



**The Palestinian Authority Continues to Encourage Terrorism:  
A mourning tent opened in the Palestinian embassy in Saudi  
Arabia for a terrorist who murdered two Israelis in the  
Barkan industrial zone**

December 23, 2018

**Overview**

**Basem al-Agha, the PA ambassador to Saudi Arabia**, opened a mourning tent in the PA embassy building in Riyadh for **Ashraf al-Na'alwa, the terrorist** who carried out a shooting attack in the Barkan industrial zone, murdering two Israelis (on October 7, 2018). Al-Na'alwa, who escaped after the terrorist attack, died in an exchange of fire with Israeli security forces after a search for him that lasted nine weeks. People who came to the mourning tent to offer their condolences were received by the PA ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Ashraf al-Na'alwa's brother and the embassy staff (Fatah Facebook page, December 15, 2018). After the opening of the tent the embassy issued **a video praising the shaheed al-Na'alwa's "determination" and "courage."**



**The mourning tent opened in the PA embassy in Riyadh for Ashraf al-Na'alwa (Facebook page of the PA embassy in Saudi Arabia, December 15, 2018).**

- ▶ Opening the mourning tent for a Palestinian terrorist who killed two Israelis **is another example of how the PA and Fatah glorify murderers and turn them into national heroes**

**and role models.** Senior PA and Fatah figures participate in memorial services for them, and streets, town squares and educational institutions are named for them. At the same time **the PA continues providing moral and financial support to terrorists who were involved in attacks and to their families.** Moreover, **the shaheed cult is embedded deep in Palestinian society and politics,** reinforced through the education system, the media and public discourse. As part of the shaheed cult, **the terrorists who carried out the Coastal Road Massacre and murdered the Israeli athletes in the Munich Olympics have been turned into Palestinian national heroes<sup>1</sup>** (see the Appendix for further examples of PA and Fatah support of terrorists).

► Glorifying terrorists and terrorism, and the extensive support they receive from Palestinian society, encourage and justify the continuation of terrorist attacks and those who carry them out. They also encourage copy-cat attacks. In ITIC assessment, **the murder of two Israelis in the Barkan industrial zone, and the success of the terrorist in evading capture for a long time, led to admiration and attempts to imitate him, contributing to the recent escalation in terrorist attacks in Judea and Samaria.**

### Glorification of Ashraf al-Na'alwa in the social networks



**Right:** Notice in the social networks glorifying Ashraf al-Na'alwa. The Arabic reads, "The legend, the fedayi [one who is ready to sacrifice himself], the hero Ashraf al-Na'alwa" (Bilal Yahya's Twitter account, December 13, 2018). **Left:** The Arabic reads, "The Barkan action, Ashraf Abu Sheikha. The legend" ("Nablus Our City" Facebook page, November 6, 2018).

<sup>1</sup> For further information, see the November 11, 2018 bulletin, "Legitimization of Terrorism by Fatah and the Palestinian Authority: Glorification of the Murder of the Israeli Athletes at the Munich Olympic Games."

## Terrorist Ashraf al-Na'alwa

- ▶ On December 13, 2018, in an exchange of fire after nine weeks of pursuit, the Israeli security forces killed Ashraf al-Na'alwa, who murdered two Israeli civilians in a shooting attack in the Barkan industrial zone (October 7, 2018, two dead civilians and one critically wounded). Ashraf al-Na'alwa was found hiding in a house in the Askar refugee camp in Nablus. Al-Na'alwa, who was armed, was killed while trying to avoid capture. According to reports **he was planning another terrorist attack**. Another Palestinian found at the site was detained on suspicion of helping him escape (Israel Security Agency, December 13, 2018).
- ▶ **Ashraf Walid Suleiman al-Na'alwa**, 23, from the village of Shuweika (Tulkarm region), had a work permit to enter Israel. During the four months prior to the shooting attack he was employed as an electrician at the factory in the Barkan industrial zone where he carried out the attack. For about two weeks before the attack he was absent from work, claiming "family problems." His Facebook page, where he used the name "Ashraf Abu Sheikha," was closed immediately after the attack. His last posting before the attack was "**Oh Allah, send me a message, for you are the best of messengers**" (Twitter account of a person calling himself "Muhammad Sayid Nashwan," October 7, 2018).



**Right: Terrorist Ashraf al-Na'alwa (Sawt Tulkarm Facebook page, October 7, 2018). Left: The last posting to Ashraf al-Na'alwa's Facebook page (Twitter account of a person calling himself "Muhammad Sayid Nashwan," October 7, 2018).**

## The Mourning Tent Opened in the PA Embassy in Saudi Arabia

- ▶ After the killing of Ashraf al-Na'alwa, **Basem al-Agha, the PA ambassador to Saudi Arabia, opened a mourning tent in the PA embassy building in Riyadh.** Those who came to offer condolences were received by the PA ambassador, Ashraf al-Na'alwa's brother (who lives in Saudi Arabia), and the embassy staff (Facebook page of the PA embassy in Saudi Arabia, December 15, 2018).
- ▶ **A large poster of the terrorist was hung on a wall of the mourning tent.** It read, "The embassy of the state of Palestine – Riyadh. Regards to his courage and the truth in his hand [i.e., the hand that carried out the murders]. **The wanted [by Israel] Ashraf al-Na'alwa, shaheed**" (Facebook page of the PA embassy in Saudi Arabia, December 15, 2018). Above the poster were pictures of Mahmoud Abbas and Yasser Arafat next to pictures of Ibn Saud, the first king of Saudi Arabia and founder of the kingdom, and the current king, Salman, and the crown prince, Mohammad Bin Salman.



**Right: The notice on the Facebook page of the PA embassy in Saudi Arabia about the opening of a mourning tent in the PA embassy in Riyadh at 18:00 on December 15, 2018. Left: The poster hung on a wall in the mourning tent in the PA embassy in Saudi Arabia (Facebook page of the PA embassy in Saudi Arabia, December 15, 2018).**

- ▶ The PA embassy in Riyadh sent out notices calling on Palestinians in Saudi Arabia to come to the opening of the mourning tent. As soon as the mourning tent opened the **embassy posted a video to its Facebook page called "The wedding of shaheed Ashraf al-**

**Na'alwa."**<sup>2</sup> In the video **Basem al-Agha, the PA ambassador to Saudi Arabia, praised Ashraf al-Na'alwa's mother and family**, and the "determination" that supported their "strength, will and hope," and his "heroism" after he avoided capture by Israel for sixty days (Facebook page of the PA embassy in Saudi Arabia, December 15, 2018).

## Reader feedback

► Many people who read the posting on the PA embassy Facebook page responded with appreciation and thanks to the ambassador for his initiative (Facebook page of the PA embassy in Saudi Arabia, December 15, 2018). Fatah's official Facebook page, which posted pictures from the mourning tent, also received many expressions of support.



**Right: Palestinians thank the Basem al-Agha, the PA ambassador to Saudi Arabia, for his initiative, and wish rest in paradise for al-Na'alwa the shaheed (Facebook page of the PA embassy in Saudi Arabia, December 15, 2018). Left: Responses in support on Fatah's Facebook page).**

<sup>2</sup> In **classical Islam** a **shaheed** is someone who falls on a jihad battlefield while fighting for the sake of Allah. In the **modern Islamic interpretation as it applies to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict**, a shaheed is a person who died during a confrontation with Israel. In **classical Islam the shaheed is promised various advantages**: he does not suffer the tortures of the grave, does not face Judgement Day, the sins he committed during his lifetime are forgiven and he can recommend entrance into paradise for up to seventy of his relatives (an exceptional privilege in Muslim society). **Once in paradise, he will marry 72 houris, black-eyed virgins.** A woman marries one shaheed... The shaheed lives in the highest sphere next to Allah, who takes care of all his needs, and next to Muhammad and the righteous Muslims.

## PA and Fatah responses to the shooting attack at the Barkan industrial zone

- ▶ Immediately after the attack the Wafa news agency (subordinate to the office of PA chairman Mahmoud Abbas) issued a short report stating that the IDF had erected roadblocks at the entrances to the villages in the western area of Salfit after "settlers were killed in a shooting incident in the Barkan industrial zone" (Wafa, October 7, 2018). No statement was issued by the PA or its leadership condemning the deaths of innocent civilians.
- ▶ On October 8, 2018, the day after the shooting attack, **Zakaria Zbaidi, a Fatah operative from Jenin**, gave his support to the terrorist and the people from his village, writing, "[The village of] Shuweika is a fork in the occupation's throat and a volcano that will explode against your oppressive entity. Have a good morning, from a different kind of resistance" (Zakaria Zbaidi's Facebook page. October 8, 2018).



**The Facebook page of Fatah operative Zakaria Zbaidi expressing support for the terrorist and his fellow villagers (October 8, 2018).**

- ▶ During the nine weeks between the shooting attack and the killing of the terrorist, **Ashraf al-Na'alwa became a national hero** and role model. On November 28, 2018, Fatah's official Facebook page praised him, writing, "The wanted [by Israel] Ashraf al-Na'alwa. Allah guards and protects you, he will not abandon you or harm you." Many people responded to the post, most of them praising and praying for the terrorist (Fatah's official Facebook page, November 28, 2018).



The post on Fatah's official Facebook page, November 28, 2018.

### Hamas' response

- Hamas' military wing also claimed Ashraf al-Na'alwa as one of its assets. After he was killed the military wing issued a death notice for him, calling him "the hero of the Barkan action."



The death notice issued in Hebrew by Hamas' military wing for the killing of Saleh al-Barghouti ("the hero of the Ofra [Junction] action") and Ashraf al-Na'alwa ("the hero of the Barkan action") by the IDF, claiming the wing had dispatched both of them (Hamas military wing Twitter account, December 13, 2018).



Cartoon by Hamas-affiliated Omayya Joha glorifying Ashraf al-Na'alwa. The Arabic reads, "Ashraf al-Na'alwa...Watch out for him" (Shehab Facebook page, October 22, 2018)



## Examples of PA glorification of terrorists

The PA and Fatah support the "popular resistance" (i.e., popular terrorism) as their preferred strategy. Mahmoud Abbas, the PA and Fatah directly and indirectly encourage the "popular resistance" [i.e., popular terrorism] in various ways: speeches and statements given at important forums; glorifying the terrorists who carry out attacks; providing political and media support for popular terrorism; the participation of senior PA and Fatah figures at terrorists' funerals; paying condolence calls to the families of terrorists who are killed; calling streets, town squares and educational institutions after terrorists killed by the IDF and providing financial support for the families of terrorists imprisoned in Israel and of terrorists who were killed.

- The case of Ashraf al-Na'alwa was not the first time PA representatives abroad showed support for the families of terrorists who were killed. On October 31, 2015, **Mahmoud Talal Abd al-Karim Nizal**, 18, from Qabatiya (near Jenin) carried out a stabbing attack at the **Gilboa crossing, near Jenin**. He was shot and killed. After his death **Atallah Kheiri, the Palestinian representative in Jordan, sent a letter of condolence to the terrorist's family** (Qabatiya OnLine Facebook page, October 30, 2018).



The letter of condolence sent by Atallah Kheiri, the Palestinian representative in Jordan, to the family of terrorist Mahmoud Nizal (Qabatiya OnLine Facebook page, October 30, 2018).

- Other examples include the following:

- ◆ On **November 18, 2018**, Mahmoud Abbas met in his office in Ramallah with the mother and sister of **Karim Yunis, an Israeli Arab, who abducted and murdered IDF soldier Abraham Bromberg, and was sentenced to life imprisonment**. The meeting, whose objective was to honor the murderer's family, was held near the date of the soldier's murder (he was shot in the head on November 26, 1980, and died on December 1). At the meeting, which was attended by senior Fatah figures, Mahmoud Abbas emphasized that the issue of the Palestinian prisoners was at the top of the Palestinian leadership's priority list, and that they were investing efforts to secure his release (Wafa, November 18, 2018).



**Mahmoud Abbas reports on the meeting held in his office. A short video was attached documenting the meeting (Mahmoud Abbas' Facebook page, November 18, 2018).**

- ◆ On March 14, 2018, Mahmoud Abbas held a reception in his office in Ramallah for **Rajaa'i Abd al-Karim Hadad**, a Fatah terrorist who had finished serving a twenty-year jail term for his participation in a shooting attack on November 20, 1997 (in the Old City of Jerusalem). Gavriel Hirschberg was killed and a friend accompanying him was critically wounded.<sup>3</sup> At the meeting, which was widely covered by the Palestinian media, Mahmoud Abbas congratulated the terrorist on his release and said the issue of the Palestinians imprisoned in Israel was the top priority of the Palestinian leadership.

<sup>3</sup> For further information, see the November 22, 2018 bulletin, "Legitimizing Terrorism: Mahmoud Abbas and other senior Fatah and Palestinian Authority figures honor terrorists involved in killing Israelis."



**Right: Gavriel Hirschberg, killed in the shooting attack on Hagai Street in the Old City of Jerusalem (Website for the Commemoration of Civilians Killed in Hate Crimes, March 21, 2018). Left: Mahmoud Abbas embraces the murderer, Fatah operative Rajaa'i Hadad, at a ceremony held in his office in Ramallah to celebrate Hadad's release from prison (Wafa, March 14, 2018).**

- ◆ In January 2018 the Fatah branch in Jerusalem rented a house for the family of **Ahmed Nasr Khaled Jarar**, one of the terrorists who carried out **a shooting attack near Havat Gilad** (southwest of Nablus), killing an Israeli civilian (on January 9, 2018). The house was rented to replace the one destroyed by the Israeli security forces. The family received help from Fatah despite its affiliation with Hamas.<sup>4</sup> Beforehand, senior Fatah figures, among them Mahmoud al-'Alul, a member of Fatah's Central Committee, visited the mourning tent in Jenin erected by the family of **Ahmed Isma'il Jarar**, who participated in the attack and was killed in an exchange of fire with the Israeli security forces (Mahmoud al-'Alul's Facebook page, January 22, 2018).

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<sup>4</sup> Ahmed Nasr Jarar's father was a senior operative in Hamas' military wing in Judea and Samaria. He was killed during the second intifada.



Senior Fatah figures at the mourning tent erected by the family in Jenin for Ahmed Jarar (Mahmoud al-'Alul's Facebook page, January 22, 2018).



Senior Fatah figures Mahmoud al-'Alul (center) and Jamal Muheisen (right) consoling Ahmed Isma'il Jarar's father (official Facebook page, January 24, 2018).

- ◆ On February 1, 2016, the PA held an official military funeral for **Amjad Sukari, who carried out a shooting attack at an IDF roadblock wounding three IDF soldiers.**<sup>5</sup> His body was carried on the shoulders of Palestinian policemen. His funeral was attended by Mahmoud al-'Alul, in charge of Fatah's bureau of organization and mobilization in Judea and Samaria, and other members of the Fatah leadership. Funeral attendees

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<sup>5</sup> On January 31, 2016, a shooting attack was carried out by a terrorist who drove to the roadblock near Beit El and shot at the soldiers stationed there. Three were wounded, one critically and two slightly. The soldiers at the roadblock shot and killed the terrorist. He was **Amjad Jaser al-Sukari, who was a bodyguard for Ahmed Hanoun, the Palestinian attorney general in Ramallah.** He was also a staff sergeant in the Palestinian police. As a policeman he had a registered gun and could pass through the roadblock without arousing suspicion

shouted slogans in praise of the terrorist (Ma'an, February 1, 2018). Mahmoud al-'Alul said that the Fatah movement was proud of shaheed Sukari, as it was of the other shaheeds who had risen [to paradise as a result of] the occupation's bullets during the popular wave [of protests] that had begun four months earlier (qudspress, February 1, 2018).



**The official military funeral held for Amjad Sukari, who carried out a shooting attack. His body was carried on the shoulders of Palestinian policemen. Senior Fatah figure Mahmoud al-'Alul was present at the funeral, a member of Fatah's Central Committee and in charge of Fatah's bureau of organization and mobilization in Judea and Samaria (Ma'an, February 1, 2018).**