Overview

On October 25, 2019, the return march was held in the Gaza Strip with the participation of about 5,000 Palestinians (a relatively low number). The level of violence was similar to that of previous weeks. Palestinians threw IEDs and Molotov cocktails at IDF forces, sabotaged the security fence and tried to break into Israeli territory.

In east Jerusalem an attempted stabbing attack targeted Border Police soldiers. The stabber was a 16-year-old Palestinian. He was wounded and taken for interrogation.

The Israeli security forces destroyed a house in the al-Am'ari refugee camp near Ramallah which belonged to the family of Palestinian terrorist Islam Abu Hamid (who killed an IDF soldier by dropping a marble slab on him from the roof of the building). Senior Palestinian Authority figures stated that the PA would rebuild the house.

Israel's South

The return march of October 25, 2019

On Friday, October 25, 2019, the return march was held with the theme "Our prisoners, our al-Aqsa, we are coming." About 5,000 Palestinians participated in the events. The level of violence was similar to that of previous weeks. Rioters burned tires, threw IEDs and Molotov cocktails at IDF forces, sabotaged the security fence and some tried to break through into Israeli territory. According to the spokesman for the ministry of health in the Gaza Strip, 77 Palestinians were wounded (Ashraf al-Qidra's Twitter account, October 25, 2019).
Palestinian rioters throw Molotov cocktails at an IDF jeep east of the al-Bureij refugee camp (Facebook page of journalist Walid Muslah, October 26, 2019, and Facebook page of photographer Sa'ad Abu Nabhan, October 25, 2019).

Pictures from the return camp in the eastern part of Gaza City. Right: A woman holds up a plastic or wooden "rifle." Left: A woman holds a sign reading, "Jerusalem is ours. If the land of Mecca exists to be worshipped, then Jerusalem is the land of the shahada" – i.e., death as a martyr for the sake of Allah (Facebook page of the Malka return camp, October 25, 2019).

Right: Operative of Hamas' security forces at the entrance to the return camp in the northern Gaza Strip. Left: Operative of Hamas' security forces helps treat the wounded (website of the ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip, October 25, 2019).

The Supreme National Authority of the Great Return March held a press conference where senior PIJ figure Khaled al-Batash said the marches would continue. He called on the public to participate in the events of the November 1, 2019, march, whose theme would be "The Balfour Declaration should be thwarted" (al-Aqsa TV, October 25, 2019).
Supreme National Authority call to the General Assembly public to participate in the November 1, 2019 return march (Supreme National Authority Facebook page, October 27, 2019).

**Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire**

**Rocket and mortar shell fire into Israel**

This past week no rocket or mortar shell hits were identified in Israeli territory.

**Monthly Distribution of Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire since January 2018**

1,939 rockets and mortar shells fired at Israel since the beginning of the return marches.
Annual Distribution of Rocket Hits

Other events

This past week Palestinians made a number of attempts to cross the security fence and break into Israeli territory:

- On October 29, 2019, IDF soldiers detained two Palestinians near the security fence in the southern Gaza Strip. They were taken for interrogation (IDF spokesman, October 28, 2019).
- On October 29, 2019, IDF forces detained a Palestinian who crossed the security fence into Israel territory in the central Gaza Strip. He was taken for interrogation (IDF spokesman, October 28, 2019).
- On October 24, 2019, two Palestinians were detained when they crossed the security fence in the security forces. They were taken for interrogation (IDF spokesman, October 24, 2019).

The Palestinian media reported that on October 28, 2019, Hamas’ security forces prevented an attempt by five Palestinians to enter Israeli territory east of Rafah. According to the report the five were taken for interrogation (Amad, October 28, 2019; the Facebook page of journalist Hani al-Shaer, October 28, 2019).
Judea and Samaria

Attempted stabbing attack at the Flowers Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem

On October 28, 2019, a Border Police soldier’s squad was the target of a stabbing attack during a security activity near the Flowers Gate in east Jerusalem. The attacker was a knife-wielding 16-year-old Palestinian. After failing to stab the soldiers, he fled through the alleys of the Old City and entered a house. The soldiers shot and wounded him. He was captured and detained (Israel Police Force Twitter account, October 28, 2019).

Other 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:

♦ October 28, 2019 – An Israeli security forces' activity in Abu Dis (east Jerusalem) uncovered a lathe used to manufacture weapons, a handgun and an M-16 assault rifle. As the forces left the site dozens of Palestinians threw stones, IEDs and smoke grenades at them. No casualties were reported; vehicles were damaged (Israel Police Force Twitter account, October 29, 2019).

♦ October 28, 2019 – Israeli security forces recently detained the operatives of a terrorist squad that threw stones near the village of Azoun (east of Qalqilya), wounding an Israeli civilian (IDF spokesman, October 29, 2019).

♦ October 28, 2019 – Stones were thrown at an Israeli bus and other vehicles on the Hebron-Tarqumiya road. No casualties were reported; the vehicles were damaged (United Hatzalah, October 28, 2019).
Israeli vehicle damaged by stones thrown by Palestinians north of Kiryat Arba (Rescue Without Borders in Judea and Samaria, October 28, 2019).

**October 28, 2019** – The Israeli security forces conducted an operation in the al-Aroub refugee camp (Hebron region) after many events in which stones and Molotov cocktails were thrown at Israeli vehicles near the camp. Several suspects were detained and an M-16 assault rifle was seized (IDF spokesman, October 28, 2019).

**October 27, 2019** – Stones were thrown at Israeli vehicles on the Tekoa-Har Homa road south of Jerusalem. No casualties were reported; two vehicles were damaged. In addition, stones were also thrown at an Israeli bus on the Gush Etzion-Hebron road near the al-Aroub refugee camp. No casualties or damage were reported (Rescue Without Borders in Judea and Samaria, October 27, 2019).

**October 26, 2019** – Molotov cocktails were thrown at vehicles north of the Ni‘lin crossing (Ramallah area). No casualties were reported (Rescue Without Borders in Judea and Samaria, October 27, 2019).

**October 25, 2019** – Stones and Molotov cocktails were thrown at the fence of the community of Karmei Tzur (north of Hebron). Following the attacks IDF forces entered the village of Bayt Umar, where Palestinians threw stones at them. One IDF soldier was slightly injured (Rescue Without Borders in Judea and Samaria, October 25, 2019).

**October 24, 2019** – During searches conducted by the Israeli security forces in Judea and Samaria to locate weapons, four handguns and an improvised Carlo machinegun were seized (IDF spokesman, October 24, 2019).
Significant terrorist attacks in Judea and Samaria since June 2017

Destruction of the house of terrorist Islam Abu Hamid

On October 24, 2019, the Israeli security forces destroyed a house in the al-Am'ari refugee camp near Ramallah. It was located at the site where the house of the family of Palestinian terrorist Islam Abu Hamid had stood. The Palestinian media reported it was the fifth time since 1994 that the IDF had destroyed the Abu Hamid family's house (Wafa, October 24, 2019).

The destruction of the house of terrorist Islam Abu Hamid in the Am'ari refugee camp in Ramallah (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, October 24, 2019).

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.

2 On May 26, 2018, Islam Abu Hamid threw a marble slab from the room of his house at IDF soldiers conducting an operational activity, killing one of them. On December 15, 2018, Israeli security destroyed the four-story house where the terrorist’s family lived (IDF spokesman, December 15, 2019).
Following the destruction of the house riots broke out, during which Molotov cocktails were thrown at the soldiers and tires were burned to block the roads (QudsN Facebook page, October 24, 2019). The destruction of the house led to a wave of protests from senior Palestinian figures:

- **Muhammad Shtayyeh, the Palestinian prime minister**, visited the Abu Hamid family the same day. He said the Palestinian Authority (PA) was true to its loyalty to the prisoners and **would rebuild what Israel destroyed** (Wafa, October 24, 2019).

- **Hussein al-Sheikh, chairman of the authority of civil affairs**, stated that Mahmoud Abbas had decided to **rebuild the house** (Hussein al-Sheikh’s Twitter account, October 24, 2019).

- The authority for prisoners and released prisoners' affairs and the Palestinian prisoners club condemned the destruction of the house (Wafa, October 24, 2019).

- **Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem** condemned the destruction of the house and praised Abu Hamid family, five of whose sons are in Israeli prisons and six of whom died as shaheeds (Sawa, October 24, 2019).

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Right: Support for Abu Hamid’s family posted by Hussein al-Sheikh to his Facebook page. It says that Mahmoud Abbas instructed the family’s house to be rebuilt (Facebook page of Hussein al-Sheikh, October 24, 2019). Left: Muhammad Shtayyeh visits the Abu Hamid family (Wafa, October 24, 2019).
The PA, Fatah and their affiliated institutions customarily support the reconstruction of the houses of terrorists destroyed by Israel. Rebuilding the houses is also a show of defiance and challenges the message of deterrence Israel sends by destroying the houses of terrorists.³

Developments in the Gaza Strip

Another Qatari delegation visits the Gaza Strip

On October 25, 2019, a Qatari delegation headed by Mohammed al-Emadi, chairman of the Qatari committee for the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip, and his deputy, arrived in the Gaza Strip (Sawa, October 25, 2019). According to al-Emadi, the delegation brought another installment of Qatari financial aid, the sum of $7.5 million, which will be distributed to 75,000 needy families in the Gaza Strip. Each family will receive $100. During his visit to the Gaza Strip al-Emadi met with senior Hamas figures headed by Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau. He also met with senior PIJ figures (Sawa, October 25, 2019).

The Hamas leadership meets with Mohammed al-Emadi in the Gaza Strip (Safa Twitter account, October 25, 2019).

On October 27, 2019, the delegation left the Gaza Strip through the Erez Crossing. In the meantime, the branches of the post office bank will be distributing the money to the needy families (al-Quds, October 27, 2019).

³ For further information, see the December 30, 2018 bulletin, “The struggle for destroying the houses of terrorists' families: the Palestinian Authority and Fatah help rebuild houses destroyed by Israel, thereby challenging the Israeli deterrent message.”
Support for the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip

Muhammad Ziyara, PA minister of public works and housing, announced that his ministry would pay $260,000 for projects to reconstruct the Gaza Strip infrastructure damaged in 2014 (Operation Protective Edge). He said so far the Palestinian government had paid about $8 million for projects to rebuild the infrastructure. He said the payment would be part of a donation from Kuwait for rebuilding the Gaza Strip, estimated at $299 million (Wafa, October 24, 2019).

The Palestinian media reported that Yahya al-Sinwar, head of the Hamas political bureau in the Gaza Strip, had allotted the sum of a million dollars of Hamas' funds to build a new medical center in Rafah (sanad.news website, October 24, 2019; Paltoday, October 24, 2019; al-Mashhad, October 24, 2019). Meeting previously with dignitaries and mukhtars in Rafah, he said that great effort had been invested with international agencies to build a hospital and that initially an emergency medicine department would be constructed (Palinfo, October 13, 2019; Paltoday, October 13, 2019). Note: For years the Abu Yusuf al-Najar hospital has served Rafah and it does not have the capabilities provide for all the medical needs of the resident of the Rafah district. An Internet campaign has recently been launched to promote the construction of a central hospital in the area. The campaign called for a hospital to be built with the theme, "Rafah needs a hospital" (Facebook page of Iyad al-Bazam, October 23, 2019).
"The Friends of the Rafah Medical Center," an association headed by Issa al-Nashar, a senior Hamas figure in the Rafah district and former Rafah mayor, represents itself as the body formally responsible for constructing the medical center in coordination with the ministry of health in the Gaza Strip. According to the association, about 13 acres have been allotted in the western part of Rafah for the construction of the center. The deputy minister of health in the Gaza Strip said work on the center would begin before the end of 2019 after funding of a million dollars had been acquired (Facebook page of the Friends of the Rafah Medical Center, October 24, 2019).

Statement from Haniyeh regarding defending al-Aqsa mosque

Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau, gave a speech at a meeting of the Legislative Council in which he related to the "defense of al-Aqsa." He praised the Palestinians in Jerusalem and Israel, who, he said, defended al-Aqsa mosque with their bodies in individual and military activities, with knives and vehicles and any other means. He called on the Palestinians in the West Bank to answer the calls of their brothers in Jerusalem to defend Jerusalem and al-Aqsa mosque. He added that they all relied on the youth, on adults, and on the entire Palestinian people in the West Bank to do everything they could. Haniyeh also praised the residents of the Gaza Strip who had raised $100,000 in donations for al-Aqsa mosque, which, he said, had [allegedly] already been transferred (al-Aqsa TV, October 23, 2019).
Preparations in the Gaza Strip for Palestinian Authority elections

As part of the preparations for PA elections, on October 27, 2019, a delegation of the PA's central elections committee, headed by its chairman, Hana Nasser, arrived in the Gaza Strip and met with senior figures from Hamas and other Palestinian organizations. Nasser reported that the committee was waiting for a presidential edict for the date of the elections that will be held in Judea, Samaria, Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. He said presidential elections would be held a short time after the Legislative Council elections (alresala.net, October 27, 2019). After meeting with Hana Nasser, Yahya al-Sinwar, head of the Hamas political bureau in the Gaza Strip, said Hamas was ready to hold elections and was prepared to participate in elections in which the movement saw an opportunity to improve its status (Sawa, October 28, 2018).
The Palestinian Authority (PA)

Continuing PA activity to separate from Israel

As part of the PA’s activity to separate from Israel, Mai al-Kaileh, the PA minister of health, told private and other hospitals in Jerusalem that to separate itself from Israel, the PA would provide health services to PA residents instead of Israeli hospitals (Wafa, October 24, 2019).

A short time later Mahmoud Abbas, the PA prime minister, held a meeting with Shukri Bishara, the finance minister, and Mai al-Kaileh, the minister of health, to discuss a solution for the financial distress of the Palestinian hospitals in Jerusalem. After the meeting the finance ministry transferred $20 million to the Augusta Victoria Hospital in east Jerusalem. Previously, it had transferred about $1.4 million to the hospital. The money would enable the continued activity of the hospital, which had reported it had run out of oncology drugs (Muhammad Shtayyeh’s Facebook page, October 27, 2019).