on the Temple Mount continued throughout Judea and Samaria, primarily involving the throwing of stones and Molotov cocktails. The Israeli security forces continued their counterterrorism activities in Judea and Samaria, detaining several dozen Palestinians suspected of terrorist activity. They also seized weapons and objects used in riots. The more prominent occurrences were the following:

- **July 30, 2017** –Border Policemen conducting a security activity **at the exit of the city of Yatta** (south of Hebron) saw a vehicle enter a dirt road nearby in an attempt to leave the city. The Border Policemen chased the vehicle. The driver tossed away a knife and tried to escape. The driver, 18, from Yatta, was detained for questioning (Israel Police Force spokesman's department, July 30, 2017)
- **July 28, 2017** – Palestinians threw an improvised IED during a clash with Israeli security forces near the a checkpoint in Hebron. There were no casualties.
- **July 28, 2017** – Palestinians threw stones at an Israeli vehicle near the **village of Hizma** (near Pisgat Ze'ev, Jerusalem). There were no casualties; the vehicle was damaged (Facebook page of Red Alert, July 29, 2017).

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



The IDF Takes Action against Radio Station in Ramallah

■ **IDF forces raided the offices of a radio station in Ramallah (Palmedia News) suspected of broadcasting and disseminating materials inciting terrorism.** Media materials and documents were seized. **Saeb Erekat, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee**, condemned the raid and the damage done to the company's property. He claimed the objective of the raid had been "to silence the voice of the Palestinian people." He called on the international community, international legal institutions, international media and the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate to take steps immediately to respond to Israel's actions against the Palestinian people (Wafa, July 29, 2017).

Residents of East Jerusalem Indicted for Incitement

■ The Israeli Prosecutor's Office of the Jerusalem district handed down **indictments against five residents of east Jerusalem for incitement of terrorism, calling for terrorist attacks** and other felonies. Three of them were accused of using their Facebook pages to incite violence after the attack on the Temple Mount on July 14, 2017.

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.

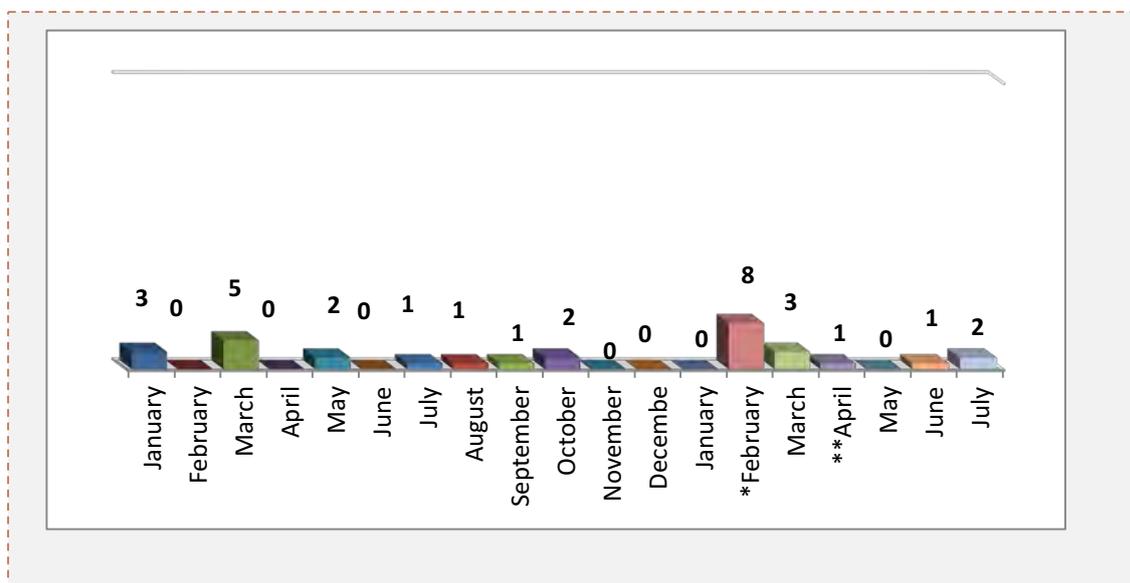
■ One of those indicted, a 19 year-old Palestinian from Anata al-Jadeeda, was accused of posting encouragement on his Facebook page for acts of violence and terrorism against Israeli civilians and the Israeli security forces. He had been using his Facebook page to advocate terrorist attacks since September 2014. He also posted praise for Hamas and its military-terrorist wing. After the attack on the Temple Mount he posted encouragement for violence on his Facebook page. Another one of those indicted, a 21 year-old Palestinian from Abu Tor, was accused of praising the Temple Mount attack and calling for more (Globes, July 31, 2017).

Israel's South

Rocket Fire Attacking Israel

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

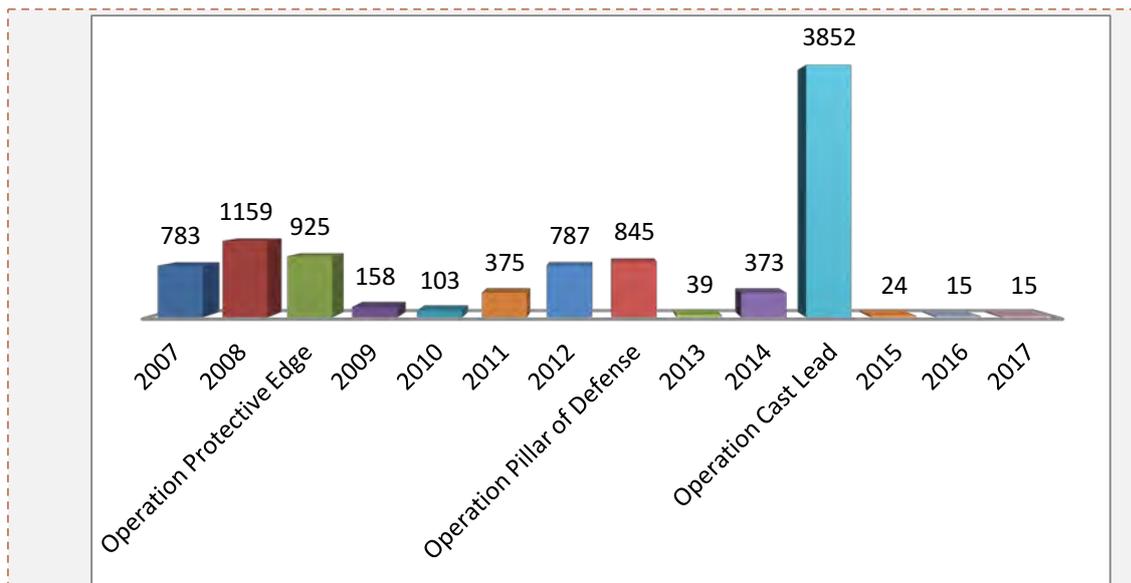
Monthly Distribution of Rocket Hits in Israel since January 2016



*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 Border Security Fence

- On July 28, 2017, riots were held at several locations near the Israel-Gaza Strip border. A spokesman for the Hamas ministry of health in the Gaza Strip said that **Abd al-Rahman Abu Hamisa**, 16, from the al-Bureij refugee camp, had been killed in a clash with IDF forces, and that two other young Palestinians had been shot in the leg by IDF soldiers. Four other Palestinians were wounded by IDF fire in riots east of Jabalia (alresalah.net and Wafa, July 28, 2017).



The Palestinian who was killed east of the al-Bureij refugee camp (Twitter account of QudsN, July 28, 2017).

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

Developments in the Gaza Strip

The Rafah Crossing

■ The Rafah crossing is undergoing renovations. The Palestinian authority for crossings and borders said the crossing would remain closed until renovations had been completed (Twitter account of 'Ajel from Palestine, July 30, 2017). **Hisham 'Adwan, spokesman for the Rafah crossing**, said Egypt had been carrying out maintenance and development work for the past four months. He said the work had progressed significantly but the security situation in the Sinai Peninsula was liable to cause delays, and therefore no date for completion had been set. The work being done includes general renovations and enlarging the waiting rooms for those entering and leaving the Gaza Strip (Majal.press, July 30, 2017).

Celebrating the Victory on the Temple Mount and Mutual Fatah-Hamas Accusations

■ Hamas held a march in the Jabalia refugee camp to mark the removal of Israel's security installations on the Temple Mount. **Fathi Hamad, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, gave a speech when the march ended, stressing that the campaign for Jerusalem had not ended. He also praised the heroism of the residents of Jerusalem and the *murabitoun* (local citizens defending the Temple Mount) at the gates of al-Aqsa mosque (Hamas movement website, July 28, 2017).



The march to Jabalia, where a rally was held (Facebook page of al-Shamla Online, July 28, 2017).

■ The Palestinian media claimed that during the procession **Fathi Hamad, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, told participants that Fatah had created the

Temple Mount crisis to deflect attention from the Gaza Strip and to avoid having to support it. He said Jerusalem was not under siege like the Gaza Strip. He added that that the **\$25 million budget Mahmoud Abbas had allotted for supporting Jerusalem**, and the funds given to the residents of Jerusalem as declared by the PA government, would only worsen the situation and not relieve it. He said that as soon as financial support had been announced the numbers of the *murabitoun* at the gates of al-Aqsa mosque grew. All they wanted, he said, was to receive money and not to defend al-Aqsa mosque. **The Gaza Strip, he said, under siege for more than twenty years, should receive the financial support**, and Fatah's calls for reconciliation were nothing more than attempts to deceive (Sahem, July 26, 2017).

■ **Tawfiq al-Tirawi, a member of Fatah's Central Committee**, strongly attacked the statement made by Fathi Hamad. He compared what Hamad had said to the media line used by the Israeli government (Ma'an, July 27, 2017). **Fathi Hamad's office** was quick to issue an announcement denying the statement attributed to him by "the mercenaries of the security coordination [with Israel]." According to the announcement, Fathi Hamad had not even attended the procession where he allegedly made the statement. The announcement called it an unsuccessful attempt of the intelligence apparatus in the Muqata'a in Ramallah to draw attention away from the events at al-Aqsa after the failure to repress the "fire of the intifada" (Hamas movement website, July 28, 2017).

Decision to Leave Hamas on the EU List of Terrorist Organizations

■ **The EU Supreme Court decided to leave Hamas on the EU list of terrorist organizations.** The court said in an announcement that after the issue had been raised again for discussion, the decision had been made not to remove the Hamas movement from the list. Hamas issued a statement criticizing the decision and objecting to it. **Muhammad al-Jamassi, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, later issued a formal statement to the effect that Hamas would continue fighting political decisions made against the Palestinian people in general and the Hamas movement in particular. He said it was the right of the [Hamas] movement to defend the rights of the Palestinian people in their struggle against Israel. According to the announcement, the Israeli media tried to have the decision passed because Israel has an interest in having Hamas remain on the EU list of terrorist organizations (Palinfo, July 26, 2017).



The decision of the European Court of Justice to leave Hamas on the list of terrorist organizations (Felesteen, July 29, 2017).

Announcements of Death of Hamas Military-Terrorist Wing Operatives

■ This past week Hamas' military wing announced the death of three of its operatives:

- **Muhammad Ahmed al-Sharafi**, 21, from the northern Gaza Strip, was killed during "preparations and training." Local sources in the Gaza Strip reported that he was killed during naval exercises held by Hamas' naval commando unit (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades website and Samaa, July 25, 2017).
- **Hani Abdallah Shakshak**, 22, from Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip, died of cardiac arrest on July 26, 2017 (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades website, July 26, 2017).
- **Mu'az Omar Abu N'ameh**, 22, Rafah, an operative in the *nukhba* special forces unit, was electrocuted while passing through one of the tunnels (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades website, July 27 and 30, 2017).

Hamas Action against the Salafists in the Gaza Strip

■ The ISIS media reported that on July 24, 2017, Hamas' internal security forces published pictures of four Salafist operatives in the Gaza Strip wanted by Israel for launching rockets into Israeli territory. According to the Hamas announcement, the four were wanted by the internal security forces, following instructions from the military prosecutor, and hiding them was breaking the law. The four were **Nour Subhi Issa**, from the al-Bureij refugee camp; **Tal'at Ibrahim Abu Jazar**, from the region of

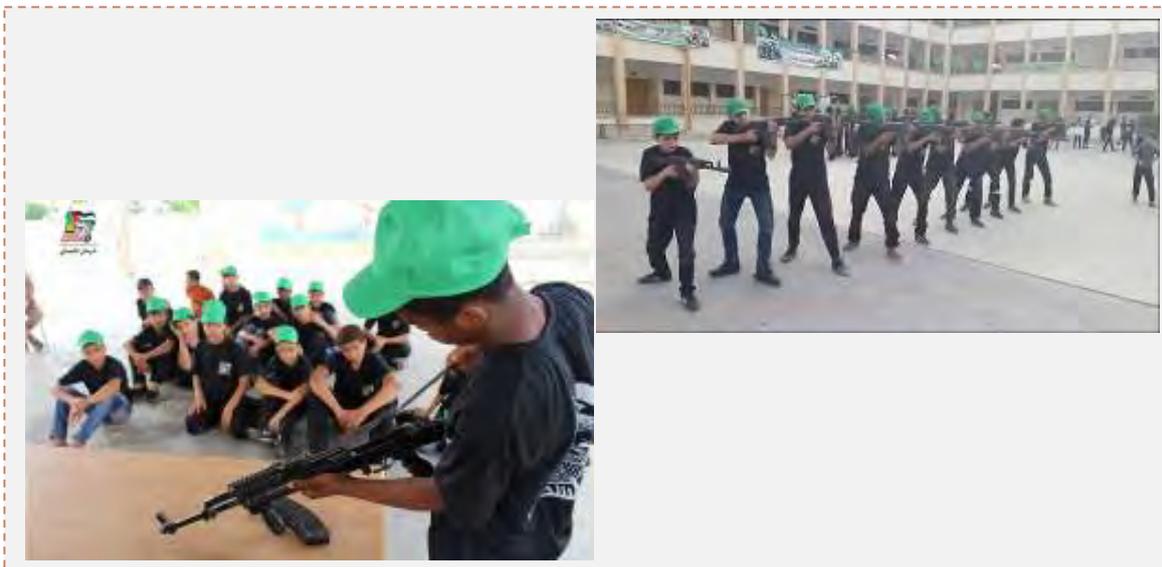
Khan Yunis; **Muhammad Uthman Taleb**, from the Shati refugee camp in Gaza City, who had allegedly previously been wounded in an attempted Israeli targeted killing; and **Yusuf Muhammad Miqdad** from the Shati refugee camp in Gaza City (Haq, July 24, 2017).



Wanted Salafist operatives (clockwise from top left): Nour Issa, Tal'at Abu Jazar, Yusuf Miqdad, Mahmoud Taleb (website of al-Saa' al-Thamina, July 24, 2017).

Hamas Summer Camps

■ Hamas marked the end of its "Knights of Palestine" summer camps with a military display in the streets of Gaza City, where signs were held in support of al-Aqsa mosque. After the display a speech was given by Fathi Hamad, a member of Hamas' political bureau, who praised the victory of the *murabitoun* at the gates of al-Aqsa mosque. He said the victory sent Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu the message that he was not allowed to attack al-Aqsa or to harm it as long as the Palestinian people lived. He said the victory also sent the Arab-Muslim world the message to take down Israel flags, as the Israeli flag had been taken down from al-Aqsa mosque (Hamas movement website, July 27; aljazeera.net, July 28, 2017)



Pictures from Hamas' summer camps (Hamas movement website and the Facebook page of the Hamas summer camp's central committee, July 27, 2017).

Life Imprisonment for Hamas Operative in Austria

- An Austrian court handed down a **life sentence** to a **Hamas operative** who had been released in the **Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal**. The operative was sentenced for **plotting to carry out and recruiting others to carry out terrorist attacks in Jerusalem**. The operative, 27 years old, whose name was not revealed in Austria, lived in the Gaza Strip. In Austria he had lived **in a center for asylum seekers**.
- In the past he had been tried in Israel and sentenced to nine years for involvement in attacks on IDF soldiers. According to the verdict, during 2016 he contacted two residents of Judea and Samaria through the Internet and coordinated with them **to recruit other operatives to carry out shooting attacks and throw hand grenades in crowded locations in Jerusalem**. The attacks were never carried out (Ynet, July 30, 2017).
- According to Hamas, the operative was **Abd al-Karim Abu Khabel. Muhammad al-Jamassi**, head of Hamas' legal department, condemned the verdict of the Austrian court. He said Hamas was following the events from the legal perspective. He also said that Abu Khabel had been convicted by the Austrians on the basis of his postings to the social media (Filastin Online, July 27, 2017).



Abd al-Karim Khabel (al-Quds, July 26, 2017).

The Palestinian Authority

Mahmoud Abbas Hospitalized for Tests

■ **PA spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeina** announced that Mahmoud Abbas had **entered al-Istishari Hospital in Ramallah for routine tests**. He added that Mahmoud Abbas was expected to leave the hospital after a number of hours (Wafa, July 29, 2017). **Jawad 'Awad, Palestinian minister of health**, said Mahmoud Abbas had left the hospital after a series of routine tests which, he said, were carried out every six months. He said Mahmoud Abbas was in excellent health (Wafa, July 29, 2017). **Nabil Shaath** emphasized Mahmoud Abbas had undergone the tests in Ramallah instead of Jordan because **he refused to coordinate the trip with the Israeli authorities** (Dunia al-Watan, July 31, 2017).



Mahmoud Abbas leaves the hospital in Ramallah accompanied by an entourage of senior PA figures (Facebook page of Mahmoud Abbas, July 29, 2017).

Anti-Israeli International Moves Planned by the PA

- The events on the Temple Mount led the **Palestinians to lodge a complaint with the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague and ask to join various international organizations.** **Riyad al-Maliki, the Palestinian foreign minister, said in an interview that Fatou Bensouda, the ICC's chief prosecutor, would interrupt her vacation to receive the Palestinian referral regarding the settlements.**⁴ He said the Palestinians were waiting for a date to be set for lodging their appeal (Voice of Palestine, July 30, 2017).
- According to **Nabil Shaath, the Palestinians were ready to appeal to the ICC and Fatou Bensouda, the chief prosecutor, had interrupted her vacation to examine the issue.** He also said that as part of its international efforts, **the PA was making preparations to join 25 additional international organizations** (Dunia al-Watan, July 31, 2017).

Pictures from Summer Camps Organized by the PA Security Forces

- Fatah's summer camps' organizing committee in the Qalandia refugee camp published pictures of the activities of campers from the Qalandia refugee camp. The camp was called **"The guardians of al-Aqsa," and it was held by the national security forces in Jericho.** The pictures show the campers in uniform, engaging in

⁴ A referral to the ICC from a member country does not require authorization from the attorney general to open an investigation after an initial inquiry has been held.

weapons' training and operation (Facebook page of the Fatah organizing committee in the Qalandia refugee camp, July 31, 2017).



PA national security forces' summer camps in Jericho (Facebook page of the Fatah organizing committee in the Qalandia refugee camp, July 31, 2017).