



Palestinian popular terrorism in Judea and Samaria declined during the first half of 2018, despite both the relocation of the American embassy to Jerusalem and Hamas' continuous inciting Palestinians to join the violent "return marches"

June 17, 2018

Overview

During the first half of 2018 (as of June 17, 2018) there have been **twenty popular terrorism attacks**, most of them vehicular attacks (seven) and stabbing attacks (seven). The most recent was a stabbing attack in Afula, in which **a young woman was critically injured by a Palestinian from Jenin staying in Israeli illegally**. Most of the attacks were carried out in Jerusalem (17), two inside Israeli territory and one in Judea and Samaria. **Five Israelis were killed in the attacks, three of them IDF soldiers**.

► **The data indicate a conspicuous decline in the scope and level of intensity of popular terrorism compared with 2017**, continuing the trend towards a decline in popular terrorism attacks since March 2016. In addition, demonstrations and riots in Judea and Samaria are also less intense. That is **conspicuous in view of the violent "return marches" in the Gaza Strip, the relocation of the American embassy to Jerusalem** and the events marking Nakba Day, Naksa Day, Land Day and Palestinian Prisoner Day. Hamas and the other terrorist organizations **hoped the events in the Gaza Strip, the ceremony marking the relocation of the American embassy and other events would ignite the Palestinian street in Judea and Samaria, and add a pan-Palestinian dimension to the marches in the Gaza Strip**, but to no avail.

Why did Hamas not succeed in duplicating the marches, with their attendant violence and terrorism, in Judea and Samaria? Why is the populace in Judea and Samaria apparently relatively apathetic, without masses of Palestinians demonstrating in support of the Gaza Strip, where events led to such a large number of casualties? Why has the relocation of the American embassy not led to mass popular protest in Jerusalem and throughout Judea and Samaria? **Why have the events in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem not motivated young Palestinians to carry out attacks and give new momentum to popular terrorism?**

► **The ITIC does not have unequivocal answers. The effectiveness of the Israeli security forces and the successful activities of the Palestinian security forces are only a partial explanation.** The answer may be a public feeling that for **an escalation in Judea and Samaria the Palestinians will have to pay a high price, especially a high economic price**, which, at least at the present time, they have no interest in paying. It is also possible that at least some of the Palestinians are averse to protest activities and popular terrorism attacks, **which are liable to be interpreted as support for Hamas**, Hamas' hostility towards that Palestinian Authority (PA), and the new strategy towards Hamas has adopted in the Gaza Strip. Moreover, public opinion polls have shown that there is an **ongoing hostility towards Mahmoud Abbas and his leadership**, which restrains the motivation of the public at large and keeps it from participating in demonstrations which are considered as supporting the PA's policy towards the United States and Israel.

► In addition, an examination of Palestinian public reactions in recent years shows that **religious issues have the power to unite them, send them out into the streets, and increase the motivation to carry out attacks.** That was clearly demonstrated by the events on the Temple Mount that began on June 14, 2017, and by the decision of the Israel Police Force to put metal detectors at the entrance to the Temple Mount compound, which **sent tens of thousands of Palestinians into the streets to riot against the Israeli security forces.** On the other hand, political events, even those concerning Jerusalem, have not led to significant rioting or to an increase in the number or scope of popular terrorism attacks.

► Regardless, past experience in Judea and Samaria has shown that **there are triggers that can rapidly change the security situation and lead to an outburst of negative sentiments left unexpressed for a long time.** Among them are solidarity with the many casualties in the Gaza Strip, the ongoing impact of the popular terrorism events in the Gaza Strip and build-up of negative emotions caused by American policy (the relocation of the embassy, the "deal of the century").

The most recent popular terrorism attack: a stabbing attack in Afula

► On the afternoon of June 11, 2018, **an 18-year-old Israeli girl waiting for a bus in Afula was stabbed and critically wounded.** A search was conducted for the stabber. After about

an hour the Israeli security forces located him. He was shot and wounded, and detained by the security forces. **He was from Jenin and staying in Israel illegally.** A knife was found in his possession (Israeli media, June 11, 2018).

► The Palestinian media reported he was **Nur al-Din al-Shenawi**, 22, from Jenin, a student at the al-Quds Open University. Friends and relatives said **he was religious. They claimed he carried out the attack in retaliation for Israeli activity in Jerusalem and on the Temple Mount** (Palinfo, June 11, 2018). Nur al-Din al-Shenawi had a Facebook page where he posted various notices. **He called for Muslims to pray in Jerusalem, and for "resistance."** Among his posts were "Jerusalem [is] a red line," a call on Muslims them to kneel and pray to Allah, pictures of the Qur'an and pictures taken with friends on the Temple Mount. He also posted a notice glorifying the "heroes of the resistance" in Jenin (Facebook page of Nur al-Din al-Shenawi).



Right: The scene of the stabbing attack in Afula (QudsN Facebook page, June 11, 2018). Left: Nur al-Din al-Shenawi, who carried out the attack (Facebook page of Jenin al-Hadath, June 11, 2018).



Right: Notice posted by Nur al-Shenawi to his Facebook page. He wrote, "If you can't do something big, do small things in big ways." Left: Nur al-Din al-Shenawi and two friends with a notice reading "Jerusalem [is] a red line, #Jerusalem_OurCapital" (Facebook page of Nur al-Din al-Shenawi, December 6, 2017).

Popular terrorism ("popular resistance") attacks in Judea and Samaria during the first half of 2018

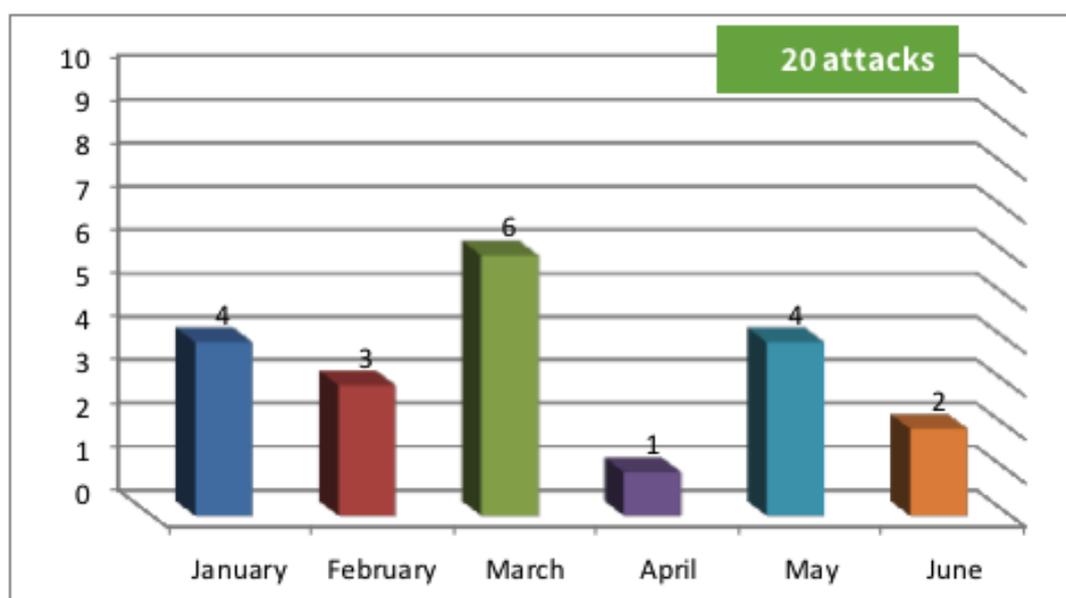
The stabbing attack in Afula was the most recent popular terrorism ("popular resistance") **attack, carried out with the support of the PA and Fatah.** The "popular resistance" is not a peaceful, non-violent protest, as claimed by Mahmoud Abbas. On the contrary, it makes massive use of violence and lethal terrorism. It is part of a strategy decided on at the 6th Fatah conference almost nine years ago (August 2009). In the summation of the PLO's Central Council (January 15, 2008), there was also **a call to continue and support the "popular resistance."**¹ Popular terrorism attacks of the first half of 2018 (as of June 17, 2018) have **declined significantly in comparison with the same period in 2017.** In retrospect, popular terrorism had been **declining consistently** since it peaked between October 2015 and March 2016 (a period during which there were dozens of significant terrorist attacks every month).

¹ For further information, see the January 17, 2018 bulletin "The PLO's Central Council and Mahmoud Abbas call for the continuation and strengthening of [so-called] 'peaceful popular resistance' [i.e., popular terrorism]."

► Between January 1 and June 17, 2018, **there have been 20 significant terrorist attacks²** (see the table in the Appendix). **In comparison, during the first half of 2017 there were 47 significant terrorist attacks, and 35 in the second half** (for a total of 82). Most of the attacks (17) in the first half of 2018 were carried out in **Judea and Samaria, one in east Jerusalem and two in Israeli territory** (an attempted vehicular attack in Acre carried out by an Israeli citizen, and a stabbing attack carried out in Afula by a Palestinian from Jenin). So far **the attacks have killed five people**, three of them soldiers (18 people were killed in popular terrorism attacks in 2017).

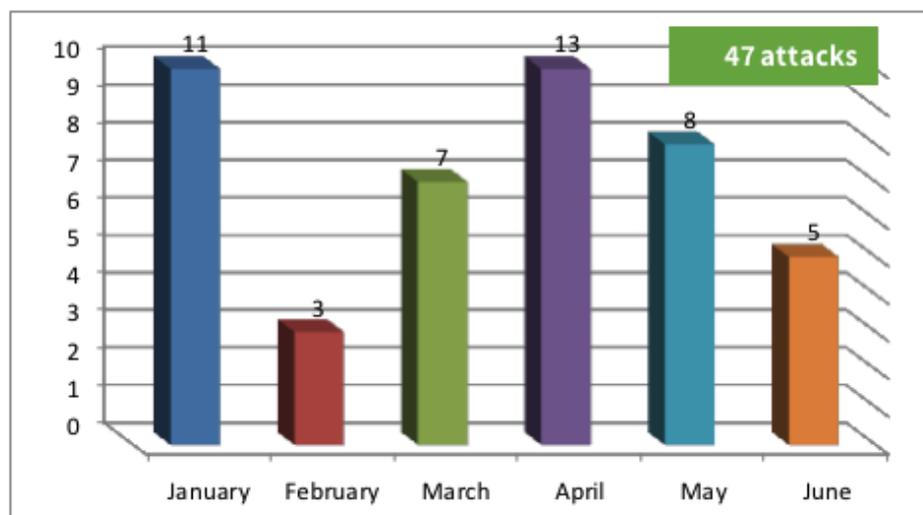
► **During 2018, so far there have been seven vehicular attacks, seven stabbing attacks and five shooting attacks. One attack involved a marble slab thrown on the head of an IDF soldier** during a security activity; the soldier later died. **Most of the attacks were directed against IDF soldiers** (attempts to run over soldiers at check points, shots fired at IDF posts). During the entire period Palestinians have continued throwing stones and Molotov cocktails, **particularly on the main roads in Judea and Samaria**, endangering the lives of drivers and passengers.

Significant terrorist attacks carried out during the first half of 2018, updated to June 17

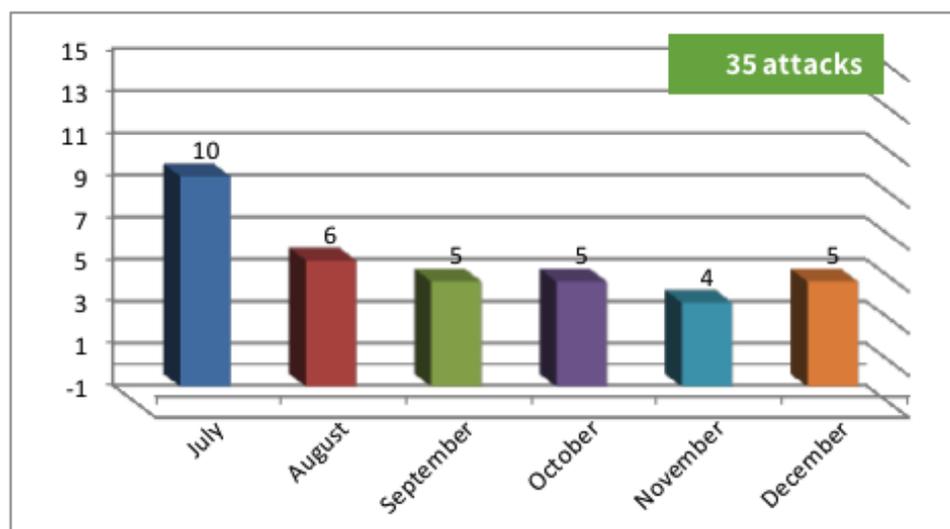


² A significant attack is defined by the ITIC as involving shooting, a vehicular attack, the use of IEDs, or a combination of the above. Stones and Molotov cocktails thrown by Palestinians are not included.

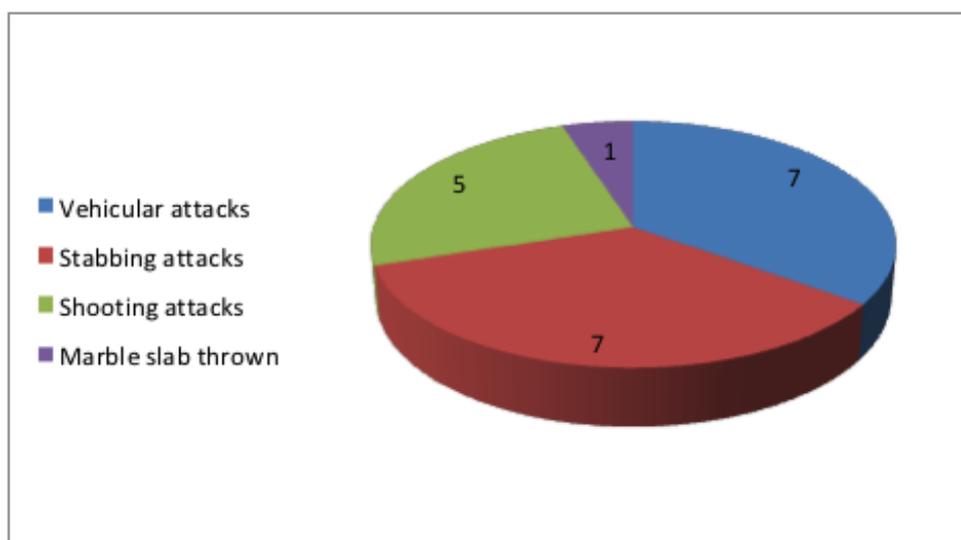
Popular terrorism attacks carried out during the first half of 2017



Popular terrorism attacks carried out during the second half of 2017



Distribution of popular terrorism attacks according to type of attack, 2018



Prevention of terrorist attacks

According to Nadav Argaman, head of the Israel Security Agency, **during the first half of 2018 about 250 significant terrorist attacks were prevented. More than 400 Palestinians who planned lone-wolf (i.e., popular terrorism) attacks were detained.** The attacks prevented included **suicide bombing attacks, abductions and shooting attacks** (data presented by Nadav Argaman at an international conference on the war on terrorism held by the Israeli ministry of the interior in Jerusalem, Haaretz, June 14, 2018; website of the Israeli ministry of the interior, June 13, 2018).

► In December 2017 the head of the Israel Security Agency spoke about the prevention of terrorist attacks during that year. He said that **during 2017 the Israel Security Agency had prevented about 400 terrorist attacks**, including 13 suicide bombing attacks, eight abductions and 94 attacks that were liable to end with the death of the terrorist operatives (Haaretz, June 14, 2018).

The influence of the relocation of the American embassy to Jerusalem on popular terrorism

► On December 6, 2017, the American president announced that **the United States recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and intended to relocate its embassy to Jerusalem**. The announcement led the PA and Fatah leadership to appeal to the Palestinian people to hold mass protest demonstrations. The leaders of Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) called for the renewal of the armed struggle against Israel. While the calls did lead to demonstrations and riots in Judea, Samaria, the Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem, **public response was relatively poor**. Only a few thousand Palestinians demonstrated every day at dozens of locations, and clashes with the Israeli security forces were of relatively low intensity (partially because of the activities of the Palestinian security forces, which helped keep the events from spinning out of control).



Demonstration on the Temple Mount the Friday after America's announcement it was moving its embassy to Jerusalem (Wafa, December 8, 2017).

► **The difference between the high level of violence in the Gaza Strip which characterized the first half of 2018, and the relatively low intensity of the protests and riots in Judea and Samaria, was particularly prominent on May 14, 2018.** That could be observed at the ceremony marking **the relocation of the American embassy to Jerusalem**, attended by senior American and Israeli officials. At the same time, riots were held in the **Gaza Strip** during which mass attempts were made to penetrate into Israeli territory. **The events led to the deaths of more than 60 Palestinians.** In Judea and Samaria there was a weak response to Hamas' calls to join the demonstrations and protests, even in view of the dramatic events in the Gaza Strip.

► On May 14, 2018, in Judea and Samaria there were a number of demonstrations at the traditional sites. The largest was held near the Qalandia crossing, northwest of Jerusalem, attended by about 1,800 demonstrators, some of whom clashed with Israeli security forces. Demonstrations were also held in Ramallah, near the Tomb of Rachel (Bethlehem) and in Shuafat. In addition, events held on other dates, **such as Nakba Day, Naksa Day, Land Day**

and the entire month of Ramadan, also did not increase the scope or intensity of the demonstrations and riots in Judea and Samaria during the first half of 2018.



[Pictures, caption] Palestinians riot against Israeli security forces at the Qalandia crossing (Wafa, May 14, 2018).

The influence of the "return marches" on the Gaza Strip on the "popular resistance" in Judea and Samaria

- ▶ During 2018, Hamas has adopted the concept of "popular resistance" (popular terrorism) as the main modus operandi of its strategy. That is because Hamas has an interest in using violence against Israel without being dragged into a comprehensive military confrontation, especially given **the difficult economic situation in the Gaza Strip, the failure of its reconciliation with Fatah and the PA, and Hamas' faltering relations with the most important Arab countries.** The "popular resistance" in the Gaza Strip has been manifested by **the "return marches" organized and conducted by Hamas**, begun on March 30 2018 and continuing to this day (with no set final date). The demonstrations **are accompanied by riots and terrorism, even though they are represented as non-violent.** The violence includes gunfire, IEDs, flying incendiary kites into Israeli territory and on occasion terrorist attacks carried out under the cover of the demonstrations. There were three rounds of rocket and mortar shell fire at the western Negev of **a scope unprecedented since Operation Protective Edge** (updated to June 18, 2018).
- ▶ However, there is **an essential difference** between the "popular resistances" in Judea and Samaria on one hand and the Gaza Strip on the other. In Judea and Samaria the riots and popular terrorism are basically popular, even though they are supported by Fatah and

the PA. Popular terrorism is carried out by Palestinians who for various reasons made personal decisions, without direction or practical support from Hamas or other terrorist organizations. In the Gaza Strip, on the other hand, **the terrorism is not "popular"** (although that is how it is represented) because it is Hamas' policy, carried out with the participation of Hamas operatives, with Hamas' logistical support, and when the necessity arises, with Hamas operatives' fire (either directly, or with a blind eye turned to the fire of other organizations).

Hamas and the other organizations participating in organizing the "marches" made a **propaganda effort to influence the Palestinians in Judea and Samaria to join them.** Hamas' (and other) media repeatedly called on the residents of Judea and Samaria (and also on Israeli Arabs) to hold demonstrations parallel to those being held in the Gaza Strip. Their calls went unanswered and the **public in Judea and Samaria remained fairly indifferent to the events in the Gaza Strip.** The round of escalation that included rocket and mortar shell fire and Israel's attacks in response, did not motivate the residents of Judea and Samaria to join the events. **Even the large number of Gazans killed in several "return march" events did not bring the Palestinian public out into the streets to demonstrate or carry out terrorist attacks.**



Hamas call to the residents of Judea and Samaria to join the "return marches." The Arabic reads, "#Where_areyou_oh[West] Bank#I return#thegreat_returnmarch" (Paldf, April 7, 2018).

The influence of events in the Gaza Strip and Jerusalem on popular terrorism attacks

The low intensity of the demonstrations and riots were accompanied by a decrease in the scope of popular terrorism (the so-called "popular resistance") during the first half of 2018. The dramatic events in the Gaza Strip and Jerusalem, and the events marking Global Quds Day and Naksa Day did not lead to lone wolf or network popular terrorism attacks. **On the contrary, the scope of popular terrorism events and the level of their lethality declined during the first half of 2018, compared with 2017, as noted above.**

Appendix

Significant popular terrorism attacks during 2018³

	Date	Description	Terrorist Name	Residence	Age	Notes
1.	January 1	Palestinian attempted to stab IDF soldiers near Beit A'innon, north of Kiryat Arba. Neutralized by IDF force. No casualties were reported.	Ahmed al-Jarar	Jenin		Son of Hamas military wing operative killed in 2002
2.	January 9	Israeli civilian shot in drive-by shooting at the Havat Gilad junction in Samaria. He was mortally wounded and later died.	Ahmed Nasr Jarar Ahmed Sayid Muhammad Jarar	Burqin		Known to be affiliated with Hamas
3.	January 19	Palestinian drove to the checkpoint near the Qasr al-Yahud baptism site. Two soldiers stopped him at the entrance. He hit one with his car. The soldier was slightly wounded and treated at the site.	Jihad Elias Muhammad	Hebron	55	
4.	January 19	Palestinian drove to a Border Police roadblock near the Atarot junction south of Ramallah. Did	Unknown			

³ Updated to June 17, 2018.

		not heed calls to stop and drove towards policemen. Tried twice to hit them with his car, and then drove away towards Ramallah.				
5.	February 5	Palestinian went to the Ariel junction, crossed the road and stabbed and killed an Israeli civilian waiting for a bus. He was wounded by an Israeli officer but escaped.	Ability al-Karim 'Adel 'Asi	Recently lived in Jaffa, father lives in Nablus	19	Israel Arab. His mother lives in Nazareth. He was captured in Nablus on March 18, 2018.
6.	February 7	Palestinian went to the entrance of the village of Karmeit Zur (Gush Etzion) before dawn and stabbed a guard inflicting a minor wound. Another guard shot and killed him.	Hamza Yusuf Naaman al-Zam'ara	Halhul (near Hebron)	19	Detained in 2015 and served a term of 14 months in an Israeli prison.
7.	February 8	Palestinian went to the Karmeit Zur junction (Gush Etzion) and tried to stab Israeli drivers as they passed by. He was unsuccessful and escaped to the Halhul area. Israeli security forces later detained him	Unknown			
8.	March 4	Palestinian driver hit four		Shfaram	26	

		Israelis (two IDF soldiers. a Border Policeman and a civilian) near the train station in Acre, northern Israel.				
9.	March 8	Shots were fired at an IDF post near Nablus. No casualties or damages were reported.	Unknown			
10.	March 11	Shots were fired at an IDF post between the villages of Psagot and al-Bireh (near Ramallah). Shell casings were found nearby.	Unknown			
11.	March 11	Shots were fired at an IDF post near the Bituniya crossing. Shell casings were found nearby.	Unknown			
12.	March 16	Vehicular attack near the community of Mevo Dotan in northern Samaria. Two IDF soldiers were killed and two others injured..	'Alaa Ratab Qabha	The village of Bartaa in northern Samaria	25	The terrorist was a former prisoner, released in April 2018.
13.	March 18	Stabbing attack on HaNeviim Street in the Old City in Jerusalem. A 30-year-old Israeli man was mortally stabbed and later died. A	Abd al-Rahman Maher Bani Fadhel	Aqraba, south of Nablus	28	

		policeman nearby shot and killed the terrorist .				
14.	April 8	Near the gas station in Mishor Adumim a Palestinian holding a screwdriver crossed the road to where an Israeli civilian was standing. He tried to stab him. A driver passing by stopped his car, ran after the Palestinian and shot him, severely wounding him. The Palestinian was evacuated to a hospital.	Muhammad al-Karim Marshoud.	Balata refugee camp in Nablus.	30	Married and father of three
15.	May 11	A car ran into an IDF soldier at a checkpoint at the Ganot junction near the community of Shavei Shomron, slightly injuring his legs. The IDF reported it was a vehicular attack.	Unknown			
16.	May 11	Attempted vehicular attack targeting an IDF soldier at a checkpoint in Mt Hebron. No casualties were reported. The driver was detained.	Unknown			
17.	May 22	Shots were fired at an Israeli vehicle near the committee of Naama,	Unknown			

		west of Ramallah. No casualties were reported.				
18.	May 24	An IDF force went to detain terrorist operatives in the al-Amari refugee camp near Ramallah. One of the Palestinian threw a marble slab on the head of a soldier, mortally wounding him. The soldier died in the hospital.	Islam Yusuf Abu Hamid	Al-Amari refugee camp	35	Hamas operative, captured on June 13. Had been imprisoned in the past for involvement in Hamas-organized terrorist attacks.
19.	June 2	Palestinian driving a small tractor tried to run over an Israeli officer and soldier. An IDF force carried out detention procedures, but the Palestinian did not halt. He turned and tried to run over civilian passers-by. He was shot and killed.	Rami Sabarna		53	
20.	June 11	An 18-year-old Israeli woman was stabbed and critically wounded while waiting for a bus in the northern Israeli city of Afula.	Nur al-Din al-Shenawi	Jenin	22	Student at the al-Quds Open University