



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (November 7 – November 13, 2018)

Overview¹

- ▶ **In the Gaza Strip** the events of the Friday, November 9, 2018, "return march" passed without exceptional incident. Hamas continued to prevent rioters from reaching the security fence, but nevertheless violent activities were carried out (IEDs and Molotov cocktails were thrown at IDF soldiers and attempts were made to cross the fence). **In Judea and Samaria** there was a shooting attack and Palestinians threw stones and Molotov cocktails. However, there were no exceptional attacks despite the events in the Gaza Strip.
- ▶ **On November 12, 2018, an unprecedented rocket attack was initiated from the Gaza Strip**, targeting the western Negev, after an IDF special force operation failed. So far about 460 rockets and mortar shells have been launched into Israeli territory, focusing on the western Negev and the southern Israeli cities of Ashqelon, Sderot and Netivot. In response the IDF attacked about 150 Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) terrorist targets, including multi-story buildings Hamas regards as important assets, among them Hamas' al-Aqsa TV building.
- ▶ In ITIC assessment, the current rocket attack is not an isolated incident but rather part of the new policy carried out by Hamas since March 30, 2018 (the first "return march"). Hamas' new policy is characterized by initiating controlled violence in the "return marches" and is accompanied by rounds of rocket fire with varying degrees of intensity (since the end of May 2018 more than 1100 rockets and mortar shells have been fired into Israeli territory).

¹ A summary of the events of the escalation of November 12-13, 2018, appear in a separate bulletin.

Israel's South

The "return marches"²

- ▶ On Friday, November 9, 2018, another "return march" was held while money from Qatar was brought into the Gaza Strip to pay the salaries of Hamas employees. In addition, ten tankers of fuel from Qatar also entered through the Kerem Shalom Crossing.
- ▶ About 12,000 Palestinians participated in the march. The demonstrators gathered at the five usual sites along the border. There was also a certain decrease in the level of violence, since **Hamas operatives kept rioters away from the fence**. However, **IEDs and Molotov cocktails were thrown at IDF soldiers and a number of attempts were made to cross the fence**. Several senior Hamas figures attended the events and declared that the next march would be held on November 16, 2018, with the slogan, "Normalization is a crime and treason."



Yahya al-Sinwar, head of the Hamas political bureau in the Gaza Strip (white shirt), at the march in eastern Gaza City (Supreme National Authority of the Great Return March's Facebook page, November 10, 2018).

Massive rocket attack on Israel

- ▶ During the IDF special force activity in the southern Gaza Strip on November 11, 2018, there was an exchange of fire between the soldiers and Hamas terrorist operatives. An IDF lieutenant colonel was killed and another officer was wounded. Seven terrorist operatives were killed, six of them from Hamas' military wing. Hamas responded in **two stages**: in the **first** stage, which was relatively moderate, **Hamas fired 17 rockets at the Israeli**

² For further information, see the bulletin see the November 11, 2018 bulletin, "Summary of Events on the Gaza Strip Border."

communities near the Gaza Strip. In the second stage, on the following day Hamas instituted **an unprecedentedly large rocket attack against the western Negev.**

► The opening shot of the attack was **the launching of a Kornet anti-tank missile at a bus transporting IDF soldiers.** Two soldiers were wounded, one critically. At the same time, **massive barrages of rockets and mortar shells were fired, initially at the communities near the Gaza Strip and later at the more distant targets of the southern Israeli cities of Ashqelon and Netivot.** As of noon on November 13, 2018, **about 460 rockets and mortar shells had been fired.** About 100 of them were intercepted by the Iron Dome aerial defense system. **One man was killed and about a hundred people were injured, most of them incurring minor injuries. There was heavy property damage** from direct hits to several buildings.

► In response to the rocket attack the **IDF attacked about 150 terrorist Hamas and PIJ targets.** This time, in addition to military area targets, the attacked multi-story Hamas assets. They included the al-Aqsa TV building, which broadcasts incitement to terrorism; the building used by Hamas' military force and intelligence; the al-Rahma building used by Hamas' military intelligence; and the al-Amal Hotel, used by Hamas' internal security apparatus.



Rockets fired at Israel from the Gaza Strip (Palinfo Twitter account, November 13, 2018).

Judea and Samaria

Shots fired at Israeli bus

► On **November 7, 2018**, shots were fired at an Israeli bus on the road **east of Ramallah**. Several bullets hit the front windshield and the side of the bus. The driver and one passenger were slightly injured. IDF forces searched the area for the shooters (IDF spokesman, November 7, 2018).



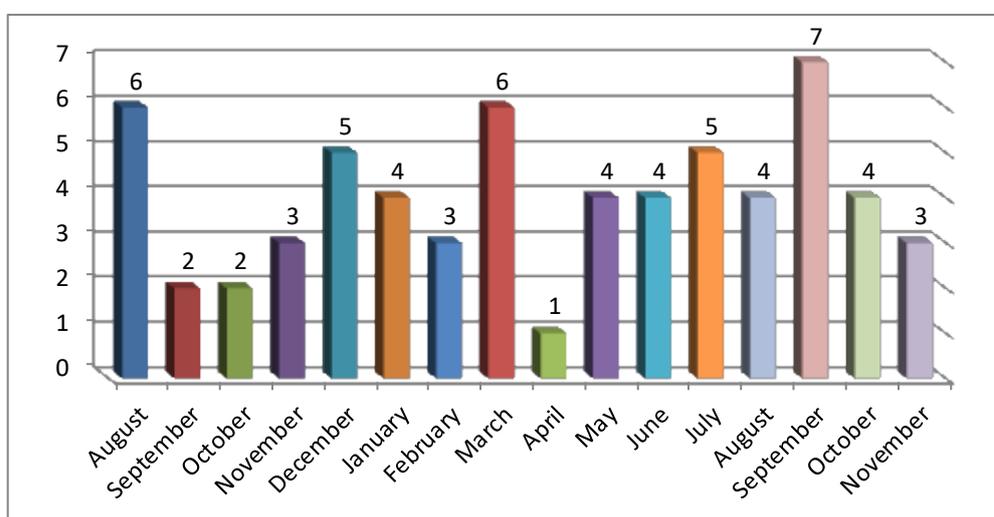
The windshield of the bus attacked near Beit El (Beit El security, November 7, 2018).

► In Judea and Samaria Palestinians continued throwing stones at Israeli vehicles. Israeli security forces continued their counterterrorism activities throughout Judea and Samaria, detaining Palestinians suspected of terrorist activity. The more prominent events were the following:

- ◆ **November 12, 2018** – Stones were thrown at an Israeli vehicle on the **Jerusalem-Gush Etzion road** near al-Khader Junction. No casualties or damage were reported (Rescue Without Borders, November 12, 2018).
- ◆ **November 12, 2018** – Stones were thrown at an Israeli vehicle on **route 433 (the Jerusalem-Modi'in road)**. No casualties or damage were reported (Rescue Without Borders, November 12, 2018).
- ◆ **November 11, 2018** – Two Molotov cocktails were thrown at an Israeli vehicle on the **Jerusalem-Gush Etzion road** near the al-Khader Junction. No casualties or damage were reported (Rescue Without Borders, November 11, 2018).

- ◆ **November 11, 2018** – About 100 Palestinians threw stones at IDF headquarters **near Beit El**. A civilian IDF employee was slightly injured (Rescue Without Borders, November 11, 2018).
- ◆ **November 9, 2018** – A Palestinian threw stones at an IDF post on the **Gush Etzion-Hebron road near Beit Umar**. He was apprehended by an IDF force (Rescue Without Borders, November 9, 2018).
- ◆ **November 8, 2018** – A stone was thrown at an Israeli bus near **Naveh Yaakov in Jerusalem**. One passenger was slightly injured (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, November 8, 2018).

Significant terrorist attacks in Judea and Samaria during the past year³



Developments in the Gaza Strip

The humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip

Qatari financial aid enters the Gaza Strip

► On November 8, 2018, **Mohammed al-Emadi, chairman of the Qatari Committee for the Reconstruction of Gaza, entered the Gaza Strip, bringing with him \$15 million in cash.** The money was earmarked for **the salaries of Hamas employees.** The money was brought into the Gaza Strip through the Erez Crossing under UN supervision and in coordination with Israel. The PA did not intervene (al-Quds, November 8, 2018). The following day the money was paid to employees of the Hamas administration through branches of the post office. In

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.

addition, ten fuel tankers carrying diesel fuel paid for by Qatar entered the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom Crossing.



Bringing \$15 million from Qatar to the Gaza Strip in three suitcases in the back seat of Mohammed al-Emadi's car (the chairman of the Qatari Committee) (almowaten.net. November 9, 2018).



Right: Mohammed al-Emadi, chairman of the Qatari Committee, supervises the disbursement of funds at post office branches in the Gaza Strip (Facebook page of the Qatari Committee, November 9, 2018).

- On November 8, 2018, the Qatari Committee for the Reconstruction of Gaza revealed the annual amounts of aid Qatar has given the Gaza Strip since 2012 by posting the information on its Facebook page. The post is entitled "Thank you Qatar...the grants will continue..." According to the page, **since 2012 Qatar has given the Gaza Strip \$717 million** (Facebook page of the Qatari Committee, November 11, 2018).



The Qatari Committee's Facebook page showing the annual amount of aid Qatar has given the Gaza Strip since 2012. It amounts to about \$717 million (Facebook page of the Qatari, November 12, 2018).

► "Senior Palestinians" reported that Mahmoud Abbas told the Qataris that the **PA and the PLO object to the financial aid given to the Gaza Strip by Qatar**. That is because of concerns about the political implications of the aid, including the separation of the Gaza Strip from the other [PA] territories, the promotion of the American "deal of the century" and the strengthening of the Hamas regime in the Gaza Strip (al-Hayat, November 11, 2018).

Employment initiative

► Musa al-Samak, deputy minister of labor in the Gaza Strip, announced the beginning of an temporary employment initiative. The initiative, with funding of \$17 million, has the support of the World Bank. It will employ 4,400 men and women for six months, and they will receive \$380 a month (al-Risalah, November 9, 2018).

UNRWA's financial situation

► **Matthias Schmale, UNRWA director of operations in the Gaza Strip**, said a number of measures had been instituted to overcome the agency's financial crisis. One was stopping rent payments for 1,612 families whose houses had been destroyed in Operation Protective Edge. He said that regardless, UNRWA would still have a deficit of \$64 million (Safa, November 8, 2018). A few days later Mu'in Muqat, an UNRWA official, said rent payments had been frozen for families whose houses had been destroyed in Operation Protective Edge. A number of families held a demonstration in Gaza City to protest the measure (Dunia al-Watan, November 11, 2018).

The Palestinian Authority (PA)

Events marking the anniversary of the death of Yasser Arafat

► **On November 11, 2018**, events were held in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip to mark **the 14th anniversary of the death of Yasser Arafat**. A march was held in Ramallah from Manara Square to Arafat's grave. A rally was held in the presidential headquarters in Ramallah, attended by Mahmoud Abbas. In the Gaza Strip Fatah held its main rally at al-Azhar University (official Fatah Facebook page, November 11, 2018). Reportedly, Hamas security forces suppressed a spontaneous rally in the Jabalia refugee camp. Security force operatives attacked the demonstrators and detained some of them (Wafa, November 11, 2018).



Right: Ahmed Hiles, senior Fatah figure in the Gaza Strip, at the main rally at al-Azhar University in Gaza City. Left: Hamas security force operatives disperse a Fatah memorial rally for Yasser Arafat in the Gaza Strip (official Fatah Facebook page, November 11, 2018).

► Mahmoud Abbas said that the Palestinians were currently exposed to many "dangers and plots," which had culminated in the declaration of "the deal of the century." He said the Palestinians would fight "until the end of the world" to realize their right to establish an independent country. He also said that PLO's Central Council had made strong decisions to deal with the United States and Israel, which were working to implement the deal, and with Hamas, which was undermining the Palestinians' efforts for an independent state. He said that to that end the PA would institute "extreme measures" in the near future, but that "the door would remain open" (Palestinian TV, November 11, 2018).



Mahmoud Abbas speaks at the memorial service for Yasser Arafat in the Muqata'a in Ramallah (Wafa, November 11, 2018).

► On the social networks Mahmoud Abbas' remarks were interpreted as a threat of additional sanctions for the Gaza Strip in the near future. **Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri** criticized Mahmoud Abbas, saying sanctions and threats against the Gaza Strip caused him to lose his "national qualifications" (Sami Abu Zuhri's Twitter account, November 11, 2018). **Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem** said Mahmoud Abbas' threats to the Gaza Strip were "unfortunate behavior" and reflected his political crisis and separatist position (Amama Twitter account, November 11, 2018).

Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) rally held in al-Bireh

► **On November 10, 2018, the PIJ held a rally in al-Bireh to mark the anniversary of the founding of the organization and the death of its founder, Fathi Shqaqi.** During the rally a **recorded speech by organization head Ziyad al-Nakhalah was played.** He praised Hamas founder Ahmed Yassin and PIJ founder Fathi Shqaqi, saying the rally was intended to strengthen commitment to the two leaders and their followers. He said **the "settlements" could be stopped only through "resistance" [i.e., terrorism], and therefore the West Bank had to join the struggle against Israel ("the occupation"). He claimed they were not far from the beginning of an intifada like the one in 2000.**

► Ziyad al-Nakhalah praised the "return marches" as one means of "resistance," and stressed **the need for them to continue until they had achieved their objectives.** He also said that the "resistance" in the Gaza Strip had escalated and imposed new equations, despite regional and international efforts to contain it, domesticate it and empty it of its objectives. He also stressed that **there was no alternative to "armed resistance,"** and therefore it had

to continue without dependence on any form of humanitarian aid (Paltoday, November 11, 2018).



The PIJ rally in al-Bireh (Facebook page of the Muhjath al-Quds Association in Gaza, November 10, 2018).

Saudi Arabian aid for the PA

► **Osama bin Ahmed Nugali, the Saudi Arabian ambassador to Egypt** and permanent representative to the Arab League, said the Saudi Development Fund had transferred \$600 million to the Palestinian ministry of the treasury to help the country's budget. It was Saudi Arabia's monthly donation for August to October 2018 (Wafa, November 11, 2018).