



# News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (March 16-22, 2022)

## Overview

- ▶ This past week terrorist events focused on the combined stabbing and vehicular ramming attack carried out in Beersheba on March 22, 2022. Four Israeli civilians were killed. The terrorist, who was shot and killed by civilian passersby, was Muhammad Ghaleb Abu al-Qi'an, born in 1988, from the Bedouin village of Hura, northeast of Beersheba. In 2015 he was sentenced to four years in prison for supporting ISIS. Hamas praised the attack, and cookies and candy were distributed to passersby in the Gaza Strip in celebration.
- ▶ In addition, Palestinians carried out three other terrorist attacks this past week: one shooting attack and two stabbing attacks, injuring a policeman and a civilian. Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) welcomed the attacks and called for increased "resistance." During counterterrorism activities Israeli security forces seized weapons. A terrorist squad of four Palestinians from East Jerusalem, who were recruited by Hamas operatives in Turkey, was also detained. They transferred funds to families of terrorists, raised money and recruited operatives for Hamas. The Gaza Strip was relatively calm. On two occasions, IDF forces detained Palestinians trying to infiltrate into Israeli territory from the Gaza Strip.
- ▶ PIJ leader Ziyad al-Nakhalah met with a Hamas delegation headed by Saleh al-'Arouri, deputy chairman of Hamas' political bureau. Both sides stressed the importance of maintaining the "equation of response" determined during Operation Guardian of the Walls.
- ▶ In the Gaza Strip activities are being planned to mark Land Day on March 30, reportedly to be held at the same time in Israel by Israeli Arabs.
- ▶ The European Union (EU) decided to delay the approval of the transfer of annual aid to the Palestinian Authority (PA). The decision was made following a demand from the Hungarian representative to condition the transfer of the funds on reforms in the PA school system because PA textbooks include anti-Semitism and incitement against Israel. Palestinian sources criticized the decision. Palestinian foreign minister Riyad al-Maliki stressed that the PA refused to accept conditions from the EU regarding the transfer of aid.

► The decline in the number of active cases of coronavirus in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip continues.

## Judea and Samaria

### Terrorist attacks

#### Combined attack in Beersheba

► According to initial reports, **at 16:10 on March 22, 2022**, a Bedouin armed with a knife drove to a gas station on the Hebron-Beersheba road, where he stabbed and killed a civilian woman. He continued driving, ramming into and killing a cyclist. He then drove to a mall in Beersheba where he stabbed shoppers in a store. Civilians at the site shot and killed him. The wounded were evacuated for medical treatment. Four people were murdered.

► The terrorist was **Muhammad Ghaleb Ahmed Abu al-Qi'an**, born in 1988, from Hura, a Bedouin village northwest of Beersheba, where he had been a teacher in the local high school. On June 2, 2015, he was detained and confessed to supporting ISIS and to attending meetings in Hura with other ISIS supporters. He also confessed to having planned to go to Syria to join the ranks of ISIS, by claiming he was going to Saudi Arabia for an *umrah*, a "small pilgrimage." On June 28, 2015, he was sentenced to four years in prison.

► Hamas praised the attack, and cookies and candy were distributed to passersby in celebration.

#### Stabbing attack in Ras al-Amoud

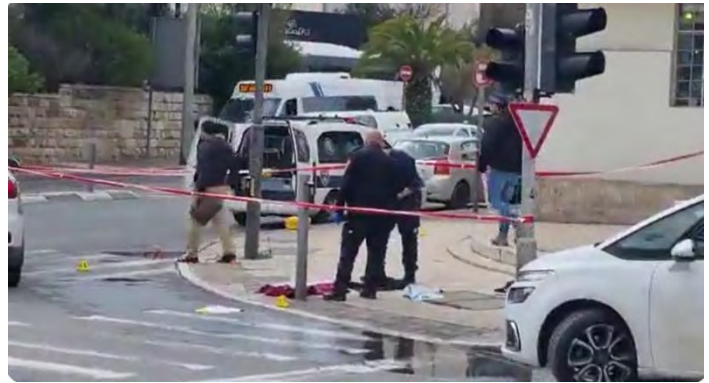
► On the afternoon of **March 20, 2022**, police were called to the Ras al-Amoud neighborhood in East Jerusalem following the torching of a vehicle. Upon their arrival they were attacked by Palestinians. One pulled a knife, stabbed a policeman and fled the scene. The policeman was evacuated to a hospital. Police forces searched for the stabber, who was located several hours later at the home of a relative. He was detained and taken for interrogation (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, March 20, 2022). Palestinian media reported he was a 23-year-old from Jabal Mukaber (Ramallah News, March 20, 2022).

► **Hamas and PIJ** praised the attack. Hamas said in a statement that every day the Palestinian people proved they could confront Israel (Hamas Telegram channel, March 21, 2022). The PIJ called for the escalation of "resistance" [i.e., terrorist activity] at the friction points (PIJ Telegram channel, March 21, 2022). **Tareq Izz al-Din, PIJ spokesman in Judea**

**and Samaria**, said that the attack showed the "necessity" for an intifada and response to the "crimes of the Israeli occupation" (Felesteen, March 20, 2022).

## Stabbing attack in west Jerusalem

► On **March 19, 2022**, a young man armed with a knife stabbed an Israeli civilian at the corner of David Remez and Hebron Streets in West Jerusalem. The Israeli was evacuated to a hospital for treatment. The terrorist was shot and wounded (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, March 19, 2022). According to the Palestinians, the stabber was mentally ill and lived in the Abu Tor neighborhood in east Jerusalem.



**Right: The scene of the attack (al-Risalah Twitter account, March 19, 2022). Left: The knife used in the attack (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, March 19, 2022).**

► **Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem** praised the attack, claiming it was more proof the "resistance" [i.e., terrorist activities] was escalating in all the "occupied cities" and that Jerusalem would continue to fight for its freedom and the expulsion of Israel ("the army of occupation") and the settlers (Hazem Qassem's Telegram channel, March 19, 2022).

## Shooting attack

► On **March 17, 2022**, during a routine Israeli security force operation in the Aqraba area, southeast of Nablus, Palestinians shot at the soldiers. There were no Israeli casualties. The initial investigation indicated that the shots had been fired from an improvised Carlo machine gun and that two Palestinian terrorists had been involved. During pursuit of the shooters more shots were fired at the forces. They returned fire and wounded one of the Palestinians, who were later apprehended. A weapon used in the attack was also seized (IDF spokesman, March 17, 2022).

## Counterterrorism activities

► A joint investigation carried out by the Jerusalem Police and the Israeli Security Agency led to the detention of four suspects against whom an indictment had recently been filed. Three

of the suspects, a father and his two sons, from Sur Baher, southeast of Jerusalem, were detained on February 4, 2022 upon their arrival in Israel from Turkey. The third suspect was from Beit Hanina. Investigation revealed that the Zakat al-Quds charitable society, for which they operated and which has offices on the Temple Mount, was used to transfer funds and support families of terrorists, even though the society's declared function is to support orphans. Investigation also revealed that some of the suspects met in Turkey with Hamas operatives who had been released in the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal. The suspects were asked to raise funds and recruit new operatives for Hamas. They also discussed carrying out various [terrorist] activities in preparation for the Muslim religious month of Ramadan, which begins on April 2, 2022. The proposed activities included clashing with Israeli security forces. In addition, the members of the squad were also trained to shoot while abroad (Israel Police Force Twitter account, March 18, 2022).

► The Israeli security forces prevented weapons and drugs from being smuggled into Israel from Jordan. The contraband was suspected of being consigned to Palestinians in the Hebron region (Israel Police Force Twitter account, March 17, 2022).



**The confiscated weapons and drugs (Israel Police Force Twitter account, March 17, 2022).**

► On **March 16, 2022**, Israeli security forces detained a wanted terrorist operative in one of Jenin's main squares. During his detention, Palestinians rioted, shooting and throwing IEDs at the security forces. A vehicle carrying an armed Palestinian drove towards the forces; he was shot and wounded. A Border Patrol fighter was also wounded. The wounded Palestinian was detained and taken for interrogation (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, March 16, 2022).

► On **March 16, 2022**, Jerusalem police operating in the Abu Tor neighborhood of east Jerusalem saw a suspect trying to escape. As he ran he threw away a bag he had been

holding. He was detained and a search of the bag revealed an M-16 assault rifle, ammunition and a stun grenade (Israel Police Force Twitter account, March 16, 2022).



**The weapon and ammunition found in the bag carried by the Palestinian (Israel Police Force Twitter account, March 16, 2022).**

## **Rocks, Molotov cocktails and other events**

► In Judea and Samaria Palestinians continued throwing rocks and Molotov cocktails at Israeli vehicles driving on the roads, IDF posts and Israeli communities. The more prominent events were the following:<sup>1</sup>

- ◆ **March 22, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Tekoa, southeast of Bethlehem. No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **March 22, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near the traffic circle between Hizma and the Benyamin industrial zone. No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **March 21, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus near Luban al-Sharqia, south of Nablus. No casualties were reported; the windshield of the bus was damaged.
- ◆ **March 21, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Ras Karkar, northwest of Ramallah. No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **March 21, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an IDF force in the Abu Sneina neighborhood in Hebron. No casualties were reported.
- ◆ **March 21, 2022:** Molotov cocktails were thrown at an Israeli bus north of Hebron. No casualties or damage were reported.
- ◆ **March 20, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle between Azzun and Karnei Shomron, east of Qalqilya. No casualties or damage were reported.

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<sup>1</sup> All information and reports are from Rescue Without Borders in Judea and Samaria unless otherwise noted.

◆ **March 20, 2022:** A Molotov cocktail was thrown at an Israeli bus near al-Mugheir, close to Ramallah. No casualties or damage were reported.

◆ **March 20, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus near an Israeli settlement in Gush Etzion. The bus driver was wounded by flying glass (Ma'aleh Amos security unit, March 20, 2022).



**The damage to the front windshield of the bus (Ma'aleh Amos security unit, March 20, 2022).**

◆ **March 20, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus near Luban al-Sharqia, south of Nablus. No casualties were reported; the bus was damaged.

◆ **March 20, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle between Hebron and Qiryat Arba. No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.

◆ **March 19, 2022:** An IED was thrown at a guard post in the Nabi Saleh region near Naveh Tzuf, northwest of Ramallah. No casualties were reported.

◆ **March 19, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle in Hawwara, south of Nablus. No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.

◆ **March 19, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle on the Nabi Ilyas bypass road east of Qalqilya. No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.

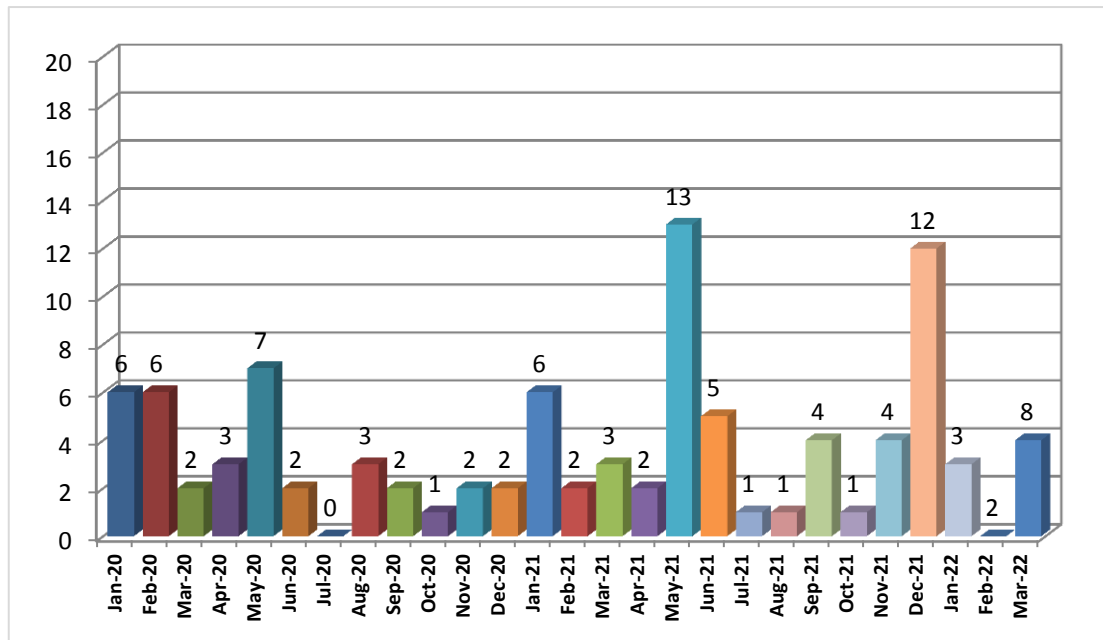
◆ **March 17, 2022:** Molotov cocktails were thrown at an Israeli vehicle on the Gush Etzion-Hebron road near Karmeit Zzur. No casualties were reported; the windshield of the vehicle was damaged.

◆ **March 17, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle south of the Ma'aleh Lavona Junction, north of Ramallah. No casualties were reported; the windshield of the vehicle was damaged.

◆ **March 17, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle in Hawwara. No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.

◆ **March 16, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near al-Mugheir, close to Ramallah. No casualties were reported; the windshield of the vehicle was damaged.

## Significant Terrorist Attacks in Judea and Samaria since January 2020



### Palestinian claims of Price Tag activities in al-Bireh

► On **March 22, 2022**, the Palestinian media reported that the tires of about twenty Palestinian vehicles had been slashed in the al-Bireh industrial zone, claiming it was a Price Tag attack carried out by Israeli settlers. The Palestinian media published photos and videos documenting the damage (QudsN Twitter account, March 22, 2022). In response, the PA issued a condemnation of what it called the "organized terrorism" of settlers in Judea and Samaria. The PA foreign ministry called for international protection for Palestinians (PA foreign ministry Facebook page, March 22, 2022).

<sup>2</sup> 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



**Pictures of Price Tag tire-slashing in the al-Bireh industrial zone (QudsN Twitter account, March 22, 2022).**

## **Jewish worshippers enter Joseph's Tomb in Nablus**

► On **March 15, 2022**, about 2,000 Jewish worshippers entered Joseph's Tomb in Nablus to pray, despite a request from Palestinian sources to postpone the visit. The postponement was requested because the visit took place on the same day a Palestinian was killed in the Balata refugee camp (after he opened fire at a Border Police force) (Kan 11 TV channel, March 15, 2022). Around the time the worshippers entered Nablus, Palestinians set fire to tires and garbage receptacles to make it difficult to access Joseph's Tomb (QudsN Twitter account, March 15, 2022).



**Palestinians burn tires and garbage receptacles in the eastern part of Nablus (Palinfo Twitter account, QudsN Twitter account, March 15, 2022).**

## Palestinians riot in Jabal Sabih, south of Nablus



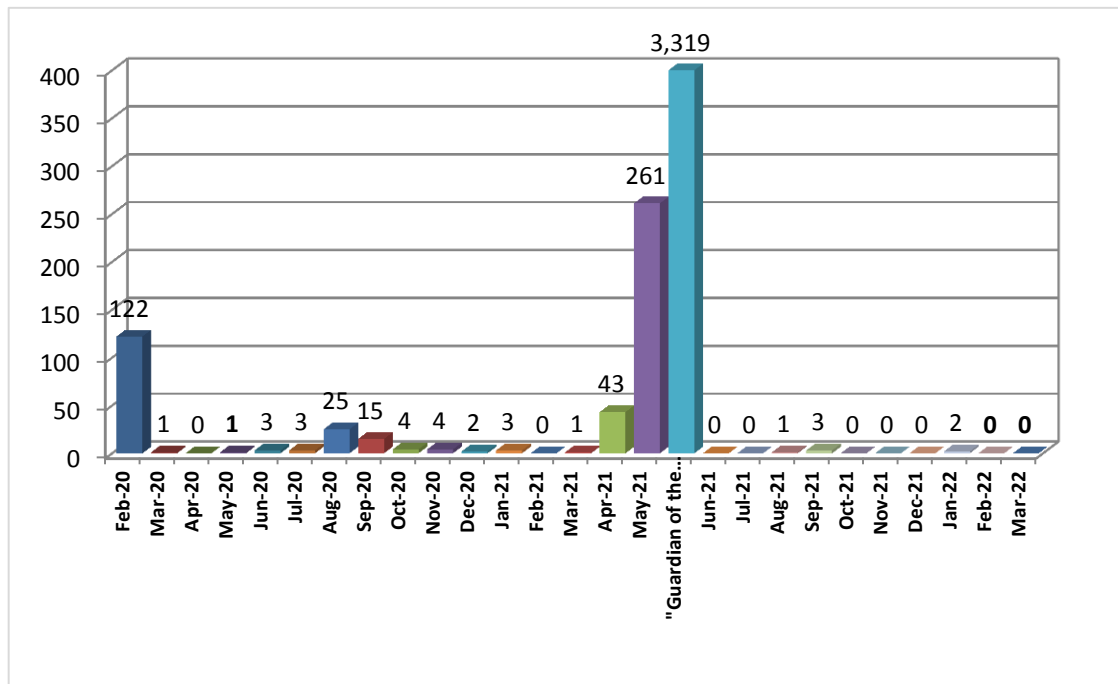
Right: Palestinians riot in Jabal Sabih to protest the arrangement reached for the Eviatar outpost. Left: The weekly Palestinian riot in the village of Qaddum, east of Qalqilya (Palinfo Twitter account, March 18, 2022).

## Israel's South

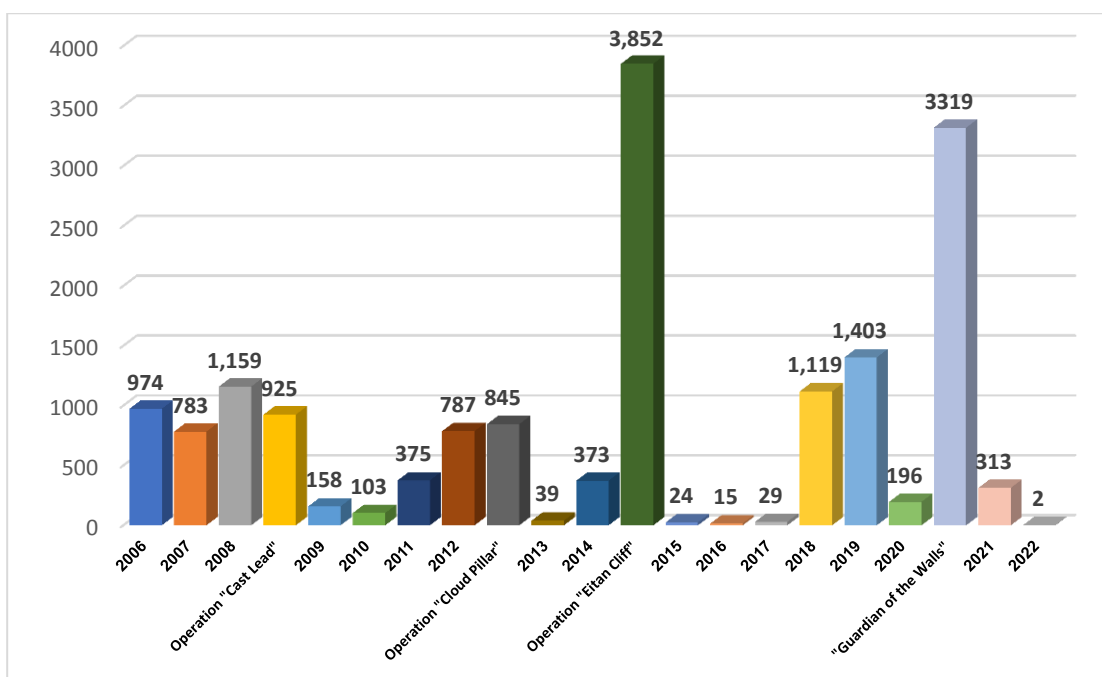
### Rocket and mortar shell fire into Israel

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

### Monthly Distribution of Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire since January 2020



## Annual Distribution of Rocket Hits



## Prevention of infiltration of Gazans into Israeli territory

► This past week, on two separate occasions IDF forces prevented Gazans from infiltrating into Israeli territory:

- ◆ On **March 20, 2022**, two suspects were detained while trying to cross the border into Israeli territory from the northern Gaza Strip. They had knives in their possession and were taken for interrogation (IDF spokesman, March 20, 2022).

- ◆ On **March 17, 2022**, three suspects were detained while trying to cross the border into Israeli territory from the southern Gaza Strip. They had knives, a cigarette lighter and bottles of gasoline in their possession, and were taken for interrogation (IDF spokesman, March 17, 2022).

## Developments in the Gaza Strip

### Aid from Qatar for the Gaza Strip

► According to reports, **Mohammed al-Emadi, chairman of Qatar's National Committee for the Reconstruction of Gaza**, will arrive in the Gaza Strip (Sawa, March 21, 2022). Al-Emadi announced that on March 22, 2022, the distribution of Qatari aid money to 100,000 needy families would begin, implemented through the UN and 300 centers located throughout the Gaza Strip (National Committee website, March 21, 2022) would begin. The last distribution of funds from Qatar was on February 17, 2022.

## Yahya al-Sinwar meets with Mustafa al-Barghouti

► **Yahya al-Sinwar**, head of the Hamas political bureau in the Gaza Strip, met with **Mustafa al-Barghouti**, secretary general of the Palestinian National Initiative Movement and a leftist Palestinian activist, who was visiting the Gaza Strip. They discussed increasing joint activity and promoting efforts to achieve internal Palestinian unity (Hamas website, March 18, 2022).



Yahya al-Sinwar (right) meets with Mustafa al-Barghouti (Hamas website, March 18, 2022).

## Ziyad al-Nakhalah meets with a Hamas delegation headed by Saleh al-'Arouri

► **PIJ leader Ziyad al-Nakhalah** met in Beirut with a Hamas delegation headed by **Saleh al-'Arouri**, deputy chairman of Hamas' political bureau. They discussed the importance of maintaining the "equation of response" set during Operation Guardian of the Walls. According to the "equation," the Palestinians will respond to any damage to al-Aqsa mosque. They also discussed recent developments regarding settlements, the [so-called Israeli] "siege" of the Gaza Strip and the security prisoners. In addition, they called on the PA to end its security coordination with Israel (PIJ website, March 16, 2022).



PIJ leader Ziyad al-Nakhalah (left) and Saleh al-'Arouri (Hamas website, March 16, 2022).

## Preparations for Land Day

► A "source" revealed information about the activities planned for Land Day (March 30, 2022). According to the source, the main event will take place in the port of Gaza. Local events will be held beforehand, including the planting of trees in front of the Karni Crossing east of Gaza City (which was a focus of return march activity). Reportedly, Israeli Arabs will hold local events at the same time (Safa, March 21, 2022).

► **Note:** on **March 12, 2022**, Palestinian and Islamic organizations in the Gaza Strip announced the establishment of a "National authority for the support of Palestinians living in Israel" [i.e., Israeli Arabs] which would be responsible for holding protests and extensive propaganda activities to strengthen ties with and support Israeli Arabs.

## Muhammad Deif's father dies

► On **March 17, 2022**, **Hajj Diab al-Masri**, father of **Muhammed Deif, the commander of Hamas' military-terrorist wing**, died. A mass funeral procession was held for him, leaving from his home in Khan Yunis and extending to the Great Mosque in the center of the Khan Yunis refugee camp. The funeral was attended by senior Hamas figures, led by **Yahya al-Sinwar, head of the Hamas political bureau in the Gaza Strip**, who helped carry the bier on which his body was placed. It was also attended by senior PIJ figures. It is unclear whether Muhammad Deif attended the funeral. Pictures of his sons saying goodbye to their grandfather were featured by many Palestinian media outlets. **Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau**, issued a statement of condolence.



**Right: Muhammad Deif (left) and senior Hamas figure Ahmed Bahar help carry the body of Muhammad Deif's father. Left: Palestinians accompany the cortège (Hamas website, March 17, 2022).**

## Death of PIJ operative reported

► The PIJ reported the death of **Muhammad Wadi**, an operative of the organization's military-terrorist wing, during a quarrel between clans in the Sajaiya neighborhood in eastern Gaza

City. According to sources in Gaza, Muhammad Wadi was apparently the sniper who shot an IDF officer during the return marches on January 22, 2019.<sup>3</sup>

## Anniversary of the death of Ahmed Yassin

► **March 22, 2022**, marked the 18<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the targeted killing of Sheikh **Ahmad Yassin**, founder and leader of Hamas. The Hamas-media affiliated published photos documenting Ahmed Yassin's funeral and the location where he was killed. Isma'il Haniyeh issued a statement praising Yassin's work, saying he had "waved the flag of resistance and jihad," while leaving behind a generation carrying the Qur'an and a rifle to fight Israel everywhere and on the front lines. Haniyeh boasted Hamas was more violent than in the past and posed a greater challenge for Israel (Hamas website, March 22, 2022).

## The Palestinian Authority (PA)

### The European Union delays confirmation of support for the PA

► On **March 15, 2022**, the EU delayed its decision regarding the approval of transferring €214 million of annual aid to the PA. The delay was the result of a demand from the Hungarian representative to condition the transfer on reforms in the PA school system because its textbooks include of anti-Semitism and incitement to violence and terrorism against Israel. Following the demand, the EU was unable to obtain a majority vote for the aid.

► Palestinians criticized the EU decision. **Palestinian foreign minister Riyad al-Maliki** said the PA refused to accept conditions from the EU for the transfer of aid. He said next week the authority in charge of policy regarding neighboring EU countries would arrive to discuss removing the condition (Sawa, March 21, 2022). At the weekly cabinet meeting, **PA Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh** expressed his appreciation for the position of the EU countries which opposed delaying the transfer.

### United States position regarding a resolution for the conflict

► In response to a question on the Palestinian issue during a press briefing, **Ned Price, a spokesman for the American State Department**, said it was the United States'

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<sup>3</sup> On the afternoon of January 22, 2019, under cover of a gathering of dozens of Palestinians who threw rocks at IDF forces, sniper fire wounded an IDF officer when his helmet was hit by a bullet. In response an IDF tank shot at a Hamas observation post in the central Gaza Strip, killing a Hamas military-terrorist operative and wounding four others (IDF spokesman, January 22, 2019). According to the Israeli media, the PIJ was behind the sniper attack (Haaretz, January 23, 2019).

"longstanding position...we've reiterated, encouraging all parties to refrain from acts that move us farther away from a negotiated two-state solution... [and] we believe it's critical for Israel and the Palestinian Authority to refrain from unilateral steps that exacerbate tension and that undercut efforts to negotiate a two-state solution" (State Department website, March 21, 2022).<sup>4</sup>

► At the weekly cabinet meeting, **Muhammad Shtayyeh** said he welcomed the American position. He claimed that for the Palestinians the political process was the most important thing and that economic peace would not bear fruit without political peace (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, March 21, 2022).

## The Palestinian minister of health slanders and defames Israel to the international community

► On **March 20, 2022**, **Mai al-Kayla, PA minister of health**, met with the foreign minister of Singapore to discuss the medical situation in the PA's territories. She condemned what she called "Israeli health violations" against the Palestinians, which she alleged included disruptions in the arrival of medical staff [to conflict zones], invasion of medical centers in the West Bank and the medical neglect of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons, which violated international laws and conventions (ministry of health in Ramallah Facebook page, March 20, 2022).



**Mai al-Kayla (right) meets with the foreign minister of Singapore (ministry of health in Ramallah Facebook page, March 20, 2022).**

## The PA continues glorifying the mothers of Palestinians shaheeds and prisoners

► In preparation for **Mother's Day in the Arab world on March 21, 2022**, Mahmoud Abbas used his Facebook page to congratulate Palestinian mothers and all mothers around the

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.state.gov/briefings/department-press-briefing-march-21-2022/>

world. Attached to the post was his personal greeting with a picture of him kissing the head of **Umm Nasser Abu Hamid**<sup>5</sup> (Mahmoud Abbas' Facebook page, March 20, 2022). Apparently, her face is hidden to make it difficult to identify her.



**Mahmoud Abbas' Mother's Day card (Mahmoud Abbas' Facebook page, March 20, 2022).**

► It was another example of the PA's glorification of the mothers of shaheeds and prisoners, especially Umm Nasser Abu Hamid, who is a role model because of her "sacrifice for the Palestinian people [sic]." Muhammad Shtayyeh also mentioned her at an EU-sponsored conference for International Women's Day held in Ramallah on March 8, 2022. He gave a speech citing her as an example of "the struggling Palestinian woman, the mother of shaheeds and prisoners" (Wafa, March 8, 2022).

► In preparation for International Women's Day, March 8, 2022, the Palestinian prisoners' club published a report claiming ten Palestinian mothers were imprisoned in Israeli jails and alleging that Israel prevented their children from visiting them regularly or, in many cases, disrupted the visits. The report also alleged that Israel "neglected prisoners health and deprived them of their rights" (Ma'an, March 20, 2022).

## **Demonstrations protesting the cost of living in the PA territories**

► In Judea and Samaria, especially Hebron, Palestinians continue to protest the cost of living with the slogan, "We want to live." A general trade strike was declared in Hebron on **March 20, 2022** and a protest rally was held in the city center (Ma'an, March 20, 2022). **PA minister**

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<sup>5</sup> One of **Umm Nasser Abu Hamid's** sons killed an IDF soldier in the al-Am'ari refugee camp in Ramallah, by throwing a slab of marble on his head on May 26, 2018. Five other sons are imprisoned in Israel for involvement in terrorist attacks.

**of agriculture Riyad al-Atari** said the most recent rise in vegetable prices was caused by the cold weather and he predicted that vegetable prices would fall towards the beginning of the month of Ramadan as the weather improved (Ma'an, March 20, 2022).



**Protest rally in the center of Hebron (al-Quds, March 21, 2022).**

## The Coronavirus

### Judea and Samaria

► According to data from the ministry of health in Ramallah, on **March 20, 2022**, there was a decrease in the number of active cases, 301, down from 560 on March 14, 2022. There were 30 Palestinians in ICUs, 8 of them on ventilators. So far 3,366 Palestinians have died of coronavirus-related causes. The percentage of vaccinated Palestinians living in Judea and Samaria is 62.6% (ministry of health in Ramallah Facebook page, March 20, 2022).

### The Gaza Strip

► **On March 22, 2022**, the ministry of health in Gaza reported 1,242 active cases in the Gaza Strip, down from 3,047 on March 15, 2022. Of the 503 tests administered during the 24 hours between March 14 and 15, 61 new cases were detected, a 12% positive rate. So far 1,976 Gazans have died of coronavirus-related causes, up from 1,961 on March 15, 2022. There are 12 hospitalized Gazans, seven in serious or critical condition. So far 675,771 Gazans have been vaccinated, up from 672,965 on March 15, 2022. The percentage of vaccinated Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip is 34.3% (ministry of health in Gaza Facebook page, December 21, 2022).