



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (October 25 – 31, 2017)

Overview

- ▶ This past week events focused on Israel's blowing up a Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) tunnel **extending from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory** (near the border security fence in the central Gaza Strip). So far the names of seven Palestinians who were killed in the blast have been published, five of them PIJ terrorist operatives. Among them were a PIJ commander of the central refugee camps brigade and his deputy, and two Hamas terrorist operatives (who helped extract the casualties from the tunnel).
- ▶ Hamas accused Israel of responsibility, claiming Israel was trying to sabotage the internal Palestinian reconciliation. The PIJ threatened revenge for "Israel's crimes," announcing that the lull in the fighting had ended. So far the terrorist organizations have not taken action.
- ▶ Blowing up the tunnel is a clear illustration of the key problem facing Mahmoud Abbas in implementing the internal Palestinian reconciliation. While the governmental authority over the Gaza Strip is supposed to pass to the Palestinian Authority (PA), including responsibility for the crossings, **Mahmoud Abbas has no influence on fundamental issues**, such as dismantling Hamas and the PIJ's the military infrastructures (including the tunnels). Hamas has been and will continue to be the real power and "address" in the Gaza Strip, including the issue of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
- ▶ On November 2, 2017, the centenary of the Balfour Declaration will be celebrated. The PA and various organizations are planning a campaign of rallies and demonstrations in Judea, Samaria and foreign countries (such as Britain). The PA's foreign minister said preparations were being made to sue Britain in court and demand a "restoration" of the "historical rights" of the Palestinians, as well as a correction of the "historical mistake."

IDF forces blow up a terrorist tunnel extending into Israeli territory

- ▶ On October 30, 2017, the IDF spokesman reported that **IDF forces had blown up a terrorist tunnel under construction which extended into Israeli territory near the border security fence in the Khan Yunis region (in the central Gaza Strip). The tunnel**

entered Israeli territory near Kissufim. The IDF reported it had been monitoring the construction of the tunnel, which was not yet operational, and it was in an area where the new barrier had not yet been built.



The smoke from the blast in the tunnel, east of Khan Yunis (Palinfo Twitter account, October 30, 2017).

► **The tunnel belonged to the PIJ.** So far **the names of seven dead operatives have been made public.** They were killed either in the blast or in attempts to extract those trapped inside the tunnel. **Five were PIJ operatives and two were Hamas operatives.** Two of those killed were **Arafat Murshid Abu Abdallah**, commander of the central refugee camps brigade in the PIJ's military-terrorist wing, and his deputy, **Hassan Ramadan Abu Hassnein**. Two were operatives in Hamas' *nukhba* elite unit (website of the Jerusalem Battalions, Twitter account and Palinfo, October 30, 2017).



Five operatives in the PIJ's military-terrorist who were killed (left to right): Arafat Murshid Abu Abdallah, commander of the PIJ's central refugee camps brigade; Hassan Ramadan Abu Hassnein, his deputy; Husam Jihad al-Samiri, Ahmed Mahmoud Abu Armana, and Omar Nassar al-Falit, operatives in the central refugee camps brigade (website of the Jerusalem Battalions, October 30, 2017).



The two Hamas terrorist operatives who were killed. Right: Muhammad al-Agha. Left: Musbah Shubeir (Palinfo Twitter account, October 30, 2017).

► In the wake of the explosion **the PIJ's military-terrorist wing** announced a general mobilization (Filastin al-Yawm, October 30, 2017). The ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip announced the evacuation of all the security posts, although **Iyad al-Bazam, a spokesman for the ministry**, denied the announcement (Twitter account of quds.press, October 30, 2017). Palestinian sources condemned Israel for the attack, claiming it had violated the "ceasefire agreement" and was trying to undermine the attempts at internal Palestinian reconciliation. Some also threatened revenge.

Hamas reactions

► **Ismail Haniyeh, head of the Hamas political bureau**, called **Ramadan Shallah, secretary general of the PIJ**, to express Hamas' support for the PIJ "at this important juncture." He claimed the deaths of operatives from both organizations were proof of the unity of their path, objectives and fate until victory and liberation [had been achieved] (Hamas website, October 30, 2017). Haniyeh also called **Khaled al-Batash, a senior figure in the PIJ in the Gaza Strip**, and stressed the unity of their position in a response to the "Zionist crime" (Paltoday, October 30, 2017).

► **Hamas said in an official announcement** that the "crime" carried out by Israel was a serious escalation [of aggression] against the Palestinian people and a desperate attempt to harm the reconciliation. He claimed "resistance" [i.e., violence and terrorism] was the "natural right" of the Palestinian people (Hamas website, October 30, 2017). **Hamas' military-terrorist wing** also accused Israel of responsibility and claiming "the blood of the dead will not have been shed in vain." Israel, Hamas said in an announcement, would be responsible for the consequences. The **military-terrorist wing** claimed that Israel's attempts to rewrite the rules of engagement through "crimes against the Palestinian

people" were feeble and that the "resistance" was familiar with them, and they would fail (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades website, October 30, 2017). **Senior Hamas figure Yahya Musa** claimed Israel was trying to stop the reconciliation process and prevent the unity of the Palestinian people by means of an unexpected escalation. He called for establishing a joint situation room of all the organizations (Shehab, October 30, 2017).

PIJ reactions

► The **PIJ's military-terrorist wing** announced that the blood of those killed was not shed in vain and that **all avenues of response were open** (Filastin al-Yawm, October 30, 2017). The organization also said the tunnels were part of its policy of "determent" [against Israel] (al-Aqsa, October 30, 2017). **PIJ spokesman Da'ud Shehab** said the Israeli attack was a declaration of war and in the coming hours the nature of the [PIJ's] response would show that all avenues were open (Filastin al-Yawm, October 30, 2017). **Muhammad al-Hindi, a member of the PIJ's political bureau, said the calm with Israel had ended** and that the punishment would fit the crime (al-Mayadeen, October 30, 2017). **Senior PIJ figure Khaled al-Batash** said Israel's action had been a surprise and clearly an attempt to reshuffle the deck. He claimed they would not allow Israel to determine the rules of engagement or violate the ceasefire agreement, and **that the PIJ would respond to the "crimes"** (al-Aqsa, October 30, 2017).

PA and Fatah reactions

► **Rami Hamdallah, prime minister of the Palestinian national consensus government**, wrote on his Facebook page that in light of the continuing "Israeli crimes" against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, he was again **stressing the need for and to adhere to national unity**. That would be achieved by reinforcing the internal front, completing the reconciliation and joining forces around the legitimate leadership led by the head of the PA. He also called on the international community to take legal and moral responsibility, to stop Israel's "aggression" and to protect the Palestinian people (Facebook page of Rami Hamdallah, October 31, 2017)

► **Fatah issued a statement** condemning the attack and saying the criminals would not escape punishment. According to the statement, this "crime" was part of the ongoing policies of the Israeli government to avoid its guilt in corruption at the expense of the Palestinian people (Wafa, October 30, 2017). **Faiz Abu 'Itta, deputy secretary of Fatah's Revolutionary Council**, said the event was a violation of the ceasefire and another Israeli

attempt to reshuffle the deck and destroy the reconciliation process. However, he also said a response had to be well-considered, and it was forbidden for any organization could operate on its own (al-Mayadeen, October 30, 2017).

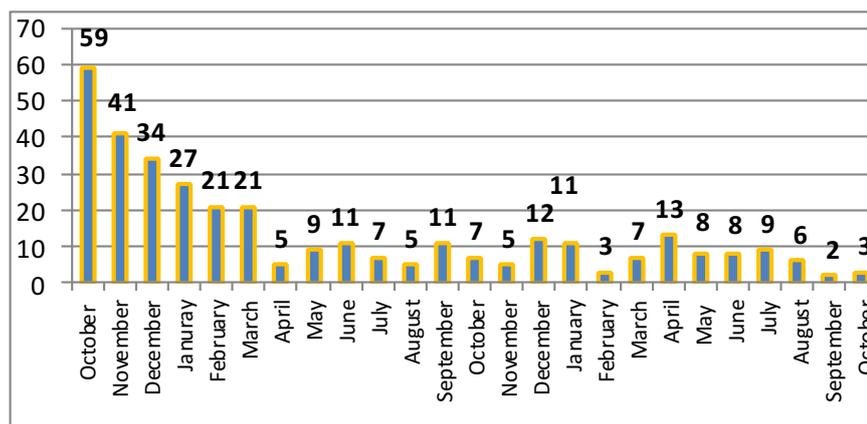
The Situation in Judea and Samaria

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. The more prominent occurrences were the following:

- ◆ **October 29, 2017** – Stones were thrown at the light railway along the **Shuafat route in east Jerusalem**. There were no casualties. A train car was damaged (Facebook page of Red Alert, October 29, 2017).
- ◆ **October 28, 2017** – A Border Policeman detained a Hamas operative from Nablus in a car near **the Abu Dis roadblock in east Jerusalem**. A handgun was found hidden in the trunk of the car (Facebook page of Red Alert, October 28, 2017).
- ◆ **October 26, 2017** – A number of Molotov cocktails were thrown at Israeli vehicles and a bus on **route 60 near Halhul** (the Hebron region). There were no casualties and no damage was reported (Facebook page of Red Alert, October 28, 2017).
- ◆ **October 25, 2017** – A IDF force reported gunshots fired near the entrance to the community of **Beit Hagai (Mt. Hebron)**. There were no casualties and no damage was reported (Facebook page of Red Alert, October 25, 2017).

Significant Terrorist Attacks in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem during the Past Two Years¹



The murder of Reuven Shmerling solved

► Indictments were recently handed down for **Yusuf Kamil and Muhammad Abu al-Rab**, both from Qabatiya, who on October 4, 2017, **murdered Reuven Shmerling from Elkana**, whose body was found in a warehouse in Kafr Qassem. According to the indictment, **the two entered Israel illegally in September 2017** in search of work. Before they arrived in Israel **they decided to carry out a stabbing attack in retaliation for the death of their friend Ahmed Abu al-Rab**, who was killed trying to carry out a stabbing attack at the gas station near the Jalameh roadblock in the Jenin area on November 2, 2015.

► **Yusuf Kamil** planned to use his stay in Israel to carry out a stabbing attack and suggested Abu al-Rab join him; Abu al-Rab initially refused. They began working at the charcoal warehouse run by Reuven Shmerling. They later **plotted to murder one of the Jewish employees working in the warehouse**. They purchased and hid a meat cleaver. They also acquired the phone number of a Kafr Qassem resident who could drive them back to where they lived after they carried out the attack. On October 4, 2017, when Reuven Shmerling came to the warehouse, they decided it was time to kill him. Kamil called the Kafr Qassem resident to arrange for their ride after the attack. After they stabbed him they struck him with a pickaxe and a fan that were in the room. Then they showered, changed clothes and were driven back to where they lived.

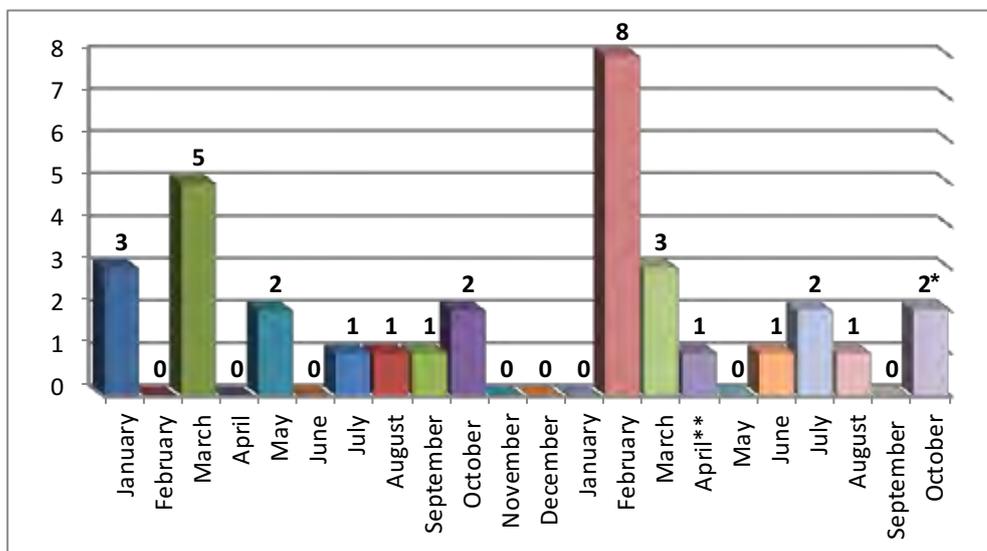
¹ A significant attack is defined by the ITIC as involving shooting, stabbing, a vehicular attack, the use of IEDs, or a combination of the above. Stones and Molotov cocktails thrown by Palestinians are not included.

Israel's South

Rocket Fire Attacking Israel

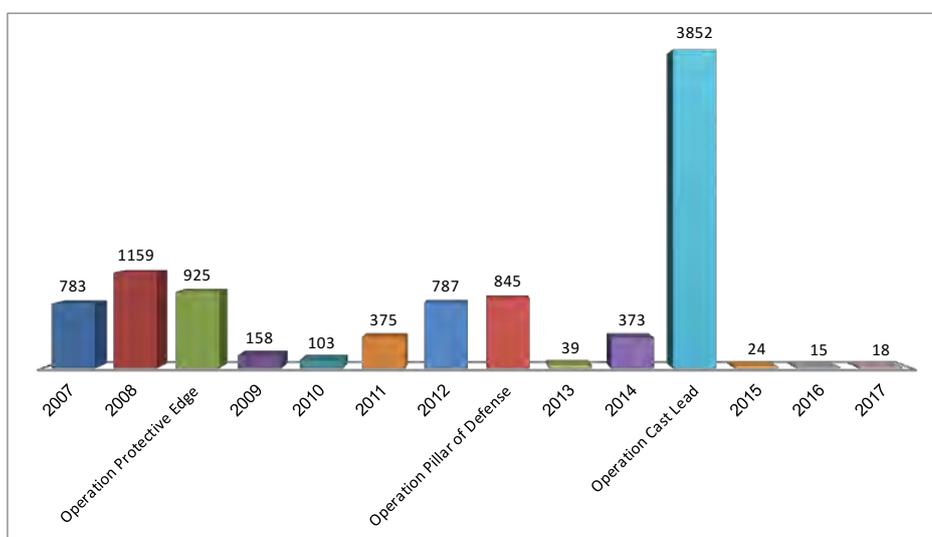
► This past week no rocket hits were identified in Israeli territory.

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. In April a rocket 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



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

Developments in the Gaza Strip

Programs to rebuild the Gaza Strip

► The Palestinian national consensus government announced **it was working hard on a program to improve the supply of electricity in the Gaza Strip before the end of the year**. According to the announcement the government is working to provide everything necessary, including financial resources and plans for increasing the number of energy sources in the Gaza Strip (Wafa, October 24, 2017). According to reports, **Zafer Milhem, chairman of the energy and natural resources authority**, has begun working at the energy authority in the Gaza Strip, and is implementing a recovery program for electricity in the Gaza Strip (Wafa, October 26, 2017).

► **Muhammad Ashtia, a member of Fatah's Central Committee**, claimed plans were ready for developing the Gaza Strip, but first what was necessary was the intervention of all the countries of the world to lift the "siege" of the Gaza Strip and for the Fatah-Hamas reconciliation to be implemented. He claimed a number of suggestions had been made for developing the Gaza Strip, such as building a railroad to connect the north and the south, constructing a desalination facility at a cost of \$450 million, and plans for building a port and airport (Dunia al-Watan, October 26, 2017).

Attempt to kill the commander of the security forces in the Gaza Strip

► **An attempt was made to kill Tawfiq Abu Na'im, secretary general of the Hamas ministry of the interior, who is also responsible for Hamas security forces. An explosive device was attached to his car in the Nuseirat refugee camp** and it detonated as he left the mosque after the Friday prayer. Abu Na'im **was slightly injured**. He was treated at a hospital and released a short time later (Palinfo, October 28, 2017)

► **Tawfiq Abdallah Suleiman (Abu Na'im)**, 55, comes from the central Gaza Strip. He was detained by Israel on May 14, 1989, and sentenced to life imprisonment for being one of the founders of Hamas' military-terrorist wing in the central Gaza Strip. Two other squad members were Yahya al-Sinwar and Rawhi Mushtaha. He was released in the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal in 2011. After his release he was given Hamas' "prisoners' portfolio."

► In December 2015 Tawfiq Abu Na'im was appointed commander of the Hamas' internal security forces, replacing Salah al-Din Abu Sharakh (alresalah.net and Palinfo, October 27,

2017). In addition, **as commander he is responsible for internal security in the Gaza Strip. He headed the construction of the buffer zone along the Egyptian-Gaza Strip border** (alresalah.net, October 29, 2017).

► **Hamas was quick to accuse Israel**, claiming its intention was to sabotage the internal Palestinian reconciliation. **Despite public accusations against Israel, in the Gaza Strip it is widely assumed that the Salafists were behind the attempted killing** in retaliation for the preventive activities carried out by Hamas internal security forces against them, especially after Hamas' rapprochement with Egypt (Haaretz, October , 2017).

► **Rami Hamdallah, prime minister of the consensus government, ordered the heads of Palestinian general intelligence and the police force to go to the Gaza Strip to investigate. Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum** said the investigation into the attempted killing was continuing. He said Israel's fingerprints were all over the incident, because Abu Na'im is a released prisoner and because his positions regarding the Palestinian cause support the "struggle" [i.e., the path of terrorism] (Ma'an, October 28, 2017). **Iyad al-Bazam, spokesman for the ministry of the interior** in the Gaza Strip, warned the media and those using the social media not to spread rumors about the attempted killing. He added that they should only rely on official announcements from the ministry of the interior (Safa, October 27, 2017).

► The heads of Hamas, including **Ismail Haniyeh, head of the Hamas political bureau**, visited Abu Na'im at home after he was released from the hospital (Palinfo, October 28, 2017). **Rami Hamdallah, prime minister of the consensus government**, called Abu Na'im to ask how he felt. He condemned the attempted killing and said the guilty parties had to be apprehended (Dunia al-Watan, October 28, 2017). Abu Na'im thanked all those who had expressed concern and said he would return to work soon. He claimed those who had attempted to kill him would not achieve their objective and that the Palestinians would continue their firm stance and end the internal schism. He claimed Israel liked to disrupt [Palestinian] plans at the moment of truth and that Israel would be the only one to profit from the situation (al-Aqsa, October 29, 2017).



Right: Abu Na'im's car after the attempt on his life. Left: Ismail Haniyeh, head of the Hamas political bureau, visits Abu Na'im in the Shifa hospital in Gaza City (Palinfo Twitter account, October 27, 2017).



Yahya al-Sinwar, head of Hamas' political bureau in the Gaza Strip (left), visits Tawfiq Abu Na'im in his home (Palinfo Twitter account, October 30, 2017).

UNRWA exposes another tunnel under one of its schools

► **UN spokesman Christopher Guinness** issued an announcement on October 15, 2017, stating that UNRWA had discovered the existence of what appeared to be a tunnel under one of the schools it operates in the Gaza Strip. In accordance with protocol, the agency took the necessary measures immediately to render the school safe and sealed the cavity underneath its premises. The school resumed its operations on October 25, 2017. According to the announcement, "the presence of a tunnel underneath an UNRWA installation, which enjoys inviolability under international law, is unacceptable. It places children and Agency staff at risk. The Agency again demands full respect for the neutrality and inviolability of United Nations premises at all times. Any activities or conduct that put beneficiaries and staff alike at risk, and undermine the ability of UNRWA staff to provide assistance to Palestine refugees in safety and security, must cease" (UNRWA website,³ October 28; al-Sharq al-Awsat, October 30, 2017). **Hamas spokesman Abd al-Latif al-Qanu'** refused to

³ <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/official-statements/unrwa-condemns-neutrality-violation-gaza>

respond to the announcement, saying authorized people in the Gaza Strip were examining the subject (Chinese news agency Xinhua, October 29, 2017).

► The Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) Facebook page in Arabic wrote that the tunnel had been exposed under the boys' middle school in Beit Hanoun in the northern Gaza Strip (Facebook page of COGAT in Arabic, October 29, 2017).

Note: It was not the first time a tunnel was exposed under an UNRWA school. On June 9, 2017, an UNRWA spokesman reported that a section of a tunnel running under two schools had been exposed in the al-Maghazi refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip.⁴



The UNRWA boys' middle school in Beit Hanoun in the northern Gaza Strip and the tunnel under it (Facebook page of COGAT in Arabic, October 29, 2017).

The Internal Palestinian Reconciliation

Implementing the reconciliation agreement

Overview

► After the Palestinian public's initial enthusiasm of the internal Palestinian reconciliation has waned, Palestinian commentators have begun emphasizing that **the road to achieving reconciliation is long and full of obstacles**. However, on the ground, preparations are still being made to transfer authority to the national consensus government. PA delegations continue arriving in the Gaza Strip to transfer positions to PA employees. Hamas is disappointed and critical of the delay in lifting the measures imposed on the Gaza Strip by Mahmoud Abbas. The key issues still have not been discussed, such as the future of Hamas' security and military infrastructures and their weapons.

⁴ See the June 15, 2017 bulletin, "UNRWA reported the exposure of a tunnel under two of its school in the Gaza Strip; Hamas quickly issued a denial."

► In the meantime, Hamas operatives in the Judea and Samaria complain that the reconciliation agreement deals entirely with the Gaza Strip. In addition, although it has been signed, the PA security forces continue their policies against Hamas operatives and institutions. **Fathi al-Qara'wi, a Hamas-faction member of the Palestinian Legislative Council in Judea and Samaria**, said the so-called "political detentions" continued and had not stopped for a second, "not before, not during and not after the signing of the agreement."⁵ He warned that continuing the detentions would cast a shadow on the reconciliation. He said the PA and its forces had to provide an explanation for their actions (alresalah.net, October 26, 2017). **Nazia Abu Awan**, a senior Hamas figure in Jenin, complained that the reconciliation agreement dealt only with the Gaza Strip and did not touch upon the measures taken by the PA in Judea and Samaria because of the schism, that is, the political detentions of Hamas operatives and the closing of Hamas institutions in the West Bank (al-Monitor, October 24, 2017).



Hamas cartoons criticizing the continuing so-called "political detentions" in Judea and Samaria. Right: The head of Palestinian general intelligence, Majed Faraj, holds a rifle in one hand and a political detainee in the other. The Arabic reads, "Reconciliation" (Twitter account of al-Risalah, October 26, 2017). Left: The Arabic reads, "Political detention" (Palinfo Twitter account, October 30, 2017).

Transferring authority to the PA

► **Transferring authority in the Gaza Strip to the PA has met with several difficulties.** For example, **Adala al-Atira, chairwoman of the PA's environmental quality authority**, reported that after a two-day visit to the Gaza Strip, she had not received responsibility for the bureau of ecology in the Gaza Strip. That was because **Kna'an Ubeid, Hamas chairman of the environmental quality authority**, refused to cooperate with her and imposed conditions to which she strongly objected (Paltoday, October 27, 2017). **Saeb Nazif**,

⁵ By "political detentions" he meant the detention of terrorist operatives and operatives in the terrorist networks Hamas is trying to establish in Judea and Samaria.

chairman of the PA's land authority, reported, after having returned to Ramallah, that **Kamel Abu Madhi, chairman of Hamas' land authority**, refused to cooperate with him or transfer the authority in the Gaza Strip to him (Wafa, October 26, 2017).

Transferring control of the crossings to the PA

► **The first stage in transferring authority as called for by the reconciliation agreement is transferring control of the crossings to the PA, which is supposed to be implemented on November 1, 2017.** Hamas continues to emphasize it is prepared to complete the transfer. **Iyad al-Bazam, spokesman for the Hamas ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip**, said control over the crossings would be transferred on November 1, 2017, and that the ministry of the interior had no intention of delaying the internal Palestinian reconciliation (Samaa News, October 28, 2017). According to **Hashem Adwan, director of public relations and information in the crossings and border authority in the Gaza Strip**, the PA is prepared to accept responsibility for the crossings at the beginning of November, as agreed upon (Shehab, October 29, 2017). It was also reported that beginning on October 31, 2017, the funds collected at the Rafah crossing will be transferred to the bank account of the consensus government's ministry of the treasury (al-Quds, October 30, 2017).

► As part of transferring authority, a PA delegation headed by **Nazmi Muhanna, chairman of the crossings authority**, met with senior Egyptian officials to discuss methods for transferring control of the Gaza Strip crossings. The delegation included senior figures in the PA's security forces (al-Quds, October 29, 2017). An Egyptian security delegation is expected to enter the Gaza Strip to oversee the transfer of authority over the crossings (Twitter account of Sinai News, October 30, 2017).

Hamas' weapons

► Sources within Hamas continue to make it clear that Hamas has certain "red lines" that cannot be crossed, and that **its military wing will not give up its weapons. Senior Hamas figure Hassan Yusuf** claimed there is justification for the existence of the "resistance" in the Gaza Strip, "underground or above ground," especially since Israel denies the Palestinians their rights. He also claimed that the weapons of the "resistance" would never be turned against the Palestinian people (Dunia al-Watan, October 29, 2017).

► A delegation of members of the Hamas faction in the Palestinian Legislative Council in the northern district of the Gaza Strip visited posts of Hamas' military wing in the northern Gaza

Strip. During the visits the members of the delegation stressed that **the weapons of the "resistance" were legitimate and had to be retained**. The Palestinians, they said, would oppose any attempt to take away their legitimate weapons (Facebook page of Musheir al-Masri, a Hamas member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, October 26, 2017).



A Hamas delegation visits Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades posts in the northern Gaza Strip (Facebook page of Musheir al-Masri, a Hamas member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, October 26, 2017).

► The following are additional comments of senior Hamas figures on the issue of disarmament:

- ◆ **Salah al-Bardawil** claimed Hamas had agreed to all conditions and prepared the ground for the sake of reconciliation, such as turning over the crossings, government bureaus and authorities. However, he said, as far as he was concerned, the "resistance" and its weapons were a red line (al-Jazeera, October 25, 2017).



Salah al-Bardawil, a member of Hamas' political bureau (al-Jazeera Mubasher website, October 25, 2017).

- ◆ **Saleh al-'Arouri, deputy head of Hamas' political bureau**, claimed Hamas had made the reconciliation its top priority and was willing to make concessions for the sake of its success. However, he said, **the weapons of the "resistance" were legitimate and necessary for the struggle against the "occupation."** He said Hamas could not recognize Israel's right to the land of Palestine and had not changed its "resistance strategy" to the occupation (al-Jazeera, October 26, 2017).

- ◆ **Musa Abu Marzouq, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, said it was time to stop thinking about disarming the "resistance," and instead to work to complete plans and realize the mutual goals all the Palestinians had agreed on (al-Quds, October 26, 2017).
- ◆ **Ahmed Bahar, deputy chairman of the Palestinian Legislative Council**, delivered the Friday sermon in a mosque in Gaza City. He said the weapons of the "resistance" were legitimate for restoring rights and liberating occupied land. He called on all the Palestinians to unite around the "resistance," which had proved its success, as opposed to negotiations, which had failed, because Israel understood only the language of force (Safa, October 27, 2017).
- ◆ **Senior PIJ figure Nafez Assam** said the issue of the weapons of the "resistance" could not be included in any discussion, including the weapons of the PIJ's military wing. In fact, he said, as long as the Palestinian territories were occupied, the Palestinian people had a legitimate right to weapons (Dunia al-Watan, October 28, 2017).



Hamas cartoon: Israeli Defense Minister Lieberman's nightmare (alresalah.net, October 30, 2017).

The security forces

► PA sources told the daily newspaper al-Hayat that the **Fatah movement strongly refused to unite Hamas' security forces in the Gaza Strip with the security forces of the PA**. The sources made it clear that the Fatah delegation that went to Cairo had expressed an interest in reorganizing the security forces. The Fatah delegation rejected Saleh al-'Arouri's statement that the ideology of the security forces should be "resistance." The Fatah delegation also opposed Yahya al-Sinwar's statements to the effect that Hamas would defend the "resistance" and work to develop it. **The Fatah delegation made it clear that**

they refused to allow a situation to develop in the Gaza Strip like that of Hezbollah in Lebanon. Senior Egyptian officials suggested that PA's security force figures go to the Gaza Strip and meet with Hamas security forces to devise a joint concept for the security forces and their ideology (al-Hayat, October 25, 2017).

► **Senior Hamas figure Musa Abu Marzouq** said it was one of the most complex issues, because there were two security institutions, one in the West Bank and the other in the Gaza Strip, and their security concepts were different. He said in the past the issue had not been thoroughly discussed. However, he said, in the recent talks with Fatah in Cairo they had discussed it and both movements agreed that the issue was sensitive, and therefore the matter could not be rushed. He claimed the Egyptians would monitor the progress of the issue and play a central role. He also said a condition for the success of the reconciliation agreement was that no one meddle in it, especially not Israel or the United States (al-Quds, October 26, 2017).

The Palestinian Authority (PA)

Security coordination with Israel

► Palestinian sources denied reports in the Israeli media about the renewal of security coordination between Israel and the PA. Security coordination was suspended on orders from Mahmoud Abbas in August 2017 in the wake of the Temple Mount crisis:

- ◆ **Nabil Shaath, advisor to Mahmoud Abbas for foreign affairs and international relations**, said the Palestinian leadership had not changed its mind about stopping security coordination, and that it would only reinstate it after Israel fulfilled the conditions of the Oslo Accords and stopped its settlement policy (Dunia al-Watan, October 26, 2017).
- ◆ **Ahmed Majdalani, a member of the PLO's Executive Committee**, denied the rumors that security coordination with Israel had been renewed. He claimed the decision to end it was still in force (Dunia al-Watan, October 28, 2017).
- ◆ **Wasl Yusuf, also a member of the PLO's Executive Committee**, claimed the decision to stop security coordination was still in force and that no official announcement had been issued by the PA about renewing it (quds.net, October 29, 2017).

The Battle for Hearts and Minds

The Palestinian campaign for the centenary of the Balfour Declaration

- ▶ **November 2, 2017, will mark the 100th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration.** The PA intends to launch a broad campaign that will include rallies and demonstrations in Judea and Samaria **and a number of other countries, Britain among them.** **Mahmoud al-'Alul, Fatah deputy security,** told a meeting of Fatah Central Committee members that the Balfour Declaration was "a crime against the Palestinian people." The committee members called on the Palestinian public to protest nonviolently (Palestinian TV, October 30, 2017).
- ▶ **In the meantime, Palestinians are critical of Britain for planning to mark the day with a ceremony attended by senior Israeli figures.** The Palestinians are also threatening to sue Britain in international courts. According to **Riyad al-Maliki, the PA's foreign minister,** if Britain goes ahead and holds the ceremony, the PA will take legal steps in accordance with instructions from Mahmoud Abbas. **He claimed preparations were being made to sue Britain in court** and demand it restore the rights of the Palestinian people and correct its so-called "historical mistake" (al-Araby al-Jadeed, October 22, 2017).



A cartoon criticizing British Prime Minister Theresa May. The Arabic reads, "Theresa May: We are proud of our role in establishing Israel" (Facebook page of Isma'il al-Bazam, October 30, 2017).

- ▶ The following are statements by senior PA figures about the Balfour Declaration:
 - ◆ **Ahmed Majdalani, a member of the PLO's Executive Committee,** said Britain had to do three things to "atone" for the Balfour Declaration: to apologize to the Palestinian people for the *nakba* [catastrophe] caused by the Balfour Declaration; to pay the

Palestinians reparations; to recognize the Palestinian state. He said the Palestinian leadership was working at the legal level to sue the British government (Dunia al-Watan, October 18, 2017).

◆ **Nabil Shaath, advisor to Mahmoud Abbas for foreign affairs and international relations**, attended a press conference about the centenary of the Balfour Declaration in Ramallah, held by the PLO's negotiating department. He said that the Palestinians were examining legal ways to investigate the consequences of the Balfour Declaration and demand that Britain compensate the Palestinians. He did not rule out the possibility of appealing to the International Criminal Court and the British courts, but claimed the matter was still being investigated. He claimed Britain was concerned that other peoples and countries, which had been part of the British colonial empire, would also demand compensation for damages. He claimed the British were also concerned that compensating the Palestinians for damages caused by the Balfour Declaration might cost billions of dollars (al-Anadolu News and Watan, October 24; Ma'an, October 25, 2017).

◆ **Shawan Jabarin, formerly affiliated with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and currently head of al-Haq, said the Palestinian legal team was seriously considering the question of lodging a suit in the British court system regarding the British Mandate and not the Balfour Declaration.** He claimed a legal opinion would be given about the possible success of such a suit with the aid of an international team of lawyers, and it would be presented to the Palestinian leadership for inspection. He claimed **the next step would be lodging a suit in the British legal system**, and that such a step had to be accompanied by an extensive media campaign (Dunia al-Watan, October 23, 2017).

◆ **Muhammad al-Laham, a spokesman for the Palestinian national committee to mark the centenary of the Balfour Declaration**, said the main march would be held in Ramallah on November 2, 2017. It would begin at Yasser Arafat square and end in front of the British cultural center. Marches will also be held in Nablus, Hebron and other cities, villages and refugee camps. A march will be held in Bethlehem on November 1, 2017. A march will be held to the British consulate in Jerusalem, and the consul will be given 100,000 protest letters written by students in various languages.

The letters are aimed at the British government and about the British position (al-Anadolu News and Watan, October 24; Ma'an, October 25, 2017).

A British delegation visits Hebron

► In preparation for the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, **a delegation of 60 British activists arrived in Hebron**. Their objective was to condemn the Declaration and apologize to the Palestinian people. They arrived on foot after having walked for 135 days from London through France, Switzerland, Italy, Turkey, Greece and Jordan, entering Judea and Samaria through the Allenby crossing. The delegation was received in Hebron by local Palestinian activists and representatives from the office of the Hebron district governor. IDF forces prevented them from entering Shuhadaa Street⁶ (al-Bawaba News, October 29, 2017).



Members of the British delegation touring Hebron (Palinfo Twitter account, October 29, 2017).

► The **Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC)**, a British anti-Israel organization working for the Palestinian cause, announced it would hold a march and rally in London on November 4, 2017. Among the speakers at the rally will be Mustafa Barghouti and the PA's representative in Britain.

Naming a square for Fathi Shqaqi

► The **PIJ inaugurated a square in the village of Arabeh** (southwest of Jenin), naming it for Fathi Shqaqi, the founder of the organization, on the 22nd anniversary of his death. The event was attended by **Khadr Adnan, a senior PIJ operative in northern Samaria**. He also posted an invitation to the ceremony on his Facebook page (Facebook page of Khadr Adnan, November 26 and 27, 2017).

⁶ The street has been closed since 2000 to Palestinians in accordance with an order from the commander of the Central Command.



Inaugurating a square in the village of Arabeh named for PIJ founder Fathi Shqaqi. The ceremony was led by senior PIJ figure Khadr Adnan (Paltoday, October 28, 2017).