



February 12, 2008

**Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center
at the Israel Intelligence Heritage
& Commemoration Center (IICC)**

Recently the second stage of the July 2007 amnesty plan for wanted terrorists ended. The stage concluded successfully, with most of the more than 200 wanted terrorists having kept to its terms. The Palestinian security services' contribution to the plan's success was limited.¹



Left: Wanted Fatah/AI-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades terrorists surrendering their weapons to the Palestinian security services. Right: Some of the surrendered weapons (Al-Jazeera TV, July 16, 2007).

¹ Based on an Israel Security Agency report, and a follow up of our October 14, 2007 Bulletin entitled "The Amnesty Plan for Fatah operatives on Israel's wanted list—Interim Summary " at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/html/ct_141107e.htm.

Overview

1. The second stage of the amnesty plan in which more than 200 wanted terrorists participated is ending **successfully**. Although there was a small number of limited irregularities, the **majority** of the wanted terrorists who participated in the plan showed restraint and **kept to its terms**. At the same time, the general atmosphere in Judea and Samaria contributed to the overall decrease in the number and severity of terrorist attacks also carried out by terrorist operatives who were not included in the plan. However, the contribution of the Palestinian security services to the enforcement and success of the plan was limited and recently even showed more signs of weakening.

2. With the end of the second stage, several dozen wanted terrorists were permitted to return to normal, law-abiding civilian life. However, the Israel Security Agency made it clear that their situation was reversible, that is, if they returned to terrorist activities their status would change and they would be vulnerable to Israeli actions against them.

The Main Points of the Amnesty Plan and the Implementation of the First Stage

3. In July 2007, as part of Israel's goodwill gestures toward the Palestinian Authority, Israeli security **decided to suspend its preventative activities against 170 Fatah/Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades** (Fatah's terrorist operative wing) operatives in Judea and Samaria. That would be done on condition that they committed themselves to abandoning terrorism, surrender their weapons and accept a series of limitations on their activities during a long trial period. The amnesty plan had two main objectives:

- 1) To sharply reduce the number of operatives involved in terrorism and thus increase security in Israel;
- 2) To encourage pragmatic elements in the PA interested in regional stability and opposed to Hamas.

4. The implementation of the amnesty plan began on July 12, 2007. The participants pledged they would abandon terrorism, surrender their weapons and accept a series of limitations on their activities during a three-month **trial period**. **The plan was coordinated with the Palestinian security services** to enable them to promote it by means of persuasion, supervision and enforcement.

5. The first group of wanted terrorists was composed of **Fatah** operatives who showed clear signs of willingness to abandon terrorism. Israeli security forces made it clear that in due course it would consider **accepting other terrorist operatives into the plan if they could prove that their intentions were serious and would of their own volition neither take part in nor abet terrorist activities**. From the beginning it was clear that **the real test** of the amnesty plan would be its participants' willingness to keep to its terms and the Palestinian security services' willingness (and ability) to enforce its authority and ensure that they carried out the agreement.

6. In **November 2007**, when the first stage ended, the data showed that **there had been a decrease in the terrorist activities** of the terrorists participating in the plan. As a result several dozen were allowed to change their status from wanted terrorists to law-abiding civilians. At the same time, additional wanted terrorists were accepted into the plan, some of them at the request of the Palestinian security services.

Carrying Out the Second Stage

7. **More than 200 additional wanted terrorists** participated in the second stage of the agreement (November 2007 – January 2008) and pledged to keep to its terms. An examination of the second stage showed that most of the 200 participants **fulfilled the agreement**. At the same time, **there was also a decrease in terrorist activities carried out by terrorist operatives who were not part of the plan**, the result of the positive dynamics surrounding it. According to the ISA, the most important achievements were the following:

1) The **majority** of wanted terrorists who participated in the second stage of the plan **showed restraint and kept to its terms**.² The irregularities were marginal both quantitatively and qualitatively. A terrorist who breached the agreement paid a price according to stiff, previously decided criteria. According to Israeli security force policy, operatives who did not fulfill 100% of the conditions of the agreement were vulnerable to Israeli counterterrorist activities against them.

2) There was a dramatic drop in the number and severity of terrorist attacks carried out by wanted Fatah-Tanzim operatives, including those who were not part of the plan.

² During the trial period Israeli security forces closely monitored the terrorists in the plan. They examined the degree to which the pledges were kept, especially the pledge not to participate in terrorist activities. Israel security encouraged the PA, of which Fatah is the main component, to collect the weapons in the hands of the wanted terrorists and to force those who refused to participate in the plan to stop their involvement in terrorism.

In our assessment that was the result of the general atmosphere in Judea and Samaria, however the decrease in activity among participants influenced non-participants.

8. With the end of the second stage, **several dozen wanted terrorists were allowed to exchange their status to that of law-abiding civilians**. Palestinian security sources told a Ynet correspondent that following deliberations between the sides **32 wanted terrorists** belonging to the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades would be pardoned, including senior operatives, at the end of the trial period. The same sources claimed that Israel had taken their names off the wanted list and given a three-month trial period to 200 more wanted terrorists (Ali Waked, Ynet, February 10, 2008).

9. During both the first and second stages, **the contribution of the Palestinian security services to the plan's success was limited**. The second stage was successful primarily because of the participants' motivation to improve their personal situations by returning to normal civilian life. The minor contribution of the Palestinian security services reflects their dysfunction and many other problems they face. Genuine reforms requested from the Palestinian security services by the road map have not been carried out and the changes made by Abu Mazen's administration so far have been cosmetic, and some of them still remain no more than ambitious plans for the future.³

³ For further information see our date Bulletin entitled "Has the Palestinian Authority fulfilled its security commitments, and to what extent, in accordance with the road map? (Interim analysis)" at http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/html/road_map_e.htm.