



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (October 24 – October 29, 2018)

Overview

- ▶ The "return march" riots of October 26, 2018, were particularly violent, with an exceptional number of hand grenades and IEDs thrown at IED soldiers. In addition, rioters made two attempts to cross the fence. Seven Palestinians were killed during the events.
- ▶ The Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), using the excuse of protecting the demonstrators, launched about 40 rockets and mortar shells. Some of the rockets were intercepted and some fell in open areas. The PIJ issued a unilateral ceasefire declaration (according to the Arab media, Hamas refused to issue a joint announcement from the terrorist organizations' operations room). The measures taken by the PIJ were not coordinated with Hamas, and were aimed to challenge Hamas and illustrate the PIJ's great importance under the leadership of recently-elected Ziyad al-Nakhalah.
- ▶ On October 28, 2018, the Israeli Air Force (IAF) attacked three Gazans who approached the security fence. A spokesman for the Palestinian ministry of health said they were three adolescents aged 13 and 14. An initial investigation conducted by the IDF revealed that soldiers in an IDF observation post saw three figures crawling toward the fence under the cover of darkness holding what was perceived as a suspicious object. The three placed the object on the ground and were then attacked from the air (Ynet, October 29, 2018). **It is known that Hamas (and others) customarily dispatches children and adolescents to the security fence on dangerous missions during the "return marches."**

Israel's South

The "return marches"¹

- ▶ The 31st march (since March 30, 2018) was held on Friday, October 26, 2018. About 16,000 Gazans (10,000 last week) gathered at a number of sites along the border fence, as they have

¹ For further information, see the October 28, 2018 bulletin "Summary of the Events on the Gaza Strip Border."

every Friday. They burned tires and threw rocks. **This past week the riots were particularly violent**, with an exceptional number of hand grenades and IEDs thrown at IDF forces. Two attempts were also made to cross the security fence (IDF spokesman, October 26, 2018).



Right: "Return march" rioters in eastern Jabalia. Left: Sabotaging the security fence in eastern Jabalia (Palinfo Twitter account, October 26, 2018).

- ▶ During the events the IAF attacked three Hamas posts in the northern Gaza Strip (IDF spokesman, October 26, 2018). According to the Palestinian media, an Israeli helicopter attacked an observation post of the "resistance" in the al-Bureij area in the central Gaza Strip and an post of Hamas' restraint force in eastern Gaza City (Shabakat Quds, October 26, 2018).
- ▶ **Ashraf al-Qidra, spokesman for the ministry of health in the Gaza Strip**, said four Gazans were killed and 232 wounded. On October 27 and 28, 2018, Ashraf al-Qidra reported two more Gazans killed during the march (Ashraf al-Qidra's Facebook page, October 27 and 28, 2018). Another rioter later died of his wounds.

Rocket and mortar shell fire

- ▶ **The night after the "return march," at about 22:30, a massive barrage of rocket and mortar shells began attacking Israel from the Gaza Strip.** It was the heaviest rocket fire since August 2018. During the night of October 26, 2018 and into the following day **about 40 rockets and mortar shells were fired at Israeli territory.** Under attack were the city of Sderot and other communities of the western Negev and south of Ashqelon. The Iron Dome aerial defense system intercepted about 15 rockets, all those directly attacking populated areas. The others fell in open (IDF spokesman, October 28, 2018). Two of the rockets fell inside the Gaza Strip.
- ▶ As a result of the attack seven civilians were treated for shock. Two others were slightly injured while running to take cover. Some property damage was also reported. On October

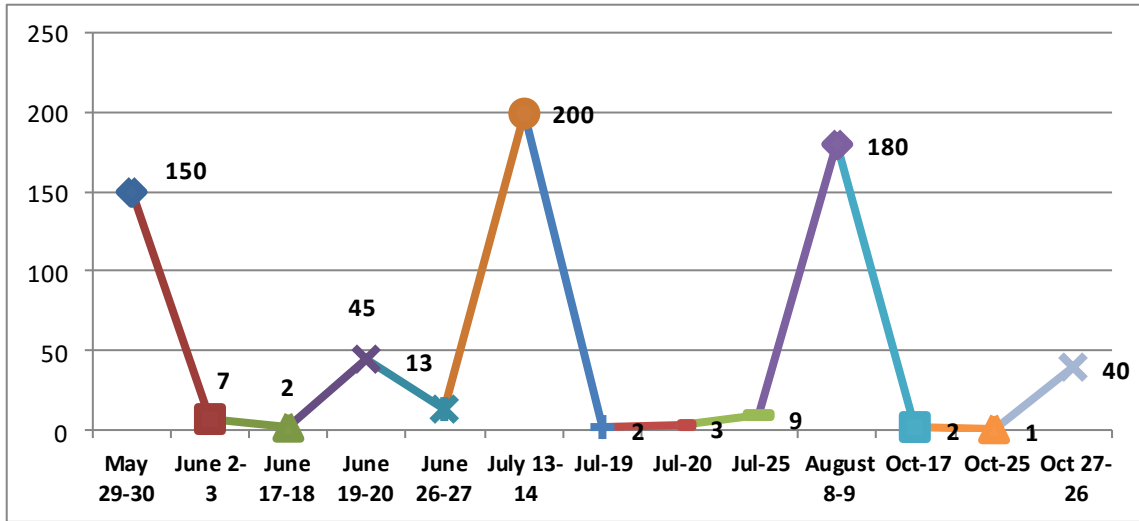
28, 2018, an unexploded rocket was found in the yard of a high school in the western Negev (Ynet, October 28, 2018).



The remains of the unexploded rocket in the schoolyard in the western Negev (Western Negev Security, October 28, 2018).

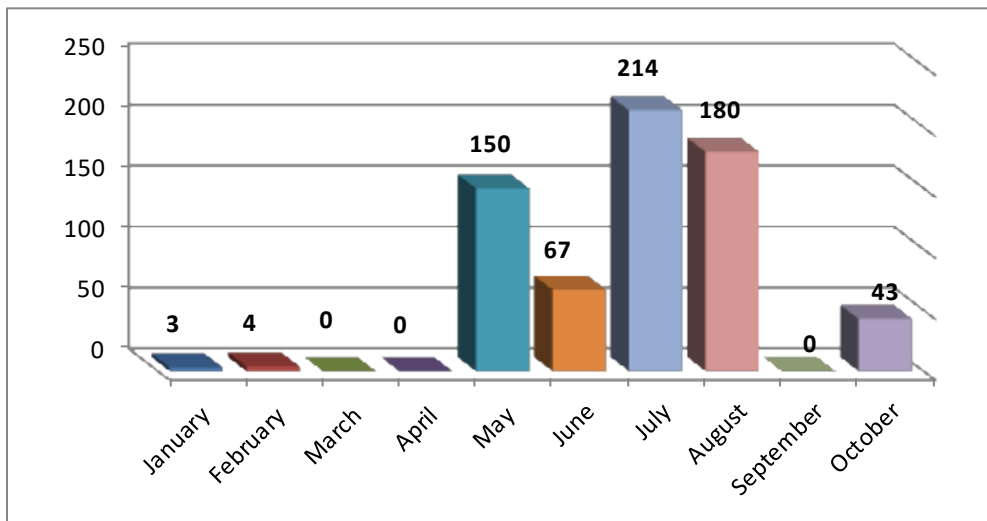
► **The military wing of the PIJ claimed responsibility for the rocket fire**, part of what it called the "October revenge" (Jerusalem Brigades website, October 27, 2018). **The rockets were fired without previous coordination with Hamas.** Sources revealed to the London-based newspaper al-Sharq al-Awsat that the PIJ wanted its claim of responsibility issued from the joint operations room of the Palestinians organizations in the Gaza Strip, but **Hamas refused.** **Salah al-Bardawil, a member of the Hamas' political bureau**, criticized the PIJ, saying it was forbidden [for any organization] to operate while contacts [about a ceasefire] with the enemy were in progress (al-Sharq al-Awsat, October 28, 2018).

Rocket and mortar shell fire during and between the recent rounds of escalation²



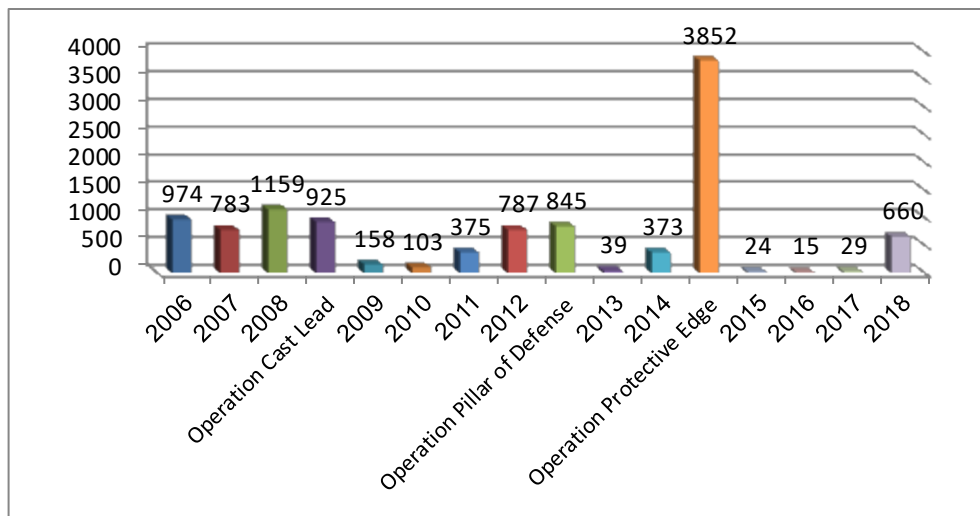
653 rockets and mortar shells

Monthly Distribution of Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire since January 2018



² The statistics do not include rockets that fell inside the Gaza Strip.

Annual Distribution of Rocket Hits



Other events

IDF activity near the border fence

► On October 28 2018, **the IAF attacked three Gazans east of Khan Yunis** (southern Gaza Strip). They had approached the security fence and tried to sabotage it with an IED (IDF spokesman, October 28, 2018). The spokesman for the ministry of health in the Gaza Strip reported the **three were adolescents aged 13 and 14** from Wadi Salqa in east Khan Yunis (Ashraf al-Qidra's Facebook page, October 28, 2018). According to the results of an initial investigation, an soldiers in an IDF observation post saw **three figures crawling towards the fence under the cover of darkness with a suspicious object**. They placed the object on the ground near the fence and were attacked from the air (Ynet, October 28, 2018).

► The deaths of the three prompted enraged responses:

- ◆ The **PIJ** issued an announcement stressing that the "resistance" would respond to the "crime" in a way consistent with its magnitude and the great rage it had engendered. The Israeli version of the event, according to the announcement, was a lie, and the children had no connection to any military activity of any kind (Jerusalem Brigades website, October 29, 2018).

- ◆ **Hamis spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri** tweeted that the killing of the three children was part of Israeli terrorism, and "a message to all those who accept the murdering Zionists, [telling them] not to dirty their hands with the hands of those who murder children" (Palinfo, October 29, 2018).

- ◆ The **Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)** said in a statement that the killing of the children, despite all the technological means available to Israel,

proved the "slaughter" had been carried out in cold blood. It was an Israeli attempt to enforce a new equation to break the willpower of the Palestinians and eliminate the "return marches." According to the statement, "sooner of later the occupation will pay the price for its crimes against our people" (PFLP website, October 29, 2018).

◆ **Former Fatah leader Muhammad Dahlan** wrote on his Facebook page that he condemned the killing of the three children. At the same time he criticized the national and Islamic forces in the Gaza Strip, which he said, were responsible for **making sure children were not allowed to approach the dangerous regions near the fence** (Muhammad Dahlan's Facebook page, October 29, 2018).



Right: The death notice issued for the three children (unclear who issued it) (Palinfo Twitter account, October 29, 2018). Left: Muhammad Dahlan's criticism of the national and Islamic forces in the Gaza Strip for not meeting their responsibility to keep children away from the fence (Muhammad Dahlan's Facebook page, October 29, 2018).

Seventeen year-old member the night harassment group killed

► This past week operatives of the "night harassment group" continued their activities along the security fence to annoy the IDF soldiers. On October 25, 2018, dozens of operatives began their activities in the eastern Gaza Strip. That included burning tires, playing songs using loudspeakers, activating sirens and aiming laser lights at soldiers near the fence to harass them (Filastin al-Yawm, October 25, 2018)

► The spokesman for the ministry of health in the Gaza Strip reported the death of **Muntaser Muhammad Isma'il al-Baz**, 17, after being wounded in east al-Bureij on the evening of October 23, 2018 (Ashraf al-Qidra's Facebook page, October 23, 2018). According to other reports he was wounded in the riots near the security fence in east Deir al-Balah (al-Mushraq News and al-Quds, October 23, 2018). His brother, **Iyad Muhammad al-Baz, an operative in the military police in the Gaza Strip**, wrote on his Facebook page that Muntaser was a **Hamas operative and a member of the "night harassment group" and the**

"breakthrough group." He was wounded three times during the "return marches" (Facebook page of Iyad al-Baz, October 23 and 24, 2018). Senior Hamas figures, led by Isma'il Haniyeh, paid condolence calls.



Muntaser al-Baz (Palestine Online Twitter account, October 25, 2018).

Attempted abduction of IDF soldier prevented

► According to the Israeli media, the IDF conducted an investigation of the penetration into Israeli territory during the "return march" events on October 12, 2018. According to the findings, the event has been designated **as the most serious since the "return marches" began. An IDF soldier was almost abducted: a group of about 25 Gazans, under the cover of smoke from burning tires and improvised smoke machines, broke into Israeli territory after detonating an IED to make a hole in the security fence.**

► The penetration was a few dozen meters from an IDF post manned by snipers. Three of the Gazans ran towards the post and two of them tried to climb into it. IDF soldiers shot and killed them. The third remained in the area. When an IDF soldier approached him he drew a knife, rushed at the soldier and tried to take his weapon. The soldier fought with him, shook him off, and shot and killed him (article by Nir Dvori, Channel 12, Keshet, October 26, 2018).



Cutting the barbed wire of the security fence in east al-Bureij (Facebook page of photographer Ahmad Khaled, October 13, 2018). Left: The knife found at the scene of the attempted abduction in east al-Bureij (IDF website, October 12, 2018).

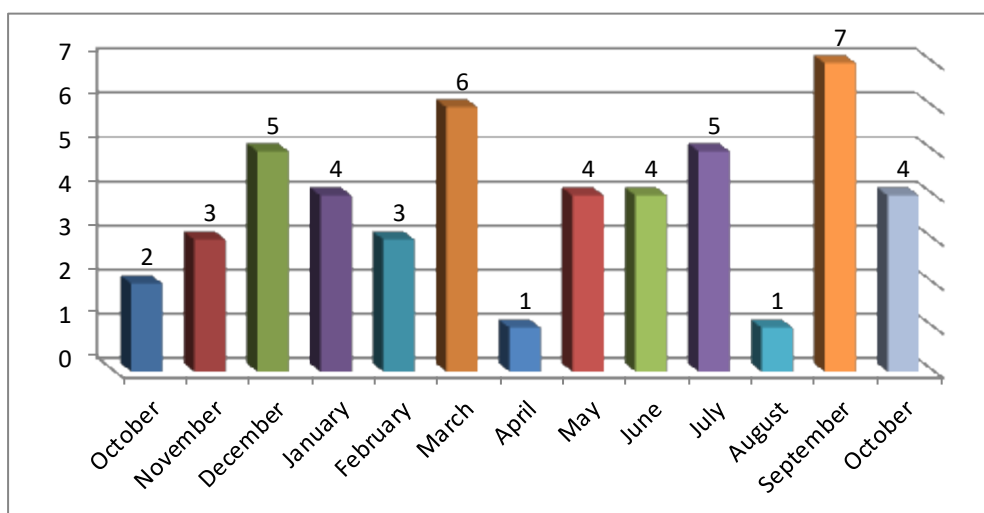
Judea and Samaria

Other events on the ground

► In Judea and Samaria Palestinians continued throwing stones at Israel vehicles. Israeli security forces carried out counterterrorism activities, detaining Palestinians suspected of terrorist activity and seizing military grade and improvised weapons. The more prominent events were the following:

- ◆ **October 28, 2018** – A pipe bomb was thrown at IDF forces from the direction of the village of Azoun (between Nablus and Qalqilya). No casualties or damage were reported (IDF spokesman, October 28, 2018).
- ◆ **October 26, 2018** – Hundreds of Palestinians threw stones and shot fireworks at Border Policemen and IDF forces in the region of Khirbat Nil'in in Samaria. The forces responded with riot control measures and by firing shots. During the riot a Palestinian was shot and killed. Three Border Policemen were slightly injured (Red Alert Facebook page, October 26, 2018).
- ◆ **October 26, 2018** – The search continues for the terrorist who carried out the shooting attack in the Barkan Industrial Zone. The Israeli security forces have detained and interrogated a number of suspects (Red Alert Facebook page, October 26, 2018).

Significant terrorist attacks in Judea and Samaria during the past year ³



³A 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.

Developments in the Gaza Strip

The provision of electricity

► On October 23, 2018, Israeli Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman **ordered the renewal of the deliveries of fuel from Qatar to the Gaza Strip**. The decision to renew the deliveries was made with a recommendation from Israeli security agencies. The defense minister said the continuation of the delivery of fuel from Qatar would be examined according to events on the ground (Haaretz, October 23, 2018).

► As a result, the Gaza Strip energy authority announced the operation of a second turbine. On October 28, 2018, it announced the operation of a third turbine. The authority said **the plant would now supply electricity in cycles of eight hours with power and eight without** (website of the Gaza Strip energy authority, October 25 and 28; Ma'an, October 28, 2018).

Interview with Ziyad al-Nakhalah after the rocket fire

► In an interview after the rocket fire with **Ziyad al-Nakhalah**, newly-elected PIJ secretary general,⁴ **he clearly attempted to appease Hamas**. He said the rocket fire was not an attempt to send a message or carried out in anger with Egypt or Hamas. Rather, it was part of the ongoing struggle against Israel, which, he said, sometimes took different forms. He said the PIJ, like the other "resistance" organizations, was committed to responding to the "crimes of the occupation," its repeated attacks against the "return marches," and the killing of "defenseless demonstrators in cold blood." Asked if rockets would be launched if Israel again harmed demonstrators at the border, he said they hoped Israel [the "occupation"] would not harm them, but if it did, then the forces of the "resistance," headed by Hamas, would respond.

► Al-Nakhalah denied that the rockets were launched because Egypt ignored the PIJ, as was reported by the media. He said the objective of such reports was to harm the legitimacy of the "resistance" and its chosen path. **He said it is Hamas that bears the responsibility for the Gaza Strip**, and it is natural Hamas would head the talks about the Gaza Strip. He emphasized that the PIJ had a good relationship with Egypt and that it was not in competition with Hamas for negotiating the lull. He denied claims that the rockets had been

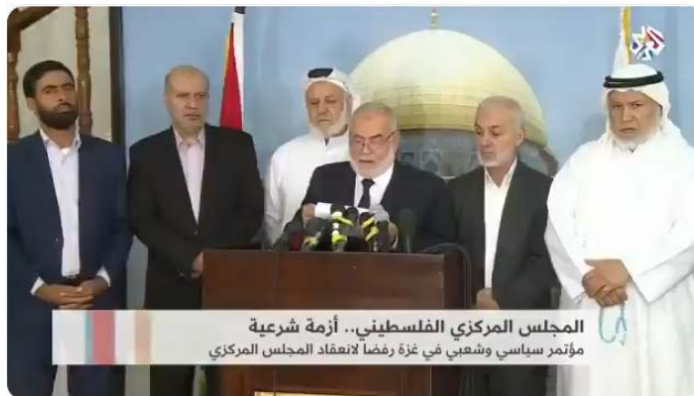
⁴ For further information about Ziyad al-Nakhalah, see the October 28, 2018 bulletin, "Profile of Ziyad al-Nakhalah, newly-elected head of the PIJ" [Hebrew]. The bulletin is being translated into English and will shortly be available on our website.

launched on instructions from Iran and Syria, saying Israel always tried to destroy the legitimacy of the "resistance" with false claims. He said the Palestinian people had begun "resisting" long before Iran began giving them support (al-Quds, October 29, 2018).

The Palestinian Authority (PA)

Conference of the PLO's Central Council

► The PLO's Central Council held a conference in Ramallah. According to **Muhammad Sabih, the council chairman**, the objective of the conference was to confirm the work program formulated in consultation with the leadership of the Palestinian National Council and the members of the PLO's Executive Committee (Palestinian TV, October 27, 2018). While the conference of the Central Council met in Ramallah, the Palestinian organizations in the Gaza Strip, headed by Hamas and the PIJ, held their own "popular" political conference. At the conference they expressed their strong objection to the Central Council conference in Ramallah, and to the plan to disperse the Palestinian Legislative Council, claiming it was illegal (AlarabyTV, October 28, 2018).



Ahmed Bahar, Hamas faction deputy chairman of the Palestinian Legislative Council, holds a press conference in the Gaza Strip with the other Palestinian organizations, stating his objection to the Central Committee conference in Ramallah (AlarabyTV, October 28, 2018).

► **PA chairman Mahmoud Abbas** gave a speech at the end of the first day of the conference. He said now was the hardest era for the Palestinian people, who had to make their most difficult and important decisions. His main points were the following:

- ◆ **The boycotting of the council:** Mahmoud Abbas devoted a substantial portion of his speech to the organizations that had boycotted the conference. He was severely critical that they had to come to express their opinions on the key issues. He called on them to

give up their seats in the Central Council and the Palestinian National Council to those who, according to Mahmoud Abbas, could and wanted to take responsibility.

◆ **The peace process:** Mahmoud Abbas called for the Palestinians to refuse the idea of a capital in Jerusalem or of Jerusalem as the capital of two states. He said the capital of Palestine had to be recognized as the entire territory of east Jerusalem occupied in 1967. He said the Palestinian leadership opposed a [separate] state in the Gaza Strip or a Palestinian state with temporary borders.

◆ **The United States:** Mahmoud Abbas said he had declared from the podium of the UN General Assembly that **he opposed the "deal of the century"** [the American president's expected peace plan]. He said the Americans had already "swallowed up Jerusalem" when they moved their embassy to the city. They had also eliminated the issue of the Palestinian refugees when they stopped funding UNRWA and claimed "in an unprecedented act of arrogance" that there were only 40,000 refugees. He said that today there were more than six million refugees. He (again) cursed the American president by saying "may your house be destroyed," an Arabic curse.

◆ **Financial support for the families of shaheeds and prisoners:** Mahmoud Abbas said that tens of thousands of shaheeds had been killed for the sake of the Palestinian cause, and that there were prisoners and wounded and thousands of crippled Palestinians in every place. He (again) stressed that despite the pressure exerted on the PA, **the salaries of the families of the shaheeds and of the prisoners were a red line and sanctified. "Even if we are left with only one cent it will be for the families of the shaheeds and not for the living."**



Mahmoud Abbas delivers a speech at the opening of the 30th conference of the PLO's Executive Council (Mahmoud Abbas' Facebook page, October 28, 2018).

The PA and Hamas condemn the murder of 11 Jews in a Pittsburgh synagogue

► Following the murder of the worshippers in the synagogue in Pittsburgh, **the PA foreign ministry issued** an announcement denouncing the terrorist attack, which had caused the deaths of American citizens and the wounding of policemen. The announcement further condemned carrying out such attacks at places of worship. The sort of terrorism involved is the most dangerous because it occurs within the [local] community (Wafa, October 28, 2018).

► **Senior Hamas figure Bassem Na'im** said Hamas heard with "great sorrow" about the "cowardly terrorist attack" at the Jewish institution in Pittsburgh which led to the deaths of 11 people and the wounding of many more. He added that the Palestinians, who were the victims of the Israeli occupation, fully understood the meaning of terrorism and its consequences. He sent his support to the families and wished a speedy recovery to the wounded, stressing that terrorism had neither religion nor nationality (al-Quds, October 28, 2018).

Call to Palestinians not to vote in the local elections in Jerusalem

► **Saeb Erekat, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee**, called on Palestinians not to vote in the municipal elections on October 30, 2018, in Jerusalem. He said east Jerusalem was the capital of the state of Palestine and the decision to annex it was "oppressive and invalid." He said the local elections did not deal with services, but were political, and therefore voting in them was a mistake, and every Palestinian should refuse (Agence France-Presse, October 28, 2018).

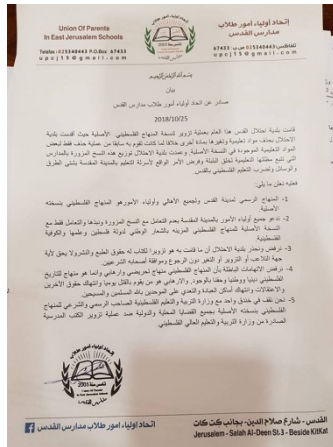
Continuing struggle over the Palestinian curriculum in east Jerusalem

► **Sabri Sidam, the PA minister of education, and Adnan al-Husseini, the minister of Jerusalem affairs**, held a press conference in the ministry of education in Ramallah where they declared the launching **of a national campaign against Israel's [so-called] policy against Palestinian education in Jerusalem**. The title of the press conference was "Evidence of the Israeli distortion of the Palestinian curriculum, the war against Palestinian education in Jerusalem and incitement against the national [Palestinian] curriculum."

► According to Sabri Sidam, the issue of Israel's damage to education in Jerusalem will be on the agenda of the Central Council. In addition, steps will be taken to include the damages and the attempts to "Israelize" the education in Jerusalem in **the Palestinian file that will be**

presented to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague. He called on all the Palestinians, especially those living in Jerusalem, to boycott the Israeli curriculum, including in schools run by the municipality. That is in accordance with the fatwa issued on the subject and the positions of Christian sources of authority, and with the declarations made by parents' committees objecting to the "Israelization" of education.

► Sabri Sidam also claimed Israel had recently printed counterfeit copies of Palestinian textbooks and distributed them to the schools supervised by the Jerusalem municipality in order to empty the curriculum of Palestinian content. The Mufti of Jerusalem repeated it was forbidden to study the Israeli curriculum in Jerusalem schools. At the press conference copies of Palestinian textbooks "distorted" by Israel were exhibited (website of the Palestinian ministry of education, October 25, 2018).



Right: Press conference where Israeli textbooks [in east Jerusalem] were shown (Facebook page of the Palestinian ministry of education, October 25, 2018). Left: Post from Sabri Sidam's Facebook page, in which he expresses his complete support for the parents' committees in east Jerusalem against the textbooks Israel distributed to schools instead of the PA's textbooks (Sabri Sidam's Facebook page, October 26, 2018).