



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

(July 17 – 23 , 2019)

Overview

► On Friday, July 19, 2019, the return march in the Gaza Strip was held with about 6,500 participants (similar to the previous week). Acts of violence included attempts to sabotage the security fence, as well as throwing IEDs, hand grenades and Molotov cocktails. Many Israeli flags were burned. The scope of incendiary and IED balloons launched into Israeli territory continued to decrease, but the launchings continue.

Click for video of Palestinians burning flags during the return march.

► A Hamas delegation headed by Saleh al-'Arouri, deputy head of Hamas' political bureau, visited Tehran. The delegation met with Iranian leader Ali Khamenei and other senior Iranian officials. Iranian and Palestinian statements mentioned that Hamas has precision missiles that can reach vital centers in Israel. The threat of precision weapons was also prominent in the most recent speech given by Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah secretary general. In ITIC assessment, it is an indication that at the present time the Iranians want to emphasize the threat.

► On July 22, 2019 Israeli security forces razed buildings in the Wadi Hums neighborhood near Sur Baher in southeast Jerusalem. The Israeli Supreme Court authorized their destruction since they were built illegally near the security fence. The Palestinian Authority called the destruction a "war crime" and said it would appeal to the International Criminal Court in The Hague and to the UN Security Council. The Palestinian government said the families would receive full compensation for the damage incurred and would immediately be lodged in alternative housing.

► This past week Hamas' summer camps began, supervised by its military wing. Tens of thousands of Gazan youngsters will attend the camps. A spokesman from Hamas military wing said their objectives were to "prepare the Palestinian people's generation of liberation"

and strengthen the "path of resistance" [i.e., terrorism]. The summer campers' training includes exiting tunnels and storming an Israeli target.

Israel's South

The return march of July 19, 2019

► On July 19, 2019, the 67th return march was held with the theme "Burning [the Israeli] flag."

About 6,500 Palestinians participated, gathering mainly at the five usual return camps.

Return march violent activities included throwing IEDs, hand grenades and Molotov cocktails, and attempting to sabotage the border security fence. In addition, many Israeli flags were burned. Senior Hamas figure **Suheil al-Hindi** said burning the Israeli flag was intended to send Israel the message that the day will come when the Palestinians return to the houses they were expelled from (al-Aqsa, July 19, 2019).

► **Ashraf al-Qidra**, spokesman for the ministry of health in the Gaza Strip, reported that 97 Palestinians were injured during the events (Ashraf al-Qidra's Facebook page, July 19, 2019), relatively more than in previous weeks. Senior figures from Hamas and other terrorist organizations criticized the violence used by the IDF. The organizations threatened not to remain silent in the face of injury to demonstrators [sic] (Palinfo, Shehab and the Hamas website, July 19, 2019).



Senior Hamas figure Ahmed Bahar at the return camp in eastern Jabalia (quds.net, July 19, 2019).



**Palestinians burn Israeli flags and tires in eastern Rafah
(Ahfad al-Nasr – Rafah Facebook page, July 19, 2019).**



**A Palestinian child holds a torch to burn an Israeli flag at the return camp in eastern Khan Yunis
(Supreme National Authority of the Great Return March Facebook page, July 19, 2019).**



**Palestinian rioters near the security fence
(QudsN Twitter account, July 19, 2019).**

► The Supreme National Authority called on the Palestinian public to participate in the activities of the return march on July 26, 2019, whose theme will be "the [Palestinian] refugees in Lebanon" (al-Aqsa TV, July 19, 2019). The objective will be to show solidarity for the struggle of the inhabitants of the refugee camps against "oppressive measures" and decisions taken against them by the Lebanese government (see below). (palsawa, July 19, 2019).

Convoy of trucks to protest the "siege" of the Gaza Strip

► In addition to the Friday return march, on July 22, 2019 the Supreme National Authority organized a convoy of trucks to protest the "siege" of the Gaza Strip and its influence on the Gazan economy, transportation and commerce. The theme of the convoy was "We will return and break the siege." The trucks left from the entrance to Beit Hanoun and drove to the return camp in eastern Gaza City (Ma'an, July 25, 2019; Safa, July 22, 2019). A spokesman for the ministry of health in the Gaza Strip said that four operatives were injured by IDF fire (Safa, July 22, 2019, Ashraf al-Qidra's Twitter account, July 22, 2019).



The truck convoy
(Supreme National Authority Facebook page, July 22, 2019).

Arson terrorism

► This past week the **decline continued** in the number of incendiary and IED balloons launched from the Gaza Strip, although the launches continued.

► The Sons of al-Zawari in Rafah's Facebook page posted a notice with the headline, "The return march [is] in its second year...[It has] limited means and its hands [are] tied." The notice criticized the Supreme National Authority of the Great Return March and called on its leadership to redefine their objectives: "Give us, and give the march its dignity...if only for one month. Either it ends by really lifting the siege or by beginning the real war of liberation" (Sons of al-Zawari in Rafah Facebook page, July 20, 2019).

► The posting received many responses, most of them positive. One person wrote that when the "harsh" measures were cancelled [i.e., launching balloons and the activities of the Night Harassment Units], the march lost its "dignity" and the [march participants] gradually stopped attending the marches. Senior Hamas figure **Fathi Hamad** related to the same issue at the return march on July 12, 2019, saying, "Do you know why the number of return march participants is lower? It's because our young people are angry, there's no action" (Facebook

page of Handala al-Akhbariya, July 12, 2019; Facebook page of journalist Ahmed Mustafa, July 12, 2019).

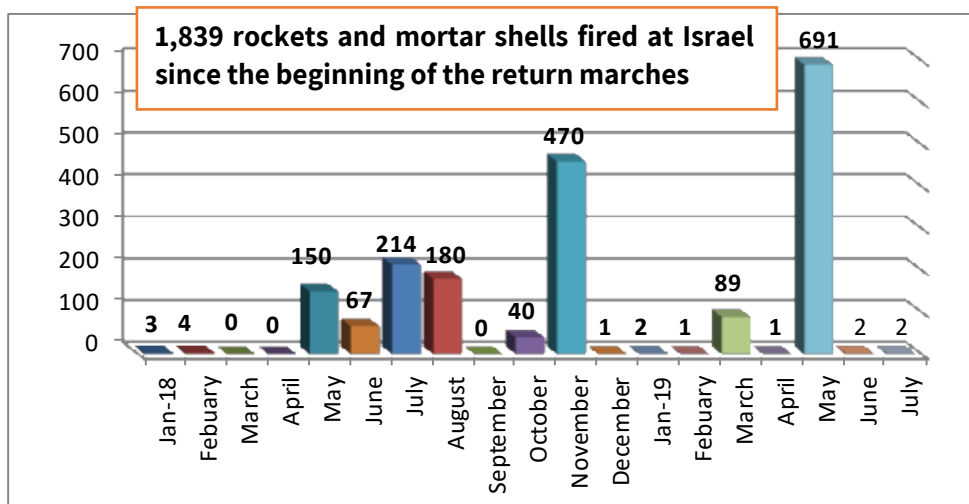


Incendiary balloons launched by the Sons of al-Zawari unit in Khan Yunis on July 20, 2019 (Sons of al-Zawari in Khan Yunis Facebook page, July 20, 2019). No fire caused by incendiary balloons was located in Israeli territory.

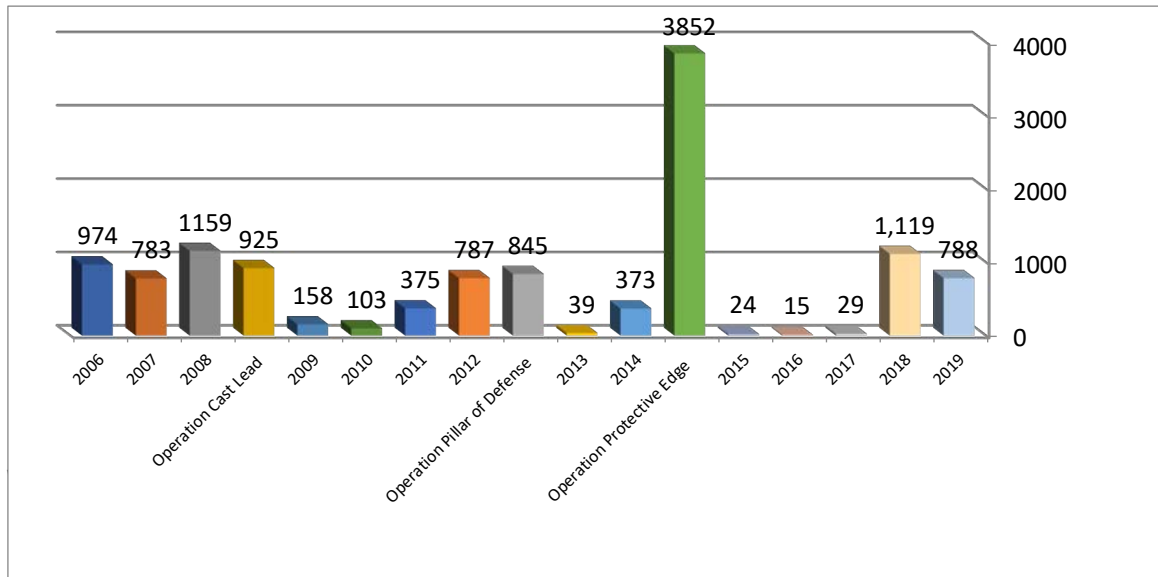
Understandings for a lull in the hostilities

► Hamas continued dealing with the understandings for a lull in the hostilities with Israel. **Musa Abu Marzouq**, a member of the Hamas political bureau, held a press conference in Russia where he said that there was no reconciliation agreement between Israel and Hamas, but "a lull and understandings" existed, which had been achieved under Egyptian aegis. He claimed there were serious problems in implementing the understandings because Israel did not meet its commitments. He said Hamas had complained to Egypt about Israel's violations (al-Jazeera, July 17, 2019).

Monthly Distribution of Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire since January 2018



Annual Distribution of Rocket Hits



Other events

- ▶ On the night of **July 20, 2019**, IDF forces detained a Palestinian who crossed the security fence in the southern Gaza Strip. He was found to be in possession of several knives and was taken for interrogation (IDF spokesman, July 21, 2019).
- ▶ On **July 18, 2019**, a Palestinian was caught near the security fence in the northern Gaza Strip. He was in possession of a weapon, and was taken for interrogation (IDF spokesman, July 18, 2019).

Judea and Samaria

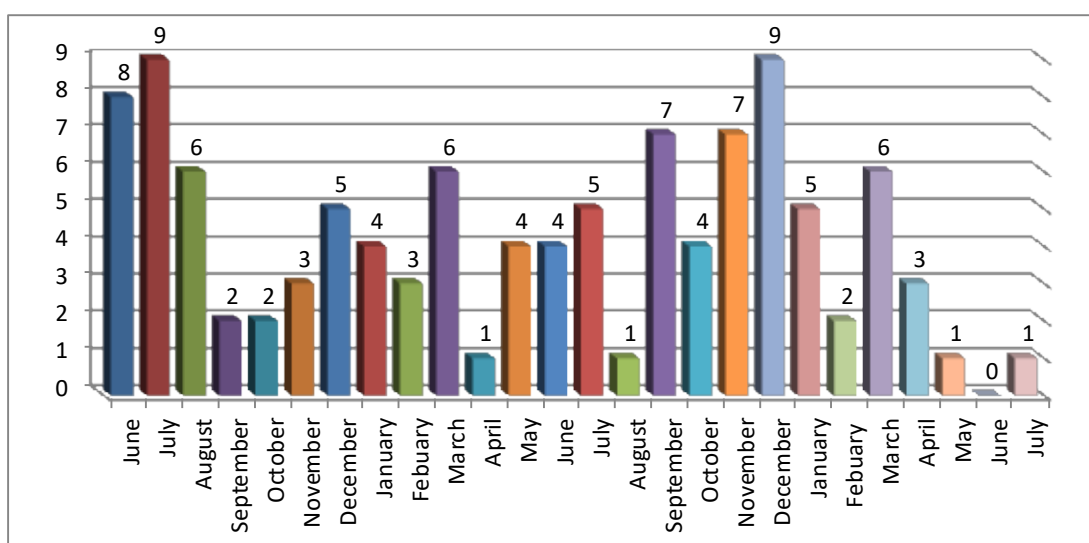
Events on the ground

▶ In Judea and Samaria Palestinians continued throwing stones and Molotov cocktails at Israeli security forces and civilian targets (mainly vehicles). Israeli security forces carried out counterterrorism activities throughout Judea and Samaria, detaining Palestinians suspected of terrorist activity and seizing military grade and improvised weapons. The more prominent events were the following:

- ◆ **July 20, 2019** – A bullet fired from the village of Aqab (south of Ramallah) penetrated the wall of an educational institution in **the Israeli community of Kokhav Yaakov**. No casualties were reported. The building was damaged (Rescue Without Borders in Judea and Samaria, July 20, 2019).

- ◆ **July 19, 2019** – Stones were thrown at a vehicle on **the trans-Judea highway near Halhul (Hebron region)**. No casualties were reported. The front windshield of the vehicle was damaged (Rescue Without Borders in Judea and Samaria, July 19, 2019).
- ◆ **July 19, 2019** – Israeli security forces operating **in east Jerusalem** located 57 packages of fireworks. Others were found in two vehicles which were halted. Twenty-seven Palestinians suspected of possessing and shooting fireworks were detained (Jerusalem police spokesperson's unit, July 19, 2019).
- ◆ **July 18, 2019** – The Israeli security forces destroyed a lathe used in the manufacture of weapons in **the Dheisheh refugee camp** (southwest of Bethlehem). The owners of the lathe were taken for interrogation (IDF spokesman, July 18, 2019).
- ◆ **July 17, 2019** – During an Israeli security force activity **in the Jenin region** weapons, pipe bombs and military uniforms were seized (IDF spokesman, July 17, 2019).

Significant terrorist attacks in Judea and Samaria since June 2017¹



Prevention of the transfer of terrorist money from Hamas to Judea and Samaria

► An Israeli security forces' operation exposed a channel for transferring funds for terrorist purposes from the Gaza Strip to the Ramallah region. The channel was operated by a travel agency called al-Haramain. The company was owned by two brothers, Hani and Firas Balbisi, who were assisted by a money broker named Muhammad Swissi. They all **operated from the Gaza Strip**. The channel exposed acted with a civilian cover to hide the source of the funds by

¹A 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.

using the *hawala* system.² Large sums of money were transferred using the system. They were used to finance terrorist activities and pay the salaries of terrorist operatives.

► Three Hamas operatives were detained during the operation. Two of them had been imprisoned in Israel in the past. The operation exposed how funds are transferred from the Gaza Strip to the Ramallah region through the coordination of **senior Hamas operatives in the Gaza Strip and Hamas operatives in Judea and Samaria**. During the operation the Israeli security forces seized hundreds of thousands of shekels (IDF spokesman, July 17, 2019).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

Money from Qatar arrives in the Gaza Strip

► On July 18, 2019 a Qatari delegation arrived in the Gaza Strip, headed by **Khaled al-Hardan, deputy chairman of the Qatari National Committee for the Reconstruction of Gaza**. The delegation entered through the Erez Crossing, bringing some of the funds for payment to families in the Gaza Strip (the rest of the money was paid through the Committee's funds that remained in banks in the Gaza Strip) (al-Akhbar, Lebanon, July 22, 2019). With him arrived experts who came to monitor the construction of the new power line to the Gaza Strip (Line 161), as well as a medical delegation which, according to reports, had begun discussing plans for the construction of a hospital on the northern Gaza Strip border (al-Quds, July 18, 2019).

► When the delegation arrived the distribution of the Qatari funds to needy families began. The money was distributed through the branches of the post office bank and the Islamic Bank in the Gaza Strip (al-Quds, July 21, 2019). The money is for sixty thousand needy families chosen according to criteria and conditions agreed on with the ministry of social development in the Gaza Strip, \$100 for each family (Qatari National Committee website, July 20 2019).

² In the most basic form of the *hawala* system, money is transferred via a network of hawala brokers... It is the transfer of money without actually moving it. In fact, a successful definition of the hawala system that is used is "money transfer without money movement... The unique feature of the system is that no promissory instruments are exchanged between the hawala brokers; the transaction takes place entirely on the honor system" (Wikipedia).



Right: The deputy chairman of the Qatari committee watches the distribution of funds at a post office bank in the Gaza Strip (Facebook page of the Qatari National Committee for the Reconstruction of Gaza, July 22, 2019). Left: Distributing aid (Twitter account or journalist Hassan Aslih, July 21, 2019).

Construction of a hospital in the northern Gaza Strip

► While in the Gaza Strip, the Qatari medical delegation began discussions with the ministry of health and the ministry of public works in the Gaza Strip for **the construction of an international hospital on the Gaza Strip's northern border**. A source in the ministry of health reported that according to the Qataris, the Israeli government had officially agreed to the project. According to the source, the hospital will have 16 departments and employ an international team of doctors from an American organization of medical volunteers. Other sources reported that security figures in the Gaza Strip were concerned that the hospital would serve as a site for collecting intelligence. The Qataris said the medical teams would not enter the Gaza Strip and would sleep in the hospital or in Israel (al-Akhbar, Lebanon, July 22, 2019).

Isma'il Haniyeh video conference interview

► **Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau**, was interviewed by Turkish journalists via video conference. He claimed the current Israeli government and the current American administration were the most extremist in history and did not recognize the "rights of the Palestinians" or agreements signed with them. He said the Palestinians' rights and principles had to be examined, first and foremost of which was **the establishment of a Palestinian state on all the territory of Israel**, with Jerusalem as its capital, and the [so-called] "right of return," the release of the [Palestinian] prisoners [in Israeli jails] and freedom of movement for the Palestinians (Sawa, July 21, 2019).

► Haniyeh called for the protection of all forms of the "Palestinian resistance," of which the return marches one of them. He also said the "resistance" [i.e., the terrorist organizations] in

the Gaza Strip had reached a stage where it could directly influence the struggle against Israel. He claimed that was primarily because of Hamas' ability to manufacture **its own weapons, which could reach Tel Aviv and beyond**. He claimed **the "resistance" could cover the entire "territory of occupied Palestine" with rockets**. He also praised the "organized popular resistance" of the residents of Judea and Samaria. He noted that Hamas was building a "jihad project" beyond the Palestinian territories, but said its activities would be directed only towards internal Palestine (Sawa, July 21, 2019).



**Isma'il Haniyeh video conferencing with Turkish journalists
(Masr Alarabia YouTube account, July 20, 2019).**

Hamas' foreign relations

Hamas delegation visits Russia

► **A Hamas delegation headed by Musa Abu Marzouq, a member of the Hamas political bureau, paid a visit to Russia.** The delegation met with Mikhail Bogdanov, the deputy Russian foreign minister. Bogdanov stressed Russia's willingness to support the Palestinian people in its struggle for the recognition of its legitimacy (al-Andalou News, July 16, 2019). Musa Abu Marzouq held a press conference where he criticized the measures taken by the United States against the Palestinians in recent years, saying the delegation had raised the issue with the deputy Russian foreign minister. He said Russia could play an important role in the Palestinian cause. Hamas also appealed to Russia to increase its aid to the Gaza Strip (al-Jazeera, July 17, 2019). In an interview with al-Mayadeen, Musa Abu Marzouq also stressed Hamas' ongoing relations with Iran (al-Mayadeen, July 16, 2019).



Hamas delegation led by Musa Abu Marzouq meets in Moscow with Russian deputy foreign minister, Mikhail Bogdanov (Hamas website, July 16, 2019).

► **One of the members of the Hamas delegation to Russia was Muhammad Kazem Sawalha, a Hamas operative who resides permanently in Britain** (al-Quds, July 16, 2019). Sawalha was also part of a Hamas delegation, headed by Musa Abu Marzouq and Saleh al-'Arouri, that visited Russia on September 19, 2017 (Hamas website, September 21, 2017). In the past he had a number of military and political roles in Hamas. At the end of the 1980s he was a senior operative in a Hamas military network in Judea and Samaria. When the IDF exposed the network Sawalha became wanted by the Israeli security forces, and fled first to Jordan with forged documents (October 1990) and from there to Britain. In London he conducts extensive activities against Israel ,as well as fulfilling rocket launchers in Hamas' political bureau between 2013 and 2017.³

Hamas delegation visits Iran

► **A Hamas delegation headed by Saleh al-'Arouri, deputy head of Hamas' political bureau, paid a visit to Iran.** Musa Abu Marzouq and Izzat al-Rishq, members of Hamas' political bureau; Maher Salah, a senior Hamas operative abroad; Zaher Jabarin, a senior Hamas figure in Judea and Samaria; Husam Badran and others participated in the delegation.

► During the visit **the delegation met with Iranian leader Ali Khamenei** and other senior officials, including **Kamal Kharrazi**, chairman of Iran's Foreign Policy Strategic Council, and **Abbas Araghchi**, political deputy the Iranian foreign ministry. Saleh al-'Arouri gave Khamenei a letter from Isma'il Haniyeh. Khamenei thanked Hamas for its activity and positions, saying he saw progress in the Palestinian situation. In the past, he said, the Palestinians struggled

³ For further information, see the October 19, 2017 bulletin, "One of the members of a recent Hamas delegation to Russia was Muhammad Sawalha, a London-based Hamas operative engaged in extensive anti-Israel activities."

with stones, and **today they were equipped with precision weapons**. Saleh al-'Arouri thanked Khamenei for Iran's support, saying that every hostile step against Iran meant a hostile step against the Palestinians and Hamas. Saleh al-'Arouri added that today Hamas' military capabilities could not be compared with what they were in the past because **today they had missiles that reached every vital center in Israel** (Fars, July 22, 2019).



The Hamas delegation in Iran. Left to right, Khaled al-Qadoumi, Hamas representative in Tehran; Usama Hamdan, Izzat al-Rishq, Maher Salah, Saleh al-'Arouri, Musa Abu Marzouq, Husam Badran, Isma'il Radwan and Zaher Jabarin (Hamas website, July 21, 2019).



The Hamas delegation meets with Khamenei (Arabic website of Khamenei's office, July 22, 2019).

Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) military wing exercise

► The military wing of the DFLP held a military exercise along the northern Gaza Strip border, with the participation of a large number of operatives. They deployed near the security fence and monitored the activities of IDF forces. According to the organization, the objective of the exercise was to examine the ability of their operatives to monitor the activities of the IDF along the border for many hours (Dunia al-Watan, July 16, 2019).



DFLP military win exercise on the Gaza Strip border
(Dunia al-Watan, July 16, 2019).

Hamas military wing's summer camps begin

► Hamas military wing held a press conference to announce the opening of its Pioneers of Liberation summer camps, held at the military wing's posts. A spokesman for Hamas military wing said **tens of thousands of youngsters would participate. The spokesman added that the objectives of the camps were to prepare the "generation of the Palestinian people's liberation" and to strengthen the path of "resistance" [i.e., the path of terrorism].** He said they would train the campers to use their physical strength and weapons in the best way possible (al-Aqsa, July 20, 2019). He also said that the camps were meant to prepare them to defend themselves, their people and their land against Israeli aggression (Shehab website, July 20 2019).



Press conference held by Hamas' military wing to announce the opening of its summer camps in the Gaza Strip, 2019 (Shehab website, July 20, 2019).



Receiving weapons and weapons training at facilities of the Izz al-Din Qassam's Khan Yunis Brigade (Muqawama Press Twitter account, July 20, 2019).



Activities held by the Khan Yunis Brigade on the second day of the summer camp: exiting a tunnel and storming the target (Pioneers of Liberation summer camps Facebook page, July 21, 2019).

The Palestinian Authority (PA)

Protest to the razing of houses in Wadi Hums, east Jerusalem

► On July 22, 2019, the Israeli security forces razed 12 houses in the Wadi Hums neighborhood near Sur Baher in southeast Jerusalem. The Israeli Supreme Court authorized the destruction of the houses because they had been built illegally and without the necessary permits. The buildings had been constructed in a area where **it was forbidden to build because it was too close to the security fence**. The destruction of the buildings led to a wave of criticism from the PA leadership and the Palestinian organizations, which referred to it as a "crime." The Palestinian spokesmen appealed to the international community to intervene. Mahmoud Abbas called an emergency meeting of the PLO's Executive Committee.



Israeli security forces raze illegally-built houses in accordance with an Israeli Supreme Court ruling (Wafa, July 22, 2019).

► Palestinian prime minister **Muhammad Shtayyeh** said the Palestinian government defined the destruction of the houses as "a war crime and a crime against humanity," and a violation of international law. **Mahmoud Abbas** instructed Riyadh al-Maliki, the Palestinian foreign minister, to add a new supplement regarding the issue to the case file against Israel already presented to the International Criminal Court in The Hague (ICC). The supplement will be a contain a demand to open an investigation of the Israelis responsible for razing the buildings. Riyadh al-Maliki will also try to call a meeting of the UN Security Council and appeal to the General Assembly if the United States vetoes a Security Council resolution (Palestinian TV, July 22, 2019).

► **Saeb Erekat**, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee, held a press conference where he said the Palestinian government would compensate the families who had been evacuated from their houses. **He said they would receive full compensation for damages done to them and immediately be moved into alternative housing.** He said that in response to the destruction of the houses the PA would take "unprecedented" measures against Israel (Palestinian TV, July 22, 2019):

- ◆ Instituting mechanisms for reneging on agreements with Israel.
- ◆ Appeals to international institutions (the UN Security Council and the ICC).
- ◆ Ending PA cooperation with the Israeli court system.



**Saeb Erekat holds a press conference
(Wafa, July 22, 2019).**

► Hamas said the "crime" demanded a Palestinian response in the form of a comprehensive national program to defend Jerusalem. Hamas added that in view of Israel's "crime," the "resistance" [i.e., the terrorist organizations] should be permitted to operate in Judea and Samaria (Hamas website, July 22, 2019). Hamas spokesmen **Sami Abu Zuhri and Abd al-Latif al-Qanua** called the razing of the houses "a crime and the slaughter of the Palestinian people" (al-Mayadeen, July 22, 2019).

Fatah summer camps

► The Shabiba Committee in high schools, Fatah branch in Tulkarm, held a summer camp for girls called "The sisters of Dalal – pioneers of national security." The campaign was named for **Dalal al-Mughrabi, a Palestinian Fatah terrorist operative who was part of the squad that carried out the Coastal Road Massacre in 1978, killing 35 Israelis, 13 of them children.** Since her death she has become an admired figure, a role model and a national heroine. The camp was held in the headquarters of the Palestinian national security apparatus in Tulkarm (Facebook page of the Shabiba Committee in high schools, Fatah branch in Tulkarm, July 4, 2019).



Right: Sign with information about the summer camp. Left: Fatah campers wear military uniforms (Facebook page of the Shabiba Committee in high schools, Fatah branch in Tulkarm, July 4, 2019).

► During the camp participants attended lectures about fundamental Palestinian principles and the boycott of merchandise manufactured in Israel. The lectures were given by former prisoners in Israeli jails. The camp participants also studied the history of the Palestinian struggle (Facebook page of the Shabiba Committee in high schools, Fatah branch in Tulkarm, July 7, 2019). **Issam Abu Bakr**, the governor of the Tulkarm district, visited the camp and said Mahmoud Abbas congratulated them for holding activities "that strengthen the spirit of national solidarity." He also noted stature of Dalal al-Mughrabi in the struggle and the revolution, which was part of the memory of every Palestinian⁴ (Facebook page of the Shabiba Committee in high schools, Fatah branch in Tulkarm, July 10, 2019).

The Northern Arena

Palestinians protest the Lebanese ministry of labor

► On July 14, 2019, the Lebanese ministry of labor announced that as part of its struggle against illegal employment in Lebanon and the enforcement of restrictions on the employment of foreigners in Lebanon, it had begun to monitor Palestinian workers in their workplaces. In addition, it had begun to publish arrest warrants and fines imposed on their employers. **The decision led to an outcry among the Palestinians living in the refugee camps in Lebanon.** There were demonstrations in the refugee camps and calls were heard to boycott goods manufactured in Lebanon. A number of Palestinians called for demonstrations to be held on the border fence between Lebanon and Israel (al-Akhbar, July 17, 2019).

⁴ For further information about the cult of Dalal Mughrabi in the PA, see the March 23, 2017 bulletin, "Glorifying shaheeds who carried out deadly terrorist attacks and turning them into role models: Dalal al-Mughrabi, a Fatah terrorist who participated in the 1978 Coastal Road Massacre, as a case study."

► **The PA** and senior figures from Hamas and other organizations protested the measures taken by the Lebanese government, claiming that the Palestinians in Lebanon were not illegal immigrants, rather they were refugees with political and legal standing backed by UN resolutions. At a meeting of the PLO's Executive Committee, Mahmoud Abbas said the PA wanted to resolve the issue diplomatically and to avoid worsening the situation. The PA decided to send **Azzam al-Ahmed**, a member of Fatah's Central Committee and supervisor of the Palestinian arena in Lebanon, to monitor the issue along with officials in Lebanon (Wafa, July 17, 2019).

► **Isma'il Haniyeh**, head of Hamas' political bureau, sent letters to the Lebanese president, prime minister and speaker of the parliament protesting the measure which, he said, hurt the relations between the Palestinians and Lebanon. On instructions from Isma'il Haniyeh, **Izzat al-Rishq**, a member of Hamas' political bureau, went to Beirut at the head of a Hamas delegation to monitor developments (Hamas website, July 19, 2019).



The Hamas delegation meets with the Lebanese prime minister (al-Quds TV Twitter account, July 19, 2019).