



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (August 30 - 5 September 2017)

Overview

- ▶ This week there were **no significant attacks** in Judea and Samaria and no rockets were fired from the Gaza Strip. Neither were there any **Rockets Fired** in Israel's South. The Israeli security forces continued their preventive and thwarting activity. In this context, they closed the Minbar al-Hurriya radio station (which belongs to the al-Hurriya media network) which operated from Hebron. According to the IDF spokesman, the station was closed due to incitement broadcasts encouraging terrorist activities, which it had regularly broadcast.
- ▶ The economic hardship and the electricity crisis in the Gaza Strip continue. In visits to the Gaza Strip by the **UN Secretary General and the President of the International Red Cross** they referred to the humanitarian crisis. In a meeting **Yahya Al-Sinwar, head of the political bureau in the Gaza Strip**, held with representatives of the business community in the Gaza Strip, Al-Sinwar emphasized Hamas' efforts to solve the population's economic problems.
- ▶ Sharp condemnation from the Palestinians of a directive which was signed, under instruction from Ministry of Defense Avigdor Lieberman, for setting up a **municipal services administration for the Jewish community in Hebron**. According to the Palestinians, this establishment of a separate authority within the city of Hebron contradicts international resolutions and is an attempt to impose Israeli sovereignty.

Situation in Judea and Samaria

Riots and Clashes

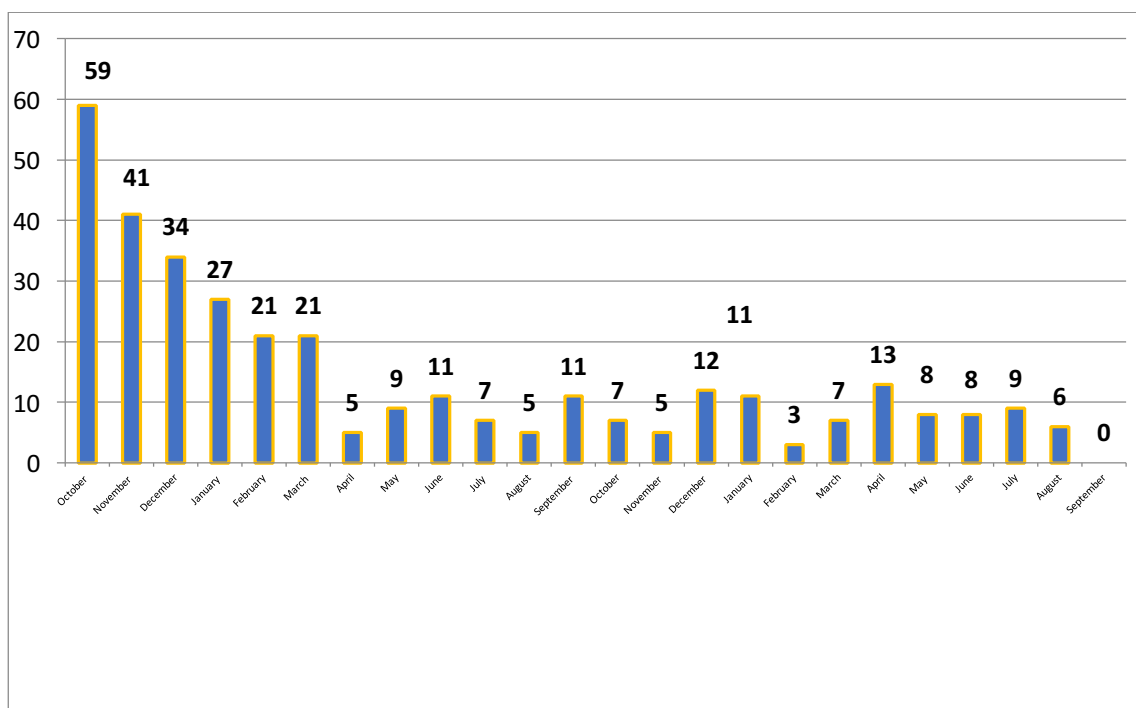
- ▶ Riots continued throughout the week in Judea and Samaria. Stone throwing and the throwing of Molotov cocktails also continued. In a thwart and prevent action by the Israeli security forces throughout Judea and Samaria, terror suspects were arrested and weapons and materials were seized. Following are the outstanding incidents:

- ◆ **4 September 2017** – An activity carried out by the security forces in the **village of Naaleen** (Binyamin region), a weapons cache was discovered including a homemade rifle, ammunition and magazines (Red Alert Facebook page, 4 September 2017).
- ◆ **3 September 2017** – stones and a Molotov cocktail were thrown at an IDF force operating in the village of **Deir Abu Mash'al** (northwest of Ramallah). One IDF soldier was slightly injured (Red Alert Facebook page, 3 September 2017).
- ◆ **2 September 2017** – shots were fired from a passing vehicle towards an Israeli vehicle in the **village of Shuqba** area, **northwest of Ramallah**. There were no injuries and no damage (Red Alert Facebook page, 2 September 2017).
- ◆ **1 September 2017** – Israeli security forces launched a sweeping operation to find weapons in the village of **Beit Ur al-Fauqa**, **west of Ramallah**. Five improvised weapons were found in one of the houses, along with other armaments and military equipment (Red Alert Facebook page, 1 September 2017).
- ◆ **1 September 2017** – Stones were thrown at a bus **on the Gush Etzion-Hebron road**. There were no injuries. The bus was damaged (Red Alert Facebook page, 1 September 2017).
- ◆ **1 September 2017** - stones were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near **the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron**. There were no injuries and no damage (Red Alert Facebook page, 1 September 2017).



An Israeli vehicle was hit by stones thrown at it north-east of Ramallah (Twitter account Al-Risala, 28 August 2017).

Significant Attacks in Judea and Samaria since October 2015¹



Radio station closure in Hebron

►The Israeli security forces closed the Minbar al-Hurriya radio station (which belongs to the al-Hurriya media network) which operated from Hebron and seized equipment they found there. According to the IDF spokesman, the station was closed due to incitement broadcasts encouraging terrorist activities, which it had regularly broadcast (IDF Spokesman, 31 August 2017). The Palestinian Ministry of Communications condemned the Israeli closure of the radio station and called for freedom of the press to be defended through UN Security Council resolutions (Al-Quds Al-Arabi, 1 September 2017). At the same time, the station director Ayman Al-Qawasmi, claimed that the closure was carried out “barbarically”. Al-Qawasmi accused the Palestinian Authority and its government that they do not provide adequate protection for the institutions and residents within the territories under their control (Area A) (Al-Quds News, 31 August 2017)². On 4 September 2017 the al-Hurriya communications network announced the launch of a new radio station named

¹“Significant attacks” are defined by the ICT as involving shooting, stabbing, vehicular attack, the use of IEDs or a combination of the above. Stones and Molotov cocktails thrown by Palestinians are not included.

²Several days after the station was closed, the Palestinian Authority’s Palestinian Preventive Security arrested Ayman Al-Qawasmi, station director, after he called on Abu Mazen and on Rami Al-Hamdallah to resign after failing to provide him protection when Israel closed his radio station (Omamah Twitter account, 3 September 2017).

Minbar Al-Quds, which will broadcast from the same location as the station that had been closed and with the same staff (al-Hurriya network, 4 September 2017).



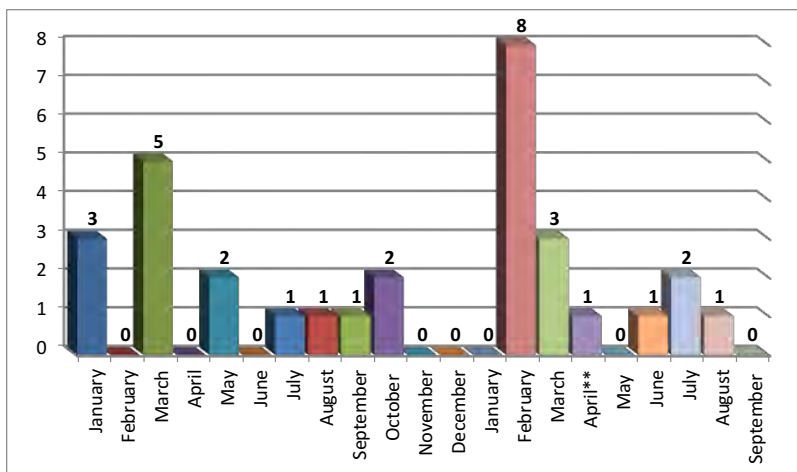
Ayman Al-Qawasmi, director of Radio Minbar Al-Hurriya, interviewing with the Paltoday television station, affiliated with the Palestine Islamic Jihad (PIJ) (Facebook page of the Al-Hurriya Network, 2 September 2017)

Israel's South

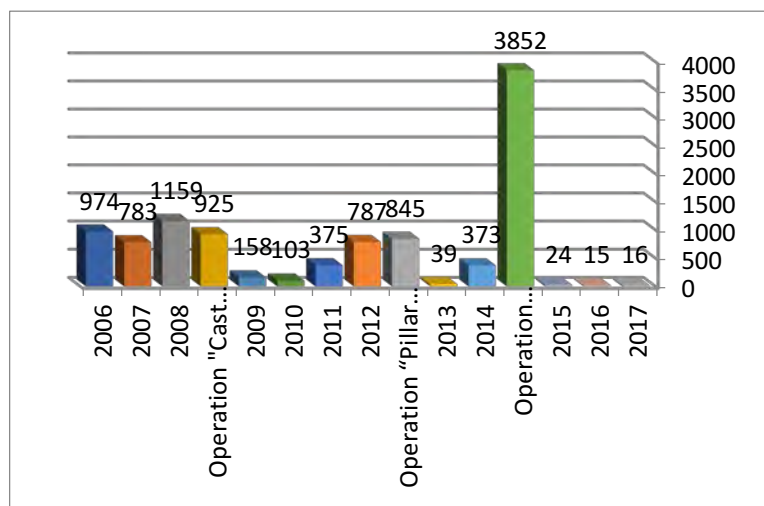
Rocket Fire Attacking Israel

- ▶ No rocket impacts were recorded in Israeli territory this week.

Monthly Distribution of Rocket Fire since January 2016



Annual Distribution of Rocket Hits In Israel's South



Developments in the Gaza Strip

Humanitarian Situation in the Gaza Strip

- The economic hardship and the electricity crisis were felt in the Gaza Strip during the Eid Al-Adha Festival. In the absence of demand, this year a drop was felt in the entry of goods into the Gaza Strip. **Head of the public relations department of Gaza's power company in Rafah Abdullah Al-Najili**, reported that on 31 August 2017 the Egyptian power lines supplying the southern Gaza Strip with electricity, resumed operations (Alwatanvoice, 31 August 2017). **Mohammed Thabit, Electricity Company spokesman**, said that if the three sources of electricity would operate without malfunctioning, they would operate at six hours per day capacity through the Eid Al-Adha festival period (Shehab, 31 August 2017).
- In a meeting **Yahya Al-Sinwar, head of the political bureau in the Gaza Strip**, held with representatives of the business community in the Strip, Al-Sinwar emphasized Hamas' efforts to solve the population's economic problems and attempts to ease their suffering. He pointed out that the contacts with Egypt were continuing and that the focus of the talks are to develop commerce and economy, setting up a free trade zone and increasing the supply of electricity to the Gaza Strip (Hamas website, 30 August 2017).



Meeting between Yahya Al-Sinwar and Palestinian businessmen in the Gaza Strip (Hamas website, 30 August 2017) The delegation was headed by Ali Al-Hayek, Chairman of the Palestinian Businessmen Association in the Gaza Strip.

Visit by the President of the Red Cross in the Gaza Strip

► **Peter Maurer, President of the International Red Cross**, arrived on 5 September 2017 for a brief visit to the Gaza Strip via the Erez Crossing. While in the Strip he met with Yahya Al-Sinwar. He also met with members of the civil sector in the Gaza Strip and visited the beach, where he took a close look at the seawater pollution caused from releasing the sewage into the sea (Elresala.net, 5 September 2017).



President of the International Red Cross, Peter Maurer, meeting with Yahya Al-Sinwar in Gaza (Safa, 5 September 2017)

Opening of a cinema in the Gaza Strip

► On 26 August 2017 the Al-Samer cinema opened in the Gaza Strip **for the first time in three decades**. Several hundred men and women arrived at the cinema for the first screening, entitled Ten Years, and which **deals with the Palestinian-Israeli conflict from the perspective of the Palestinians incarcerated in Israeli jails**. The cinema opened in the building which housed the first cinema to open in the Gaza Strip in 1944, and which closed in 1987 following the outbreak of the first Intifada (French News Agency, 27 August

2017; palsawa, 26 August 2017). The head of the arts department in the Gaza Ministry of Culture said that the Ministry has no problem with the opening of the cinema, provided the content screened there does not contradict the “public principles and values” (Al-Istiqlal, 31 August 2017).



Right: Al-Samer cinema. Left: the audience at the screening (palsawa, 26 August 2017).

Eid Al-Adha in the Gaza Strip



Yahya Al-Sinwar greeting well-wishers at his home in Khan Yunis (Facebook page of the Khan Yunis communication network, 2 September 2017)



Ismail Haniyeh greeting well-wishers at his home in the Al-Shati refugee camp in Gaza Right: with Sheikh Taha Al-Astal, Chairman of the Reconciliation Committee in the town of Al-Qarara (Twitter account of Sheikh Taha Al-Astal, 2 September 2017). Left: With Adham Abu-Salmiah, Hamas operative and deputy chairman of the Deir Al-Balah Charitable Association (Abu-Salmiah’s Twitter account, 3 September 2017).

The Palestinian Authority

United Nations Secretary General's visit in Judea and Samaria and the Gaza Strip

- ▶ United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres arrived for a brief visit to Israel and the Palestinian Authority for the first time since taking office. During his visit he met in Ramallah with Rami Al-Hamdallah, Prime Minister of the Government of National Accord and he also paid the Gaza Strip a visit which lasted several hours.
- ▶ The United Nations Secretary General met with UNRWA workers in the Gaza Strip and expressed his support for their work. He announced that he would be granting four million dollars to an emergency plan of the UNRWA workers. A demonstration was held during his visit to the Gaza Strip by families of the prisoners, who protested the United Nations Secretary General's refusal to meet with them (Al Aqsa, 30 August 2017).



United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres holding a press conference in an UNRWA school in the northern Gaza Strip (UN Spokesman's Twitter account, 30 August 2017).

- ▶ The Secretary General expressed his sympathy for the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip and called on the international community to support the Gaza inhabitants (Pal Info, 30 August 2017). He also stressed the importance of reviving the peace process, which would include willingness to implement the two-state solution, and which would include commitment to all of the UN resolutions (Pal Info, 30 August 2017).
- ▶ The Government of National Accord welcomed the Secretary General's visit and stressed the UN's responsibility for the Palestine issue. The government called on the Secretary

General to enact the ideals expressed in the UN charter and enlist his best offices for achieving a just solution to the Palestinian issue. The government also demanded that the UN work to carry out its resolutions **and require Israel to obey international law** (Wafa, 29 August 2017). Hamas spokesmen and other senior Hamas officials expressed their satisfaction with the United Nations Secretary General's visit to the Gaza Strip, however at the same time they expressed their concern over his support for Israel and his refusal to meet with the prisoners' families.

► During his visit to Ramallah the Secretary General met with several family members of shahids and Palestinians incarcerated in Israeli jails. Present at the meeting were **Saeb Erekat**, secretary of the PLO executive committee, Riyadh Mansour, Palestinian Authority observer at the United Nations, and Issa Karaka, head of Prisoner Affairs at the Palestinian Authority. The families called on the United Nations Secretary General to work to “save the lives” of over 6,500 prisoners in Israeli jails (Quds.net, 29 August 2017).



Right: Rami Al-Hamdallah meeting United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres (Wafa, 29 August 2017). Left: Palestinian prisoners' families blocking the United Nations Secretary General's convoy upon entering the Gaza Strip (QUDSN website, 30 August 2017).

Condemnation for Israel's decision to set up an independent municipal authority in Hebron

► Under instruction from Israeli Minister of Defense Avigdor Lieberman, the Commander of the IDF Central Command signed an order to set up a municipal services administration for the Jewish community in Hebron. According to the order, the Jewish community in Hebron will be represented by an administration, which will provide the residents municipal services in various areas. The community committee will also be given independent municipal authority, which will not be dependent on the Hebron municipality.

►The signing of the order aroused **sharp condemnation** among Palestinians who perceive this as intent to operate in a manner contrary to international resolutions and an attempt to impose Israeli sovereignty in Hebron. **The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates in the Palestinian Authority** claimed that this was an **illegal decision contradicting international law** and the existing agreements and it even disregards the efforts made by the American administration to revive the negotiation process (Wafa, 3 September 2017). Dozens of Palestinian residents held a **protest rally in the Old City of Hebron** (Quds.net, 3 September 2017).



A demonstration held by a group from Hebron entitled Youth Against Settlements (right: Facebook page of Youth Against Settlements, 3 September 2017; left: Facebook page of the Hebron communication network, 3 September 2017)

►Following are some responses:

- ◆ **Saeb Erekat, Secretary of the PLO executive committee**, called on the international community and first and foremost the USA, the European Union and Russia to take immediate action to force Israel to withdraw its decision. He called to put an end to illegal settlement construction and to hold Israel, along with its settlers, accountable for their systematic violations and crimes against the Palestinian people, which contradict International law. (Wafa, 3 September 2017).
- ◆ **Yousef Al-Mahmoud, spokesman of the Government of National Accord**, said that the “Settlement project” operated by the Israeli government **precludes any chance of continuing the political activity and puts a final end to the international efforts which are a part of that activity** (Wafa, 4 September 2017).
- ◆ **Osama Al-Kawasmi, Fatah spokesman**, said the Israeli decision was grave and that it had effectively blown up all the international agreements **and was an actual implementation of an apartheid regime**. He added that this was an attempt to effect separation in the heart of Hebron and its Old City in a conspiracy to Judaize it. He

called for immediate measures at all levels: official, popular, legal and diplomatic and he urged the international community to take immediate action on the issue (Wafa, 2 September 2017).

◆ **Kamel Hamid, governor of Hebron**, said Israel's decision to grant the Hebron settlers authority to manage their own affairs was the most dangerous since 1967, which may pave the way to imposition of Israeli sovereignty and for disrupting the entire political order in the region. He said this would lead to chaos and would destabilize Judea and Samaria. He went on to say that the decision was contrary to international law and reflected the radicalism of the "occupation government" (Wafa, 2 September 2017).

◆ **Abdul Latif Qanou, Hamas spokesman**, said the decision to enable the settlers to set up a council to manage their affairs and to provide local services in Hebron was **a violation and amounted to a "crossing of the red lines"**. He said Israel bore responsibility for the results of this move and called on the international community and the UN to apply pressure on Israel to force it to stop its "crimes" (Hamas website, 4 September 2017).

Statements regarding the American Delegation's Visit to Restart the Peace Process

► **Mohammad Ishtayeh, member of the Fatah central committee**, said that if the Americans would not fulfill Palestinian demands in mediating the peace process, then the Palestinians had several options available to them, the main one being reaching intra-Palestinian settlement and reconciliation. This path would lead, in his words, to convening of the Palestinian National Council and to the formation of a new operational strategy. He said there are two roles to the mediation process: The liaising entity, bringing the two sides to the negotiating table and the initiating entity, which also proposes clear solutions. He said the Palestinians as yet do not know which of these two roles the USA seeks to play in the negotiations with Israel. According to him, it had been agreed that the American delegation would continue its discussions and meetings until it formed its opinion on the issue, without setting a timetable for this. As for **suspending the security coordination with Israel**, Ishtayeh said that to the best of his knowledge this suspension was still in place and that this decision had been made for the good of the Palestinian people following the

measures Israel took in Jerusalem. He emphasized that the Palestinians were not interested in backtracking (Al-Quds, 30 August 2017).

Palestinian attempts to derail a summit meeting of African states and Israel

► On 23 October 2017 an African-Israeli summit will for the first time convene in Togo. At this meeting Benjamin Netanyahu, Israeli prime minister, is expected to meet with leaders of African countries and to discuss issues of cooperation with Israel with them. Palestinians are attempting to derail these plans. As a part of these efforts, **Ahmed Majdalani, a member of the PLO executive committee**, said the Palestinian leadership was looking at ways to foil this summit meeting, which is a part of Israel's plan to deepen its influence in African countries. According to him, **Abu Mazen, Chairman of the Palestinian Authority**, has already contacted Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan and asked him to pressure the Muslim African states not to take part in the meeting and to avoid normalizing relations with Israel. He also said a dialog on this issue was ongoing with senior officials in countries such as Kuwait and Saudi Arabia in view of the influence these countries have in several African countries (Alwatanvoice, 1 September 2017).