



# News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (April 13-26, 2022)

## Overview

- ▶ The week during which Israel celebrated Passover, the Muslims Ramadan and the Christians Easter was fraught with tension in east Jerusalem, especially on the Temple Mount after Palestinians tried to prevent Jewish worshippers from conducting prayers at the site. Tensions increased when Israel limited the number of Christians who could attend Holy Saturday prayers at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in east Jerusalem. The tension was exacerbated by a massive Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) propaganda campaign to incite violence in Judea and Samaria, especially in east Jerusalem.
- ▶ Given the tension in east Jerusalem, Palestinians in the Gaza Strip fired five rockets at Israel, four of them landing inside Israel, one of them damaging a house in the southern Israeli city of Sderot. In response Israeli Air Force aircraft attacked Hamas terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip. Israel also took the exceptional step of closing the Erez Crossing to the entrance of Gazan workers into Israel. After two days of relative quiet the Erez Crossing was reopened on April 26, 2022.
- ▶ In addition, a rocket was launched from Lebanon at the western Galilee, apparently by Palestinians in south Lebanon. It landed in an open area. In response the IDF fired artillery at the area in south Lebanon from which it had been launched.
- ▶ The events were accompanied by extensive Hamas and Palestinian Authority (PA) activity with Arab and international agencies, calling on Russia, the United States, Turkey and other countries to intervene. Apparently, all sides wanted to calm the situation and prevent escalation.
- ▶ On April 15, 2022, a young woman carried out a stabbing attack in the northern Israeli city of Haifa, wounding one man. In Judea and Samaria an exceptionally large number of rocks and Molotov cocktails were thrown at Israeli vehicles driving on the roads.

## Events in Jerusalem

►The triple religious holidays of Passover, Ramadan and Easter led to an increase in clashes between Palestinians and the Israeli security forces in east Jerusalem and near al-Aqsa mosque. Most of the riots were the results of Palestinians attempting to prevent Jews from entering the Temple Mount compound. During the riots on the Temple Mount many Palestinians waved Hamas flags and chanted anti-Israeli slogans and praise for Muhammed Deif, the commander of Hamas' military-terrorist wing. Despite the violence, Israel did not prevent Muslims from entering the Temple Mount compound and continued to allow Ramadan prayers to continue. The Palestinian media accused Israel of escalation, claiming the motive for Israel's activity was the desire to divide the Temple Mount and create separate places and times for Jews and Muslims to pray, which the Palestinians consider a violation of the status quo in Jerusalem and the holy sites.

►The main events were the following:



**Right: The waqf reported 150,000 Muslim worshippers attended the third Ramadan Friday prayer on the Temple Mount (Twitter account of journalist Hassan Aslih, April 22, 2022). Left: Muslims wave Hamas flags (Paldf Twitter account, April 22, 2022)**

►**April 15, 2022**, the second Friday of Ramadan: The previous night dozens of Palestinians, armed with rocks and fireworks, barricaded themselves inside al-Aqsa mosque. Before dawn thousands of Muslims entered for the morning prayer, including those who had come for the purpose of disrupting order and clashing with the Israeli security forces. They began throwing rocks at the Western Wall, and in response large forces of Israeli police broke in. A riot developed at the site, inside al-Aqsa mosque itself. The clashes continued for several hours; three Israeli policemen were injured. Palestinian medical sources reported more than 150 wounded rioters. Several hundred Palestinians were detained (and released the following day).



**Piles of rocks next to wooden boards and barriers in the Temple arranged by Muslims in the Temple Mount compound in preparation for clashes with the Israeli security forces (Twitter account of journalist Hassan Aslih, April 15, 2022)**

►The events were widely covered by the Palestinian media. The PA foreign ministry condemned the "barbaric attack" of the Israeli forces against "worshippers in al-Aqsa mosque" and the oppression and "harassment of women, children, the aged and medical and media teams" (PA foreign ministry Facebook page, April 15, 2022). **PA Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh** condemned the Israeli police forces for entering the Temple Mount and "attacking Muslim worshippers." He called on the Arab and Muslim states and international organizations to condemn Israel's actions on the Temple Mount and to act to prevent a repetition (Wafa, April 15, 2022). **Nabil Abu Rudeineh, spokesman for Mahmoud Abbas**, accused Israel of wanting to "turn the political conflict into a religious war." He called "attacking" al-Aqsa mosque "crossing all lines" (al-Jazeera, April 15, 2022). The **Fatah movement** issued an announcement condemning the events and stating they would not allow Israel to force its rule on al-Aqsa mosque, and would remain the mosque's first line of defense (Wafa, April 15, 2022).

►**Khaled Mashaal, a member of Hamas' political bureau and head of the "external" Hamas leadership**, praised the Palestinians who were "defending al-Aqsa mosque" (Hamas Telegram channel, April 16, 2022). **Hamas spokesman** in Jerusalem **Muhammad Hamada** praised the presence of Muslim worshippers and the Palestinians who had barricaded themselves inside al-Aqsa, adding that Israel had not yet seen the "hell waiting for it," which would be attacks in Israel, Jerusalem and the West Bank (Hamas website, April 16, 2022).

►**April 17, 2022:** Several hundred Palestinians went to the plaza in front of al-Aqsa in the morning on the pretext of wanting to prevent Jews from entering the Temple Mount compound. Large Israeli police forces entered the compound to remove the Palestinians

causing the disturbance and the improvised barriers they had erected, and to allow Jews to enter. The Palestinians rioted, employing loudspeakers and chanted slogans encouraging terrorist attacks and calling on Muhammad Deif to intervene. Other violent events were reported in Jerusalem: three buses bringing Jews to the Western Wall to pray were attacked with volleys of rocks and seven passengers were injured. In one of the alleys of the Old City of east Jerusalem five Orthodox Jews were beaten as they walked to the Western Wall.

► **Hussein al-Sheikh, PA minister of civilian affairs and a member of the PLO's Executive Committee**, attacked the government of Israel for allowing people who he claimed were "extremist" to enter the Temple Mount compound. He claimed that by so doing Israel violated the status quo. He also claimed that "Israel's serious escalation" on the Temple Mount was "underhanded aggression" against sites sacred to the Palestinians. He called on the international community to intervene and rein in the Israeli government (Hussein al-Sheikh's Twitter account, April 17 2022). **Hamas** issued an announcement condemning Israel's "aggression" towards Muslim worshippers on the Temple Mount. According to the announcement, the Palestinian people would continue their firm stance in the struggle against Israel in all arenas and in their defense of Jerusalem and al-Aqsa mosque (Hamas website, April 17, 2022).

► **April 19, 2022**: A large Israeli police force entered al-Aqsa mosque to defend the lives of the Jewish visitors. Palestinians who had arrived earlier were planning to clash with the Israeli security forces, and had prepared piles of rocks. To deter the Israelis, they played tapes of **Abu Obeida, spokesman for Hamas' military-terrorist wing**, and of wailing sirens.

► **April 21, 2022**: Palestinians renewed the riots against the Israeli police forces, and more than twenty Palestinians were wounded. According to the Palestinians, more than 700 Jews entered the al-Aqsa precinct (Wafa, April 21, 2022). The Palestinian media and social networks posted videos of Palestinians throwing rocks at Jews and of riots between Palestinians and Israeli police forces. In the afternoon the "flag march" was held. Before the march Hamas threatened that Israel would bear full responsibility for the consequences if it allowed the marchers to approach the sites sacred to Islam. Israeli police forces barred the marchers' way near the Damascus Gate. Hamas claimed Israel's decision to prevent them from reaching the Gate as a victory, stating its threats had deterred Israel (Shehab, al-Mayadeen, April 21, 2022). **Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau**, said they had been "victorious" over the flag march. He also claimed that the Hamas operatives inside al-Aqsa mosque represented

the first strong front line of defense that had "defeated" Israel (Radio Sawt al-Aqsa, April 21, 2022).

► **April 22, 2022:** Palestinians rioted in the al-Aqsa compound, forcing Israeli police forces to enter the area in the early morning to remove hundreds of Palestinians who were causing a disturbance. Some of them were masked and waved Hamas flags. They threw rocks at the forces and at the Western Wall, shot fireworks and improvised barriers to prevent the police from entering. The police requested they allow the morning prayer to be held, and afterwards, in light of the increasing violence of the riot at the site, they went into action. Within a short time, calm was restored and the worshippers returned to the mosque and the prayers continued. At noon the third Ramadan Friday prayer was held with the participation of an estimated 150,000 Muslims. Relative calm was maintained. After the prayer Palestinians renewed the riots. For the first time, the police employed a quadcopter to drop teargas canisters to disperse the rioters. Hamas issued an announcement calling on the Palestinian people to defend al-Aqsa mosque and support the defenders of the holy city. Hamas called for a massive uprising [to challenge] "the occupation and its settlers" (Hamas Telegram channel, April 22, 2022).



**Masked Palestinians riot on the Temple Mount (Paldf Twitter account, April 22, 2022)**

► On **April 23, 2022** the annual Easter Holy Saturday prayers were held at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in east Jerusalem. Given the tension, the Israeli police erected barriers on the streets leading to the church and checked the belongings of those wishing to enter, and limited the number of worshippers allowed in. The PA accused the police of "raiding" the church, attacking worshippers and trying to prevent thousands from praying. The PA foreign ministry issued an announcement condemning Israel's "brutal attacks" on the church and the worshippers. According to the ministry, the events at the church were an integral part of the Judaization of Jerusalem and the holy sites, especially al-Aqsa mosque. The ministry

demanded the American administration take responsibility and exert pressure on Israel (PA foreign ministry website, April 23, 2022).

► **Izzat al-Rishq, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, condemned Israel's activities "against the Church of the Holy Sepulcher" and the Christian worshippers, claiming Israel's actions violated freedom of worship. He called on the international community to exert pressure on Israel (Hamas Telegram channel, April 23, 2022). **PIJ spokesman in Judea and Samaria Tareq Izz al-Din** condemned the measures taken by Israel, claiming Israel's "policy of terrorism" attacked the entire Palestinian people, regardless of religion (Telegram channel of the PIJ's department of propaganda, April 23, 2022).

► The **Jordanian foreign minister** also condemned the measures employed by Israel against Christian worshippers who wanted to enter the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Foreign ministry **spokesman Haitham Abu al-Foul** said Israel had to respect the historical, legal status quo in Jerusalem and its holy sites (Jordanian foreign ministry Twitter account, April 24, 2022).

### **Hamas' perspective on the events**

► After two days of relative quiet Hamas summed up the events in Jerusalem as a "victory" over Israel and counted their achievements: they claimed Hamas had prevented the Jews from sacrificing [the Paschal Lamb] on the Temple Mount, prevented the flag march from reaching the Damascus Gate, created confusion within the Israeli leadership, and even used new "harassment" methods on the Temple Mount, employing powerful loudspeakers to play music and sirens. They also claimed to have united the Palestinians under the option of "resistance" [i.e., terrorism].

► **Musa Abu Marzouq, a member of the Hamas political bureau**, said the events in Jerusalem were a "new victory," similar to what had happened during "Sword of Jerusalem" [i.e., Operation Guardian of the Walls], claiming the pictures of the "Palestinian resistance" in al-Aqsa mosque were "radiant and promising." He also said they relied on the Palestinians in Judea and Samaria, who had provided an example of struggle and sacrifice (al-Aqsa TV, April 24, 2022).

► **Khaled Mashaal, head of the "external" Hamas leadership**, called for the establishment of an "al-Aqsa army" which would be formed from within the Islamic nation in collaboration with the Palestinians. He said the next stage of the "struggle" would be to stop waiting for

Israeli "violations" and "Jewish events" to defend Jerusalem and al-Aqsa, and to formulate a strategy that would lead to the "liberation of al-Aqsa" (Shehab, April 25, 2022).

► **Khalil al-Haya, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, claimed Israel had tried to deceive the mediators with the false claim that it did not want an escalation during Ramadan. In reality, he claimed, Israel was trying to establish a new situation in Jerusalem and [the Palestinians had] no choice but to confront it. He claimed the courage of the men of Jerusalem and the threats of the "resistance" [i.e., terrorist organizations] had forced Israel to prevent Jews from sacrificing [the Paschal Lamb] on the Temple Mount and holding the flag march (al-Aqsa TV, April 25, 2022).

► **Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum** claimed preventing the sacrifice [of the Paschal Lamb] in al-Aqsa mosque and preventing the flag march from reaching the Muslim Quarter [of the Old City of Jerusalem] and the Damascus Gate were achieved by virtue of the "equation" determined by the "organizations" during Operation Guardian of the Walls. He claimed the unity of the Palestinian people and their activities in the West Bank and Jerusalem had confused Israel (Shehab, April 21, 2022).

► **Zaher Jabarin, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, said the Palestinian people had the right to "resist the Israeli occupation" and to respond to its "aggression on the Temple Mount." He claimed that for 70 years Israel had been "defiling religious sites" and preventing believers from visiting them. He said the Gaza Strip was prepared for a confrontation with Israel at all times, and they had updated the negotiators about their red lines (Dunia al-Watan, April 25, 2022).

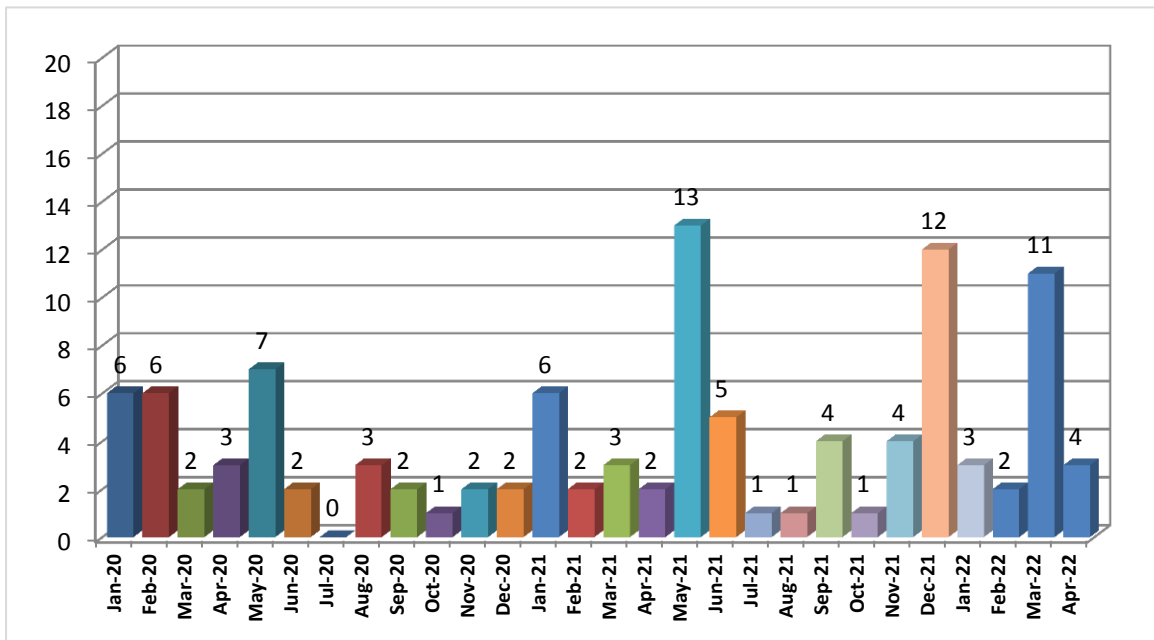
► The events during the week of Passover were another Hamas attempt, like its attempt during Operation Guardian of the Walls, to position itself as the guardian of the holy sites. Hamas also works tirelessly to enflame emotions and encourage anti-Israel activities in Judea and Samaria. At the same time, however Hamas works to preserve relative quiet in the Gaza Strip to keep Israel from revoking the measures it has taken to improve the daily life of the Gazan population. In addition to harming Israel, Hamas' objective is to strengthen its status among the Palestinians by bypassing the PA's authority and weakening its ability to govern.

## Terrorist attacks

### Stabbing attack in Haifa

► On **April 15, 2022**, a stabbing attack was carried out in northern Israeli city of Haifa. During the afternoon a Haifa father reported that his 15-year-old daughter was planning to carry out a terrorist attack in Jerusalem. A stabbing attack was also reported in a park in Haifa, in which a man was wounded. Police who arrived at the scene found a young girl with a knife in her hand; she was detained (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, April 15, 2022).

### Significant Terrorist Attacks since January 2020



## Judea and Samaria

### Counterterrorism activities

► While events were unfolding in east Jerusalem, the Israeli security forces continued their counterterrorism activities in Judea and Samaria:

- ◆ **April 13, 2022:** During an Israeli security force operation in Kobar, northwest of Ramallah, **Moaz Hamed**, 33, from Silwad, was detained. He is a Hamas terrorist operative who was a member of the squad that carried out a drive-by shooting attack on June 29, 2015, killing Malakhi Rozenfeld and wounding three others. Imprisoned by the Palestinian security forces since the attack, he escaped from jail, apparently to

<sup>1</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

planning carry out another terrorist attack. Several other Palestinians were detained on suspicion of intending to carry out the attack with him (Israel Prison Service spokesman's unit, April 13, 2022). Palestinians rioted during the Israeli security force operation in Silwad to detain members of the terrorist squad, throwing rocks and heavy objects at the forces (Wafa, April 13, 2022). The ministry of health in Ramallah reported the death of **Omar Muhammad Alian**, 20, from Silwad, during the riot (Watan, April 13, 2022). His body was wrapped for burial in a Palestinian flag topped with a Fatah flag (Nabadh website, April 14, 2022).



**Right: Moaz Hamed (Shehab website, April 13, 2022). Left: Palestinians attack Israeli security forces in Silwad (Wafa, April 13, 2022)**



**Right: Omar Alian, killed in Silwad (Watan, April 13, 2022). Left: His funeral (Nabadh website, April 14, 2022)**

◆ **April 13, 2022:** Israeli security forces operated in Tulkarm to detain a Palestinian wanted for terrorist activity. He tried to escape but was wounded by IDF fire and detained. A riot broke out during which an armed Palestinian was detained (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, April 13, 2022).

◆ On **April 13, 2022** the ministry of health in Ramallah reported the death of **Muhammad Hassan Assaf**, 34, from the village of Laqf, east of Ramallah. He was killed

in a riot that broke out when Israelis entered the Tomb of Joseph. He was a lawyer for the authority against the fence and settlements (ministry of health in Ramallah Facebook page, April 13, 2022). Muhammad Shtayyeh reported on his Facebook page that Assaf was the secretary of the Fatah movement in Laqf. He condemned the killing, calling it a "crime" for which Israel was responsible (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, April 13, 2022).



**Right: Muhammad Hassan Assaf (Arabs48, April 13, 2022). Left: The picture Muhammad Shtayyeh posted to his Facebook page, April 13, 2022**

◆The Palestinian media reported the death of **Qasi Fouad Hamamra**, 14 from Husan, west of Bethlehem, during a riot that broke out when IDF forces entered the village (Watan, April 13, 2022). A military-style funeral was held for him on April 18, 2022, after the IDF returned his body to the family. His body was wrapped for burial in the Palestinian and Fatah flags (al-Hadath, qudsnet.com, April 11, 2022).



**Right: Qasi Fouad Hamamra (Arabs48, April 14, 2022). Left: The military-style funeral held for Hamamra (qudsnet.com, April 18, 2022)**

◆ On **April 14, 2022**, the Israeli security forces operated in a number of locations in Judea and Samaria, including the Balata refugee camp in Nablus, in Hebron and in Bayt Ummar, to detain Palestinians wanted for terrorist activities and to seize weapons (IDF spokesman, April 14, 2022). In the village of Dan, near Jenin, two Palestinians were killed. One was **Shas Kamamji**, 29, whose brother Iham Kamamji was sentenced to two terms of life imprisonment, and was one of the six terrorist prisoners who escaped from the Gilboa Prison in September 2021. His body was wrapped for burial in the PIJ flag. The other was **Mustafa Abu al-Rab**, from Salia, southeast of Jenin. His body was wrapped for burial in the Palestinian flag (al-Quds al-Arabi, April 14, 2022).



**The two Palestinians who were killed (al-Quds, April 14, 2022)**

◆ **April 16, 2022**: An infiltration into the community of Beit El was prevented. A Palestinian armed with a knife who tried to enter through the fence was detained by the Beit El security department (Rescue Without Borders in Judea and Samaria, April 16, 2022).

◆ On **April 18, 2022** Israeli security forces operating in Husan detained four Palestinians wanted on suspicion of attacking an Israel and setting fire to his vehicle. The Israeli security forces also operated in the village of Yamoun near Jenin to detain a wanted Palestinian. During the operations Palestinians confronted the forces, threw stones and IEDs and shot at them. The soldiers shot at the Palestinians throwing IEDs (IDF spokesman, April 18, 2022). Reportedly, two Palestinians were seriously wounded. On April 22, 2022, the death of **Lutfi Labdi** was reported. He was a Fatah operative who was wounded in the riot in Yamoun.

◆ **April 20, 2022**: Israeli security forces conducted searches in Khirbet Carmel in Hebron and seized two anti-tank shells, a mortar, parts of weapons and various types

of ammunition which had been hidden in suspects' houses. A lathe used to manufacture weapons was also seized (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, April 20, 2022).



**Right: The lathe. Left: The ammunition (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, April 20, 2022)**

◆ **April 25, 2022:** Israeli security forces prevented 24 handguns from being smuggled into Israel from Jordan. The suspected smuggler was also found to be in possession 380,000 shekels (about \$115,000).



**The handguns and money found in the smuggler's possession (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, April 25, 2022)**

◆ **April 26, 2022:** The ministry of health in Ramallah reported the death of **Ahmed Ibrahim Awidat**, 20, from the Aqabat Jabber refugee camp, during a riot that broke out during an Israeli security force activity in the camp (Ma'an, April 26, 2022). Fatah issued a mourning notice for him.



**Ahmed Ibrahim Awidat, killed in Jericho (Ma'an, April 26, 2022)**

## **Prevention of attempt to establish a PIJ terrorist network in Judea and Samaria**

► In recent months the Israeli Security Agency prevented an attempt made by the PIJ to establish a terrorist network in Judea and Samaria, whose objective would be to carry out terrorist attacks on targets in Israel. Following the exposure seven Palestinians from Jenin and surrounding villages were detained. Interrogation revealed they had been recruited through the Palestinian social networks by **Ahmed Nabil Ahmed Jawda**, a PIJ operative from Rafah who deals with the location and recruitment of potential operatives. One of the Palestinians detained was a 40-year-old woman from Jalameh, a mother of four, who in the past was imprisoned after planning to carry out a suicide bombing attack. Another Palestinian who was detained had recruited a number of operatives. Using instructions received from the Gaza Strip, they manufactured a rocket-like IED to attack local Israeli farmers (Israeli Security Agency spokesman's unit, April 25, 2022).



**Two of the Palestinian detainees (Israeli Security Agency spokesman's unit, April 25, 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. During the past two weeks there were many instances of Palestinians **dazzling Israeli drivers with laser beams** (See the Appendix).

## Israel's South

### Rocket and mortar shell fire into Israel

► As a consequence of the tension in Judea, Samaria and east Jerusalem, five rockets (in four separate attacks) were fired from the Gaza Strip at the Israeli communities near the Gaza Strip. Four landed in Israeli territory, and one inside Gaza. It was the first rocket fire since January 1, 2022. It is unknown which organization fired the rockets but it may have been the PIJ or one of the rogue organizations which do not accept Hamas' authority.

◆ **April 18, 2022:** A rocket was fired at the communities near the Gaza Strip and intercepted by the Iron Dome aerial defense system (IDF spokesman, April 18, 2022). In response Israeli Air Force aircraft attacked a Hamas workshop for the manufacture of weapons (IDF spokesman, April 19, 2022). **Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem** said Israel had attacked a number of empty sites and called the attack a failed attempt to prevent the Palestinian people from defending Jerusalem and al-Aqsa mosque (al-Risalah Telegram channel, April 19, 2022).



**IDF attack in the Gaza Strip (IDF spokesman, April 19, 2022)**

◆ Following the Israeli response, operatives of **Hamas' military-terrorist wing fired a Strela surface-to-air missile** at an Israeli Air Force aircraft. Hamas military-terrorist wing claimed responsibility for the attack (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades Telegram channel, April 19, 2022). According to "sources" in the Gaza Strip, at a meeting held in his office, **Yahya al-Sinwar, head of the Hamas political bureau** in the Gaza Strip,

said that the skies of the Gaza Strip would not remain open to Israeli Air Force planes. He added that if the IDF renewed its "aggression" the scenario of the anti-aircraft missile would be renewed to a greater degree (al-Ayam, April 20, 2022). It was also reported that the leaderships of the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip decided to strengthen their aerial defense to cope with and strike Israeli planes operating over the Gaza Strip. Their stated objective is to cancel the equation they claim Israel is trying to enforce on the Gaza Strip of attacking Hamas facilities in response to rocket fire from the Gaza Strip (al-Akhbar, April 23, 2022).

◆ On the evening of **April 20, 2022** a rocket was fired at the southern Israeli city of Sderot, hitting a house and causing damage. In response Israeli Air Force aircraft attacked Hamas terrorist targets in the Gaza Strip, including a Hamas post south of Gaza City and the opening of a terrorist tunnel leading to an underground structure where raw materials for the manufacture of rocket motors were stored (IDF spokesman, April 21, 2022). **Izzat al-Rishq, a member of Hamas' political bureau,** said Israel's attacks in the Gaza Strip would not influence the ongoing defense of Jerusalem and there would be no retreat from the "equations" [the terrorist organizations] had enforced [on Israel] (Hamas website, April 21, 2022).



**Right: The rocket which hit a house in Sderot (Twitter account of journalist Hassan Aslih, April 20, 2022). Left: Israeli Air Force attack in response to the rocket fire (Paldf Twitter account, April 21, 2022)**

◆ On the night of **April 20, 2022**, during an Israeli Air Force operation, the Iron Dome aerial defense system was activated. The IDF reported the interception of four rockets fired from the Gaza Strip. A source in the Palestinian terrorist organizations rushed to claim that no rockets had been fired, but rather machineguns (al-Mayadeen, April 22, 2022). It later became evident that the Iron Dome aerial defense system had been mistakenly activated by massive machinegun fire targeting an Israeli plane. The

Palestinian social media mocked Israel for its mistake and for wasting money on the unnecessary use of the Iron Dome.

◆ On the evening of **April 22, 2022** two rockets were fired at the Israeli communities near the Gaza Strip. One exploded in an open area near the border security fence (IDF spokesman, April 22, 2022). The second landed in the northern Gaza Strip near Beit Hanoun. The Palestinians reported two wounded (Amad, April 22, 2022).

◆ Before dawn on **April 23, 2022** another rocket was fired at Israel. It fell in an open area (IDF spokesman, April 23, 2022).

### An additional Israeli response

► Following the rocket fire Israel took exceptional action by having the Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) announce the temporary closing of the Erez Crossing as of April 24, 2022. The crossing would be open exclusively for humanitarian cases. Reopening the Crossing would depend on an examination of the security situation. Closing the Crossing for Gazan workers entails significant financial loss for the Gaza Strip.

► The Palestinian media reacted to the closing of the Erez Crossing by elaborating on the economic damage it would cause, estimated at about 50 million shekels (more than \$15 million) a day, to the detriment of about 12,000 Gazan workers (Ma'an, April 23, 2022). The head of the workers' union in the Gaza Strip claimed closing the Crossing was "collective punishment," which proved Israel did not want to improve the workers' situation or economic conditions in the Gaza Strip, as it had told international negotiators. Rather, he said, Israel wanted to exploit the workers for political and security aims (al-Quds, April 23, 2022).  **Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem** called closing the Crossing "collective punishment" whose objective was to tighten the "siege" on the Gaza Strip, which Hamas would not agree to (Hamas website, April 23, 2022).  **Muhammad al-Hindi, a member of the PIJ's political bureau**, said Israel's threats to remove the measures put in place for the good of the Gazan population and to close the Erez Crossing were intended to isolate the Gaza Strip from events in Jerusalem and Jenin. He claimed the Gaza Strip could not be blackmailed or isolated because it had become the fortress of the "resistance" [i.e., Palestinian terrorism] (PIJ propaganda department's Telegram channel, April 23, 2022).

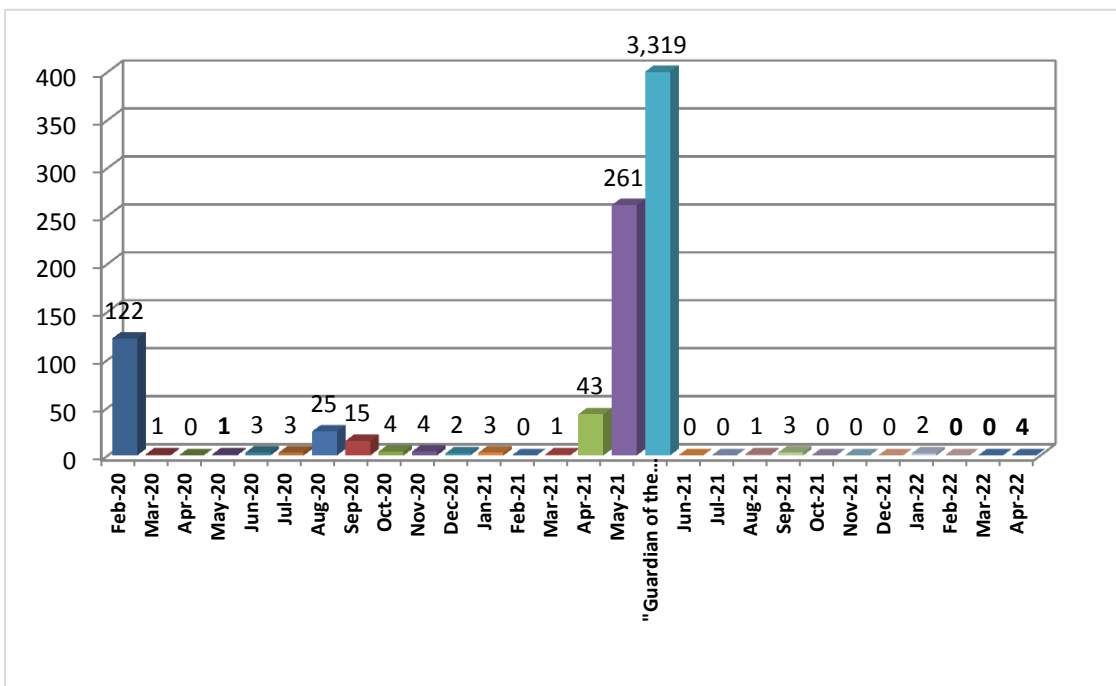
► After 24 hours of relative quiet and at the end of a security assessment, Israel reopened the Erez Crossing on April 26, 2022. The COGAT said reopening the Crossing and the other

measures put in place for the benefit of the Gazan population were conditioned on continuing security stability (COGAT, April 25, 2022).

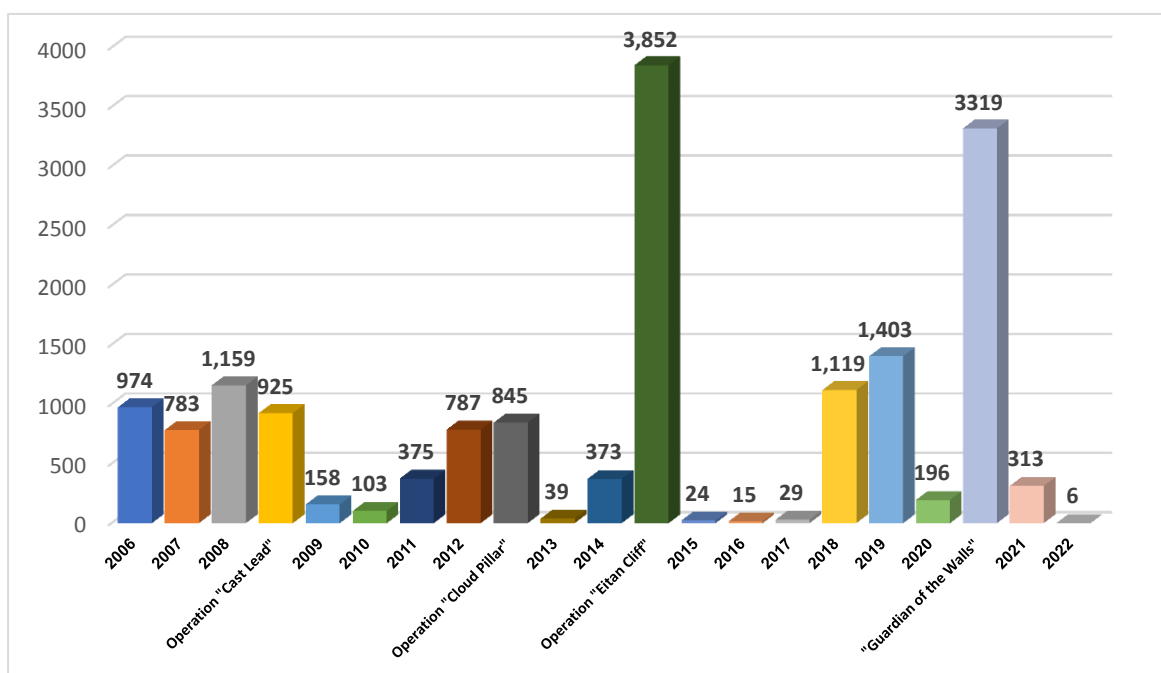


The Palestinian side of the reopened Erez Crossing  
(Twitter account of journalist Hassan Aslih, April 26, 2022)

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



## Annual Distribution of Rocket Hits



## Developments in the Gaza Strip

### International activity prompted by the events in east Jerusalem

►The events in east Jerusalem prompted the Hamas leadership to hold a series of contacts with international figures. **Taher al-Nunu, Isma'il Haniyeh's media advisor**, said Haniyeh was in contact with relevant individuals who could stop the attacks on al-Aqsa mosque on two levels: one was with the Egyptians, Qataris and the UN secretary general, and the other with the Arab foreign ministers and the Arab League secretary general. He updated them on the situation and called for them to act quickly and to exert pressure on Israel (al-Mayadeen, April 17, 2022).

►**Isma'il Haniyeh** met with **Tor Wennesland, special UN envoy** to the Middle East peace process. According to Hamas, Wennesland said the UN had sent Israel three messages: non-Muslims could not be allowed to enter al-Aqsa mosque until Ramadan ended, Israel had to stop its activities in the West Bank, and had to stop escalating its activities in the Gaza Strip [sic]. Haniyeh praised the UN's efforts and the mediation efforts of Egypt and Qatar, and warned of Israel's efforts to temporarily divide al-Aqsa mosque and its continued escalation and attacks in the Gaza Strip, which were liable to have dangerous consequences (Hamas website, April 22, 2022).

► **Isma'il Haniyeh** spoke on the phone with **Sergei Lavrov, the Russian foreign minister**.

After the conversation Haniyeh said they had agreed that Israel's violations of the status quo of the holy sites was unacceptable, and that a future deterioration of the situation, which could turn local confrontations into a broad military activity, had to be prevented (website of the Russian foreign ministry, April 22, 2022).

### **Reports of attempts to mediate between Hamas and Israel**

► In addition, there were reports of attempts to mediate and messages passed between Hamas and Israel through the various agencies, primarily senior Egyptian intelligence officials. The reports of Hamas' position were contradictory. For example, according to the Hezbollah-affiliated Lebanese newspaper *al-Akhbar*, Hamas and the other organizations in the Gaza Strip told Egypt they adhered to the Gaza-Jerusalem "equation" and had no concerns over a new military confrontation. The organizations also stated that humanitarian assistance could not come at the expense of the holy sites and other "national" issues (*al-Akhbar*, April 23, 2022).<sup>2</sup>

► Previously it had been reported that the heads of the terrorist organizations had met in Yahya al-Sinwar's office to discuss developments, and had declared a general mobilization. Contacts to prevent the situation from deteriorating were also reported. A "source" in the joint operations room said the highest Hamas and PIJ leadership both in the Gaza Strip and "externally" had conducted about 150 telephone conversations with various mediators, among them Qatar, the UN and Egypt. The organizations asked them to send Israel and the mediators the message that they had a surplus of rockets and would not hesitate to fire them at the "settlements in Israel" [sic] instead of towards the sea (*al-Jazeera*, April 19, 2022).

► **Khaled Mashaal, head of the "external" Hamas leadership**, praised the Palestinians "defending" al-Aqsa mosque. He said the Qatari foreign minister had called Isma'il Haniyeh to report that Israel did not want the situation to escalate. Haniyeh said that the Gaza Strip did not want it either, but it had a "responsibility," and the escalation in Jerusalem had to stop (*Hamas Telegram channel*, April 16, 2022). **PIJ spokesman Tareq Salami** said his organization would not remain idle in the face of violations at al-Aqsa mosque, in Jerusalem or in the West Bank. He said mediations were in place to contain the situation but they would

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<sup>2</sup> According to *al-Araby al-Jadeed*, quoting Fatah sources, Mahmoud Abbas did not hide his anger over the mediators' dealing directly with Hamas and the PIJ to achieve a lull (*al-Araby al-Jadeed*, April 17, 2022).

not remain silent in the face of "ongoing crimes," and that the ball was now in Israel's court (al-Masira, April 20, 2022).

### Rally in the Gaza Strip to show solidarity with al-Aqsa mosque

► On **April 22, 2022**, Hamas organized a march and rally in the Jabalia refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip to show solidarity with al-Aqsa mosque and "resistance" to Israel's activities. Present at the rally were representatives of senior figures from Hamas and the other terrorist organizations, among the **Suheil al-Hindi, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, who called on the Palestinians in the West Bank and Jerusalem to defend al-Aqsa mosque, and repeated that al-Aqsa mosque was a red line for Hamas' military wing. He also appealed to the families of the shaheeds, especially to the father of Raed Hazem (the terrorist who carried out the shooting attack in Tel Aviv), assuring them that they would not be abandoned and that Hamas would protect them from Israel (Safa website, April 22, 2022). **Senior PIJ figure Khaled al-Batash** said his organization promised it would not accept the imposition of the "Zionist narrative" on al-Aqsa mosque, and warned that the "resistance" in the Gaza Strip and West Bank would go into action if Israel tried to enforce its narrative and control on al-Aqsa (al-Aqsa TV, April 22, 2022).



Hamas rally in the northern Gaza Strip (Paldf Twitter account, April 22, 2022)

### The PIJ reveals its tunnel system

► **Agence France-Presse** exposed a tunnel system used by the PIJ's military-terrorist wing. The exposure was apparently part of the propaganda war the organization is waging because of tensions with Israel.

► The report showed seven armed terrorist operatives entering one of the tunnels near Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip. The tunnel had a dirt floor and its ceiling and walls were made of concrete slabs. It was narrow and only one person could pass at a time. Small rooms were built off the tunnel to store weapons. **Abu Hamza, spokesman for the Jerusalem**

**Brigades**, the PIJ's military-terrorist wing, who accompanied the Agence France-Presse team into one of the tunnels, claimed the organization had a number of offensive and defensive tunnels which were used for trapping Israeli soldiers [sic], repelling ground offensives and carrying out various activities on the ground. He claimed the tunnels were being worked on around the clock, and after Operation Guardian of the Walls they had been repaired and the supply of missiles had been renewed. He claimed Israel had managed to destroy only a very small part of the tunnel network in general and the PIJ's in particular, and that coordination with Hamas' military wing was carried out at the very highest level (AFP, April 23, 2022).

## The Palestinian Authority (PA)

### International PA activity

►The PA also conducted intensive international activity around the events in Jerusalem. It sent urgent communiqués to the king of Saudi Arabia, the Pope, the UN secretary general and others. It also consulted daily with Jordan, Egypt, Qatar and the Arab League countries to present its version of the situation and to demand they intervene and provide the Palestinians with international protection and force Israel to obey international law (Wafa, April 16, 2022).

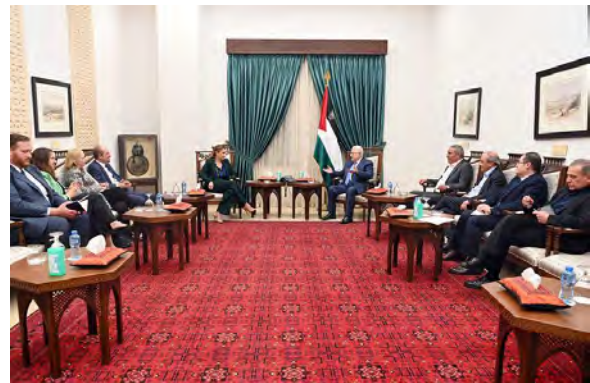
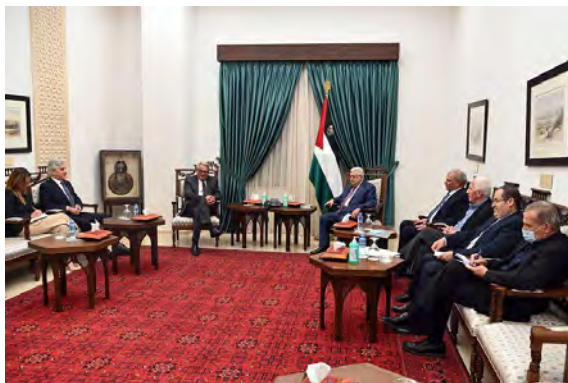
►The **PA foreign ministry** sent an urgent communiqué to the Geneva Convention signatories, calling on them to take responsibility, employ measures to implement the conventions, hold an international conference to deal with the events and aid the Palestinian people. The ministry demanded that Israel bear responsibility for its "crimes" against the Palestinians and its "war crimes" (PA foreign ministry website, April 21, 2022).

►Mahmoud Abbas called on the **United States administration** to intervene urgently to put a stop to Israel's activity in the Palestinian territories. **American Secretary of State Antony Blinken** spoke with Mahmoud Abbas. According to Palestinian sources, Mahmoud Abbas reported Israel's "attacks" on al-Aqsa mosque and its gross violation of the regional historical and legal situation. He warned that Israel's continued actions would have serious consequences (Wafa, April 19, 2022).

►Mahmoud Abbas met with an **American administration delegation** led by **Yael Lempert, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs**. He claimed Israel was responsible for the current escalation, and that given the lack of a political horizon and Israel's refusal to stop its activities, the Palestinian leadership had the right to implement the

decisions of the PLO's Central Council [regarding security coordination with Israel]. He also called for the reopening of the American consulate in east Jerusalem (Wafa, April 22, 2022).

►Mahmoud Abbas met with **Tor Wennesland** and gave him a letter for the UN secretary general. He updated him on the "barbaric attacks" the Israeli security forces carried out in the Temple Mount compound. He noted the importance of creating a political horizon that would end the "Israeli occupation" and called for the end of Israel's unilateral measures and for its compliance with signed agreements. Wennesland said the UN security force was maintaining contacts to end the escalation (Wafa, April 19, 2022; Mahmoud Abbas' Facebook page, April 20, 2022).



**Right: Mahmoud Abbas meets with the American delegation (Mahmoud Abbas' Facebook page, April 22, 2022). Left: Mahmoud Abbas meets with Tor Wennesland (Mahmoud Abbas' Facebook page, April 20, 2022)**

►On **April 18, 2022**, Mahmoud Abbas spoke with **Russian President Putin**. According to the Palestinian media, Putin said Russia would continue to offer comprehensive support for the Palestinian cause in all international forums and with everything connected to east Jerusalem and al-Aqsa mosque (Wafa, April 18, 2022). The Kremlin's accounts of the conversation did not mention that Putin had condemned Israel's actions on the Temple Mount (Kremlin website, April 18, 2022).

►Mahmoud Abbas spoke with **Turkish President Erdogan** (Wafa, April 17,2022). Erdogan gave a speech at a Turkish party meeting where he said Turkey could not ignore the "attacks in Palestine" and would continue to support the Palestinian cause. He also said Israel was aware of Turkey's sensitivity to Jerusalem, and that Turkey's support of the Palestinian objective did not mean the destruction of relations with Israel (world now Twitter account, April 20, 2022).

## Conferences of Arab states

► Given the events in Jerusalem, an urgent meeting of Arab foreign ministers was held in Jordan. It was hosted by the Jordanian foreign minister and attended by the Arab League secretary general, the UAE representative as the Arab member of the UN Security Council, and the foreign ministers of Egypt, the PA, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia.

**King Abdallah of Jordan** spoke at the conference via video. The summary announcement of the meeting described Israel's activities as "violations of the [rights of] worshippers in the mosque." The foreign ministers warned that such activities were "gross provocations of the sentiments of Muslims everywhere,," and threatened to ignite another round of violence that would damage regional security and stability. **Ayman Safadi, the Jordanian foreign minister**, said all of al-Aqsa mosque was an area for Muslims to pray in and that the presence of others had to be coordinated with and approved by the waqf, and that there could be no change in the historical and legal status quo of al-Aqsa mosque (Jordan foreign ministry Telegram channel, April 21, 2022).

► On **April 23, 2022**, the Arab Parliament met to discuss the "Israeli attacks on al-Aqsa mosque" carried out since the beginning of Ramadan. The Parliament's office condemned Israel's activities and claimed its methodical attempts to Judaize Jerusalem were a gross violation of international law and resolutions. The office also praised the firm stance of the Palestinians against Israel (Sabaq24, April 23, 2022).

## Muhammad Shtayyeh attacks Israeli policies and calls for economic disengagement

► **Muhammad Shtayyeh** met with members of the Palestinian businessmen's association. He condemned the statements made by Israeli President Naftali Bennett, who said Palestine was not occupied land. He claimed Palestine was in fact occupied land which belonged to the Palestinians, who had the historic "right" to Palestine and Jerusalem. He said the objective of Israel's activities was to take control of Palestinian territories to expand the settlements, prevent the establishment of an independent Palestinian state and shatter [the idea of] the two-state solution. Regarding economics, he said the Palestinian government's strategy was to disengage from Israel by strengthening the Palestinian national economy. He praised the cooperation between the government and the private sector, saying the economy could be used in the struggle against the "occupation" and to strengthen the Palestinians' firm stance (Wafa, April 23, 2022).

## The Northern Arena

► On the night of **April 24, 2022**, a rocket launch from Lebanon into Israel territory was identified. It landed in an open area near the city of Shlomi in the western Galilee (IDF spokesman, April 25, 2022). According to the Lebanese media, one or two Grad 122mm rockets were fired from the area between Qlaileh and al-Malia, south of Tyre (MTV, al-Manar, April 25, 2022). No claim of responsibility was made. According to Israeli security assessments, Hamas operatives in south Lebanon were responsible for the rocket fire.

► In response IDF artillery fired dozens of shells at the open area in south Lebanon from where the rocket had been fired (IDF spokesman, April 25, 2022). Hezbollah's combat information issued an announcement stating that Israel had fired several dozen shells and flares towards south Lebanon, causing a fire in a wooded area.



**IDF artillery responds to the rocket launch (IDF spokesman, April 25, 2022)**

► **Lebanese army headquarters** announced two additional Grad rockets had been found, positioned and ready for firing in the Qlaileh region, and were neutralized (Lebanon Debate, April 25, 2022). UNIFIL forces began an investigation of the incident. **UNIFIL Commander Major General Aroldo Lázaro Sáenz** called on both sides to avoid escalating the situation and said he was worried by Israel's "disproportional" response (UNIFIL Twitter account, April 25, 2022).

► During Operation Guardian of the Walls (May 2021), which began because of confrontations in Jerusalem, rockets were fired at Israel on three separate occasions by Palestinian organizations which undoubtedly acted with Hezbollah's knowledge.

## Appendix

►While Palestinians were rioting on the Temple Mount, there was an increase in the number of rocks and Molotov cocktails thrown at Israeli vehicles driving on the roads in Judea and Samaria. The more prominent events were the following:

- ◆ **April 23, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus near the Ma'aleh Amos Junction, southeast of Bethlehem. No casualties were reported; the bus was damaged.
- ◆ **April 21, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle between Funduq and Qadumim, east of Qalqilya. No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **April 19, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle on route 90 northeast of Ramallah. No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **April 19, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Masua, southeast of Nablus. No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **April 19, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Luban al-Sharqia, south of Nablus. No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **April 18, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle in Taqua, southeast of Bethlehem. One person was injured by flying glass.



**The vehicle's shattered windshield**

- ◆ **April 17, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle in Uja, north of Jericho. No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.

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<sup>3</sup> Information and pictures from Rescue Without Borders in Judea and Samaria unless otherwise noted.



**The vehicle's shattered window**

- ◆ **April 17, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus and another vehicle near Turmus Aya, northeast of Ramallah. One person was injured; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **April 17, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Efrat, south of Bethlehem. No casualties were reported; the windshield of the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **April 17, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus in east Jerusalem near the Old City. Several passengers were wounded and the bus was damaged.



**Israel bus attacked by rock-throwing Palestinians near the Western Wall  
(Twitter account of journalist Hassan Aslih, April 17, 2022)**

- ◆ **April 17, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle between Givat Ze'ev and New Givon, southwest of Ramallah. No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **April 17, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Ni'lin, north of Modi'in. No casualties were reported; the windshield of the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **April 17, 2022:** Rocks were thrown from a passing car at an Israeli vehicle south of the Ma'aleh Lavona Junction, north of Ramallah. No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.

- ◆ **April 16, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle between Yakir and Emanuel, southeast of Nablus. No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **April 15, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at Israeli vehicles south of the Zif Junction in Hebron. No casualties were reported. Three vehicles were damaged. Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus at the same location. No casualties were reported; the windshield of the bus was damaged.
- ◆ **April 15, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle north of Sinjil, northeast of Ramallah. The vehicle was damaged. IDF forces arrived at the site and carried out procedure for detaining suspects. The Red Crescent claimed a Palestinian was injured by Israeli gunfire and evacuated by the Red Crescent after he had escaped.
- ◆ **April 15, 2022:** A Molotov cocktail, a paint bottle and rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus and other vehicles south of Givat Assaf, east of Ramallah. No casualties were reported; the vehicles were damaged.
- ◆ **April 15, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Abud, northwest of Ramallah. No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **April 15, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle on the Gush Etzion-Hebron road. No casualties were reported; the windshield of the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **April 14, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at several Israeli vehicles near Sinjil, northeast of Ramallah. No casualties were reported; the vehicles were damaged. IDF forces arrived at the site and carried out procedure for detaining suspects, including the use of live fire. According to reports, a Palestinian was wounded.
- ◆ **April 13, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus near Efrat, south of Bethlehem. No casualties were reported; the bus was damaged.
- ◆ **April 13, 2022:** An Israeli who drove into the village of Husan, west of Bethlehem, was attacked and his vehicle was set on fire. He managed to escape.
- ◆ **April 13, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus south of Givat Assaf, east of Ramallah. No casualties were reported; the bus was damaged.
- ◆ **April 13, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle between Aqraba and the Tapuah Junction, southeast of Nablus. No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **April 13, 2022:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus and other vehicles near al-Aroub, north of Hebron. No casualties were reported; the vehicles were damaged.

◆ **April 13, 2022:** A Palestinian threw a Molotov cocktail at an IDF force near Husan, west of Bethlehem. No casualties were reported. In response the soldiers shot at the Palestinian (IDF spokesman, April 13, 2022).