Overview

There were two terrorist attacks this past week: A Palestinian woman was killed attempting a combined vehicular-ramming and stabbing attack in Hizma, south of Nablus; a Palestinian woman tried to carry out a stabbing attack in Hebron and was detained. In addition, Israeli vehicles and civilians were attacked in east Jerusalem. Tensions continue in Judea, Samaria and east Jerusalem, especially at the Eviatar outpost south of Nablus and the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in east Jerusalem. On Friday June 18, 2021, Palestinians rioted at al-Aqsa mosque. In the meantime, Palestinians continued throwing rocks and Molotov cocktails at Israeli civilians and vehicles driving on the roads in Judea and Samaria.

The flag march in the Old City of Jerusalem, June 15, 2021 and reactions: Despite threats from Hamas and the other terrorist organizations, the flag march in Jerusalem ended without significant repercussions, after having been delayed and rerouted, for which Hamas claimed credit. However, the incendiary balloon-launching units of the terrorist organizations operating in the Gaza Strip renewed their activities, and Hamas reactivated the night harassment units near the border security fence. In any event, despite the threats, there was no rocket fire from the Gaza Strip. In response to the incendiary balloons, which were launched for four consecutive days, IDF aircraft attacked Hamas terrorist targets.

Addenda to Operation Guardian of the Walls: Given what is described by Hamas as lack of progress in contacts for defining the situation in the Gaza Strip, the Hamas leadership is increasing its efforts to ease daily life for the Gazan population by exerting pressure on Israel. Hamas threatened that unless Israel began implementing the measures it had promised, Hamas would renew the hostilities. According the Israeli media, the Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) authorized the implementing of a limited number of measures beginning on June 21, 2021. Nevertheless, the Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) leaderships continue threatening Israel.

The coronavirus vaccine crisis: The delivery of soon-to-expire coronavirus vaccines from Israel to the Palestinian Authority (PA) was severely criticized, and after the first batch was
delivered the PA cancelled the deal. On June 20, 2021, the ministry of health in Ramallah confirmed the renewal of negotiations with Pfizer and Israel for the delivery of coronavirus vaccines.

► **PA demand from the new ICC chief prosecutor**: The day after Karim Khan, the new ICC chief prosecutor, was sworn in, the PA foreign ministry issued a statement urging him to put the investigation of the [alleged] "war crimes of the Israeli occupation" at the top of his priority list.

► **Palestinian opinion poll**: Khalil Shqaqi's Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PCPSR) latest public opinion poll showed a significant rise in Hamas' popularity among the Palestinian people.

### The Jerusalem Flag March and the Launching of Incendiary Balloons from the Gaza Strip

► On Tuesday, **June 15, 2021**, despite the threats issued by Hamas and the other terrorist organizations, the flag march was held in east Jerusalem after it had been authorized by the Israeli government and police, and after its route had been changed. Events included dancing in front of the Damascus Gate, but marchers did not enter the Muslim Quarter of the Old City.

► In the meantime, **June 15, 2021** was declared a "day of rage" in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip. The Palestinians in Judea and Samaria did not turn out in significant numbers and there was limited attendance at the few riots which were held. The terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip, led by Hamas, held their own march.

► The flag march in Jerusalem ended without significant repercussions. However, the incendiary balloon-launching units renewed their activities, and Hamas renewed the activities of the night harassment units near the border security fence. Hamas and the other terrorist organizations did not renew the rocket fire, despite their direct and indirect threats.¹

► **The PA foreign ministry** condemned the march, claiming it reflected the "essence of the occupation and its racism" (Wafa, June 16, 2021).

► **Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum** claimed Hamas and its "resolute" decisions had forced Israel to change the route of the march, deploy Iron Dome aerial defense system batteries

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¹ "Sources" leaked to the Arab media that on the eve of the march Israel and Hamas exchanged messages through the Egyptian intermediaries. Hamas and the PIJ told the Egyptians they did not want to renew the hostilities (al-Arabiya, June 15, 2021). Hamas spokesman Muhammad Hamada claimed the Egyptians had asked Hamas not to renew hostilities (al-Aqsa, June 15, 2021).
and change civilian flight plans. He claimed they were all "proof" of the new "deterrent equations" and "rules of struggle" they had enforced on Israel during the most recent hostilities. Hamas spokesman Abd al-Latif al-Qanua claimed Israel had brought all its resources to bear on the march. He claimed the "deterrence" created by the "Palestinian resistance" [i.e., the Palestinian terrorist organizations] during the most recent hostilities was evident in Israel's plan for the march and the changes it had made in the route and date (al-Ghad, June 15, 2021).

Clashes near the border security fence in eastern Rafah (Twitter account of journalist Hassan Aslih, June 15, 2021).

Demonstrators in Khan Yunis burn Israeli flags and pictures of Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett to protest the flag march (Twitter account of journalist Hassan Aslih, June 15, 2021).

Arson terrorism

This past week, after the flag march in Jerusalem, arson terrorism from the Gaza Strip increased. During three consecutive days, June 15-18, 2021, dozens of incendiary balloons were launched, causing fires near the Gaza Strip. In addition, the night harassment units renewed their activities at several locations along the border.

On June 15, 2021, incendiary balloons caused more than 20 fires, 15 of them in the Be’eri Forest. In one instance an IED balloon exploded in the air over a kibbutz in the western Negev, the noise making children run from the playground to a shelter (Ynet,
Hamas and the PIJ claimed responsibility for the fires. Several dozen Palestinians gathered at the five traditional return march sites along the border.

On June 16, 2021, incendiary balloons caused four fires in the Israeli communities near the Gaza Strip border (Ynet, June 17, 2021).

On June 17, 2021, incendiary balloons caused eight fires in the western Negev (Israel Fire and Rescue Services spokesman, southern district, June 17, 2021).

On June 18, 2021, at least eight fires were found. An IED exploded near one of the Israeli communities, apparently attached to a balloon (Globes website, June 18, 2018).


Fires near the Gaza Strip ignited by incendiary balloons from the Gaza Strip (Jewish National Fund, June 15, 2021).

According to a Palestinian source, balloon launches will continue, accompanied by other forms of "popular pressure" to force Israel to open the Gaza Strip crossings and in retaliation for "Israel's aggression in east Jerusalem" [sic] (Ma’an, June 18, 2021).

On June 21, 2021, after a number of days of calm, the Hamas-affiliated Sons of al-Zawari balloon-launching unit said it was waiting for orders and was losing patience. Later it issued a statement claiming its activities had made Israel ("the enemy") discuss the round [of arson attacks] at all its government and military meetings (Sons of al-Zawari Telegram channel, June 21, 2021).
Israel's response

In response to the incendiary balloon launches, Israeli Air Force aircraft attacked Hamas military-terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip more intensively than previously, the first aerial attacks since the end of Operation Guardian of the Walls. On the night of June 15, 2021, Israeli Air Force aircraft attacked Hamas military facilities which served as camps and places where operatives of the Khan Yunis and Gaza Brigades met and carried out terrorist attacks (IDF website, June 17, 2021). The ministry of health in Gaza reported there had been no casualties in the attack.

Palestinian sources reported that after the attack Hamas told the Egyptian mediators that Israel's response had exceeded the existing rules of engagement and would lead to escalation (al-Akhbar, June 17, 2021). Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem called the Israeli attack on the Gaza Strip a failed attempt to end the Palestinian people's solidarity with the "resistance" and Jerusalem, and to hide the Zionist establishment's unprecedented confusion in organizing the flag march (Hazem Qassem's Twitter account, June 16, 2021). However, no overt threats were made to renew the rocket fire in response.

Close to 23:00 on Thursday, June 17, 2021, the Israeli Air Force attacked the Gaza Strip again. Targets included a Hamas rocket-launching position and military-terrorist facilities...
(IDF spokesman, June 18, 2021). The Palestinian media reported an attack on a post near civilian residences in the northeastern part of the Sheikh Zaid neighborhood in Gaza City (Wafa, June 17, 2021). An hour after the attack a red alert siren was sounded in the Israeli communities near the Gaza Strip for the first time since the end of Operation Guardian of the Walls, May 21, 2021. The IDF said the alert was sounded in response to machinegun fire inside the Gaza Strip, not rocket fire (IDF spokesman, June 18, 2021).

According to Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum, the IDF attacks "were only the new Israeli government showing its muscles" to raise morale, and the military wings of the Palestinian organizations would defend the Palestinian people and their holy sites from Israel's "acts of stupidity." He claimed the "resistance" determined the rules of engagement. A different Hamas source said they would not allow Israel to enforce new rules of engagement (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades website, June 18, 2021).

PIJ leader Khader Habib reported they had informed the Egyptians that they had no more patience for Israel's continued attacks and the continuation of the [so-called] Israeli "siege" of the Gaza Strip. He threatened they would respond to every future attack according to the principle of "eye for an eye" and would not allow Israel to enforce its conditions on the "resistance" or to isolate the Gaza Strip. He also claimed the joint operations room was united and in response to Israel's conduct would not hesitate to renew the hostilities (al-Ayam, June 19, 2021).

Judea and Samaria

Attempted combined terrorist attack

On June 16, 2021, IDF fighters prevented a combined vehicular ramming and stabbing attack in the Hizma region (near Pisgat Ze'ev, north of Jerusalem). An IDF soldier was superficially injured. A Palestinian woman attempted to run over IDF soldiers who were securing engineering activities near Hizma. She then got out of the vehicle holding a knife. She was shot and killed.
The Palestinian media reported she was Mai Khaled Yusuf Afana, 29, from Abu Dis in east Jerusalem, married and the mother of a four year old daughter. She had recently received her PhD and lectured in mental health at the Palestinian security forces' al-Istiqlal University in Jericho. According to claims, she had "taken a wrong turn" into a road the IDF had recently begun paving (Wafa, June 16, 2021).

Al-Istiqlal University in Jericho issued a mourning notice on its Facebook page, calling her a "shaheed of Jerusalem and Palestine" (al-Istiqlal University Facebook page, June 16, 2021).

Hamas spokesman Abd al-Latif al-Qanua said the [so-called] "cold-blooded death penalty" Israel had imposed on Mai Afana proved its [alleged] cruelty and "bloodlust." He said all forms of "resistance" had to be used to combat Israel and young Palestinians had to be given free rein (Palinfo Twitter account, June 16, 2021). The PIJ claimed the [so-called] "execution" of Mai Afana by IDF forces was "organized terrorism" and "aggression" which exposed Israel's "evil intentions," and the only way to deter Israel was through the "resistance" [i.e., terrorism], igniting the arenas of confrontation and dying as martyrs (PIJ website, June 16, 2021).
Stabbing attack

On June 16, 2021, Border Police fighters detained a Palestinian woman, 28, from Hebron, who went to the Cave of the Patriarchs armed with a knife. She aroused their suspicions and they initiated procedures for halting a suspect. She threw the knife on the ground, was detained and taken for interrogation (Israel Police Force spokesman’s unit, June 16, 2021).

![The knife carried by the terrorist](image)

Riots in the region of the Eviatar outpost

The epicenters of riots this past week were the regions of the Eviatar outpost (Jabal Sabih, south of Nablus), the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in east Jerusalem and al-Aqsa mosque. The daily riots against Eviatar continued in the villages of Bayta and Jabal Sabih. Every evening Palestinians from the villages gathered near Eviatar, burned tires, shot fireworks and directed laser beams at the outpost [tactics similar to those used by the night harassment units on the Gaza Strip border] (QudsN Facebook page, June 18, 20 and 21, 2021).

On June 17, 2021, the death of Ahmed Bani Shamseh, 16, from the village of Bayta, was reported. He had been wounded while rioting against Israeli security forces near Eviatar a few days previously. He was the fourth Palestinian killed in riots at the site. According to IDF reports dozens of Palestinians approached an IDF force securing the region. One of the Palestinians ran towards the soldiers and threw a suspicious object which exploded nearby. In response the soldiers initiated procedures for halting a suspect, shooting first in the air and then at the Palestinian (IDF spokesman, June 17, 2021). The PA condemned the killing and demanded the international community act against Israel to stop hurting Palestinian children (Wafa, June 17, 2021).

Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem expressed sorrow at the death of the "shaheed" and praised the young Palestinians revolting in Nablus, Judea and Samaria, claiming their "uprising" was a guarantee of the liberation of "Palestine" and the only way to expel the "settlers" (Hamas website, June 17, 2021). PIJ spokesman Tareq Salmi expressed sorrow at his death and called him a "hero" who acted against the "terrorist settlement project" (Filastin al-Yawm, June 17, 2021).
**Riots on the Temple Mount**

After the Friday prayers on **June 18, 2021**, several hundred Palestinians left the Temple Mount through the Chain Gate. Once outside they threw rocks at police stationed at the entrance. The police detained 14 suspects (Israel Police Force Twitter account, June 18, 2021).

![Riots on the Temple Mount after the Friday prayers](press.net website, June 18, 2021).

**Rocks, Molotov cocktails and other events**

In Judea and Samaria Palestinians continued throwing rocks and Molotov cocktails at Israeli civilians vehicles driving on the roads. **This past week civilians and vehicles were attacked in east Jerusalem.** The more prominent events were the following:

- **June 22, 2021** – Israeli security forces operating in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of east Jerusalem detained three Palestinians suspected of rioting and one was detained on suspicion of shooting fireworks.
- **June 21, 2021** – Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle on the Jerusalem-Gush Etzion road west of Bethlehem. No casualties were reported. The front windshield of the vehicle was damaged.
- **June 19, 2021** – Molotov cocktails, rocks and burning tires were thrown near the village of Hizma, northeast of Jerusalem. No casualties or damage were reported.
- **June 19, 2021** – Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle south of Bethlehem. No casualties were reported. The front windshield of the vehicle was damaged.
- **June 17, 2021** – Rocks and other objects were thrown at an Israeli as he mounted the steps during riots at the Damascus Gate.

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2 All information and reports are from Rescue Without Borders in Judea and Samaria unless otherwise noted.
June 17, 2021 – Rocks were thrown at the vehicle of a couple driving to the Western Wall. The woman, who was several months pregnant, was wounded, and the windshield and windows of the vehicle were shattered.

![Israeli civilian vehicle after the attack](https://example.com)

Israeli civilian vehicle after the attack
(Rescue Without Borders in Judea and Samaria, June 17, 2021).

June 17, 2021 – A container and the equipment of the contracting company constructing the road bypassing Hawwara (south of Nablus) were set on fire. No casualties were reported.

![The burned-out container and equipment](https://example.com)

The burned-out container and equipment (Yitzhar Security, June 17, 2021).

June 16, 2021 – Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle southwest of Nablus. An Israeli man was wounded and evacuated to a hospital.

June 16, 2021 – A woman drove to the guard post in the committee of Tekoa after Palestinians threw a bottle of paint at her vehicle. No casualties were reported. The windshield of the vehicle was damaged.

June 16, 2021 – Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle on the trans-Judean highway east of the Halhul Bridge (north of Hebron). No casualties were reported. The front windshield of the vehicle was damaged.
Significant Terrorist Attacks in Judea and Samaria since January 2020

Rocket and mortar shell fire into Israel

Since the ceasefire that ended Operation Guardian of the Walls on May 22, 2021, no rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory.

Monthly Distribution of Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire since January 2020

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3 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 Israeli media reported that the COGAT had authorized a limited number of measures to ease the situation in the Gaza Strip as of June 21, 2021. The export of a limited amount of agricultural produce for the markets in Judea, Samaria and abroad will be permitted. The produce will leave the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom Crossing. The measures were authorized by the political leadership and are conditioned on the continuation of stability in security in the south (Israel HaYom, June 20, 2021).

Gazan farmers prepare to export produce to Judea and Samaria (Twitter account of journalist Hassan Aslih, June 21, 2021)
Contacts for rebuilding the Gaza Strip

A representative of the Turkish Red Cross arrived in the Gaza Strip and opened a logistic center in collaboration with the Palestinian Red Cross. According to the representative, he came to assess the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip and to talk about the needs of local residents, especially in view of the damage to the supplies of water and electricity (TRT website in Arabic, June 20, 2021).

On June 21, 2021, Tor Wennesland, special UN envoy to the Middle East peace process, arrived in the Gaza Strip and met with Yahya al-Sinwar, head of the Hamas political bureau in the Gaza Strip to discuss the rebuilding of the Gaza Strip. Al-Sinwar left the meeting calling it "awful," and claiming he had seen nothing to indicate a desire to resolve the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip. He claimed Israel was trying to blackmail Hamas with measures to ease the humanitarian situation and Hamas had informed the UN delegation they would not surrender to blackmail. He said Israel perhaps had not understood the message and they would have to continue the "popular resistance" [i.e., popular terrorism] to exert more pressure (al-Aqsa, June 21, 2021).

Hussein al-Sheikh, PA chairman of the authority of civilian affairs, said his ministry demanded the Gaza Strip crossings be opened for the passage of merchandise and people, and that imports and exports be allowed. He said that would be the beginning of the lifting of the "siege" of the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip (Hussein al-Sheikh’s Twitter account, June 21, 2021).

Ongoing mediation efforts

Hamas has decided to increase its efforts to ease the humanitarian situation of the Gazans by exerting pressure on Israel. According to a "Palestinian source," before al-Sinwar's meeting with the UN representative, the "resistance" leadership had assessed the situation and decided to give Arab and international efforts a chance to lift the "siege" of the Gaza Strip and end the suffering of the local residents. To that end the leadership held contacts with the UN, European countries and the Arab states (al-Andalou News, June 20 2021).

According to the Hezbollah-affiliated Lebanese newspaper al-Akhbar, talks between Hamas and the Egyptian mediators have accelerated, and according to "Hamas sources" the movement has authorized the involvement of new mediators to help lift the "siege" of the Gaza Strip. According to the sources, Hamas is willing to renew the hostilities more forcefully, claiming that if Israel attacks the Gaza Strip the Israeli communities near the border will be a
confrontation arena forcing a ground war on Israel. The pressure along the border will increase in the near future and the coming days are liable to bring new hostilities (al-Akhbar, June 21, 2021).

Palestinian demonstrators and operatives reported that the launching of balloons had been temporarily suspended to give the mediators an opportunity to exert pressure of Israel to reopen the crossings. According to the sources, the order was given to gradually reduce the rate of balloon launches until they stopped completely. However, they said the suspension was temporary and launches would be renewed no later than the beginning of next week unless Israel reopened the crossings, lifted the restrictions on the Gaza Strip and increased the fishing zone. The situation would be reassessed and it was possible that balloons would be launched throughout the Gaza Strip (al-Ayam, June 20, 2018).

Regarding mediation, "knowledgeable sources" reported that the Palestinian terrorist organizations again told the Egyptian mediators that Israel’s attempt to link the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip with the missing and abducted Israelis was unacceptable (al-Akhbar, June 20, 2021).

Ongoing Gazan incitement against Israel

This past week Yahya al-Sinwar issued threatened Israel several times. He told Dunia al-Watan that Jerusalem needed neither words nor messages, and they would arrive in Jerusalem with the help of barrages of hundreds of rockets fired at Tel Aviv (Dunia al-Watan, June 20, 2021). On another occasion he told al-Jazeera that he wanted to ensure that every Palestinian would have a grave in Palestine and Jerusalem. He told the Palestinians that victory had been achieved thanks to each of them, and he praised the operatives of the organizations military-terrorist wings (al-Jazeera, June 20, 2021).

PIJ leader Khaled al-Batash said the next battle would be for strategic issues, especially Jerusalem, and he claimed the war would be regional. He claimed they had heard from five "important leaders" from Lebanon, Iraq and Yemen, who said they were prepared to defend Jerusalem and their forces could wage a regional war (Sawa, June 17, 2021).

PIJ leader Ahmed al-Mudallal called for national unity founded on all types of "resistance," headed by "armed resistance." He claimed the battle of the Sword of Jerusalem [i.e., Operation Guardian of the Walls] had proved Israel was so weak it could not even defend itself from "the kitchen knife of a Palestinian boy." He said the ball was now in Mahmoud Abbas’ court, and asked him to come to the Gaza Strip to meet with PIJ leader Ziyad al-
Nakhalah and Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau, for Palestinian unity and to form a Palestinian national council (Filastin al-Yawm, June 16, 2021).

The Hamas leadership visits Morocco

▶ Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau, leading a large Hamas delegation, arrived in Morocco as one of the stops on their visits to several Arab countries. They came as guests of the Justice and Development party, which rules the country, and were welcomed by Moroccan Prime Minister Saadeddine Othmani, a member of the party who supported Hamas during Operation Guardian of the Walls. He said they had invited the delegation to visit half a year ago. The delegation also met with the speaker of the Moroccan parliament, Habib el-Maliki. El-Maliki stressed the historical connection between Morocco and Palestine, noting Morocco's support for the Palestinian people. From Morocco the delegation went to Mauritania, where they met with the president, who welcomed them and praised their achievements in the battle of the Sword of Jerusalem (Sawa, May 21, 2021).

▶ While in Morocco Haniyeh said the Moroccans were the Palestinian people's "strategic depth" on the way to Jerusalem and al-Aqsa mosque. He boasted the "resistance" had had a military and political victory in the clashes that broke out over the Jerusalem flag march. He claimed victory had been achieved through Palestinian unity, internal and external, and with the help of the Arab and Islamic peoples who had defended Jerusalem and al-Aqsa mosque, and who supported the Palestinian people. He claimed the "resistance" had important missions to carry out, and the next step would be to hold serious talks with Morocco (al-Jazeera, June 16, 2021).
Israel delivers coronavirus vaccines to the PA

At part of negotiations between the PA, Israel and Pfizer, the decision was made for a coronavirus vaccine exchange deal between Israel and the PA. Israel would deliver to the PA more than a million doses of the vaccine whose expiration date was close and Israel would receive the PA shipment which was supposed to arrive in October 2021. On June 18, 2021, the first batch of 90,000 doses of the vaccine was delivered to the PA, with an expiration date of the end of June 2021.

The PA stressed that Israel, the PA and Pfizer were holding negotiations. Mai al-Kayla, PA minister of health, said signing an agreement was important because on the Palestinian government was under pressure to provide vaccines as soon as possible so that the coming school year could begin according to schedule and the economy could be reopened. She stressed that the agreement was with Pfizer, not with Israel (Filastin al-Yawm, Wafa, June 18, 2021).

A few hours later, and after trucks had already arrived in the PA, government spokesman Ibrahim Melhem and Mai al-Kayla held a press conference where they said that PA Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh had ordered the agreement with the Israeli ministry of health to be cancelled and the vaccines that had already arrived to be returned. They claimed a technical examination had revealed the doses were not compatible with the specifications and the conditions of the agreement, and their expiration date was close (Wafa, June 18, 2021).

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4 The expiration date of some of the vaccines was the end of June 2021 and the rest, the end of July 2021.
The cancellation of the agreement was widely covered. The Palestinian media and social networks accused the PA of lack of transparency, and demanded the details of the agreement. There were also demands for the appointment an independent investigation commission to examine the agreement, and there were also demands for the government to be toppled (Filastin al-Yawm, June 19, 2021). Muhammad Shtayyeh ordered the appointment of an independent commission to investigate the issue of the delivery of the vaccines from Israel. The commission will be headed by Amer al-Dweik (a lawyer) and two doctors. By appointing the commission the PA apparently sought to respond to the public and media pressure and the extreme criticism of the deal with Israel (Wafa, June 21, 2021).

After the deal was cancelled, on June 20, 2021, the ministry of health in Ramallah confirmed that negotiations with Pfizer and Israel had been renewed for the transfer of the vaccines (ministry of health in Ramallah Facebook page, June 20, 2021).

**Fatah's Revolutionary Council holds a meeting**

On June 21, 2021, Fatah’s Revolutionary Council held a meeting chaired by Mahmoud Abbas with the theme, "Jerusalem our capital and the crown jewel of our people." He called on Hamas, the PIJ and the other organizations to return to talks as quickly as possible for an agreement to end the internal Palestinian schism and achieve national cooperation. He said they would not rest until the end of "the occupation of Palestine and its capital, east Jerusalem." He claimed the PA was in contact with Egypt, Jordan, Qatar and other countries for the rebuilding of the Gaza Strip, saying the PA was the only legitimate body to deal with the issue (Wafa, June 21, 2021).
Possible renewal of negotiations between the PA and Israel

The daily newspaper al-Akhbar published an article stating that Egypt and the United States had told the PA that in the coming weeks the American administration planned to hold exploratory talks about Israel’s positions and Palestinian positions on the renewal of negotiations. According to the article, Mahmoud Abbas would have to prepare for the negotiations, meaning he would have to find a successor for the late Saeb Erekat, secretary of the PLO’s Executive Committee and who represented the Palestinians in negotiations with Israel. Mahmoud Abbas apparently supports the appointment of Hussein al-Sheikh. It was also reported that a Fatah delegation would go to Cairo in the near future to discuss the matter with the Egyptian leadership (al-Akhbar, June 18, 2021).

"A Palestinian political source" reported that the PA would be willing to renew direct talks with the new Israeli government. However, it does not expect a breakthrough because the Israeli government is "unstable and does not have the capabilities to make life-and-death decisions." According to the source, they do not expect strong the Americans to exert strong pressure on the Israeli government (al-Aqsa, June 18, 2021).

The PA and the International Criminal Court (ICC)

About 24 hours after Karim Khan was sworn in as the new chief prosecutor of the ICC, replacing Fatou Bensouda, who held the post for nine years, the PA foreign ministry called on him to put the investigation of the [alleged] "crimes of the Israeli occupation" at the top of his priority list for the immediate future. The ministry’s stated objective was to send Israel the message that it could not continue committing crimes against the Palestinian people. The ministry also demanded that the international community and human rights organizations document events to be able to take the necessary steps to investigate and bring to trial those who had committed the crimes and those who were responsible for them (Wafa, June 18, 2021). In his first speech as chief prosecutor, Khan did not relate to specific investigations, including the investigation of Israel (al-Haq, June 14, 2021).
According to **al-Haq director Shaawan Jabarin**, the ICC had begun an investigation of Israel's [alleged] "crimes" in the Palestinian territories. He said he hoped Israel would be tried quickly. He claimed Israel continued committing crimes that could be designated as "war crimes" against the Palestinian people, and evaded punishment (Voice of Palestine radio, June 17, 2021).

**On June 15, 2021,** the Palestinian radio and television authority held simultaneous protest rallies in Ramallah and Gaza City. **Muhammad Shtayyeh participated in the Ramallah rally.** He called on the media to expose Israel's [alleged] "crimes." **Wassel Abu Yusuf, a member of the PLO's Executive Committee,** stressed the need to provide members of the media with international protection, claiming the [alleged] crimes of Israel ("the occupation") against the media could be used as the foundation for a case against Israel in international courts, especially the ICC. According to **Nasser Abu Bakr,** head of the journalists' union, since 2013 Israel [allegedly] committed more than 5,000 "crimes and attacks" against correspondents and media institutions. He said the material had already been lodged with the ICC (Wafa, June 15, 2021).

**Israel and the UN report on the violations of the rights of children in conflict zones**

**Amanda Price,** a producer for **al-Jazeera in English,** reported that a UN report dealing with children in conflict zones around the globe confirmed on June 18, 2021, that there had been more than 1,000 violations of the rights of children in Judea, Samaria, east Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip and Israel in 2020. According to the report, most the attacks [sic] were carried out by Israeli forces against Palestinian children. The report also claimed at least 30 attacks on schools and hospitals in the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria which had been carried out primarily by Israeli forces. Four of the attacks were reportedly carried out by Israeli settlers.
She said that despite the report Israel was not on the black list of countries responsible for serious violations (Amanda Price’s Twitter account, June 18, 2021).

During the weekly PA government meeting in Ramallah, Muhammad Shtayyeh called on the UN to put Israel on its black list of countries that violate the rights of children (Muhammad Shtayyeh’s Facebook page, June 21, 2021). Yahya al-Sinwar was also critical of the fact that the UN report did not call for including Israel on the black list for the harm it does to Palestinian children. He said that during the most recent hostilities in the Gaza Strip (Operation Guardian of the Walls) 66 children were killed by IDF fire, but nevertheless Israel is not on the UN’s black list (al-Aqsa, June 21, 2021).

**Palestinian public opinion poll after Operation Guardian of the Walls**

Khalil Shqaqi’s **Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PCPSR)** published the results of its latest Palestinian public opinion poll. The poll, which interviewed 1,200 Palestinians from Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip, found a significant increase in support for Hamas, and a similar decrease in support for Mahmoud Abbas. Some of the poll’s results were the following:

- 77% think Hamas won its last war with Israel; 18% think neither side won, 1% think Israel won. 65% think Hamas achieved its declared goals.
- 72% think the objective of Hamas’ rocket fire was to defend Jerusalem and al-Aqsa mosque; 9% think the rockets were fired to protest the cancellation of the Palestinian general elections.
- 64% think the residents of east Jerusalem are the most willing to defend the city and its holy places; 29% think Hamas is most willing and 3% think the PA is most willing.
- 68% think if Israel evicts the families from Sheikh Jarrah the response should be the renewal of rocket fire; 9% think the response should be an appeal to the ICC.
- Regarding the internal Palestinian reconciliation, 53% think Hamas is better qualified than Fatah to lead the Palestinian people; 14% think Fatah rather than Hamas.
- Asked if Mahmoud Abbas were to run against Isma’il Haniyeh, 59% would vote for Isma’il Haniyeh and 17% for Mahmoud Abbas. If Marwan Barghouti were to run against Isma’il Haniyeh, 29% would vote for Barghouti and 28% for Haniyeh.

According to the Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center’s examination of the names of 52 Palestinians killed in Operation Guardian of the Walls, 52 children were killed by IDF attacks. Nine other children were killed when rockets misfired and fell inside the Gaza Strip.
According to Khalil Shqaqi, the results showed a dramatic change in public opinion, but the data generally seem to indicate a preference for Hamas during hostilities, which wanes after three to six months, when Hamas finds it difficult to keep its promises (Washington Post, June 15, 2021).