



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (October 3 – 17, 2017)

Overview

- ▶ At the beginning of October there was a stabbing attack that killed an Israeli civilian from Elkana. His body was found in a warehouse in Kafr Qassem. The Israel Security Agency reported detaining two Palestinians from Qabatiya who had been involved in the stabbing attack, which was carried out because of nationalist motives.
- ▶ This past week two rockets were fired from the northern Sinai Peninsula at the western Negev. There were no casualties and no damage was reported. ISIS's Sinai Province fired the rockets as part of a broad-scale attack on the Egyptian security forces.
- ▶ **On October 12, 2017, a reconciliation agreement was signed by Fatah and Hamas** with the stated goal of "ending the Palestinian division." It was signed in Cairo and mediated by the Egyptians. The agreement determined that governing the Gaza Strip **will be transferred to the Palestinian national consensus government** according to a set schedule for implementing decisions within weeks and months.
- ▶ The agreement includes **transferring supervision of the border crossings to the Palestinian Authority (PA)** by November 1, 2017. According to the agreement, experts will meet to decide how the security forces in the Gaza Strip will function. It was also decided that a solution had to be found for government employees serving in the Gaza Strip (many of whom are affiliated with Hamas) by February 1, 2018.
- ▶ **Not included in the agreement** were a number of **sensitive and important issues** which might have prevented its signing: the future of Hamas' military wing and its weapons; Hamas activity in Judea and Samaria; lifting the sanctions Mahmoud Abbas imposed on the Gaza Strip; establishing a Palestinian national consensus government with Hamas and the issue of Hamas membership in the PLO.

Terrorist attacks and attempted terrorist attacks

- ▶ **Stabbing attack:** On October 4, 2017, the body of man in his seventies was found in a warehouse in Kafr Qassem. He had been stabbed to death. He lived in Elkana (western

Samaria) and owned a warehouse in the industrial zone of Kafr Qassem. On October 8, 2017, the Israel Security Agency announced **the detention of two Palestinians from Qabatiya who had been involved in the murder. The announcement said that the motive had been nationalist and that it had been deemed a terrorist attack.**

► On October 11, 2017, Border Policemen detained a Palestinian staying in Israel illegally. He resisted detention, **took out a knife and tried to stab the policemen.** He was detained and taken for interrogation (Facebook page of Red Alert, October 11, 2017).

The Situation in Judea and Samaria

Riots, clashes and popular terrorism

► These past two weeks 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 and seizing weapons. The more prominent occurrences were the following:

◆ **October 16, 2017** – The Israeli security forces detained **Abd al-Rahman al-Jalis**, 30, from the **Jilazoun refugee camp** (near Ramallah). He was planning a terrorist attack inside Israel (Facebook page of Red Alert, October 15, 2017). The Palestinian media reported he was detained on the Israeli claim that he had allegedly posted his will to his Facebook page where he announced that he was planning an attack against Israel (Ma'an and the Palinfo Twitter account, October 17, 2017). In the early hours of the morning (apparently close to the time he was detained) he posted a notice on his Facebook page saying he did not intend to carry out an attack and that a number of days previously he had posted a death notice for a cousin (Facebook page of Abd al-Rahman al-Jalis, October 17, 2017).



Abd al-Rahman al-Jalis, detained by the Israeli security forces for planning a terrorist attack against Israel (Watan, October 17, 2017).

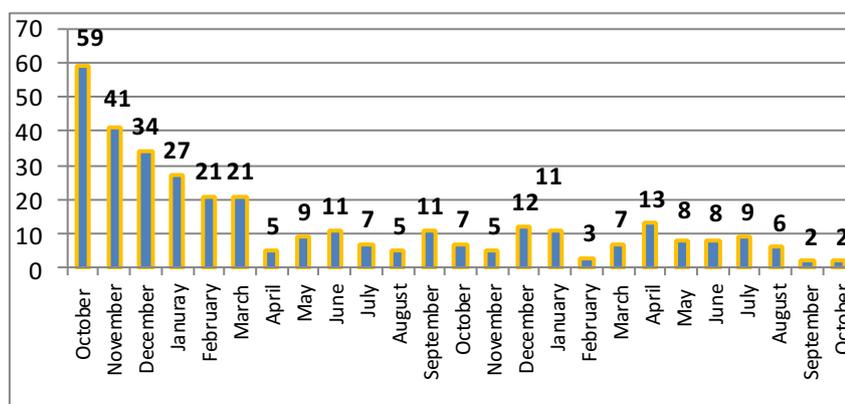
- ◆ **October 15, 2017** – The Israeli security forces detained a Palestinian from **Jenin** who went to the military courthouse with a pipe bomb. He was detained and taken for interrogation (Facebook page of Red Alert, October 15, 2017).
- ◆ **October 15, 2017** – In an operation carried out by the Israeli security forces in **the Dheisheh refugee camp** a Palestinian was shot in the leg during a riot (Facebook page of Red Alert, October 15, 2017).
- ◆ **October 14, 2017** – Border Policemen prevented three Palestinians **from Nablus** from infiltrating into Israel. The three were found in the trunk of a car driving to the Hizmeh crossing (Facebook page of Red Alert, October 14, 2017).
- ◆ **October 13, 2017** – Palestinians rioted near **Beit Hagai** (Hebron region). They threw stones at Israeli security forces, who responded with gunfire to disperse the rioters (Facebook page of Red Alert, October 13, 2017).
- ◆ **October 12, 2017** – Palestinians threw stones and Molotov cocktails at Israeli security forces in **Issawiya** (northern Jerusalem). An Israeli policeman was wounded and evacuated to a hospital (Facebook page of Red Alert, October 12, 2017).
- ◆ **October 12, 2017** – The Jerusalem police detained a young Palestinian who threw stones at the light railway in the **Shuafat area in northern Jerusalem**. There were no casualties. The railway as damaged (Facebook page of Red Alert, October 12, 2017).
- ◆ **October 12, 2017** – Palestinians threw stones at Israeli security forces operating in the **Jilazoun refugee camp** (near Ramallah). There were no casualties and no damage was reported (Facebook page of Red Alert, October 12, 2017).

- ◆ **October 11, 2017** – Palestinians threw Molotov cocktails at an IDF force operating near **Nablus**. There were no casualties and no damage was reported (Facebook page of Red Alert, October 11, 2017).
- ◆ **October 10, 2017** – Border Policemen detained a Palestinian from **the village of Bidu** (northwest of Jerusalem) who was suspected of rioting and throwing stones at Israeli security forces. A search of his house revealed a large quantity of weapons, including used spare parts from which to make improvised weapons (Facebook page of Red Alert, October 10, 2017).



Windshield of Israeli vehicle attacked with stones near Bayt A'innon, north of Hebron (Palinfo Twitter account, October 16, 2017).

Significant Terrorist Attacks in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem since September 2015¹



¹ 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.

Israel's South

Rocket fire attacking Israel

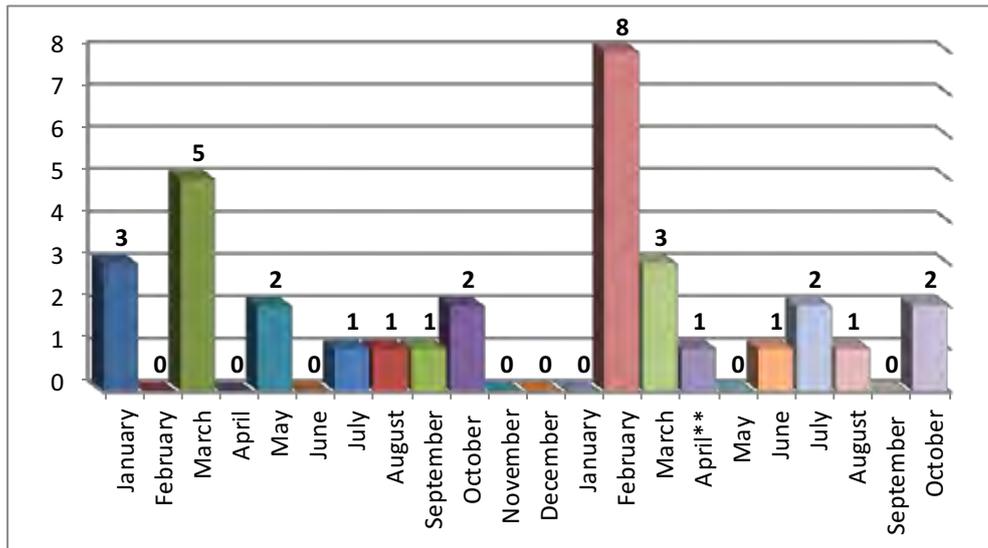
► On October 15, 2017, **two rockets were fired from the northern Sinai Peninsula into Israeli territory**. The rockets fell in open areas in the western Negev. There were no casualties and no damage was reported. The rockets were fired by operatives of ISIS's Sinai Province. According to an announcement issued by ISIS, **the rocket fire was part of a broad-scale attack, primarily launched against the Egyptian security forces in the northern Sinai Peninsula** (Haq, October 16, 2017).



Notice issued by ISIS's Sinai Province claiming responsibility for the attacks on the Egypt army at Sheikh Zuweid and El Arish, and for firing two Grad rockets at the western Negev (dawaalhaq, October 16, 2017).

► On October 8, 2017, a rocket was fired at Israeli territory, falling inside the **Gaza Strip** (near the border security fence). No claim of responsibility was issued, but Salafists in the Gaza Strip welcomed it. **In response IDF forces fired at a number of targets in the central Gaza Strip**. The Palestinian media reported that the IDF had fired artillery and destroyed a Hamas observation post east of the al-Maghazi refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip (Ma'an and (aljazeera.net, October 8 and 9, 2017)

Monthly Distribution of Rocket Hits in Israel since January 2016

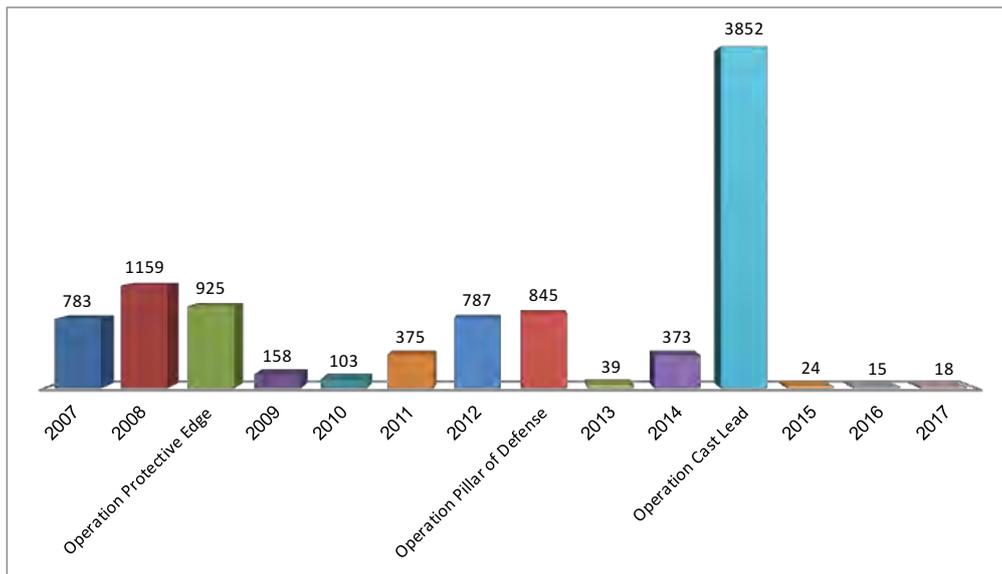


*Six of the rockets fired in February 2017 were launched from the Sinai Peninsula at Israeli territory, apparently by ISIS's Sinai Province.

** The rocket fired in April was launched from the Sinai Peninsula by ISIS's Sinai Province.

*** In October 2017 two rockets were fired from the northern Sinai Peninsula by ISIS's Sinai Province. They fell in an open area in the western Negev.

Annual Distribution of Rocket Hits in Israel's South²



Palestinians shoot at IDF forces at the border security fence

► **On October 11, 2017**, Palestinians shot at an IDF force engaged in routine operations near the border security fence in the southern Gaza Strip. The soldiers returned fire at a number of Palestinians seen at the site. There were no casualties. In response IDF tanks

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

fired at a Hamas post near the Gaza Strip border (Facebook page of Red Alert, October 11, 2017).

Attempted smuggling at the Kerem Shalom crossing

► **On October 8, 2017**, security inspectors of the border crossings authority at the Kerem Shalom crossing and representatives of the Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories detained a truck carrying a consignment of winter slippers for the Gaza Strip. Examination of the slippers revealed an attempt to smuggle thousands of pair of military boots, apparently for the operatives of the elite units of Hamas military-terrorist wing. The boots were hidden inside the slippers (various news websites, October 8, 2017).



Military boots hidden in a shipment of winter slippers (Facebook page of the Israeli Ministry of Defense, October 8, 2017)

Developments in the Gaza Strip

The humanitarian situation

The supply of electricity

► **Muhammad Thabet, spokesman for the Gaza Strip electric company**, said improving the supply of electricity depended on **national consensus government decisions** and on how long it would take to transfer authority for the Gaza Strip to the national consensus government. He said that without a doubt **in the coming days there would be an improvement**. He added that currently electricity is supplied in cycles of six hours with power and ten without (Dunia al-Watan, October 15, 2017).

The Rafah crossing

► The border crossings authority reported **the Rafah crossing would be opened** as of October 16, 2017, for humanitarian cases and Palestinians waiting on both sides (Emad, October 15, 2017). However, in the wake of the ISIS attack in the Sinai Peninsula against

Egyptian army posts in Sheikh Zuweid, the Egyptian army announced it had **decided not to open the Rafah crossing** (Safa, October 16, 2017).

The completion of the buffer zone along the Egypt-Gaza Strip border

► **Tawfiq Abu Na'im**, deputy minister of the interior in the Gaza Strip and responsible for the security forces, announced that **Hamas had completed the construction of the buffer zone along the Gaza Strip-Egypt border**. He said a barbed wire fence had been erected, security cameras had been installed and a command center had been established. He said that in a few days Hamas would hold a press conference where it would reveal the scope of the work carried out, especially everything connected to securing the border (al-Youm al-Sabaa, October 6, 2017).



Erecting obstacles and barbed wire fences in the buffer zone along the Egypt-Gaza Strip border (Sawt al-Uma, October 14, 2017)

► **Na'im al-Ghoul, head of Hamas' national security force**, visited the Gaza Strip-Egypt border for a first-hand look at the construction of the buffer zone and its various facilities (Facebook page of the national security forces in the Gaza Strip, October 3, 2017). He claimed Egypt had promised to supply patrol cars, weapons and monitoring devices for securing the border (al-Youm al-Sabaa, October 7, 2017).³ **The open question now is whether, following the reconciliation agreement with the PA, supervision of the buffer zone will also be transferred to the PA's security forces.**

³ For further information about the buffer zone, see the July 16, 2017 bulletin, "Hamas constructs a buffer zone to secure its border with Egypt in response to a demand from the Egyptian regime."



Na'im al-Ghoul visits Hamas forces along the Gaza Strip-Egypt border (Facebook page of the national security forces in the Gaza Strip, October 3, 2017).

Hamas activities against the Salafists

► **Iyad al-Bazam, spokesman for the ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip**, reported that **the security forces had detained Nur Issa, a senior Salafi jihadist operative in the Gaza Strip who had been on the wanted list for a year** (website of the ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip, October 7, 2017). Nur Issa, from the al-Bureij refugee camp, was head of an organization called "The descendants of the prophet under the wings of Jerusalem." A number of other senior jihadist operatives were detained with him. The Ibn Taymiyyah Media Center confirmed he had been detained and condemned Hamas' internal security forces (Haq, October, 2017; Ma'an, October 7, 2017; al-Hayat, October 8, 2017).



Nur Issa after his detainment (YouTube, October 7, 2017).

Deputy head of Hamas' political bureau appointed

► At a meeting of its Shura Council, **Hamas announced the appointment of Saleh al-'Arouri as deputy chairman of Hamas' political bureau** (Hamas movement website, October 9, 2017). Saleh al-'Arouri replaced Musa Abu Marzouq, who, according to the

regulations of the Hamas movement, could not serve two consecutive terms.⁴ As deputy chairman, Saleh al-'Arouri headed the Hamas delegation to the reconciliation agreement talks.



Right: Saleh al-'Arouri (Hamas website, October 17, 2017). Left: Hamas announcement of Saleh al-'Arouri's appointment (Hamas movement website, October 9, 2017).

Saleh al-'Arouri was born in 1966 and comes from the village of 'Aroura (Ramallah area). **He cofounded Hamas' military-terrorist wing in Judea and Samaria during the nineteen nineties.** He was detained by Israel in 1992 and sentenced to five years in jail for membership in a terrorist organization. Since then he served various sentences. He was released from jail on March 30, 2010, and expelled from Israel. He went first to Jordan and from there to Syria.

- ▶ **In Syria Saleh al-'Arouri again directed terrorist activities in addition to his other dealings.** Upon reaching Syria he was elected to Hamas' political bureau and given the prisoners' portfolio. As a result he participated in the negotiations for the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal. When Hamas left its headquarters in Damascus after the outbreak of the Syrian civil war, **al-'Arouri went to Turkey and settled in Istanbul, where he established a political bureau for Hamas.**
- ▶ **From Turkey had continued his activities to establish, fund and reinforce Hamas' military-terrorist networks in Judea and Samaria.** After his arrival in Turkey Hamas' political bureau became more significant and he was Hamas representative in Turkey. In

⁴ **Musa Abu Marzouq** was appointed to head the office of political affairs, which includes political planning and international relations. **Khalil al-Haya** was appointed to head Hamas' main information office; **Izzat al-Rishq** to head the ministry of Arab and Islamic relations; and **Husam Badran** to head the ministry of national connections (al-Quds, October 5, 2017).

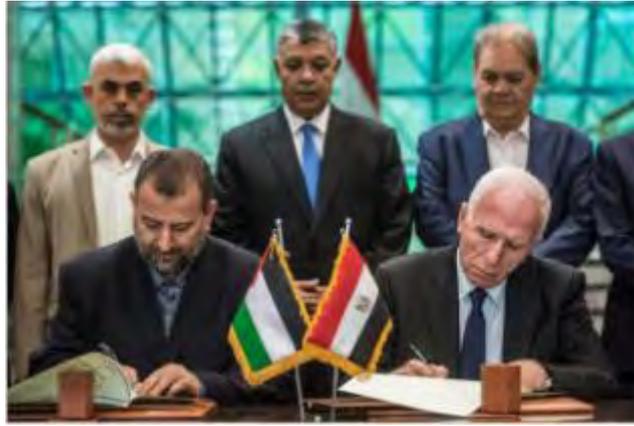
reality, his "political" bureau also dealt with organizing and handling terrorist squads in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem. In August 2015, when Israel and Turkey were about to renew diplomatic relations, he left Turkey and **went to Syria, where he currently carries out his activities.**

► Interviewed after the last round of talks in Cairo, Saleh al-'Arouri said **Hamas is not interested in a political process with Israel**, and sees its main role as "resistance" ("until the occupation leaves our lands"). He said, "We have no political dealings with the enemy, only resistance." He also noted that the reconciliation agreement includes participation in deciding war and peace. He said it was out of the question that anyone would surprise Hamas by signing a political agreement, but a decision for a confrontation with Israel also had to be "a national Palestinian decision." He added there had to be agreement about "all the forms" of the confrontation with Israel. Asked if Hamas and Fatah plan to reach a national strategy integrating political and resistance activities, he said Hamas hopes to reach a "comprehensive national strategy" for dealing with "the Zionist enterprise." He added **that it would not be hard to find a formula that could unite everyone** (al-Quds, October 14, 2017).

The Internal Palestinian Reconciliation

► **On October 9, 2017, small Hamas and PA delegations went to Egypt for another round of talks to formulate the reconciliation agreement.** The Hamas delegation was headed by **Saleh al-'Arouri** as his first act as deputy head of Hamas' political bureau. Also in the delegation was **Yahya al-Sinwar**, head of Hamas' political bureau in the Gaza Strip. The PA was represented by **Majed Faraj**, head of PA general intelligence, and **Hussein al-Sheikh**, head of the ministry of civil affairs and holder of the Fatah's reconciliation portfolio.

► Despite the differences of opinion and distance between the sides, on October 12, 2017, after two days of deliberations, it was announced that **an agreement had been signed by Fatah and Hamas "to end the Palestinian division."** The agreement was a summation of the understandings reached by the various delegations **through Egyptian mediation (Khaled Fawzy**, head of Egyptian General Intelligence, was present at the signing) (al-Aqsa, October 12, 2017).



Azzam al-Ahmed (right), head of the Fatah delegation, and Saleh al-'Arouri (left), head of the Hamas delegation, sign the reconciliation agreement in Cairo. Behind them are Yahya al-Sinwar, head of Hamas' political bureau in the Gaza Strip, Khaled Fawzy, the Egyptian minister of intelligence, and senior Fatah figure Rawhi Fattouh (Wafa, October 12, 2017).



The text of the reconciliation agreement signed in Cairo (Hamas website, October 12, 2017).

The reconciliation agreement includes a decision to transfer governing of the Gaza Strip to the Palestinian national consensus government, including control of the crossings. The agreement set a schedule for implementing the decisions within weeks and months, as opposed to previous agreements. The agreement is vaguely worded regarding several issues and the discussion of controversial issues **was postponed by transferring them to joint professional committees. The agreement also does not mention sensitive, important issues such as disarming Hamas's military wing, the national consensus government and Hamas membership in the PLO. It also does not include the PA's obligation to cancel the sanctions Mahmoud Abbas imposed to punish the Gaza Strip. It was decided that the talks would continue in Egypt on November 14, 2017 (Safa, October 14, 2017).**

► **Muhammad Ashtia, a member of Fatah's Central Committee**, on the sidelines of a World Bank conference currently being held in Washington, DC, called on the international community to enlist to support the implementation of the reconciliation agreement. He

said the Palestinian government had already begun its implementation and had to deal with the humanitarian hardships in the Gaza Strip, which necessitated international support (Ma'an, October 16, 2017).



Right: Gazans celebrate the signing of the agreement at the Square of the Unknown Soldier in Gaza City (Wafa, October 12, 2017). Left: Hamas activist in Gaza Strip hands out candy to passersby to celebrate the signing of the reconciliation agreement in Cairo (Palinfo Twitter account, October 12, 2017).

- ▶ The following are some of the key issues discussed in the talks and were expressed (and not expressed) in the agreement:

The border crossings

- ▶ **According to the agreement, the transfer of all the border crossings to the national consensus government has to be completed and PA teams have to be enabled to fully direct the operation of the crossings by November 1, 2017** (Safa, October 14, 2017). On October 16, 2017, a delegation of the PA border crossings authority went to the Gaza Strip to be implementing the agreement. **Nazmi Mahanna** met with **Tawfiq Abu Na'im**, who is responsible for the security forces in the Gaza Strip (Facebook page of Palinfo, October 16, 2017). The delegation also visited the Rafah crossing and the Kerem Shalom crossing (Shehab, October 16, 2017).
- ▶ According to **Azzam al-Ahmed**, a member of Fatah's Central Committee, **a Palestinian crossings authority will be established and take responsibility for the Beit Hanoun crossing (the Erez crossing) and the Kerem Shalom crossing no later than November 12, 2017**. In the meantime Egypt is preparing its side of the Rafah crossing for opening. The Palestinian side of the Rafah crossing will be manned by Presidential Guardsmen who will deploy along the border. Egypt will enable the passage of humanitarian aid for Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, but for the full opening of the Rafah crossing agreements signed with

Israel and various European countries have to be regularized, as well as the agreement signed in 2005 (Palestinian TV, October 12, 2017).⁵



Right: Nazmi Mahanna, in charge of the crossings for the PA, meets in Gaza with Tawfiq Abu Na'im, in charge of internal security in Gaza Strip. Left: Nazmi Mahanna visits the Rafah crossing (Palinfo Twitter account, October 16, 2017).

The security forces

- ▶ **According to the agreement, the leadership of the PA security forces will visit the Gaza Strip to examine the security situation.** During the visit experts will meet to establish the status of the security forces. That will be un preparation for a Hamas-Fatah meeting mediated by Egypt during the first week of December 2017 (Palestinian TV, October 12, 2017).
- ▶ **According to Khalil al-Haya, a member of Hamas' political bureau** and of the Hamas movement delegation to the dialogue in Cairo, finding solutions for the activities of the security forces may take six months, but no more than ten. He claimed the national consensus government would supervise the payment of salaries to civilian employees and operatives in the security forces (website of al-Aqsa TV, October 14, 2017; Hamas movement website, October 14, 2017)
- ▶ **The reconciliation agreement does not deal with Hamas activity in Judea and Samaria but it can be assumed that Hamas expects the PA security forces to end or at least lessen their pressure on Hamas operatives and networks.** However, so far **there has been no change in the activities of the PA security forces against Hamas in Judea**

⁵ The crossings agreement, or more formally The Agreement on Movement and Access, was signed by Israel and the PA on November 15, 2005, after Israel disengaged from the Gaza Strip. According to the agreement the Rafah crossing would be operated by Egypt and the PA with EU oversight. In addition, a joint Israeli-Palestinian emergency room would be established to receive video feed and other data in real time.

and Samaria, and Palestinians suspected of Hamas activity are still being detained and interrogated (Hamas website, October 16, 2017).

► **Hassan Yusuf**, senior Hamas figure in Judea and Samaria, called on Fatah and the PA to take serious, practical measures on the ground so the Palestinian man in the street would know "the era of division" had ended. He added that **the security forces continued carrying out detentions and issuing summons, although fewer than in the past**. He said he hoped they would end, especially when detentions were carried out because of "opposition to the occupation" (Palestine Online, October 17, 2017).

The Palestinian employees in the Gaza Strip

► According to the reconciliation agreement, a legal-administrative committee appointed by the national consensus government will be responsible for **finding a solution, before February 1, 2018, for the issue of government employees in the Gaza Strip**. When the committee completes its work Hamas employees are expected to integrate into the government apparatuses. **Mahmoud al-'Alul, deputy Fatah chairman**, said the government is investing efforts for the success of the reconciliation agreement and that the legal-administrative committee formed to oversee employees in the Gaza Strip will begin its work in the coming days (Palestine Online, October 16, 2017).

► According to **Saleh al-'Arouri**, it was agreed that the legal-administrative committee, with Hamas and Fatah participation, would be responsible for integrating and organizing all the long-time employees (from the era of PA rule in the Gaza Strip) with the new employees (from the era of Hamas rule). He said one organization had to be established would serve the residents of the Gaza Strip. He said that based on data from Hamas, the Gaza Strip will require 5,000 more workers in the public sector after integration has been completed (al-Quds, October 12, 2017).

The issue of Hamas' weapons

► **The issue of the future of Hamas military wing and its weapons was not discussed at the meetings per se** but was referred to on several occasions. **Some senior figures were in favor of finding a formula that would enable the military wing to remain in place**. Some of the statements made were the following:

- ◆ According to **Abbas Zaki, a member of Fatah's Central Committee**, in principle the PA finds it unreasonable to disarm Hamas, as **the PA regards the weapons of the "resistance" as necessary**. However, he said, they [Fatah] want the use of the

weapons to be conditioned on a collective national decision. He said there is no demand that Hamas or any other organization disarm, or cancel the decision to wage an armed struggle. However, the PA will demand that the use of the weapons will be a national decision (al-Sharq al-Awsat, October 12, 2017).

- ◆ **Usama al-Qawasmeh, spokesman for Fatah's Revolutionary Council**, claimed international law allows the Palestinians to resist the [so-called Israeli] "occupation." He said Fatah wants a comprehensive national agreement that will prevent actions that cause damage to the Palestinian people, such as rocket fire by an organization leading to Israeli attacks, which will harm the entire Palestinian people (Palestinian TV, October 16, 2017).

- ◆ **Senior Hamas figure Yahya Musa** said the military wing belongs to all the Palestinians, not only Hamas. He said the military wing supports the reconciliation and its role will be determined in the future by general agreement (Dunia al-Watan, October 9, 2017).

Lifting the sanctions Mahmoud Abbas imposed on the Gaza Strip

- ▶ **The agreement does not obligate the PA to lift the sanctions imposed on the Gaza Strip announced by Mahmoud Abbas.** Before signing, Mahmoud Abbas declared that the measures punishing the Gaza Strip would be cancelled only after the national consensus government has complete control over the crossings, the security forces and the ministries (CBC, October 3, 2017). Fatah's Central Committee, which met on October 15, 2017, also did not announce the cancellation of the measures (alresalah.net, October 15, 2017). The PLO's Executive Committee, which met on October 16, 2017, chaired by Mahmoud Abbas, did not discuss the issue (Shehab, October 16, 2017). Fatah spokesmen reported that lifting the sanctions was conditional on the beginning of the activity of the national consensus government and its committees in the Gaza Strip (Dunia al-Watan, October 15, 2017).

- ▶ **Senior Hamas figures criticized the postponement of lifting the sanctions**, claiming it was inconsistent with the general atmosphere of reconciliation. They said the national consensus government had to lift the sanctions in its first meeting. Similar criticism was heard from other organizations. The social networks and public discourse also stressed the delay in cancelling the measures punishing the Gaza Strip (Palinfo, October 3, 2017).



A cartoon posted by Hamas to its official website a few days after Hamas and Fatah signed the reconciliation agreement. A Gazan is searching for reconciliation. The sign reads "Reconciliation." The Gazan asks, "Where is it?" (alresalah.net, October 16, 2017).

The central role of Egypt in the reconciliation agreement

► **Egypt's part in the signing of the agreement was praised by both sides.** On the other hand, Egypt praised Fatah and Hamas for their activity for the sake of the Palestinian national interest. The head of Egyptian General Intelligence also attending the ceremony and said Egypt was prepared to complete its role in the reconciliation process. **Egypt also announced it was reopening its legation in the Gaza Strip and establishing a security legation.** It was also reported that Egypt would renovate the Rafah crossing so that it could be open continuously and would deal with the issue of supplying electricity, fuel and water to the Gaza Strip (Filastin al-Yawm, October 11, 2017).



Hamas cartoon indicating that the reconciliation will continue, in spite of Israel's expectation that it will fail. The Arabic reads, "The Palestinian reconciliation" (Palinfo Twitter account, October 13, 2017).

The Palestinian Authority (PA)

The international arena

► **Rami Hamdallah, prime minister of the national consensus government**, chaired a meeting of the committee appointed after PA chairman Mahmoud Abbas decided to make the PA's membership in INTERPOL significant. The committee discussed the technical and logistic preparations necessary for practical participation in INTERPOL, and the establishment of a Palestinian INTERPOL office. He said membership in the organization is a national success for the Palestinian leadership (Wafa, October 12, 2017).

Belgian government delays donations

► The Belgian foreign minister reported that the Belgian government would delay its donation of \$3.9 million to fund two Palestinian schools. That was because a Palestinian school in south Mt. Hebron, which received the funding, changed its name and is **now called the Dalal al-Mughrabi school, after the Palestinian terrorist who participated in the Coastal Road Massacre**. He said Belgium was not prepared to have its name linked to terrorists (Washington Post, October 10, 2017).⁶

⁶ For further information see the August 28, 2017 bulletin, "European countries freeze donations to anti-Israel women's organization after learning it supported the establishment of a women's center named after Palestinian terrorist Dalal al-Mughrabi."