



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (November 1-7, 2017)

Overview

- ▶ This past week in Judea and Samaria rallies, marches and demonstrations were held to mark the centenary of the Balfour Declaration. **The events passed quietly** without clashes with the Israeli security forces. The Palestinian foreign minister said the Palestinians would sue Britain over the Balfour Declaration in British, European and international courts.
- ▶ The IDF announced it was holding the bodies of the five Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) operatives who had been trapped when the IDF blew up a terrorist tunnel. **Israel conditioned the release of the bodies on progress regarding the Israeli captives and MIAs whose bodies are held by Hamas.** The PIJ and Hamas strongly rejected Israel's condition, claiming they would act "in other ways" to get the bodies back. Senior PIJ figure Ahmed Mudallal said that **his organization possessed other tunnels** and many other possibilities to which Israel had recently been exposed.
- ▶ As part of implementing the internal Palestinian reconciliation, on November 1, 2017, Hamas transferred control of the Rafah, Kerem Shalom and Erez crossings to the Palestinian Authority (PA). Hussein al-Sheikh, PA minister of civilian affairs, said that from now on illegal taxes imposed on Gazans would be revoked.

Riots, clashes and popular terrorism

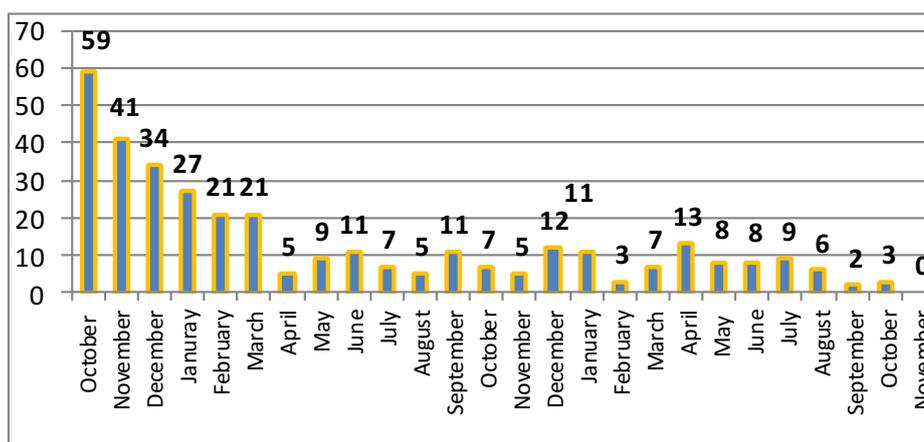
- ▶ On Overview 2, 2017, events were held throughout Judea and Samaria to mark the centenary of the Balfour Declaration. Rallies, marches and demonstrations were held in the main cities (including Ramallah, Hebron, Nablus and Tulkarm). Several hundred Palestinians attended each event. There were no clashes with the Israeli security forces.
- ▶ In the meantime 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 objects used in riots were seized, as were funds intended to finance terrorist activities. The more prominent occurrences were the following:

- ◆ **November 6, 2017** – A Palestinian went to **a roadblock near Qalqilya**. A knife was found in his possession and he was detained and taken for interrogation (Facebook page of Red Alert, November 6, 2017).
- ◆ **November 5, 2017** – A Palestinian holding a knife approached a civilian and Israeli security forces near **Mevo Dotan (in northwestern Samaria)**. He was detained and taken for interrogation (Facebook page of Red Alert, November 5, 2017).
- ◆ **November 4, 2017** – A Palestinian threw stones at the fence of the community of **Karmeit Tsur in Gush Etzion**. An IDF force using rubber bullets shot and wounded him (Facebook page of Red Alert, November 4, 2017).
- ◆ **November 1, 2017** – An Israeli civilian mistakenly entered the Arab village of Teqo'a in Gush Etzion. An IDF force rescued him after Palestinians attacked his car with stones (Facebook page of Red Alert, November 1, 2017).



Israeli vehicle damaged by a stone thrown near the village of Azoun, east of Qalqilya (Facebook page of Shehab, November 2, 2017).

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

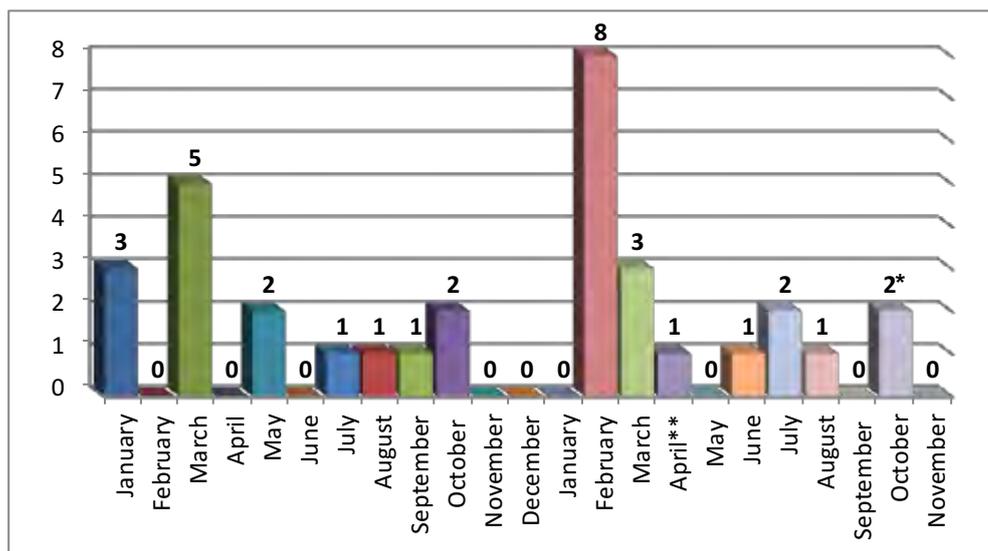


Israel's South

Rocket Fire Attacking Israel

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

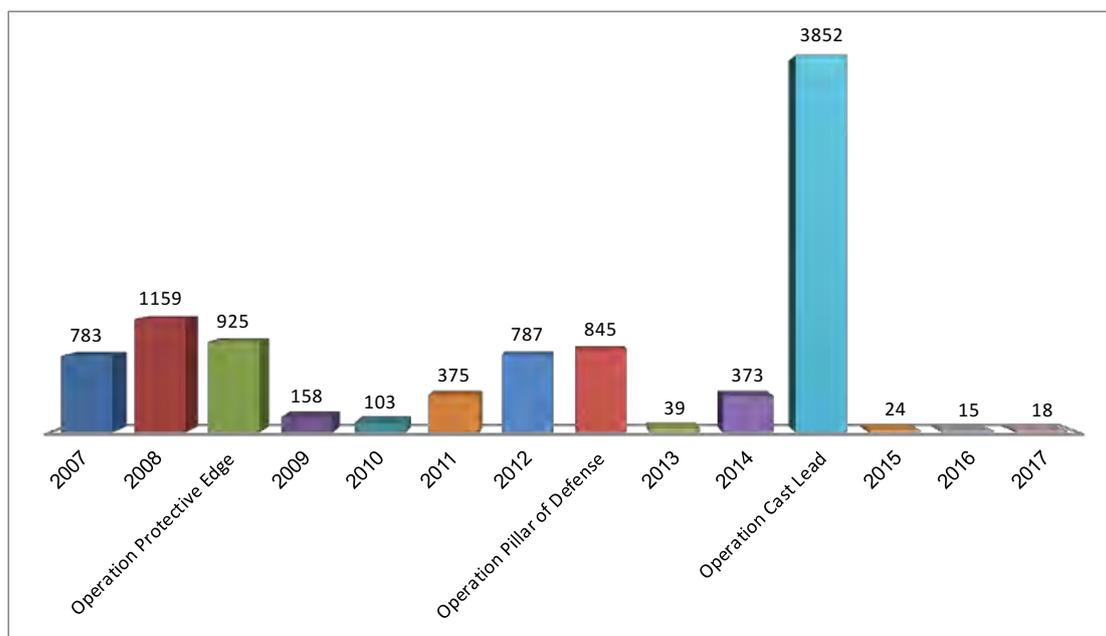
Monthly Distribution of Rocket Hits in Israel since January 2016



***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.**

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.

Annual Distribution of Rocket Hits in Israel's South²



Developments in the Gaza Strip

The attack on the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) terrorist tunnel (update)

► On October 30, 2017, Israel blew up a terrorist tunnel dug by the PIJ's military-terrorist wing. The tunnel extended into Israeli territory near Kissufim in the central Gaza Strip. **Twelve PIJ and Hamas operatives were killed in the explosion. Five operatives were trapped in the tunnel.**

► The Red Cross appealed to Israel to help locate the trapped terrorist operatives. **Israel conditioned its support on making progress on returning the Israeli captives and MIAs whose bodies are held by Hamas.** General Yoav Mordechai, the Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT), said Israel would not allow anyone to enter Israeli territory to search for the missing operatives in the tunnel. If Hamas wanted to look for its operatives, it would have to make a significant offer about the Israeli captives and bodies of MIAs in the Gaza Strip (Haaretz, November 2, 2017).

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



Palestinian digging efforts to find the bodies of the terrorist operatives killed in the tunnel explosion east of Khan Yunis, secured by Hamas military-terrorist operatives (Safa website, November 5, 2017).

- ▶ In response, **senior Hamas figure Mahmoud al-Zahar** said Hamas would not provide information about the Israeli captives in the Gaza Strip. He claimed information would only be given in return for the release of the Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails (Palinfo, November 3, 2017). **PIJ spokesman Da'ud Shehab** said Israel's refusal to release the bodies was a "crime" exploiting the "humanitarian situation" in the Gaza Strip (al-Aqsa, November 6, 2017).
- ▶ The PIJ's military-terrorist wing announced that the five operatives in the tunnel at the time of the explosion had been declared dead, and prayers and funerals had been held for them. In addition, according to the announcement, despite the fact that Israel had used complex technological security measures, the PIJ's operatives had penetrated several hundred meters into Israeli territory through the tunnel. The announcement added there were **other tunnels like it** (website of the Jerusalem Battalions, November 3, 2017). Sources within the organization threatened to attack Israel.



Official PIJ death notice for five operatives of its military-terrorist wing whose bodies are held by Israel. Right to left, top to bottom: Alaa' Abu Ghrab, Shadi al-Hamri, Bader Musbah, Ahmed al-Sabakhi and Muhammad al-Bahisi (website of the Jerusalem Battalions, November 3, 2017).

► The IDF spokesman later announced that five bodies had been taken out of the tunnel and were being held by the IDF. In response the heads of Hamas and the PIJ strongly criticized Israel, stating they would not agree to negotiations forced on them by Israel, but **would operate in other ways to retrieve the bodies**. They said negotiations would be held only in return for prisoners in Israeli jails. The main PIJ and Hamas responses were the following:

- ◆ **Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum** called Israel's activity "a poor attempt" to enforce "a new equation" on the "resistance" [i.e., the terrorist organizations]. He claimed the organizations knew how to release their heroes from the jails in prisoner exchange deals and they had the capabilities to retrieve the bodies of the shaheeds (Hamas website, November 5, 2017).
- ◆ **Ahmed Bahar, Hamas' deputy chairman of the Palestinian Legislative Council**, claimed the "resistance" continued planning and digging tunnels to empty the Israeli prisons of Hamas prisoners (Dunia al-Watan, November 3, 2017). On another occasion he said they would not negotiate with Israel and the "resistance" would retrieve the bodies "in a way it knew" (al-Ra'i, November 6, 2017).
- ◆ **Senior PIJ figure Ahmed Mudallal** said his organization would never abandon the bodies of its five operatives held by Israel. He promised the bodies would not remain in Israel hands for long, saying that the "resistance" knew how to release them. He added that his organization had other tunnels and that the "resistance" had many possibilities to which Israel had recently been exposed (Shehab, November 5, 2017).



Cartoon by Hamas-affiliated Omayya Joha boasting about the ability of the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip to surprise Israel. The Arabic reads, "The tunnels of the resistance" (alresalah.net, November 2, 2017).

Hamas delegation pays condolence call in Iran

► A Hamas delegation headed by **Saleh al-'Arouri, deputy head of Hamas' political bureau**, went to Iran to participate in a memorial service for **the father of Qasem Soleimani, commander of the IRGC's Qods Force**. The Hamas delegation included senior figures, among them **Izzat al-Rishq**, in charge of Hamas' Arab-Islamic relations, **Khaled Qadoumi**, Hamas representative in Iran, and senior Hamas figures **Muhammad Nasr and Usama Hamdan** (alresalah.net, November 5, 2017). Before going to Iran Saleh al-'Arouri met in Lebanon with Hezbollah secretary general Hassan Nasrallah (Felesteen, November 1, 2017).



Saleh al-'Arouri meets with Hassan Nasrallah (Felesteen, November 1, 2017).



Right: Usama Hamdan and Muhammad Nasr (second row) at a memorial service in Tehran for the father of Qasem Soleimani. Left: Telegram in Persian sent by Isma'il Haniyeh to Qasem Soleimani (Naba' Press, November 3, 2017).

Iranian support for Gaza charity association affiliated with the PIJ

► **The al-Ansar PIJ-affiliated charitable association** announced that on November 5, 2017, **it would begin the distribution of financial aid received from Iran for the families of Gazans killed in Operation Protective Edge.** According to the heads of the association, the first disbursement would be **\$631,000 paid to 1,630 individuals** throughout the Gaza Strip. The money will be distributed by district (al-Wataniya TV, October 31, 2017).

► In August 2017 the Iranian TV channel al-Kawthar broadcast a report from the Gaza Strip about the distribution of funds to families of shaheeds killed during the second intifada. **The funds were transferred from the Iranian Shaheed Foundation in collaboration with the Gazan al-Ansar charitable association.** "Abu Khaled," a senior al-Ansar figure, was interviewed for the program ("Abu Khaled" has been interviewed previously and in ITIC assessment is deputy chairman of al-Ansar).

► **"Abu Khaled" said the funds, \$1.4 million, were for Eid al-Adha and would be distributed to 4,700 families of shaheeds in the Gaza Strip.** According to the broadcast, for **years Iran has stood by the Palestinian people at every juncture. It provides the "resistance" with weapons** and supports the entire Palestinian cause, even when the Arab countries had ignore them. Residents of the Gaza Strip interviewed for the program thanked Iran for its financial support (al-Kawthar TV, Iran, August 14, 2017).



"Abu Khaled" interviewed by Iranian TV station al-Kawthar. Behind him is a sign with the logos of the Shaheed Foundation and the al-Ansar charity association in the Gaza Strip. The Arabic reads, "The families of the shaheeds of Palestine in the heart of the siege. Thank you Iran" (al-Kawthar TV, Iran, August 24, 2017).

The Internal Palestinian Reconciliation

Transferring control of the crossings

As part of implementing the internal Palestinian reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas signed on October 12, 2017, **on November 1, 2017 responsibility for the crossings was transferred to the Palestinian national consensus government. That included the Rafah, Kerem Shalom and Erez crossings.** The transfer was carried out under the direct supervision of an Egyptian security delegation commanded by Khaled Samy, Egyptian representative in Ramallah (Dunia al-Watan, October 31, 2017). So far, **the transition is apparently going smoothly.**



**The ceremony of transferring control of the Rafah crossing
(Facebook page of Wafa, November 1, 2017)**

► In accordance with the agreement, Hamas removed its equipment and operatives from the crossings, including the "4/4 checkpoint" manned by Hamas' security forces near the Erez crossing (Emad, November 1, 2017). It was reported that at the same time, PA employees and

security force operatives of the PA's crossing authority entered the crossings, in uniform but unarmed. At a press conference held by representatives of the PA and Hamas, the director of the Rafah crossing and representatives of the Egyptian delegation, **Mufid al-Hasayneh, minister of public works in the national consensus government**, announced the formal transfer of the crossings to the national consensus government (Dunia al-Watan, November 1, 2017).³



Nazmi Muhanna, chairman of the crossings authority, and PA security forces' operatives at the crossing (Facebook page of Shehab, November 1, 2017).

► **The PA received authority to collect money at the crossings** (al-Quds, October 31, 2017). On October 31, 2017, the systems for depositing funds from toll collection, tickets and surcharges at the Rafah and Kerem Shalom crossings were transferred from **Hamas' al-Intaj National Bank to the Bank of Palestine** (Palinfo, October 31; and the Hamas government's al-Ra'i agency, November 1, 2017). With the transfer of control of the crossings to the PA, **Hassan al-Sheikh, chairman of the authority of civilian affairs**, said the national consensus government had decided **to revoke all the illegal orders, customs and taxes imposed on the Gaza Strip**. He claimed the national consensus government was committed to collecting only taxes imposed according to Palestinian law (Wafa, November 1, 2017). On November 1, 2017, trucks reportedly entered the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom crossing without being taxed (Dunia al-Watan, November 1, 2017).

³³ In media reports of the ceremony to transfer control of the crossings **no pictures were seen of Hamas employees or the security operatives appointed by the Hamas de facto Hamas administration, which had operated the crossings since 2007**. Their absence was a condition imposed by Nazmi Muhanna, chairman of the crossings and borders authority. The Hamas leadership agreed to the condition after the intervention of representatives of Egyptian General Intelligence (al-Sa'ah al-Thamina, November 1; al-Quds al-Arabi and al-Sharq al-Awsat, November 2, 2017). **Hashem Adwan**, Hamas spokesman for the crossings and borders authority in the Gaza Strip, said that after the transfer there would be no Hamas presence at the crossings and that all the workers would be employed by the national consensus government (al-Aqsa TV, November 1, 2017).

► **So far the Kerem Shalom crossing is open for the passage of merchandise and the Erez crossing is open for the passage of individuals. The Rafah crossing on the Gaza-Egypt border has not yet opened.** According to Nazmi Muhanna, chairman of the crossings authority, the renovation of the Rafah crossing will soon be completed and it will begin operations as stipulated in the crossings agreement of 2005, after the transfer of the crossings (alresalah.net, November 1, 2017). **Azzam al-Ahmed, a member of Fatah's Central Committee**, said the Erez crossing would remain open as long as there are no security problems and there would be no limitations on people using it (al-Arabiya, November 1, 2017). **The EU** said that if the parties on both sides were interested, **it was prepared to renew its border assistance mission (EUBAM)** to monitor operations at the Rafah crossing (EU website, November 2, 2017).



Dismantling equipment and facilities at Hamas' "4/4 checkpoint" on the Palestinian side of the Erez crossing (Twitter account of Robert Piper, UN coordinator for humanitarian aid and development activities, October 31, 2017).

Reactions to transfer of control over the crossings

► Fatah expressed satisfaction. **Ahmed Hilles, a member of the Central Committee and Fatah leadership in the Gaza Strip**, said handing over the crossings to the PA was the "genuine beginning" of implementing the reconciliation agreement, showed the seriousness of both sides and was evidence of progress (Samaa News, November 1, 2017).

► **Jason Greenblatt, the American president's special representative for international negotiations**, said the United States welcomed the transfer of control over the crossings to the PA's. He said the United States would monitor developments and work together with the PA, Israel and international donors to improve the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip (Dunia al-Watan, November 2, 2017).

► **Musa Abu Marzouq, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, asked why Israel insisted on maintaining a presence at the crossings after the PA had taken over directing them, and after European representatives were once again manning them (Twitter account of Musa Abu Marzouq, November 4, 2017).

The issue of uniting the security forces

► In view of the intention to discuss, during November, **uniting Hamas and the PA's security forces, Hazem Atallah, commander of the PA police force, said the PA would not agree to leaving weapons in the hands of Hamas**. He said it was the duty of the police in the Gaza Strip to operate the same way they operated in the West Bank. He said he would not cooperate unless the police were under his command (Samaa News, November 1, 2017).

► **Tawfiq al-Na'im, responsible for the internal security forces in the Gaza Strip**, said that as part of the reconciliation process **no operative in Hamas' security forces would be fired**. He also said that **Hamas' security forces still controlled the buffer zone between the Gaza Strip and Egypt**, despite the fact that responsibility for the border crossings had been transferred to the PA. Hamas' security forces, he said, were working to prevent smuggling along the border. He claimed that to that end Egypt was supposed to provide them with additional equipment and other means (Shehab, not 1, 2017).

Disarming Hamas

► **Disarming Hamas is still the main cause of disagreement in the reconciliation process. Senior Hamas figures continue to stress that they will not agree to disarm.**

◆ **Hassan Yusuf, senior Hamas figure in Judea and Samaria**, said that the "weapons of the resistance" were the Palestinians' right and would remain in Palestinian hands **as long as the [so-called Israeli] "occupation" exists on Palestinian land**. He claimed that when Palestine was liberated, they would agree to a national army and one set of weapons. Now, however, they would not permit the weapons of the resistance to be put on the negotiating table (Palestine Online, November 2, 2017).

◆ **Husam Badran, a member of the Hamas' political bureau** and head of Hamas' national relations ministry, claimed that the "resistance to the occupation" was "a legitimate right" of the Palestinians, anchored in all international conventions in all its forms and methods, **led by armed resistance**. As far as Hamas was concerned, he said, the issue could not be discussed, either internally or externally. The armed "struggle,"

he claimed, was the natural condition of every "occupied" people (al-Shuruq Online, November 2, 2017).

- ◆ **Senior Hamas figure Mahmoud al-Zahar** said in a television interview that the weapons of the "resistance" would not be touched. He asked who the insane person was who would approach the weapons of the "resistance" (palsawa, November 6, 2017).

- ◆ **Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri**, speaking for Hamas at a conference in **Istanbul** to mark the centenary of the Balfour Declaration, said **Hamas planned to adhere to "resistance" to the occupation**. He claimed Hamas **continued weapons training and even manufactured some of its own weapons** ("Most of the rockets we use are manufactured in Gaza," he said). He said Hamas would retain its weapons until the day of Palestine's liberation (al-Anadolu News, November 2, 2017).

Lifting the PA's sanctions on the Gaza Strip

► Despite the implementation of the reconciliation agreement, **no announcement has come from Mahmoud Abbas about lifting the sanctions he imposed on the Gaza Strip**. The delay in the announcement has led to strong criticism from Hamas. **Hassan Yusuf, a senior Hamas figure in Judea and Samaria**, said the delay weakened faith in the reconciliation and increased worry. Following the transfer of the crossings to the PA, he called for the complete end to the sanctions on the Gaza Strip and for attention to be paid to the daily issues of the Gazans (Shehab, November 1, 2017).

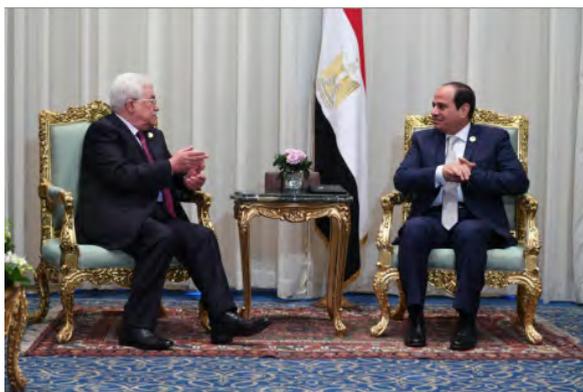


Hamas cartoons critical of the internal Palestinian reconciliation. Right: A drowning Gazan tries to keep the reconciliation from failing. The boat is labeled "Reconciliation" (Twitter account of Palinfo, November 5, 2017). Left: Criticism of Palestinian Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah for unkept promises made to the Gaza Strip. The Arabic reads, "We have been exhausted by promises" (Facebook page of Isma'il al-Bazam, November 7, 2017).

The Palestinian Authority (PA)

Mahmoud Abbas visits Egypt and Saudi Arabia

► At the request of Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-El-Sisi, Mahmoud Abbas went to Sharm el-Sheikh in the Sinai Peninsula for a two-day visit. Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki accompanied him, as did Majed Faraj, head of Palestinian general intelligence; Hassan al-Sheikh, head of the civilian authority; and Nazmi Muhanna, chairman of the crossings authority. During the visit Mahmoud Abbas met with el-Sisi (Wafa, November 6, 2017). From there Mahmoud Abbas went to Saudi Arabia for an official visit, where he met with King Salman and Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman (Wafa, November 6, 2017).



Mahmoud Abbas meets with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi at Sharm el-Sheikh (Wafa, November 6, 2017).

The Battle for Hearts and Minds

Palestinian campaign for the Balfour Declaration centenary

► November 2, 2017, was the one hundredth anniversary of the Balfour Declaration. To mark it the Palestinians held rallies with hundreds of participants in the main cities of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip. Schools and government institutions closed so that students and employees could attend the various events. Many participants wore black, waved black flags and carried anti-Balfour Declaration signs. Demonstrators demanded the British government apologize to the Palestinians. A protest rally was held in front of the British consulate in Jerusalem attended by dozens of protestors, some of whom were detained. Hundreds of Palestinians participated in marches in Gaza City (alresalah.net, November 2, 2017).



Right: Palestinians in Bethlehem throw shoes at an effigy of Lord Balfour. Left: Burning the Israeli and British flags and a picture of Lord Balfour during a demonstration held at the northern entrance to Bethlehem (Facebook page of QudsN, November 1, 2017).



Right: Hamas protest demonstration in the Jabalia refugee camp. Left: Burning pictures of British Prime Minister Theresa May and Lord Balfour during the demonstration (Safa, November 3, 2017).

► On November 4, 2017, a demonstration was held **in front of the American embassy in London** to mark the centenary of the Balfour Declaration. Demonstrators protested American and British support of Israel. According to the demonstration's organizers, "thousands" of people marched to Parliament Square. A demonstration was also held near the Parliament itself. **Saeb Erekat, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee**, expressed the appreciation of the Palestinian leadership and the Palestinian people for everyone in Britain who supported the rights of the Palestinians (Wafa, November 5, 2017).



Rally in London protesting Israel and the Balfour Declaration attended by leftist Palestinian activist Mustafa Barghouti (center, directly under the "n" in "Campaign") (Palinfo Twitter account, November 4, 2017).

- ▶ On the eve of the event **Mahmoud Abbas issued an announcement calling on the British government to take responsibility for the consequences of the Balfour Declaration, to apologize to the Palestinian people and to correct the historical injustice by recognizing the Palestinian state** (Wafa, November 1, 2017).
- ▶ **There are reports of Palestinian legal activity** against Britain and other countries and institutions. **Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki said legal suits would be brought against Britain in the British, European and international courts to "atone" for the suffering of the Palestinian people caused by the Balfour Declaration.** The suits would be brought in accordance with instructions from Mahmoud Abbas. Riyad al-Maliki claimed his ministry was encouraging Palestinians harmed by the Balfour Declaration to bring similar suits, especially those who had British citizenship (Wafa, November 2, 2017).