



News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (December 2-8, 2020)

Overview

► In the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria the number of active Covid-19 cases **continues to rise sharply**. As of December 8, 2020, there were **10,091 active cases in Gaza and 14,894 in Judea and Samaria**. Those are the minimum numbers because **the actual numbers seem to be far higher**. The percentage of positive test results in Gaza spiked to 38%, while in Judea and Samaria it fluctuates between 20% and 30%.

► **The Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip has begun to signal a loss of control**. A spokesman for the ministry of health in Gaza said the central laboratory **had stopped processing tests** because it ran out of materials. **The W.H.O. rushed to provide materials sufficient for eight days**, but the laboratory has not yet renewed its activity.

► This past week as well the Gaza Strip remained quiet. In Judea and Samaria, however, **Palestinians rioted in the village of al-Mughayir, northeast of Ramallah, and in the Qalandia refugee camp**. A young Palestinian boy was killed in clashes near Ramallah between Israeli security forces and rioters. The IDF announced that following the event the IDF's Criminal Investigation Division had begun an investigation and its findings would be sent to the Military Advocate's Office. In the riots in the Qalandia refugee camp **six members of the Israeli security forces were injured. Four Palestinians were injured**, some of them seriously. In addition, Palestinians continue their routine of throwing stones, rocks and Molotov cocktails at Israeli vehicles, including civilian buses.

► **The Palestinian Authority (PA) now has to deal with internal protests and riots**. In **Hebron** businessmen and store owners held a mass demonstration to protest the full lockdown of the Hebron district. In **the Balata refugee camp near Nablus** clashes continued between the Palestinian security services and armed Palestinians, at least some of them supporters of Muhammad Dahlan, Mahmoud Abbas's rival. The clashes were accompanied popular protests.

► On December 2, 2020, **the PA announced that the government of Israel had transferred all the tax revenues to the PA's account, the sum of 3.768 billion shekels** (approximately

\$115.6 billion). The Israeli media reported that the government of Israel had decided **to deduct 600 million shekels from the tax revenues** (about \$184 million), the sum of the salaries the PA pays to imprisoned Palestinian terrorists, released terrorists and the families of shaheeds. According to the reports, the 600 million shekels will be paid in 12 monthly installments of 50 million shekels.

Covid-19 Infection – Update¹

The Gaza Strip

As of December 8, 2020, **the number of active coronavirus cases in the Gaza Strip was 10,091**, after 550 new cases were detected between December 7 and 8. **The number of deaths rose by six to 155**. There are 372 Gazans in ICUs, 153 of them in serious or critical condition (al-Ra'i news agency, December 8, 2020).

►On December 7, 2020, **Dr. Ashraf al-Qidra**, spokesman for the ministry of health in Gaza, announced that the ministry had **received sufficient materials from the W.H.O. to process 19,500 Covid-19 tests, enough for eight days** (Dr. Ashraf al-Qidra's Twitter account, December 7, 2020). The materials have already been delivered to the central laboratory, which had stopped operations two days previously. Nevertheless, **the laboratory has not yet renewed its activity, although it is expected to do so in the near future**.



The central laboratory in the Gaza Strip, disabled until the receipt of test materials from the W.H.O. (ajyal.fm Facebook page, December 7, 2020).

►On December 8, 2020, a delegation of 48 representatives from the UAE entered the Gaza Strip through the Erez Crossing. They planned to stay in Gaza for several hours to visit the European Gaza Hospital in Khan Yunis, which has been designated a Covid-19 hospital, and to meet with representatives of NGOs (Safa, December 8, 2020).

¹ For further information, see the December 7, 2020, bulletin, "The Spread of Covid-19 in Judea and Samaria (Updated to December 7, 2020)."



The UAE delegation enters the Gaza Strip through the Erez Crossing (picture from the Palestinian side) (Safa, December 8, 2020).

Judea and Samaria

The sharp rise in the number of active cases in Judea and Samaria continues. On December 8, 2020, there were 14,894 active cases, up from 11,692 on December 1, 2020. So far 712 Palestinians in Judea and Samaria have died, up from 636 on December 1, 2020. This past week 8,974 new cases were detected, bringing the total number of Palestinians infected to 75,517, as of December 8, 2020. **The number of positive test results fluctuates between 20% and 30%, fewer than in the Gaza Strip but still very high.** Nevertheless, the PA has so far abstained from imposing an overall lockdown in Judea and Samaria. Instead, it announced a series of new preventive measures, including **a full lockdown of four districts with high rates of infection** (the Nablus, Hebron, Bethlehem and Tulkarm districts). The enforcement of the nightly curfew continues and movement between districts has been banned for a week.

► Mai al-Kayla, PA minister of health, said **the percentage of positive test results in the districts subject to a full lockdown had reached 30%**. She said the PA's epidemiological committee had recommended an overall lockdown, but data from the district governors, the security services and the various ministries led to the decision to impose a general lockdown only on the districts where the level of infection was high and serious. She added that **the situation is serious, manifested by the high percentage of positive test results and the dwindling number of coronavirus-designated hospital and ICU beds**. She said the Covid-19-designated hospitals are full, and the Covid-19 wards in the government hospital are almost full (Dunia al-Watan, December 8, 2020).

► Following the decision to impose a full lockdown on the Hebron district, **businessmen and store owners in Hebron held a mass demonstration in the center of the city**. They

protested the lockdown, which is expected to last a week (Palinfo Twitter account, December 7, 2020).



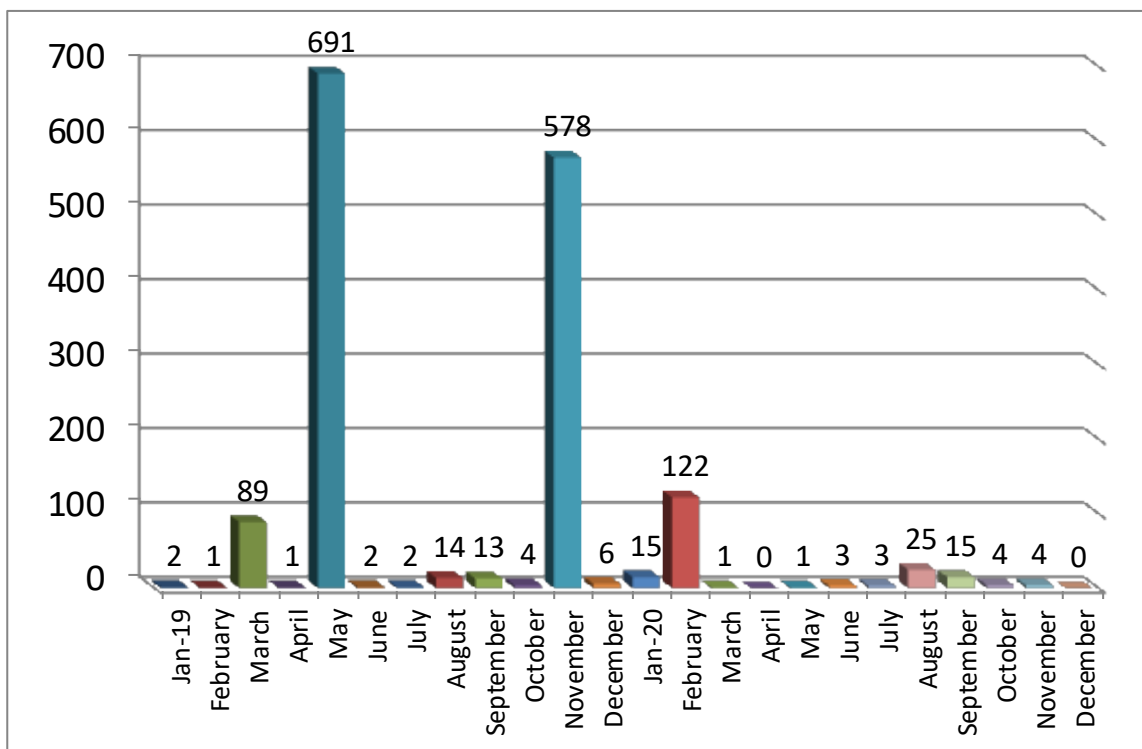
Businessmen and store owners demonstrate in Hebron to protest the government decision to impose a full lockdown on the Hebron district (ajyal.fm Facebook page, December 7, 2020).

Rocket Fire

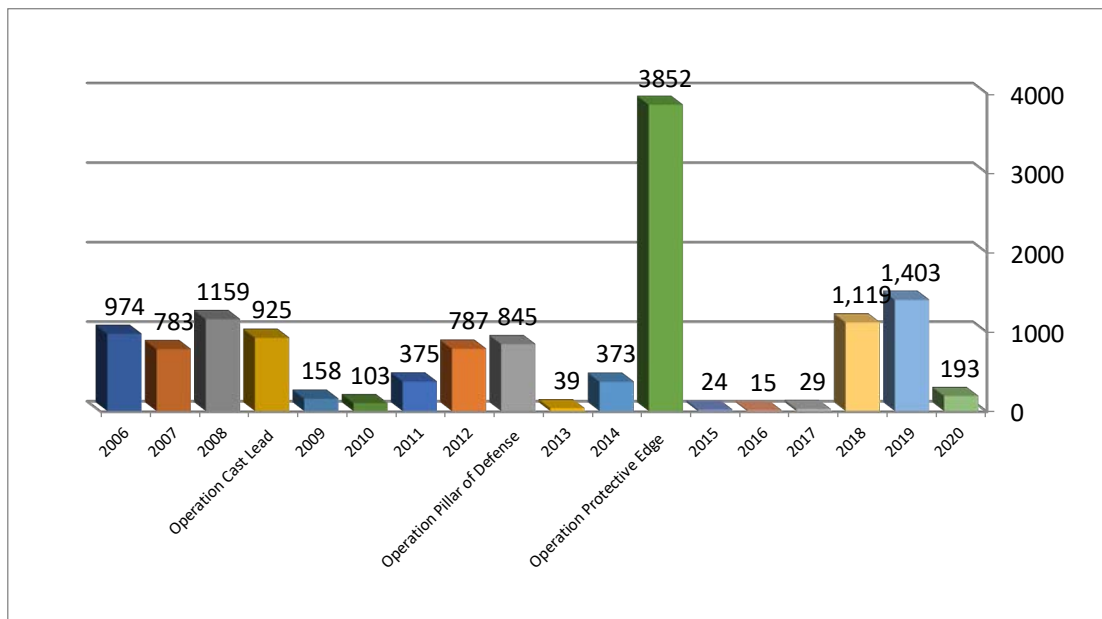
Rocket and mortar shell fire into Israel

► This past week no rocket hits were identified in Israeli territory.

Monthly Distribution of Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire



Annual Distribution of Rocket Hits



Judea and Samaria

Palestinian rioters clash with Israeli security forces

Clashes in the villages of al-Mughayir and Malek

►The IDF spokesman reported that riots were held on December 4, 2020, near the village of al-Mughayir and Malek (northeast of Ramallah). During the violent **dozens of rioters threw stones at the IDF and Border Police forces. They also tried to roll boulders and burning tires from the mountain ridges towards the main road on the eastern side of the Judea and Samaria mountains, which would have endangered the lives of people driving on the road.** Israeli security forces prevented them from blocking the road by employing riot dispersal methods. The IDF spokesman added that the claim of wounded Palestinians and one death was known to the IDF, and the IDF's Criminal Investigation Division had begun an investigation, whose findings would be examined by the Military Advocate's Office (IDF Twitter account, December 6, 2020).

►The ministry of health in Ramallah reported **that during the riots in the village of al-Mughayir, Ali Ayman Nasr Abu Alia died** after having been shot in the stomach. There are at least versions of his age.² **Two years ago he was wounded by a rubber bullet in a riot in al-**

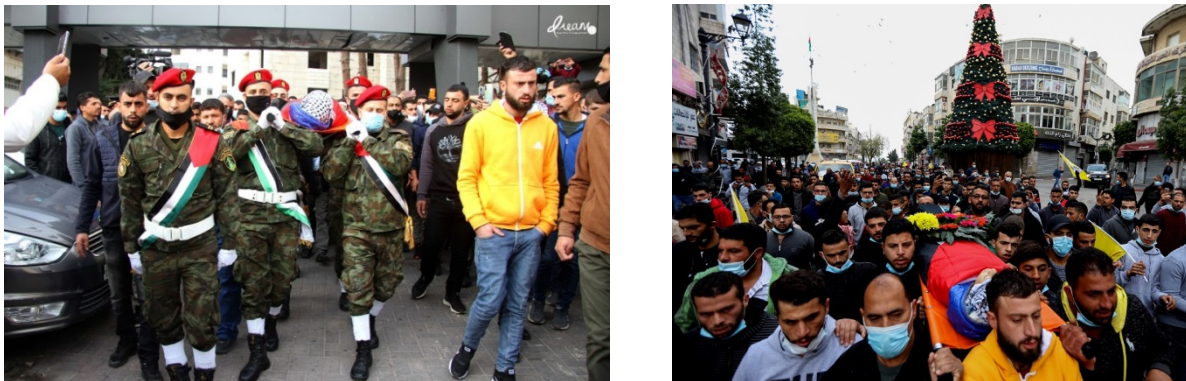
² According to the ministry of health in Ramallah, he was 13 years old. According to investigative reports based on conversations with members of his family, he was killed on his 15th birthday.

Mughayir on the day of the funeral held for Laith Abu Alia³ (Wafa, December 5, 2018). The Fatah branch in al-Mughayir issued a mourning notice for him (official Fatah Twitter account, December 5, 2020), as did the Hamas movement in the Ramallah-al-Bireh district (Ayash Abu Alia's Twitter account, December 4, 2020).



**Right: The mourning notice issued by Fatah (official Fatah Twitter account, December 5, 2020).
Left: The mourning notice issued by Hamas (Ayash Abu Alia's Twitter account, December 4, 2020).**

► **Abu Alia was given a military-style funeral.** The official funeral rites were held in the government hospital in Ramallah and attended by Laila Ghannam, the Ramallah-al-Bireh district governor, and operatives of the PA's security services. The cortège passed through Ramallah to al-Mughayir, where Abu Alia as buried.



The funeral held in Ramallah. (Right: Wafa, December 5, 2020; left: Facebook page of Studio Dream in Ramallah, December 5, 2020).

³ The Laith Abu Alia, or Laith Abu Na'im, was a young Palestinian killed on January 30, 2018, in riots held in al-Mughayir.



The cortège in the village of al-Mughayir. A Hamas flag was placed on the body along with the Palestinian flag (Wafa, December 5, 2020).

- ▶Palestinians from the entire political spectrum condemned Abu Alia's death. **Mahmoud Abbas** called his father, offered condolences and condemned Israel (Wafa, December 5, 2018). PA Prime Minister **Muhammad Shtayyeh** also condemned his killing (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, December 4, 2020). Fatah spokesman **Usama al-Qawasmeh** said the response to Abu Alia's death should be national unity and escalating the overall "popular resistance" [i.e., popular terrorism] (Dunia al-Watan, December 5, 2020). **Saleh al-'Arouri**, deputy chairman of Hamas' political bureau, also called Abu Alia's father and stressed that the "resistance to occupation" in all its forms was the only way to stop [alleged] "Israeli aggression" (Hamas' Telegram channel, December 5, 2020). The **Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)** stressed that the only path is escalating the "resistance" and an overall intifada to deter the "occupation" and defend the Palestinians and their land (PIJ website, December 4, 2020).
- ▶The head of the local council in al-Mughayir also reported that four Palestinians were wounded by rubber bullets and received medical treatment at the site (Wafa, December 4, 2020).

Violent clashes in the Qalandia refugee camp

- ▶On December 7, 2020, **violent clashes developed** during a joint Israel Police-Border Police activity in the Qalandia refugee camp. Palestinians **threw concrete blocks and other heavy objects from roofs, wounding six fighters**. The Israeli forces used live fire and riot dispersal measures. Additional IDF forces were called to the site. After detaining two Palestinians, the forces left the refugee camp (Border Police spokesman's unit, December 7, 2020). **The ministry of health in Ramallah reported that four Palestinians had been wounded in the clashes, some of them seriously.**



Palestinians throw concrete blocks and other heavy objects (circled in red) from roofs (adham922 Twitter account, December 7, 2020).

Other events

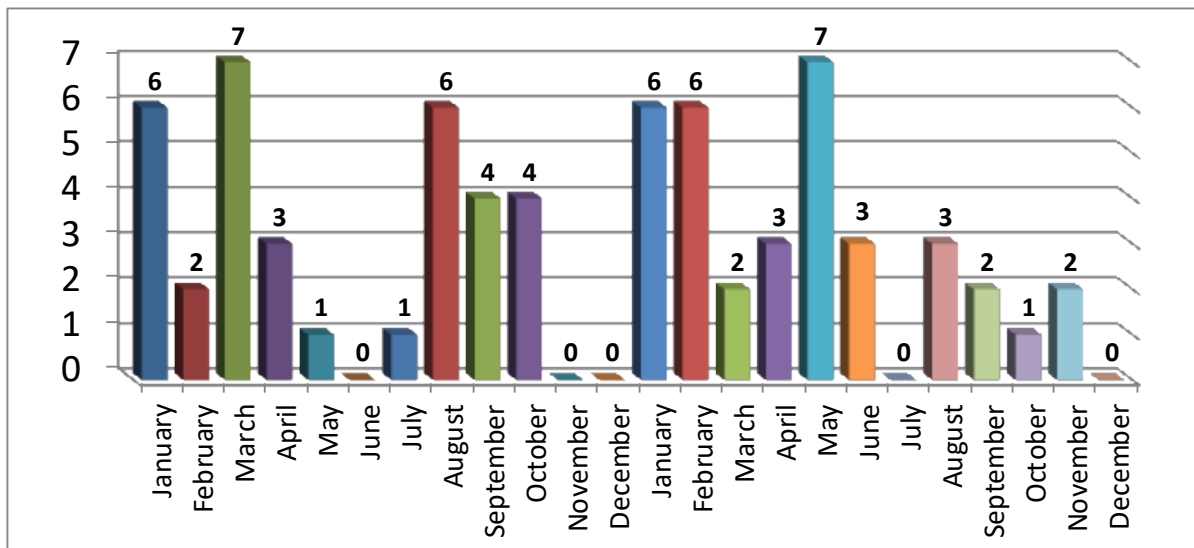
► In Judea and Samaria Palestinians continued throwing stones and Molotov cocktails. The more prominent events were the following:⁴

- ◆ **December 7, 2020:** Stones were thrown at Israeli vehicles south of Hebron. No casualties were reported.
- ◆ **December 6, 2020:** A bottle of paint was thrown at an Israeli vehicle northeast of Ramallah. No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **December 6, 2020:** Stones were thrown at an Israeli vehicle south of Nablus. No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **December 6, 2020:** Stones were thrown at an Israeli bus on the Hebron-Gush Etzion road north of Hebron. No casualties were reported.
- ◆ **December 6, 2020:** Stones were thrown at Israeli vehicles near the village of al-Mughayir northeast of Ramallah. No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **December 5, 2020:** Stones were thrown at Israeli vehicles and a bus northeast of Ramallah. No casualties were reported; the front windshield of the bus was damaged.
- ◆ **December 3, 2020:** Stones were thrown at an Israeli bus north of Hebron. No casualties were reported; the front windshield of the bus was damaged.

⁴ All information and reports are from Rescue Without Borders in Judea and Samaria unless otherwise noted.

- ◆ **December 3, 2020:** Stones were thrown at an Israeli bus on the Hebron-Gush Etzion road, north of Hebron. No casualties were reported
- ◆ **December 2, 2020:** Stones were thrown at an Israeli vehicle southeast of Nablus. No casualties were reported.
- ◆ **December 2, 2020:** Molotov cocktails were thrown at an Israeli vehicle northeast of Ramallah. No casualties were reported.
- ◆ **December 2, 2020:** Molotov cocktails were thrown at an Israeli bus east of Jerusalem. No casualties were reported; the front windshield of the bus was damaged.
- ◆ **December 2, 2020:** Stones were thrown at an Israel vehicle near the village of al-Mughayir, northeast of Ramallah. No casualties were reported.

Significant terrorist attacks in Judea and Samaria since January 2019⁵



Developments in the Gaza Strip

Distribution of the donation from Qatar

► **Mohammed al-Emadi**, chairman of Qatar's National Committee for the Reconstruction of Gaza, said that **on December 3, 2020 the Committee**, in cooperation with the Qatar Fund for Development, **had begun distributing \$100 to each of 100,000 needy Gazan families**. He said the payments would be made through the branches of the post office bank while

⁵A 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.

implementing strict health precautions because of the coronavirus, and under the full supervision of the Committee teams/staff (Committee website, December 3, 2020).

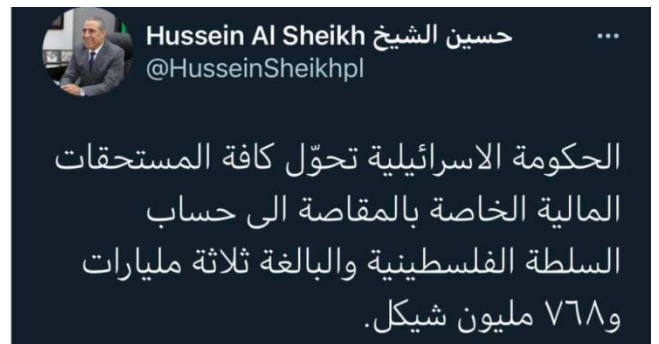


Distribution of the funds from Qatar
(Qatar's National Committee's Facebook page, December 3, 2020).

The Palestinian Authority (PA)

Transfer of tax revenues to the PA

► On December 2, 2020, **Hussein al-Sheikh**, chairman of the Civil Authority, posted to his Facebook page that **the government of Israel had transferred all the tax revenues to the PA's bank account, the sum of almost 3.768 billion shekels** (about \$115.6 billion) (Hussein al-Sheikh's Facebook page, December 2, 2020). The PA news agency Wafa reported Hussein al-Sheikh's Facebook post (Wafa, December 2, 2020).



Right: Hussein al-Sheikh announces that the government of Israel transferred all the tax revenues to the PA bank account (Hussein al-Sheikh's Facebook page, December 2, 2020). Left: The Wafa website reports al-Sheikh's announcement (Wafa, December 2, 2020).

► Following the transfer of funds, the PA ministry of the treasury announced that **salaries for November would be paid in full to all PA employees on December 3, 2020**. In addition, 50% of the debts to employees accumulated between May and October 2020 would also be

paid. According to the announcement, the remainder by the end of December 2020 at the latest. Part of the sum will be used to pay debts to providers of services and goods to the PA, especially to hospitals and others in the health sector combatting the Covid-19 epidemic. According to the announcement, **the ministry of the treasury will continue verifying accounts with Israel ("the other side") for the return of remaining money** (Facebook page of the PA ministry of the treasury, December 2, 2020). In ITIC assessment, the reference was to money **the government of Israel decided to deduct from the tax revenues transferred to the PA.**

►The Israeli media reported that **the government of Israel decided to deduct 600 million shekels (about \$184 million) from the tax revenues**, the sum paid by the PA to the terrorist prisoners, released prisoners and the families of shaheeds in 2019. According to the report, **the sum will be deducted in 12 monthly installments of 50 million shekels** (Israeli Kan Corporation, November 29, 2020).

PA prime minister continues raising money from donor states

►On December 2, 2020, PA Prime Minister **Muhammad Shtayyeh** participated in a video conference with donor states of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC). He called for a boycott of the Israeli settlements and not merely marking the origin of the products they manufacture and export. He said Palestinian economic growth is not separate from the national state program but rather meant to end the [Israeli] "occupation" and establish a Palestinian state. He added that the receipt of the tax revenues will enable them to complete the plan for growth by focusing on clean energy and technological development for the entire Palestinian public (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, December 2, 2020).



PA Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh participates in a video conference with representatives from AHLC donor states (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, December 2, 2020).

Statements from senior PA and Fatah figures about the "popular resistance" (i.e., popular terrorism)

► **Ahmed al-Majdalani**, PA minister of welfare, said the PA was struggling against Israel in three fields, especially against the settlements. The first field is **escalating the "popular resistance" [i.e., popular terrorism] against Israel and the "settlement project."** He said it was the main path that would enable them to construct a strong internal front and to strengthen the international coalition against Israel. The second field is **completing political measures for the recognition of "Palestine" and imposing sanctions on Israel.** The third field is **consistently pursuing the legal battle against the settlements** (Sawa, December 6, 2020).

► **Azzam al-Ahmed**, a senior Fatah figure and a member of Fatah's Central Committee, interviewed by Palestinian TV said that the Palestinians intended to **develop the "popular resistance."** He also called on Hamas and the other Palestinian [terrorist] organizations to take an active part in the "popular resistance." Asked about the "popular resistance," he answered that it had expanded and was operating wherever there were settlements (Palestinian TV, November 30, 2020).

Clashes continue between Palestinian security forces and armed residents of the Balata refugee camp

► On December 6, 2020, popular protests were reported in the Balata refugee camp **after a confrontation between a PA security force and armed Palestinians.** Young Palestinians blocked al-Quds Street and the market street to **show their anger at the ongoing siege of the camp, which has lasted for almost 40 days.** They threw stones at the forces stationed around the camp, burned tires and blocked streets. Local sources reported that a PA security force infiltrated into the camp in plain clothes in **an attempt to detain one of Muhammad Dahlan's supporters.** After an armed confrontation, the detention attempt failed (Palestine Online, December 6, 2020 ASKA2R's Facebook page, December 6, 2020).

► **On December 7, 2020, clashes were reported between PA security operatives and residents of the Balata refugee camp after the security forces detained a senior al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades operative.** Eye witnesses reported that security force operatives threw teargas canisters and shock grenades at the young residents, who kept the operatives from entering the refugee camp (al-Kofiya TV website, December 7, 2020). According to reports, a fire broke out in the Fatah office in the Balata refugee camp, caused either by a teargas

canister or arson (the Shifa website, affiliated with Muhammad Dahlan, December 7, 2020; the al-Kofiya TV Twitter account, December 7, 2020).



**Clashes in the Balata refugee camp, setting a building on fire
(al-Kofiya TV website, December 7, 2020).**