



Jibril Rajoub and other senior Fatah figures represent the strategy of "popular resistance" [i.e., popular terrorism] as their main course of action if Israel announces annexation of territory

July 13, 2020

Overview

►Senior Fatah figures have recently often represented **the "popular resistance" [i.e., popular terrorism]** as an important response to an Israeli annexation of territories. Senior Fatah figure Jibril Rajoub was interviewed by the Hezbollah-affiliated Lebanese al-Mayadeen TV channel. According to Rajoub the "popular resistance" is carried out peacefully (a baseless allegation) and has gained international legitimacy. However, in principle does not reject the alternative of "armed resistance" (i.e., institutionalized military terrorism). Relating to the issue in careful terms, he said that in the event of an annexation, [Fatah] would meet to decide the option of "armed resistance" (for the main points of the interview see **Appendix A**). In addition, Fatah spokesman **Usama al-Qawasmeh** said that currently **Fatah was in constant contact with Hamas to advance a plan of escalation of the "popular resistance," as had been carried out in the first intifada.**



Jibril Rajoub interviewed by the Hezbollah-affiliated Lebanese al-Mayadeen TV channel (Jibril Rajoub's Facebook page, July 8, 2020).

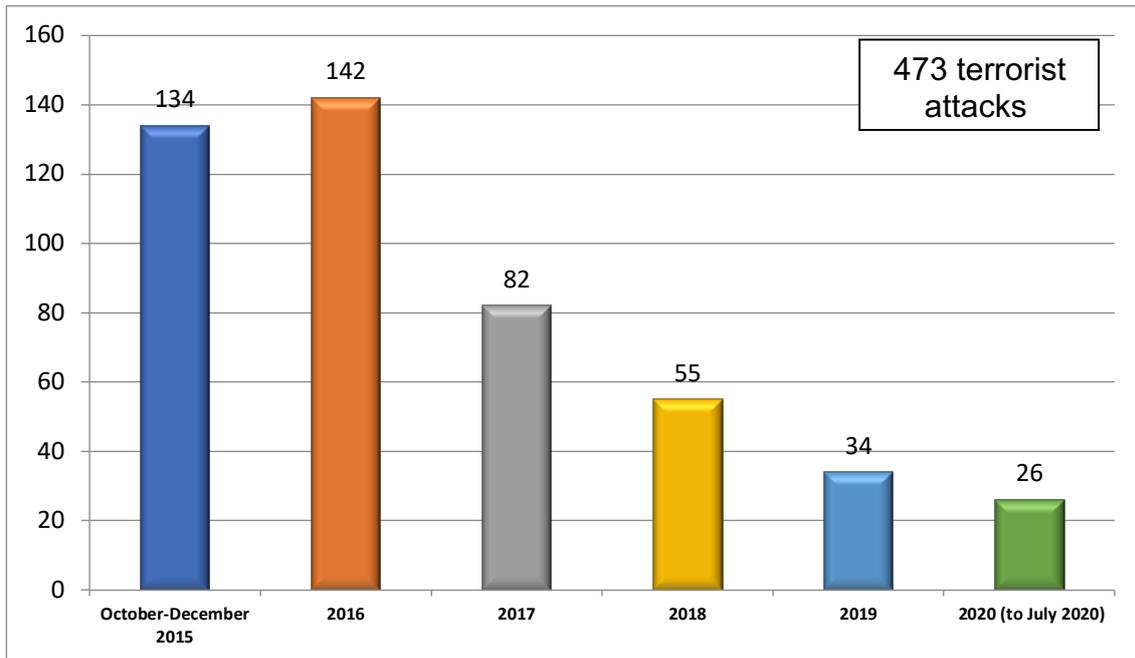
►Senior Hamas figures, among them Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau, also discussed the "popular resistance." However, there were **two important differences** between Hamas and Fatah. According to Hamas, **agreeing to "Fatah's program of popular resistance" did not mean abandoning "armed resistance," which is Hamas' preferred strategy.** In addition, according to Haniyeh **the objective of all forms of the "resistance" is**

not only to prevent Israel from annexing territories and Trump from carrying out the "deal of the century," it **is the destruction of the State of Israel** ("the liberation of all Palestine from the [Jordan] River to the [Mediterranean] Sea") (for further information see **Appendix B**). **Khaled Mashaal, former head of Hamas' political bureau**, called for a comprehensive exploitation of the "popular resistance" and a variety of activities in the West Bank to exhaust Israel: ramming attacks, the erection of "solidarity tents" in the Jordan Valley and territories Israel annexes and confrontations with IDF soldiers.

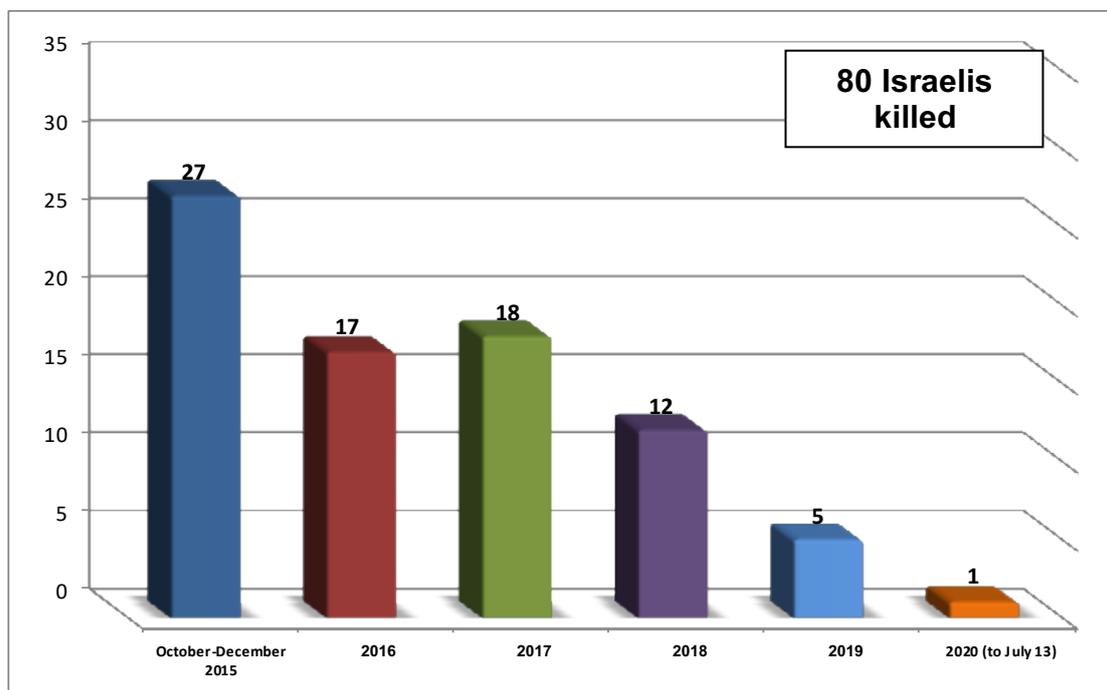
►**What exactly is the popular resistance" [i.e., popular terrorism]?** It is a strategy formulated at the Sixth Fatah Conference in August 2009, adopted by the Palestinian Authority (PA) and reconfirmed at the Seventh Fatah Conference in November 2016 and at other Fatah and PLO forums. As opposed to the statements of Mahmoud Abbas and other Fatah and PA figures, **it is not a "non-violent resistance" but rather popular terrorism employing a variety of methods using cold weapons**, such ramming and stabbing attacks (sometimes accompanied by shooting attacks and IEDs). The attacks are **carried out on a backdrop of daily attacks involving throwing stones and IEDs**, and clashes with the Israeli security forces (for an analysis of the aspects of popular terrorism, see **Appendix C**).

So far **473 significant popular terrorism attacks** have been carried out. The attacks peaked during the **last quarter of 2015 and in 2016** but have since tapered off and are currently trending downward. Since October 2015 **popular terrorism attacks have killed 80 people in Judea and Samaria**, most of them Israeli civilians, and some of them members of the Israeli security forces.

Significant terrorist attacks since October 2015¹



Israelis killed since October 2015 (since the outbreak of the wave of popular terrorism at the end of 2015)

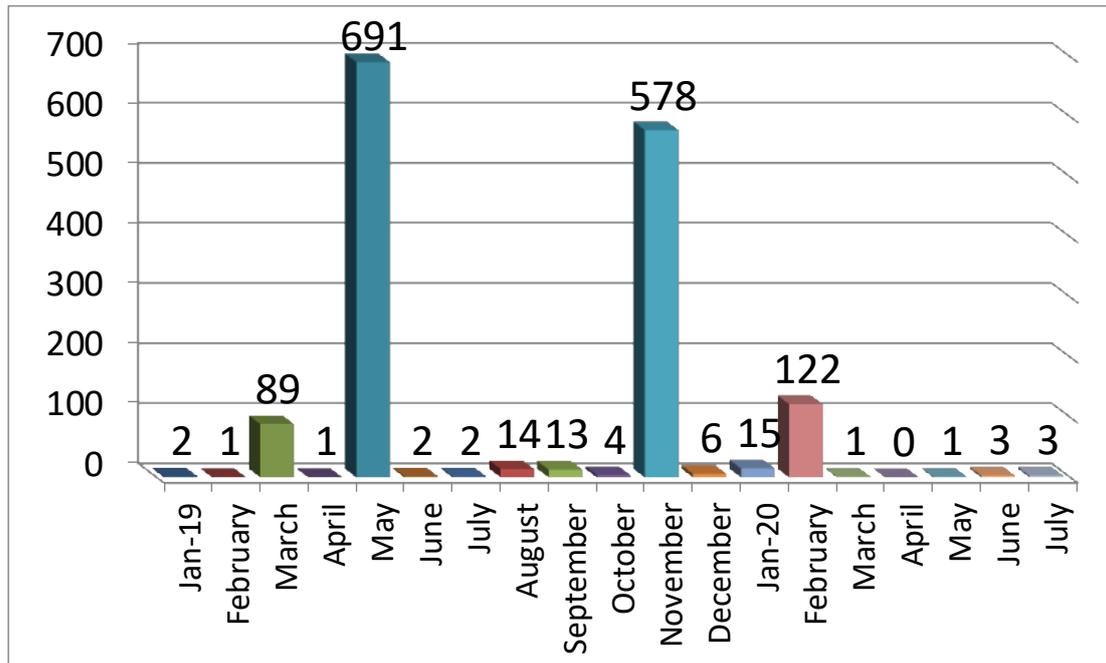


¹ A significant attack is defined by the ITIC as involving shooting, stabbing, a vehicular attack, the use of IEDs, or a combination of the above. Stones and Molotov cocktails thrown by Palestinians are not included.

The "popular resistance," represented by Jibril Rajoub and Fatah spokesmen as the response chosen for Israel's annexation of territories in Judea and Samaria, **is not a new strategy, as it has been utilized by Fatah and the PA for a decade**. It is implemented regularly and those who carry out popular terrorism attacks receive support from Fatah and the PA. In ITIC assessment, Israel's annexation of territories is liable **to increase popular Palestinian motivation to carry out popular terrorism attacks, with the encouragement and support of Fatah and the PA. However, apparently Fatah and the PA have no current interest in allowing popular terrorism to turn into an overall deterioration of security**, which may present the PA with **a significant challenge to its governance**. Therefore, in ITIC assessment, the PA and Fatah may try to manage the intensity of the "popular resistance" to keep it under control. There is a built-in difficulty between Fatah and Hamas that makes difficulties for the idea of **possible collaboration between them for the mutual advancement of the "popular resistance,"** an idea which has been repeated by the Palestinian media.

►As for Hamas, since the end of March 2018 its policy has been to **exert controlled pressure on Israel with organized popular terrorism** (such as mass demonstrations, some of them near the border fence) **combined with institutionalized military terrorism** (rounds of rocket fire and rioting against the IDF near the fence). However, at the end of December 2019 the weekly return marches at the border were suspended. During recent months, there has been relative calm along the Israel-Gaza Strip border (used by Hamas for the successful prevention of the spread of the coronavirus inside the Gaza Strip). However, the calm is short-term and does not reflect a long-term Hamas policy. In ITIC assessment Hamas is liable to return to its previous policy of rioting at the border fence along with rounds of escalation, if Israel annexes territories or in other scenarios (if, for example, the so-called "rogue organizations," the most important of which is the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), provoke Israel and draw Hamas into a broad military confrontation).

Monthly distribution of rocket and mortar fire since January 2019



► In ITIC assessment, Hamas is deterred by the idea of a broad military confrontation in the Gaza Strip, and **regards Judea and Samaria as the main arena for exporting anti-Israel terrorism**. Hamas views an escalation of the "popular resistance" in Judea and Samaria as a possible catalyst for promote military terrorism and for encouraging an overall uprising (a new intifada). Hamas' assumption is that popular terrorism will undermine the security and stability of Judea and Samaria and will **lead to the strengthening of its own power and a weakening of Fatah and the PA**. Their efforts to escalate the situation in Judea and Samaria have accompanied popular terrorism for years, but so far have **been foiled by the Israeli and Palestinian security forces**.

Appendices

► Appendix A – Statements from senior Fatah figures about the "popular resistance:"

- ◆ The "popular resistance" as represented by Jibril Rajoub
- ◆ Statements from Usama al-Qawasmeh, Fatah spokesman in Judea and Samaria

► Appendix B – Statements from senior Hamas figures

► Appendix C – Aspects of the "popular resistance" strategy:

- ◆ Overview
- ◆ Aspects of popular terrorism (the "popular resistance")

Appendix A

Statements from senior Fatah figures about the "popular resistance"

The "popular resistance" as represented by Jibril Rajoub (al-Mayadeen, July 8, 2020)

►After a joint press conference held by senior Fatah figure Jibril Rajoub and Saleh al-'Arouri, deputy head of Hamas' political bureau, Jibril Rajoub was interviewed by the Hezbollah-affiliated Lebanese al-Mayadeen TV. His answers were, as usual, belligerent. **He related to the "popular resistance" [i.e., popular terrorism] a number of times** as the chosen method of response if Israel carries out its "annexation plan."

►Regarding the "popular resistance," Jibril Rajoub said the following:

- ◆ Carrying out Israel's annexation plan will be considered a "declaration of war" on the two-state solution and signal the end of any negotiation. In such a situation, the **"rules of engagement" between the Palestinians and Israel will change** and the Palestinians will begin a "popular resistance." **Jibril Rajoub claimed the Palestinians have international legitimacy for self-determination, establishing a state and "waging all forms of resistance."**²

- ◆ Jibril Rajoub repeated the slogan that if Israel announces annexation, **"the rules of the confrontation will change."** The change will be made jointly with Hamas, based on the "unity of the concept of the struggle" against Israel. He said he thinks that at this point Hamas regards the "popular resistance" as a strategic choice (**while Hamas itself has repeatedly made it clear it regards the "armed resistance" as its preferred strategy;** see **Appendix B**).

- ◆ The "strategic choice" (of the PA and Fatah) is currently **"peaceful popular resistance" in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Jerusalem and the Palestinian dispersal.**³ He added that the "occupation" [i.e., Israel] has forced the Palestinians

² The expression **"all forms of resistance"** including popular terrorism (the "popular resistance") and institutionalized military terrorism (the "armed resistance"). Saying "all forms" means that in principle "armed resistance" has not been rejected, even if at the present time "popular resistance" is the preferred course of action.

³ During the past decade Jibril Rajoub has not particularly promoted "non-violent resistance." He has supported terrorists who carried out attacks in which Israeli civilians were killed and has praised the terrorists. As chairman of the Palestinian Olympic Committee he commemorated shaheeds with sporting events.

and the international community to reexamine the rules of Israeli-Palestinian engagement.

◆ Asked by al-Mayadeen if under certain conditions the Palestinians might also **adopt a strategy of "armed resistance"** [i.e., organized military terrorism], his answer was **careful and vague**. He said that should Israel decided to annex territories, even partially, **Fatah would return to the status quo before the Oslo Accords**, and then **the rules of engagement would definitely change**. He added that instead of using terminology such as "armed resistance" or "rocket fire" **he preferred to say that in a case of annexation they would discuss the issue again, and decide**. In any event, they would take the initiative and never "wave a white flag."

◆ Should Israel annex territories, he claimed the international community would allow the Palestinians to wage "all forms of resistance."⁴ That type of resistance would be carried out in all the occupied territories [i.e., Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem] against the [Israeli] "occupation and its symbols." **Jibril Rajoub claimed the Palestinians would use their "legal right" at a time when it would be most painful for Israel (the "occupation").**

Statements from Usama al-Qawasmeh, Fatah spokesman in Judea and Samaria

► **Usama al-Qawasmeh, a member of Fatah's Revolutionary Council and Fatah spokesman in the West Bank**, related to the "popular resistance" in a media interview (Dunia al-Watan, July 9, 2020). He said Fatah's activity against annexation and the "deal of the century" was not only temporary measures in response to Israel but were **an expression of a "continuing plan" which was part of the "popular resistance."**

► Usama al-Qawasmeh said **Fatah and Hamas were in contact for escalating the "popular resistance."** He said **contacts are almost daily with high-level coordination to escalate the "popular resistance."** That is to be done, he said, as part of one [joint] plan, as was done during the first intifada.

⁴ During the wave of popular terrorism that began in October 2015 Jibril Rajoub warned the Palestinians that the international community opposed blowing up buses in Tel Aviv, but would support a popular resistance: "The international community does not agree to a bus blowing up in Tel Aviv. But the international community does not ask what happens to a settler or a soldier who is in the wrong place at the wrong time. No one asks about them. Therefore, we want to struggle in a way that will keep the world and the international community on our side" (Palestinian TV, October 17, 2015, from the program, "A look at Palestinian media, the Jibril Rajoub file," July 27, 2016).

Appendix B

Statements from senior Hamas figures

►Senior Hamas figures also recently made statements in support of the "popular resistance," but with **two important differences**:

- ◆ For the **PA and Fatah**, the "popular resistance" is the preferred strategy. For **Hamas**, agreeing to the "popular resistance" **does not mean abandoning "armed resistance,"** which remains its preferred form of struggle against Israel.
- ◆ For **Hamas**, the objective of the "resistance" [both popular and armed] is not only to undermine Israel's attempt to annex territories and making sure the "deal of the century" fails. Its objective is primarily the destruction of the State of Israel [the liberation of all Palestine from the [Jordan] River to the [Mediterranean] Sea]. **Mahmoud Abbas**, on the other hand, declared that the PA remained committed to the two-state solution and said he left the door open to other mediators [the International Quartet] to replace the central role of United States.⁵

►The following are statements from senior Hamas figures:

- ◆ **Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau**, related to the types of "resistance" in a speech (al-Aqsa TV, July 11, 2020):
 - The objective of Hamas' plan is not to prevent the annexation and cause the "deal of the century" to fail. He said it was **a stage in the liberation of the entire Palestinian homeland, from the river to the sea.** Hamas' plan also includes Palestine, with Jerusalem as its capital; the return of the refugees to the lands and houses they were expelled from; and the release of all the prisoners in Israeli jails.
 - The term "resistance" strategy means "**comprehensive resistance in all its forms, the first of which is armed resistance.**" That is the strategy Hamas follows, and its military wing continues its buildup and preparedness for the battlefield. Haniyeh added that "we will not recognize Israel and we will not lay down our rifles. We will continue to resist until we fulfill the expectations of our people and nation for a free, Arab, Muslim Palestine."

⁵ For further information, see the June 2, 2020 bulletin, "Palestinian Authority launches campaign to prevent Israeli application of its sovereignty in Judea and Samaria (updated to June 2, 2020)/"

◆ **Musa Abu Marzouq, a member of the Hamas political bureau,** said the significance of **Hamas' agreement to formulating a plan for the "popular resistance" with Fatah did not mean it has abandoned armed resistance** because **that is the path Hamas follows** (Dunia al-Watan website, July 9, 2020)

◆ **Khaled Mashaal, former head of Hamas' political bureau,** was interviewed by the head of a British organization called the Arab Thinking Forum,⁶ and related to the struggle against Israel:

- The West Bank is the daily arena of Israel's decision to annex territories. Therefore, the West Bank has to "rise up and burn under the invaders' feet" in a confrontation that will use **all possible weapons – vehicles, knives and other weapons.**
- In addition, there is "**mass popular resistance.**" Palestinians have to go to the Jordan Valley and the enclaves Israel wants to annex and erect "solidarity tents." Palestinians should clash with the Israeli soldiers sent to annex territories and to **exhaust Israel.**
- Khaled Mashaal also called on the [refugee] camps and the Palestinian dispersal (possibly in Lebanon) to hold return marches to their borders. He said **protests and demonstrations could also be held in front of Israeli embassies and consulates around the world** (Facebook page of the Arab Thinking Forum, July 1, 2020).



Khaled Mashaal interviewed by Muhammad Amin, chairman of the Arab Thinking Forum (Facebook page of the Arab Thinking Forum, July 1, 2020).

⁶ The Arab Thinking Forum is an independent organization of Arab journalists and intellectuals living in Britain (Arab Thinking Forum Facebook page, October 1, 2019).

Appendix C

Aspects of popular terrorism (the "popular resistance")

Overview

The "popular resistance," that is, popular terrorism, is a strategy used by the PA and Fatah against Israel. It was formulated during the Sixth Fatah Conference in August 2006 and adopted by the PA. It was then reconfirmed by the Seventh Fatah Conference on November 30, 2016, at a meeting of the PLO's Central Council on January 15, 2018, and at other forums.

► **Popular terrorism uses massive, non-institutionalized "popular" violence**, which is carried out in different ways, such as demonstrations and clashes with the Israeli security forces, throwing stones and Molotov cocktails, and attacks using so-called "cold weapons" (such as stabbing and ramming attacks). Occasionally there are shooting attacks and the use of IEDs, but they are not part of the ongoing "popular resistance" attacks. The PA and Fatah have applied "popular resistance" strategy for the past decade, but for various reasons (which will not be elaborated here) **it has not yet been turned towards fomenting an overall popular uprising like the first intifada**, which is perceived as a model for popular resistance.

Popular terrorism (the "popular resistance")

► An analysis of the popular terrorism attacks of the past five years reveals a number of common aspects:

- ◆ **Popular terrorism is not an isolated strategy** but rather part of a combined political, economic, media, propaganda and legal **campaign waged by the PA against Israel**. From the perspective of the PA and Fatah, implementing the "popular resistance" creates a situation of **constant, monitored, controlled tension between Israel and the Palestinians**. The Palestinians can use it to exert pressure on Israel in a way that, quantitatively and qualitatively, is in accordance with developments in political activity and is considered as legitimate by the international community. At the same time, in the internal Palestinian arena the PA and Fatah represent the "popular resistance" **as an acceptable alternative** for the Palestinian public in Judea and Samaria **to Hamas' concept of "armed resistance."** Hamas' concept is not

considered by the PA and Fatah as beneficial to the Palestinian struggle against Israel at this point in time (although it has not been rejected in principle).

◆ **The "popular resistance" is not the calm, non-violent protest it is repeatedly claimed to be by Mahmoud Abbas and other senior PA and Fatah figures** (mainly for Western ears and at international forums). Popular terrorism makes massive use of "violence." The violence employed since the beginning of the wave of popular terrorism that began in October 2015, has caused the deaths of 80 Israelis in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem, most of them civilians and some members of the Israeli security forces.

Mahmoud Abbas' false claims to the UN that the "popular resistance" is non-violent



Right: Mahmoud Abbas delivers a speech to the UN General Assembly, saying, "We will not go to terrorism and violence..." (Wafa, September 21, 2017). Left: Mahmoud Abbas claims to the members of the UN Security Council that "the Palestinians will never turn to violence and terrorism, and will fight with 'non-violent popular resistance' " (Mahmoud Abbas' Facebook page, February 11, 2020).

Fatah incitement for popular terrorism



Right: Fatah encourages stabbing attacks at the beginning of the wave of popular terrorism (Twitter account of Fatah's bureau of organization and mobilization, October 4, 2015). Left: Encouragement for ramming attacks on the Facebook page of the Shabiba, Fatah's student movement in al-Najah University in Nablus. The Arabic reads, "Resist, even with your own car" (Facebook page of the Shabiba movement in al-Najah University, November 6, 2014). The previous day a lethal ramming attack was carried out in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of Jerusalem.



Cartoon by Palestinian cartoonist Imad Baalbeki, published after the lethal ramming attack in the Armon Hanatziv neighborhood of Jerusalem which killed four IDF officers and wounded 13 soldiers. Instead of Fatah's slogan, "Revolution until victory," it reads, "Ramming [attack] until victory." The sign at the left reads, "Palestine" (mapnews.com, January 9, 2017).

- ◆ **The PA publicly supports the violence routinely employed in the "popular resistance."** It provides financial support for those who carry out popular terrorism attacks and for their families, and helps rebuild the houses of terrorists destroyed by Israel. Mahmoud Abbas and other senior PA and Fatah figures meet with the terrorists and their families, and pay condolence calls. The PA and Fatah media support popular terrorism attacks and those who carry them out, and consistently (and falsely) claim that Israel "executes" innocent Palestinians who have done nothing wrong (while ignoring the fact that they were killed while carrying out terrorist attacks).

Senior Fatah figures pay a condolence call to the family of the terrorist who carried out a shooting attack and provide them with support



Right: Senior Fatah figures Mahmoud al-'Alul and Jamal Muheisen in the mourning tent of the Jarar family in Jenin⁷, two of whose members participated in a shooting attack that killed an Israeli civilian (Mahmoud al-'Alul's Facebook page, January 22, 2018). Left: The picture of the mourning tent uploaded to the official Fatah Facebook page (January 24, 2018).



Right: The mother of one of the terrorists thanks the Fatah branch in Jenin for the house provided to the family (YouTube, February 18, 2020). Left: Fatah's official Facebook page publishes a post from the brother of one of the terrorists thanking the secretary and deputy secretary of the Fatah branch in Jenin for the aid they gave the family (official Fatah Facebook page, February 24, 2020).

- ◆ **There is no one profile for Palestinians who carry out popular terrorism attacks. Most of them operate alone**, although there have been instances of local networks of several operatives. Most of them are young (although there have been instances of adults, even parents). Some of them were high school children, university students or unemployed adults with **no record of involvement in terrorist attacks or membership in one of the establish terrorist organizations**. Prominent were **many**

⁷ The **Jarar clan** lives in Jenin. Two of its members belonged to the squad that carried out the shooting attack at the Gilad Farm (about five miles southwest of Nablus) on January 9, 2018, where an Israeli civilian was killed. The Fatah branch in Jenin was quick to demonstrate support for the terrorist's family. They were given temporary housing, which, according to the secretary of the Fatah branch in Jenin, was a gesture meant to stress "Fatah's national obligation" to the families whose houses were destroyed by the IDF (Wafa, February 24, 2018)

whose motives were personal and not nationalist or religious (such as family problems, frustration, gender discrimination among the women, a desire to overcome the difficulties of daily life or to become shaheeds and enjoy the pleasures of paradise, while their families on earth enjoy the prestige and generous allowances from the PA)

◆ **The PA opposes turning the "popular resistance" into an armed military campaign against Israel** (the so-called "armed resistance"). **The PA and its security services have enforced their position on Hamas and the other terrorist organizations in Judea and Samaria through ongoing preventive measures in cooperation with the Israeli security forces**, despite Hamas' harsh criticism (cooperation recently hurt by the PA's abandoning agreements and cutting off ties with Israel in various fields, including security, but Hamas' criticism of the PA's security cooperation with Israel is ongoing).

◆ On the other hand, despite adopting the strategy of "popular resistance," **in principle the PA and Fatah do not reject the concept of "armed resistance."** According to Fatah's platform of August 2009, **the concept of "armed resistance" remains a possible future option for the future**, when the political and social conditions of the conflict with Israel warrant it (also hinted at by Jibril Rajoub in the interview quoted above). Moreover, even during the era of "popular resistance" **Fatah and the PA preserve the legacy and symbols of the "armed resistance" against Israel, manifested in the fostering of the cult of shaheeds of all the terrorist organizations, even shaheeds who were party to the murder of Israeli civilians, and turning them into role models for the younger generation.** One of the most prominent examples is **Dalal Mughrabi**, a female Palestinian terrorist who participated in the Coastal Road Massacre (1978), which killed 37 Israelis, 13 of them children.



Right: Glorification of Palestinian terrorist Dalal Mughrabi in PA textbooks (the Arab language, fifth grade, Part 2, 2019, page 51). Left: Post on the Facebook page of Fatah's bureau of organization and mobilization issued for the anniversary of the birthday of Palestinian terrorist Dalal Mughrabi (Facebook page of Fatah's bureau of organization and mobilization, December 29, 2013).

- The number of significant popular terrorism attacks carried out since October 2015 currently stands at **473**. The attacks peaked **from the last quarter of 2015 (with a wave of 134 significant attacks) through 2016 (142 attacks)**, and have since tapered off (although 2020 has not ended and the number may rise before it does). Since October 2015 **popular terrorism attacks have killed 80 Israelis in Judea and Samaria**, most of them civilians, and some of them members of the Israeli security forces. **The number of fatalities has also trended downward** during the past five years.