



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

April 20, 2009

The Palestinian Authority security services have recently exposed a Hamas terrorist network in Qalqilya



Internal security forces operating in Qalqilya (Al-Jazeera TV, April 14)

Overview

1. The Palestinian Authority security services conduct extensive counter-activities against military-terrorist networks belonging to the Hamas movement. Recently, the security services have exposed a **laboratory and workshop for manufacturing explosives in Qalqilya**. The laboratory was located in the **basement of a mosque** and the workshop was located in an

abandoned building near the security fence. Such activities are conducted at the same time as Palestinian National Dialogue negotiations are held in Cairo. Hamas denies carrying out military and terrorist operations in Judea and Samaria, accusing the Palestinian Authority security services of cooperation with Israel.

The exposure of Hamas's military-terrorist infrastructure in mosques

2. Following an explosion heard in **Qalqilya's Al-Ansari Mosque** (April 8), the Palestinian Authority security services were called to the scene. They discovered a **laboratory for manufacturing explosives** in the basement of the mosque; found inside were pipe bombs and ready-to-use explosives (Nablus TV website, April 9). A Palestinian officer said anonymously that it was most likely a Hamas **explosive laboratory**, and **"a very big one"** at that. He further noted that four individuals were arrested, some of them Hamas operatives (nrg, April 9). The explosives were detonated with the assistance of IDF forces (ynet, April 10).



Materials found in the explosives laboratory located in the basement of the mosque (Al-Jazeera, April 14)

3. The Palestinian Authority had the incident massively covered on the media. At a press conference held in Ramallah, **National Security Spokesman Adnan al-Dumairi** listed the recent achievements of the Palestinian security services, including the confiscation of the explosives in the Qalqilya mosque, and even showed some of the seized materials. He said that the explosives found in the mosque included a ready-to-use IED weighing about 7 kg (15 lbs) as well as chemicals used for manufacturing explosives, such as ammonia and sulfur. The Palestinian security forces arrested eight suspects who admitted to being involved with the improvised explosives laboratory. Adnan al-Dumairi noted that the security services' activity was

designed to promote public safety, and condemned the illicit use made of mosques and civilian institutions for military activity (Al-Jazeera, April 14).



National Security Spokesman Adnan al-Dumairi at the press conference (Al-Jazeera, April 14)

4. On April 16, the Palestinian Authority security services exposed a **workshop for manufacturing explosives** in an abandoned house in Qalqilya, some 200 yards from the security fence. Three civilians were arrested for their alleged involvement. Found in the abandoned house were eight IEDs and gas tanks with text on them that read **“Al-Qassam Martyrs Brigades”**. Also found in the abandoned house were pamphlets inciting against Palestinian Authority institutions (Qudsnet website, April 16). **The Palestinian Authority suspects that this explosives workshop belonged to the same Hamas network responsible for the workshop under the mosque.**

5. It is no accident that the workshop was located in a **mosque in Qalqilya**. Hamas frequently deploys its military and terrorist infrastructures in mosques, both in the Gaza Strip and in Judea and Samaria.¹ The Palestinian Authority security services are well aware of that, and are keeping a watchful eye on many Hamas-controlled mosques. It should be noted that since late 2007, the Palestinian Authority has been conducting extensive counter-operations against the Hamas civilian infrastructure in Judea and Samaria. Thus, Salam Fayad’s government and the Palestinian Authority security services took action against the **mosques**, many of them traditionally regarded as being influenced by Hamas. The Palestinian Authority has focused its activities in **Nablus and Hebron**, where Hamas enjoys a great deal of influence over the local population. As part of that activity, the Palestinian Authority security services carried out dozens of raids on

¹ See our March 1, 2009 Information Bulletin: [“The use of mosques for military and political purposes by Hamas and other terrorist organizations and Islamic groups: according to international laws governing of armed conflict, mosques used for military purposes lose the special protection afforded houses of worship and may become legitimate targets for attack”](#).

mosques, in which they confiscated inciting materials, arrested several preachers, and even replaced some of them.

Reactions

6. The Palestinian Authority **security services spokesman** said that the services were working to maintain their recent achievements and prevent a lapse back into anarchy. He further noted that the security servicemen were showing a great deal of professionalism **in their pursuit of achieving tangible results** rather than engaging in mere propaganda activities. He listed several incidents in which weapons and ammunition were seized in Judea and Samaria mosques, including mosques in Hebron, Nablus, and Tulkarm, saying that using mosques for such activities was a **cynical exploitation** (Al-Jazeera, April 14).

7. Hamas denies the Palestinian Authority's allegations on using mosques for military and terrorist needs. Hamas spokesmen and media took the opportunity to criticize the Palestinian Authority security services and their cooperation with Israel. Following are several statements made by Hamas spokesmen:

a. Hamas spokesman **Fawzi Barhoum** said that the statements made by the Palestinian Authority security services were just a media spin designed to scare civilians in order to keep them away from mosques, disconnect them from their culture, and provide excuses for the desecration of mosques which they and Israel are responsible for. He said that the security services had to be rebuilt "on professional and national foundations" and that cooperating with Israel in the field of defense was treason (Palestine-info, April 14).

b. Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades spokesman **Abu Obeida** denied that the movement's operatives were making use of mosques for storing weapons, claiming that such allegations were made as part of the security services' cooperation with the Israeli security forces. He also denied reports that the security services had arrested in one of the mosques an expert on manufacturing IEDs, saying that such claims were compromising mosques and giving Israel an excuse to destroy them (Al-Bayan Center website, April 14).

c. The Hamas organ **Felsteen** said that the explosives found in the Qalqilya mosque did not belong to Hamas but rather to Ibrahim Muhammad al-Fayed, a local Hamas operative

killed by the IDF in 2006. According to Hamas operatives in Qalqilya, the Preventive Security was using the discovery of the old explosives to justify acts of cruelty against them. The same operatives, however, said that mosques had always provided assistance to the “resistance”, whatever form it may take (Felesteen, April 17).

d. A Felesteen report from Qalqilya included “testimonies” by imams in Qalqilya mosques, saying that the Palestinian Authority security services asked them to falsely accuse Hamas of using mosques for weapons storage. According to one imam, who wished to remain anonymous, he had received an official memo from a branch of the Waqf (Religious Endowments) Ministry saying that Hamas had to be falsely incriminated. He further added that some imams had “sold themselves to the security services” (Felesteen, April 19).

8. Many residents of Qalqilya condemned Hamas, whose operatives built the explosives laboratory in the **Abu Ayyoub al-Ansari Mosque**, claiming the laboratory risked their lives.