



# News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (September 19 – 26, 2017)

## Overview

- ▶ This past week there was a shooting attack near Har Adar, an Israeli community west of Jerusalem. The terrorist killed three Israelis and seriously wounded another. The terrorist who carried out the attack was a Palestinian from Bayt Surik (a Palestinian village east of Har Adar), father of four and holder of a legal work permit. He had no past security offenses but had a history of severe family violence.
- ▶ **Mahmoud Abbas and the Palestinian Authority (PA)** have not condemned the attack so far. The official **Fatah** Facebook page posted responses praising the terrorist. **Hamas** welcomed the attack and its activists handed out candy and pastries to passersby in the Gaza Strip.
- ▶ A delegation of senior Hamas figures headed by Musa Abu Marzouq visited Moscow and met with Russian officials. After the visit it was reported that a permanent Hamas representative would be appointed to Moscow, but his name has not yet been officially made public.
- ▶ Following Hamas' announcement that it would disband its administrative committee, the Palestinian national consensus government reported it would hold its next meeting in the Gaza Strip. Ministers of the national consensus government are expected to leave for the Gaza Strip on October 2, 2017 to begin the procedure of transferring authority.
- ▶ In his speech before the UN General Assembly, Mahmoud Abbas noted, among other things, that the Palestinian struggle against Israel is political, and Palestinian people shun terrorism and religious wars. However, the terrorist attack in Har Adar and the lack of PA condemnation of the attack again illustrate that **the "political struggle," so-called by Mahmoud Abbas, is accompanied by violence and terrorism (the so-called "popular resistance") supported by the PA.**

## Shooting attack at Har Adar

► On the morning of September 26, 2017, a **Palestinian carried out a shooting attack near Har Adar, northwest of Jerusalem. Three Israelis were killed and another was seriously wounded.** Initial information is the following:

- ◆ In the morning, as workers from Judea and Samaria entered through the examination point at the rear entrance to the community of Har Adar, one of the Palestinians trying to pass through aroused the suspicions of the Border Policemen and security guards. They initiated the procedure for detaining suspects and ordered him to halt. At that moment the Palestinian opened his shirt, **took out a gun and shot at policemen and security guards at close range.** They immediately returned fire, killing him. **Three Israelis were killed: a Border Policeman and two security guards.** Another security guard was seriously wounded.



**Pictures from the scene of the shooting attack (Palinfo Twitter account, September 26, 2017).**

- ◆ The Palestinian who carried out the attack was **Nimr Mahmoud Ahmed Jamal**, 37, from Bayt Surik, a village east of Har Adar. He had four children and held a legal work permit for Israeli communities near the border. He had worked in the community of Har Adar for a long time. He had **no record of prior security offenses.** The gun he used was **a standard pistol stolen in 2003.** He had a history of severe family violence (a number of weeks ago his wife fled to Jordan and left him with four children). **The Israeli security forces imposed a closure on the area around Bayt Surik.**



**Right: Terrorist operative Nimr Jamal (Facebook page of QudsN, September 26, 2017). Left: The gun used in the shooting attack (Israel Police Force, September 26, 2017).**

- ◆ A few hours before the attack Nimr Jamal **sent a message to his mother-in-law and a selfie**. He asked her to post the following on **his Facebook page**: "When you wake up in the morning share this message on my [Facebook] page, and don't let your conscience trouble you. I testify before Allah that my wife, Umm Bahaa', was genuinely a good wife and a compassionate mother, and I was the one who behaved towards her in an ugly way, with my stupid jealousy and horrifying actions. **I state that what you witness tomorrow [i.e., the shooting attack] has nothing to do with my wife**. I ask that you forgive me" (Facebook page of QudsN, September 26, 2017).



**The announcement the terrorist sent his mother-in-law (Facebook page of QudsN, September 26, 2017).**

- ▶ The reactions so far have been the following:
  - ◆ **Wafa, the Palestinian news agency directly under the control of Mahmoud Abbas' office, reported informatively about the attack** quoting the spokesperson for

the Israel Police Force. It reported the death of a young Palestinian, the deaths of three Israelis and the wounding of a fourth, in a shooting attack in Jerusalem (Wafa, September 26, 2017). **So far it has not issued a condemnation of the attack.**

- ◆ **Fatah's official Facebook page** posted a picture of terrorist Nimr Jamal. **It drew responses of encouragement, including "Glory to the shaheeds," "May Allah have mercy on him and may he rest in paradise"** (official Fatah Facebook page, September 26, 2017).

- ◆ **Munir al-Jaghoub, head of Fatah's information commission**, said Israel bore sole responsibility for anti-Israel responses because of its activities and use of force against the Palestinian people (Facebook page of QudsN, September 26, 2017).

- ◆ **Hamas praised the attack.** Throughout the Gaza Strip Hamas operatives distributed pastries and candy to passersby. **Husam Badran**, a member of Hamas' political bureau, said the attack had been carried out in response to "the crimes of Israel against the Palestinian people and the ongoing violations at al-Aqsa [mosque]." He claimed the attack showed that **the "Jerusalem intifada" continued** (Hamas website, September 26, 2017).

- ◆ **Khaled al-Batash, senior Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) figure** in the Gaza Strip, called the attack "heroic" and a Palestinian response to Donald Trump's plan to annihilate the Palestinian cause (Facebook page of QudsN, September 26, 2017).



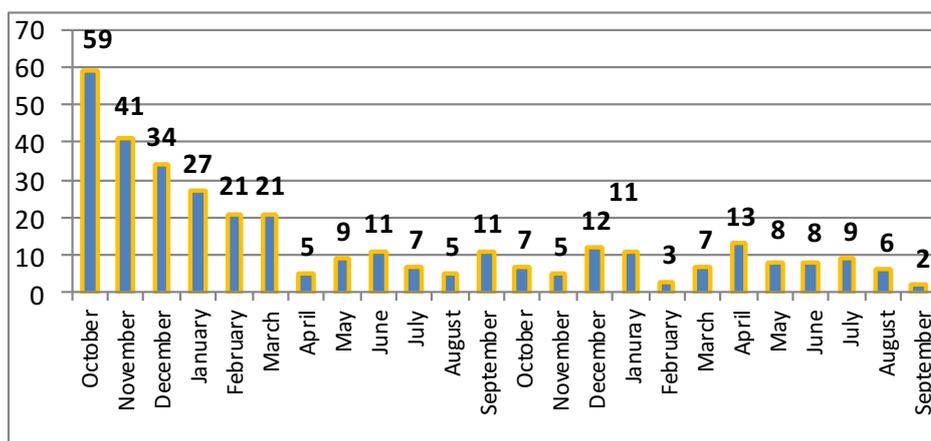
**Hamas operatives in the Gaza Strip distribute pastries and candy to celebrate the shooting attack in Har Adar (Palinfo Twitter account, September 26, 2017).**

## Riots, clashes and popular terrorism

► This past week Palestinians continued throwing stones and Molotov cocktails. The Israeli security forces carried out counterterrorism activities throughout Judea and Samaria, detaining Palestinians suspected of terrorist activity. Weapons and funds for financing terrorism were seized. The more prominent occurrences were the following:

- ◆ **September 25, 2017** – Stones were thrown at an Israeli vehicle on **the Gush Etzion-Hebron road, near Bayt Ummar**. There were no casualties. The vehicle was damaged (Facebook page of Red Alert, September 25, 2017).
- ◆ **September 23, 2017** – Stones were thrown at Israeli vehicles on **route 443 (Jerusalem-Tel Aviv) near the gas station**. A father and son were wounded by flying glass and the mother went into shock (Facebook page of Red Alert, September 23, 2017).
- ◆ **September 19, 2017** – Three Molotov cocktails were thrown at vehicles on **the Gush Etzion-Jerusalem road near the village of al-Khader**. There were no casualties (Facebook page of Red Alert, September 19, 2017).

## Significant Terrorist Attacks in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem since September 2015<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Terrorist operatives detained in Silwan (east Jerusalem)

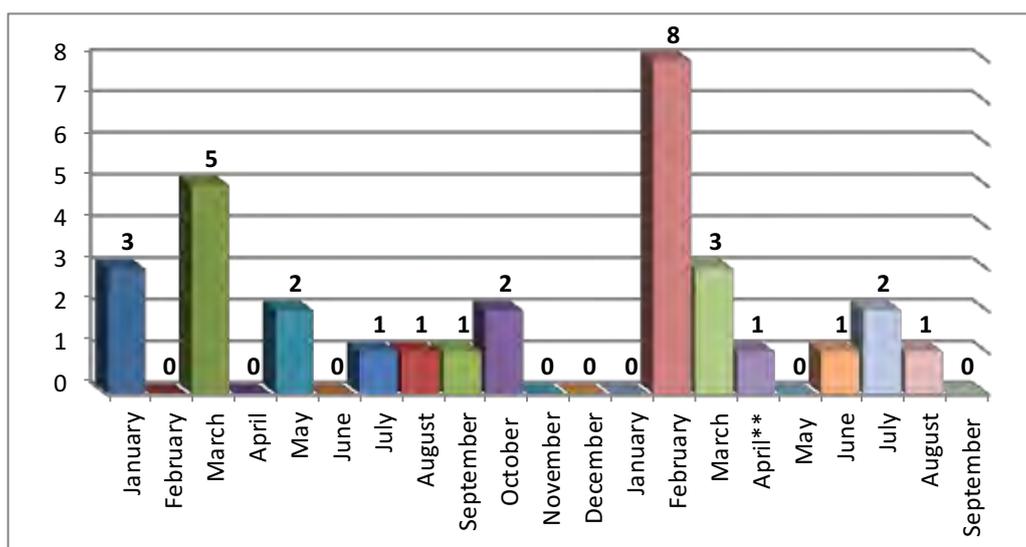
- ▶ The Israeli security forces detained **a terrorist squad whose members were Israeli citizens living in the Palestinian neighborhood of Silwan in east Jerusalem**. They called themselves "the ghosts of Silwan." Eight of the squad operatives were detained. The leader of the squad was **Muhammad Farukh**, 39, an Israeli citizen **in contact with operatives in Lebanon and the Gaza Strip to receive sponsorship and funding**.
- ▶ Interrogation of the squad revealed that they **planned to carry out shooting attacks at Israeli targets in Silwan** (Israeli vehicles or houses in the neighborhood where Jews live). To that end they needed weapons. They also threw Molotov cocktails, shot fireworks and threw stones at the Israeli security forces and security vehicles. On August 6, 2017, before throwing Molotov cocktails, they poured gasoline on a security vehicle to set it on fire. The members of the squad were indicted (Israel Security Agency, September 19, 2017).

## Israel's South

### Rocket Fire Attacking Israel

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

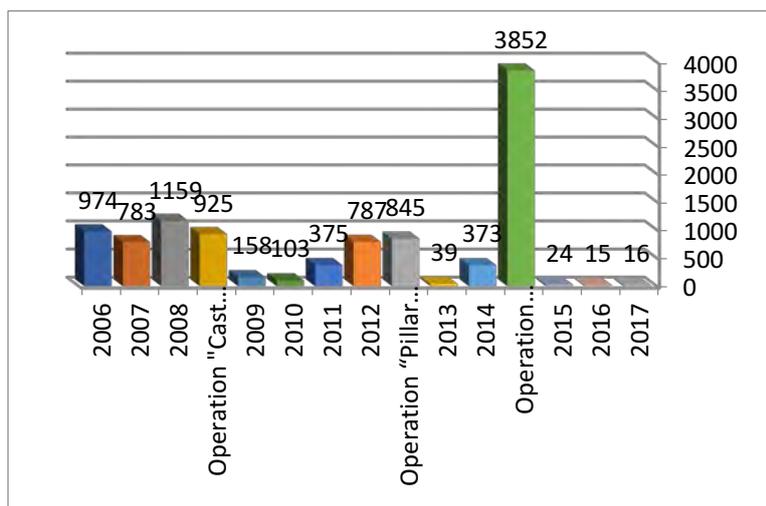
### Monthly Distribution of Rocket Hits in Israel since January 2016



\*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 South<sup>2</sup>



## Developments in the Gaza Strip

### The humanitarian situation

#### The supply of electricity

► **Muhammed Thabet, director of public relations and information for the Gaza Strip electric company**, said the supply of electricity to the residents of the Gaza Strip had returned to cycles of four hours with and 12 hours without power. He said that was because the power plant currently supplies 45 megawatts instead of the 67 megawatts it formerly produced. He added that all the power lines from Egypt were operative, after having been inoperative because of maintenance work (Dunia al-Watan, September 23, 2017).

#### The reconstruction of buildings

► **Mofeed al-Hasayneh, PA minister of housing and public works**, said that of the 11,000 houses destroyed in Operation Protective Edge, **80% had been completely rebuilt**. He said the Gaza Strip now needed \$150 million to complete reconstruction and return the residents to their houses (Ma'an, September 20, 2017).

#### UNRWA

► Following a request lodged with the UN General Assembly, a report was issued to member countries suggesting ways to fund UNRWA to ensure the uninterrupted continuation of its operations. The report mentioned new sources for funding, such as the World Bank and the

<sup>2</sup> The statistics do not include mortar shell fire or rockets which misfired and fell inside the Gaza Strip.

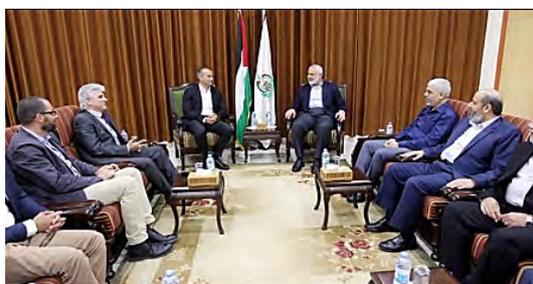
Islamic Development Bank. UN Secretary General António Guterres said UNRWA must continue its humanitarian support of the Palestinian refugees and that there must be immediate action because UNRWA might lose all its funding in a matter of weeks (UN website, September 23, 2017).

► The government of Austria transferred €1.5 million to UNRWA to support a medical program in the PA territories. Austria is one of UNRWA's largest donors and since 2007 has given the agency more than €21 million (alresalah.net, September 22, 2017).

### **The visit of the UN special coordinator to the Gaza Strip**

► **Nikolay Mladenov, UN special coordinator for the Middle East peace process**, arrived in the Gaza Strip accompanied by a delegation of aides. He was received by Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau. Present at the meeting were Yahya al-Sinwar, head of the Hamas' political bureau in the Gaza Strip, and senior Hamas figures Khalil al-Haya, Nizar Awadallah and Salah al-Bardawil. At the meeting Haniyeh reported on the discussions held in Cairo, the issue of the internal Palestinian reconciliation and the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip (Hamas website, September 25, 2017).

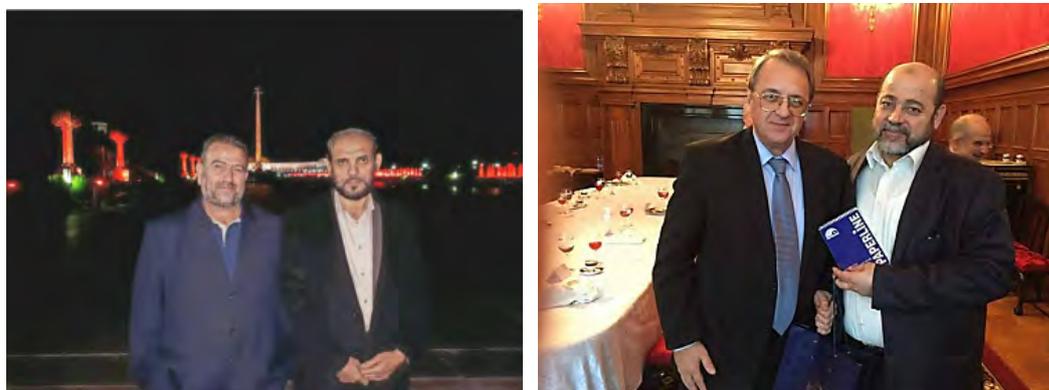
► Mladenov held a press conference where he praised Hamas' decision to disband its administrative committee, saying no understandings would have been reached without Egypt. He expressed hope that the Palestinian government would come to the Gaza Strip and take responsibility for it. He also said that such a step would help lift the siege of the Gaza Strip (Ma'an, September 25, 2017).



**Right: Nikolay Mladenov holds a press conference in Gaza (Ma'an, September 25, 2017). Left: Mladenov meets with senior Hamas figures (Hamas website, September 25, 2017).**

## Hamas visit to Russia

► **A senior delegation of senior "external" Hamas figures, headed by Musa Abu Marzouq of Hamas' political bureau, and Saleh al-Arouri, met in Russia on September 19, 2017, with Russian officials.** According to Musa Abu Marzouq, the delegation met with **Mikhail Bogdanov, Russian deputy foreign minister**, and other senior figures in the foreign ministry. The Hamas delegation asked the Russians to help put an end to the "siege" of the Gaza Strip and work in the international arena to prevent the United States from exerting pressure on Hamas or imposing sanctions. According to Musa Abu Marzouq, the Russian foreign minister emphasized **Russia does not regard Hamas as a terrorist organization, but rather as an important Palestinian faction that won in fair elections.** Musa Abu Marzouq said he felt Russia wants to have an active role in future dialogues (al-Hayat, September 22, 2017).



**Right: Musa Abu Marzouq, deputy head of Hamas' political bureau, with Mikhail Bogdanov, Russian deputy foreign minister (Hamas website, September 21, 2017). Left: Picture posted Husam Badran to his Twitter account of himself and Saleh al-Arouri with the lights of Moscow in the background (Twitter account of Husam Badran, date, 2017).**

► **Following the visit of the Hamas delegation it was reported that a permanent Hamas representative to Russia had been appointed.** Hamas did not reveal his name. **Note:** Hamas has official representatives in a number of countries, among them Lebanon, Iran and Yemen, and an office was recently opened in Algeria. It was also agreed that for the time being, senior Hamas figure Rawhi Mushtaha would remain in Cairo to monitor the issue of the participation of both sides (al-Quds al-Arabi, September 23, 2017).

## Death of Hamas terrorist operative

► Hamas' military-terrorist wing announced the death of **Hani Faraj Shalouf**, 24, from the al-Shabura neighborhood of Rafah. According to a spokesman for the ministry of health in the Gaza Strip, Shalouf was an operative in the military wing's engineering unit and had been involved with building tunnels since 2011. **He was electrocuted in a tunnel in Rafah** (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades website, September 19 and 20, 2017; Filastin al-A'an, September 19, 2017).



**Hani Shalouf (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades website, September 20, 2017).**

## Delegation of senior Hamas figures returns from Egypt

► A Hamas delegation headed by Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau, returned to the Gaza Strip from Egypt after a ten-day visit (al-Quds, September 19, 2017). On his return Haniyeh held a press conference at the Rafah crossing where he said **the Hamas delegation's visit to Egypt had been successful and achieved important results**. He claimed that in addition to the reconciliation, the visit had dealt with five important issues, headed by the political situation and the Palestinian cause. The delegation also discussed Hamas' bilateral relations with Egypt.

► Haniyeh claimed the visit to Egypt had defined "strategic elements" in the relations between Hamas and Egypt. It had also dealt, he said, with the issue of security, during which the situation along the border and the Rafah crossing was discussed. The Hamas delegation had stressed that Hamas was concerned about Egyptian national security and stability. The issue of the "siege" was also discussed, as were the [economic] crises in the Gaza Strip. **Haniyeh expressed hope that the visit would bear fruit, but did not mention specific steps or Egyptian promises** (Hamas movement website, September 19, 2017).



**Isma'il Haniyeh, Yahya al-Sinwar and Khalil al-Haya hold a press conference at the Rafah crossing after their return to the Gaza Strip ( Hamas website, September 19, 2017).**

## The internal Palestinian Reconciliation

### **Disbanding Hamas' administrative committee and preparing to turn the direction of governmental institutions over to the national consensus government**

- ▶ With the return of the Hamas delegation from Egypt, Isma'il Haniyeh said that Hamas had decided to disband its administrative committee. He said Hamas had taken a giant step forward and had not posed any obstacles to the reconciliation. **He claimed the committee had already ceased functioning.** He invited a delegation of the Palestinian national consensus government to talks in Gaza and Cairo to arrange for the transfer of authority and called on the Palestinian government to hold a meeting of all the Palestinian organizations (Hamas movement website, September 19, 2017).
- ▶ On September 25, 2017, **Yusuf al-Mahmoudi, spokesman for the national consensus government,** said that **Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah,** after deliberating with Mahmoud Abbas, had **decided to hold the next government meeting in the Gaza Strip** (Wafa, date, 2017). **Hussein al-Sheikh, minister of civilian affairs,** said that all the senior officials and security figures of the national consensus government would **leave on October 2, 2017 for the Gaza Strip to begin the process of the transfer of authority.** He said the national consensus government was prepared to accept responsibility for the crossings and government headquarters as soon as it arrived (Ma'an, September 25, 2017). Two Egyptian representatives will also go to the Gaza Strip to monitor the implementation of the agreement (Palestinian TV, September 25, 2017).

- ▶  **Hamas spokesman Abd al-Latif al-Qanu'** praised PA Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah for his decision to hold the weekly government meeting in the Gaza Strip, and wished the government success in its roles. He said the PA had to revoke the measures it had taken against the Gaza Strip (Shehab, September 25, 2017). **Senior Hamas figure Khalil al-Haya** said Hamas would work to meet all the conditions necessary for ensuring the success of the national consensus government when it arrives in the Gaza Strip.
- ▶ It was also reported that after the members of the administrative committee left their offices,  **Hamas made preparations for the transfer of governmental institutions in the Gaza Strip to the national consensus government.** Hamas also instructed senior bureau employees to fully cooperate with the ministers of the Palestinian national consensus government and to do everything necessary to complete the transfer (al-Quds al-Arabi, September 21, 2017).
- ▶  **According to Nabil Shaath, advisor to Mahmoud Abbas for foreign affairs and international relations,** there are still issues which have to be resolved, such as security control in the Gaza Strip and the issue of lower-level officials. However, he said it was a process and that after dialogue there would be complete trust between both sides. Nabil Shaath stressed that Mahmoud Abbas would rescind the measures he had taken against the Gaza Strip if Hamas committed itself to implementing the agreement and make it clear that it would transfer control of the Gaza Strip to Mahmoud Abbas and the national consensus government. Then Mahmoud Abbas would rescind the measures he had instituted and there would be mutual trust (al-Quds al-Arabi, September 21, 2017).

## The Palestinian Authority (PA)

### Mahmoud Abbas' speech at the UN General Assembly

Mahmoud Abbas' speech focused on a call to the world to support the success of peace and the two-state solution with the 1967 borders. He strongly attacked Israel for the "continuing occupation" and for its refusal to recognize a Palestinian state. He said he had asked the International Criminal Court in The Hague (ICC) to begin an investigation of senior Israeli figures, and said the PA would continue signing accords and joining international organizations.

► The main points of Mahmoud Abbas' speech were the following (Wafa, September 20, 2017):

◆ **The political process:** Mahmoud Abbas presented the principles he believes will lead to the success of the peace process and the two-state solution, and called on the UN and its member states to promote them. He asked for a clear time table to end the Israeli occupation, implement the Arab peace initiative and stop the settlement project in the Palestinian territories. He called on the international community not to support or have any involvement in the so-called "colonial settlement regime" and demanded protection and financial support for the Palestinian people.

◆ **Israel:** Mahmoud Abbas accused Israel of refusing to recognize a Palestinian state with the 1967 borders and of employing procrastination, subterfuge and excuses to evade its responsibility to end the occupation. He claimed it was all done in contrast to the Palestinian's recognition of a State of Israel with the 1967 borders and in contrast to the principles of the Oslo Accords. He called the continuation of the occupation "Israel's mark of shame." He claimed Israel's annexations of east Jerusalem and the Golan Heights are illegal. **He said the PA had asked the ICC to begin investigations of senior Israeli figures in connection with the settlements and the harm done to the Palestinian people.** He said the PA would continue signing accords and joining international organizations to establish its status in the UN.

◆ **Terrorism: Mahmoud Abbas claimed he rejects all forms of terrorism,** adding that the end of the occupation is a necessary step in the struggle against terrorism. He claimed Israeli policies in east Jerusalem "play with fire" and inflame religious fervor that could develop into a violent religious conflict. He claimed **the Palestinian struggle is political and that the Palestinian people shun terrorism or a religious war.**

◆ **Historical reckoning:** Mahmoud Abbas again demanded recognition and reparations **from Britain to repair the "historical injustice" of the Balfour Declaration.** He called on the international community to punish Israel for violating UN General Assembly Resolution 194 (the so-called "right of return" of the Palestinian refugees) and Resolution 2334 (the illegality of the settlements). He also asked that Israel be punished for violating the UN Partition Plan, saying that Israel be recognized only within the 1967 borders.

- ▶ **Before giving the speech Mahmoud Abbas met with Donald Trump.** In a joint statement given before the meeting Trump said that he believes there is a good chance for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He said he would devote all his efforts to achieving a political agreement between Israel and the PA (White House website, September 20, 2017)

## Public reactions to the speech

- ▶ Mahmoud Abbas' speech was well-received by senior PA figures:
  - ◆ **Hanan Ashrawi, speaking for the PLO's Executive Committee**, said the speech had delivered a clear message strengthening the principles of the Palestinian people's basic legal and national rights. She said the speech had faithfully represented the issues in a way that committed the international community to obey its laws and respect its decisions, and to bear political and humanitarian responsibility for the Palestinian people (Dunia al-Watan, September 21, 2017).
  - ◆ According to **Riyad al-Maliki, foreign minister of the national consensus government**, an international consensus now exists about the two-state solution and that the PA had worked to years to achieve it. He added that the alternative to the two-state solution is the one-state solution (Ma'an, September 22, 2017).



**Right: Mahmoud Abbas speaking at a session of the UN General Assembly in New York (Wafa, date, 2017). Left: Cartoon in the Palestinian daily paper al-Quds, published in east Jerusalem, illustrating the PA's difficulties in promoting measures in the UN (al-Quds, September 21, 2017).**

- ▶ **Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum** criticized the part of the speech dealing with a political process based on what he called the "failed approach of negotiations and arrangements" with the occupation. He said that unfortunately Mahmoud Abbas had not distinguished between the [so-called] "legitimate resistance" of the Palestinian people and

the Israeli occupation, which perpetrates the most extreme form of terrorism ( Hamas website, September 21, 2017).

### Statement made by a PLO representative at a meeting in Washington, DC

► Husam Zomlot, PLO representative in Washington, DC, gave a speech at a meeting of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC). He said that in Congress a political campaign is currently being waged. That is because there are currently 25 proposed bills in Congress that will be debated if the Palestinians appeal to [join] UN agencies. He said the most recent proposed bill cuts part of the budget for the Palestinians as a means of exerting pressure on the PA **to stop its support of the families of prisoners and shaheeds**. According to Zomlot, **Congress had sent a message to the Palestinians to stop supporting the families of shaheeds**. He stressed that **the commitment of the Palestinian leadership to the families of prisoners and shaheeds is greater than any other consideration, and that the PA would not cut its funds for them** (Ma'an, date, 2017).



Husam Zomlot speaking at an ADC meeting in Washington, DC  
(Facebook page of Husam Zomlot, September 24, 2017)

### PA efforts in the international arena

#### INTERPOL

Despite Israel's diplomatic struggle to prevent the PA from joining INTERPOL, based on the fact that it does not meet the criteria for a state, **INTERPOL's Executive Committee decided to transfer the PA's request to the General Assembly, which will meet on September 27, 2017, in Beijing** (Ma'an, September 26, 2017).

► **The national consensus government's foreign ministry** strongly condemned the Israeli government's actions to defeat the PA's efforts to join INTERPOL. According to the foreign ministry, Israel's policies defeat the efforts of the Americans to renew the negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. Therefore, the PA will continue its efforts to achieve full membership in the UN and **join international agencies to bring about the end of the occupation** (Wafa, September 24, 2017).

### Lawfare

► The Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR), al-Mayadeen Center, al-Haq and the Council of Palestinian Human Rights Organizations **lodged a complaint with Fatou Bensouda, chief prosecutor of the ICC. According to the claim, Israel is guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem.**

► The Palestinian organization **al-Haq** said in a formal statement on its website that **its director Shawan Jabarin**<sup>3</sup> had lodged a 700-page report, the fourth of its kind, with the ICC. According to the statement, the report "documents" the "crimes" carried out by Israel in Judea, Samaria and east Jerusalem and is supposed to be given to chief prosecutor Fatou Bensouda (al-Haq, September 20, 2017).

► According to Jabarin, the objective is to have an investigation begun of all the "crimes" Israel has committed against Palestinians (al-Aqsa TV, September 20, 2017). In the meantime, four Palestinian NGOs in the Gaza Strip held a press conference (the PCHR, al-Mayadeen Center, al-Dameer and al-Haq). The press conference was headed by Raji al-Surani, PCHR director in the Gaza Strip, who condemned Israel's actions against the Palestinian population in Judea, Samaria and east Jerusalem (al-Haq, September 21, 2017).



**Right: Shawan Jabarin holding the report before handing it over (al-Haq, September 20, 2017).**

**Left: Press conference in Gaza held by Raji al-Surani (al-Haq, September 21, 2017).**

<sup>3</sup> In the past Shawan Jabarin was an operative the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) a terrorist organization established by George Habash. The PFLP has been involved in international terrorism, including abducting civilians and deadly terrorist attacks.



**Nada Kiswanson, attorney from The Hague who received the Palestinian report (frontlinedefenders, September 25, 2017).**

### Saeb Erekat reveals illness

► **Saeb Erekat, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee**, revealed in an interview that **he had pulmonary fibrosis, an incurable lung disease that leads to progressive loss of lung function**. He said he had become ill five years ago but in recent months his condition had worsened. He said he is currently waiting for a lung transplant to be carried out in the United States (Palestinian TV, September 21, 2017). People posted wishes for a full recovery on his official Facebook page (Facebook page of Saeb Erekat, September 24, 2017).



**Right: Saeb Erekat in a wheelchair pushed by Husam Zomlot, the PA representative to the United States, at a conference of the Arab and Palestinian dispersal in America. Left: Cartoon symbolizing Saeb Erekat's illness. The Arabic reads, "I breathe the homeland" (Facebook page of Saeb Erekat, September 24, 2017).**