



**The Meir Amit Intelligence and
Terrorism Information Center**

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Following the Naksa Day events, there was strong internal Palestinian criticism of Ahmed Jibril's organization (PFLP-GC), affiliated with the Syrian regime, and of other pro-Syrian organizations. They were blamed for cynically sending young Palestinians to their deaths to serve the interests of the Syrian and other regimes (possibly Iran). PFLP-GC and PFLP-Habash operatives were attacked by relatives of the slain Palestinians during funerals held in Al-Yarmukh refugee camp near Damascus. The PFLP-GC headquarters were torched.



Palestinians in Al-Yarmukh refugee camp watch as the PFLP-GC headquarters go up in flames (electronic-intifada.net website, June 6, 2011).

Overview

1. The Naksa Day events, which ended (according to the Syrian media) with the deaths of 24 demonstrators, **caused serious internal criticism among the refugees in Syria**. The criticism was **directed at the pro-Syrian Palestinian organizations based in Damascus, accusing them of responsibility** for sending Palestinian youths to demonstrate in the Golan Heights, even though they knew of the IDF's preparations for preventing attempted invasions of Israeli territory.

2. **The criticism focused on Ahmed Jibril's organization**, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command, **which is affiliated with the Syrian regime and promotes its interests, collaborating with it for decades**. Other operatives of pro-Syrian organizations, among them George Habash's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP-Habash), were also targeted and attacked by relatives of the dead youths. Al-Jazeera TV reported that during clashes in Al-Yarmukh refugee camp **a number of Palestinians were killed and 20 were injured. The PFLP-GC headquarters were set on fire by local Al-Yarmukh refugee camp residents**.

3. The families of the dead youths accused senior PFLP-Habash activist Maher al-Taher, saying his organization had incited the young men to go to the Golan Heights "to serve the political interests of others." **The accusation (and the entire event) hinted at criticism of the Syrian regime and Iran for trying to turn the escalating internal protests against Israel at the expense of the Palestinians, exploiting the "popular protests" in the Arab world**.

4. Moreover, the affair shows that **in several instances the "popular" protests and demands to realize the so-called "right of return" have been instigated by familiar terrorist organizations, such as the PFLP-GC in Syria (and Hezbollah in Lebanon)**. Some of the terrorist organizations, as well as Iran, try to encourage seemingly popular Palestinian protests, **using them for their own purposes or those of countries like Iran and Syria**.

Al-Yarmukh refugee camp inhabitants criticize the Palestinian terrorist organizations

5. **Palestinian Authority TV interviewed a correspondent named Amal Shahin at the Al-Yarmukh refugee camp near Damascus on June 6**. The interview took place during the funerals of the Palestinians killed during the Naksa Day riots in Majdal Shams. Amal Shahin described at length the **"atmosphere of anger" in the camp directed at the "Palestinian factions"** (i.e., the Palestinian terrorist organizations whose headquarters

and/or bases are located in Damascus) **for not having done enough to prevent the young men from going to Majdal Shams.**

6. She made the following points [ITIC emphasis throughout]:

1) "...In all honesty, **as for the second return march** [the first was held on Nakba Day], **there was a serious argument. Most of the Palestinian factions, and the independent young people themselves** from the Third Palestinian Intifada Coordinating Committee **were not, in all sincerity, satisfied with the second return march.** They objected to going to Majdal Shams and **tried to prevent the young people from going** to Majdal Shams, wanting **to prevent Palestinian blood from being shed. They were concerned that to a great extent it was a [risky] adventure, in light of the strict security measures taken by Israel, and after additional [Israeli] forces had been deployed in Majdal Shams."**

2) Today [i.e., June 6, 15:04], she said, "**there is a great anger in Al-Yarmouk refugee camp**, anger over the people who died yesterday, the martyrs, the shaheeds, the Palestinian street is very bitter today. **There is great anger, and really, an accumulation of anger at the Palestinian factions. In fact, there are people who say that they didn't do everything they could have to prevent those young men from going there** [to the Golan Heights]. **They were young people who were full Palestinian love and desire for *shahadah*** [martyrdom for the sake of Allah], but nevertheless, people are angry at the factions, which didn't deter them from going."



Amal Shahin reports on extreme anger in Al-Yarmouk refugee camp (Palestinian Authority TV, June 6, 2011).

Violent confrontations between the relatives of the dead Palestinians and pro-Syrian terrorist organization in Al-Yarmukh refugee camp

7. The strong criticism of the Naksa Day events among the Palestinians in Syria was expressed in **clashes between the families of the Naksa Day victims and PFLP-Jibril operatives at the funerals held in Al-Yarmukh refugee camp**. According to news agency reports, the relatives attacked the PFLP-GC headquarters in the camp. **They also attacked a senior PFLP-Habash operative named Maher al-Taher**, whose bodyguards opened fire to disperse the attackers. **According to reports, the clashes resulted in a number of deaths and 20 wounded**. Some of the casualties occurred near Al-Wassim mosque, the focus of the clashes, located in the center of Al-Yarmukh refugee camp (Al-Jazeera TV, UPI, FNN and YouTube, June 6, 2011).

8. **Al-Jazeera TV** described the violent clashes as follows:¹

1) While the funerals of eight Palestinians killed in the Golan Heights left Al-Wassim mosque, several refugee camp inhabitants attacked the PFLP-GC headquarters. **At the time of the attack Ahmed Jibril, the organization's leader, was in the building** (according to photos taken at the site, the headquarters was set on fire.)

2) Mourners at the funerals shouted "**The people want to overthrow the [Palestinian] factions,**" "**Down with Ahmed Jibril,**" "**Down with the [Palestinian] Liberation Army [i.e., the PLA]**" and "**Where is the Syrian army?**" They attacked the PFLP-GC headquarters and burned a number of cars in front of the building, a clinic and a kindergarten. Eye witnesses added that **the mourners chased away representatives of the "Palestinian factions" [i.e., the Palestinian terrorist organizations] and by themselves carried the bodies of their dead relatives to Al-Shuhada'a cemetery in the camp.**

3) Several "Palestinian faction" commanders were also attacked by relatives of the dead men. One of them was a senior PFLP-Habash figure named **Dr. Maher al-Taher**, responsible for the "external" PFLP leadership. **The PFLP-Habash was blamed for inciting the young men who were killed to go to the Golan Heights "to serve the political interests of others."** A "senior Palestinian figure" told a UPI correspondent that Maher al-Taher's armed bodyguards fired at the attackers to disperse them, "which worsened the situation."

¹ <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/B1C34485-D226-4F9F-ADBC-68B973B96543.htm>



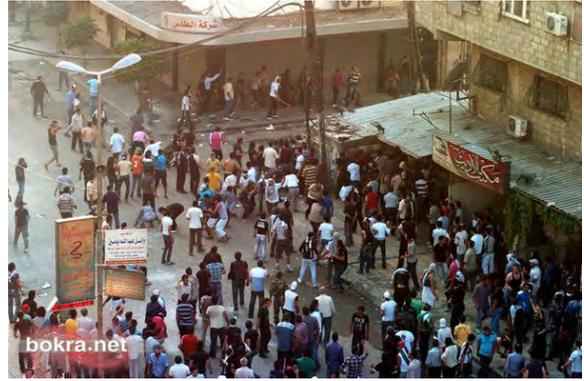
Taher al-Maher, senior PFLP-Habash figure, attacked by relatives of those killed in Al-Yarmukh refugee camp.²

4) Trucks carrying Syrian security forces arrived at the refugee camp to disperse the confrontations.

Pictures of the June 6 events in Al-Yarmukh refugee camp



² <http://www.abedkhattar.com/news-action-show-id-2777.htm>



Palestinians demonstrate in front of the PFLP-GC headquarters in Al-Yarmukh refugee camp (bokra.net website, June 7, 2011). See first page for pictures of the headquarters in flames.



Residents of Al-Yarmukh refugee camp seek shelter from PFLP-GC sniper fire (YouTube, June 7, 2011).



Palestinian killed by PFLP-GC sniper fire (YouTube, June 7, 2011).