



Palestinian Terrorism Against Israel, 2022 Methods, Trends and Description

January 29, 2023

Introduction¹

Overview

In 2022 there was a substantial rise in the number of Palestinian terrorist attacks against Israel. Eighty-six significant attacks² were carried out, up from 54 in 2021, 40 in 2020, 34 in 2019 and 55 in 2018; 16 of the attacks were carried out inside Israeli territory (one in 2021). Thirty Israelis were killed (24 civilians and six members of the security forces). One Border Police fighter was killed in an operational activity in Samaria. In 2021 three civilians were killed. Sixteen terrorist attacks were carried out inside Israel. There were 46 shooting attacks (the most deadly form of attack) during the year, 54% of the total number (12 in 2021). There were 25 stabbing attacks, 29% of the total (30 in 2021). Seven were vehicular ramming attacks and four were combined attacks. In addition, according to official sources, there were about 3,000 instances of rock-throwing (about 7,600 according to the IDF) and about 500 instances of Molotov cocktail-throwing (about 1,200 according to the IDF).³

One round of fighting was conducted in the Gaza Strip, Operation Breaking Dawn, in August 2022. During the Operation 946 rockets and mortar shells hit Israeli territory. Eleven rockets were fired from the Gaza Strip before the Operation and two after, a total of 959 rockets and mortar shells. **Therefore, with the exception of Operation Breaking Dawn, the annual trend was towards a decrease in rocket attacks. The number of terrorist attacks from the Gaza Strip targeting the Israeli communities near the border security fence also declined**

¹ The full document is available in Hebrew on the ITIC website. An English translation will shortly be available.

² A significant attack is defined by the ITIC as one involving shooting, stabbing, a vehicular ramming attack, the use of IEDs, or a combination of the above. Stones and Molotov cocktails thrown by Palestinians are not included, nor are shooting attacks targeting IDF forces during counterterrorism activities in Judea and Samaria.

³ The discrepancy in the numbers is the result of the IDF's inclusion of attacks carried out during counterterrorism activities.

significantly, and there were almost no instances of the so-called "controlled violence" (return marches, IED and incendiary balloon launching, night harassment unit activities).

- ▶ In 2022 there was a substantial increase in what the Palestinian Authority (PA) refers to as "peaceful popular resistance" [popular terrorism].⁴ Most of the attacks were carried out by lone terrorists or local networks. The attacks included throwing rocks and Molotov cocktails, shootings, stabbings, vehicular rammings and combinations of two or more of the above. **The Palestinian leadership, headed by Mahmoud Abbas, encouraged the "popular resistance,"** did not condemn or criticize it and praised the terrorists, including when Israeli civilians were killed and wounded.
- ▶ The wave of current wave of terrorism began in effect in March 2022 with a series of attacks inside Israel (two of them carried out by operatives affiliated with ISIS), and continued after Operation Wave Breaker. The objective of the Operation, which focused on Jenin and Nablus in northern Samaria, was to destroy the networks' military-terrorist capabilities and prevent further attacks, and in effect it continues to this day. **Dozens of terrorist operatives have been killed**, attacks in Judea and Samaria have increased, and concern exists regarding more attacks, including inside Israel.
- ▶ Several new aspects of terrorist activity in Judea and Samaria surfaced in 2022:
 - ◆ The wave of attacks and Israeli security force counterterrorism activities led to the growth of a new type of local network consisting of armed Palestinian terrorist operatives, independent or members of organizations. They do not take orders either from the established terrorist organizations or the PA's security services. They include the Lion's Den network and the Nablus Battalion in Nablus and the Jenin Battalion, which was initially composed of operatives from the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) military-terrorist wing and which is based in Jenin.⁵ In addition, networks which were virtually inactive in recent years were reactivated. The most prominent is the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades (AAMB), until recently affiliated with Fatah. While it does have Fatah

⁴ For further information see the January 17, 2018 bulletin, "The PLO's Central Council and Mahmoud Abbas call for the continuation and strengthening of [so-called] "peaceful popular resistance" [i.e., popular terrorism]."

⁵ For further information about the Jenin Battalion, see the July 4, 2022, bulletin, "The Jenin Battalion: a non-aligned organization of terrorists operating against the Israeli security forces."

operatives, its new identity is generic and it is mostly composed of armed squads which operate independently, with no central leadership or hierarchy.⁶

◆ Unlike previous years, when most terrorist operatives were lone wolves without organizational identity, this past year many have **affiliated themselves with the new networks**, evident by the claims of responsibility issued by the various organizations and networks. In a number of instances more than one organization or network has claimed responsibility for an attack.

◆ An examination of the terrorist operatives in the new networks revealed many were the sons of PA security service operatives, including high-ranking officers, or security services operatives who were also active in the networks. In addition, many PA security service operatives are former terrorists who were integrated into the services through various arrangements.

◆ The types and methods used in the terrorist attacks also changed. There was a relative decline in the number of stabbing attacks, which were the most prevalent type of attack in previous years and were carried out by lone terrorists. There was a substantial rise in the number of shooting attacks, which accounted for more than half of the attacks carried out in 2022: a total of 46 shooting attacks were carried out, 54% of the total number, up from 12 in 2021, when they made up 22% of the total. The change was apparently a direct result of the formation of the established and quasi-established networks, which provide a framework for terrorist operatives and allow them to carry out fairly complex attacks which demand preparation and the acquisition of weapons.

◆ The number of attacks and attempted attacks inside Israel also **rose significantly**. This past year **16 terrorist attacks were carried out inside Israeli territory**, four of them in Jerusalem, compared with one in 2021 and three in 2020.

◆ Three terrorist attacks were carried out on behalf of global jihad organizations, one each in Beersheba, Hadera and Jerusalem. The attack in Hadera was carried out by two ISIS operatives and for which ISIS claimed responsibility; the organization listed it in its annual summary of attacks. The other two attacks were apparently inspired by ISIS' ideology. **All of the terrorists had Israeli ID cards.**

⁶ For further information see the October 30, 2022, bulletin, " 'Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades' – a generic name for the armed squads of Palestinian terrorists currently active in Judea and Samaria."

◆ The terrorist attacks were also deadlier than in previous years. **In 2022 30 Israelis were killed (24 civilians and six members of the security forces), up from four in 2021 and three in 2020.**

◆ **This past year the PA's support for terrorist operatives continued and increased, including attacks in which Israelis were killed.** The PA gave political and media [propaganda] support to popular terrorism, members of the Palestinian leadership paid condolences calls to the families of terrorists who were killed, the PA continued paying generous stipends to terrorists imprisoned in Israel and to the families of shaheeds and prisoners, paid to rebuild the houses of terrorists demolished by the Israeli security forces, glorified the terrorists and their attacks, including in the Palestinian formal and informal education systems, presented awards and plaques, etc. The PA completely ignored the presence of its security personnel or their sons among the terrorist operatives. No action was taken against them and nothing was said when their parents openly supported the attacks. Rather, Mahmoud Abbas called the families to offer condolences and members of the Palestinian leadership visited the mourning tents. On occasion formal military funerals were held for terrorists.

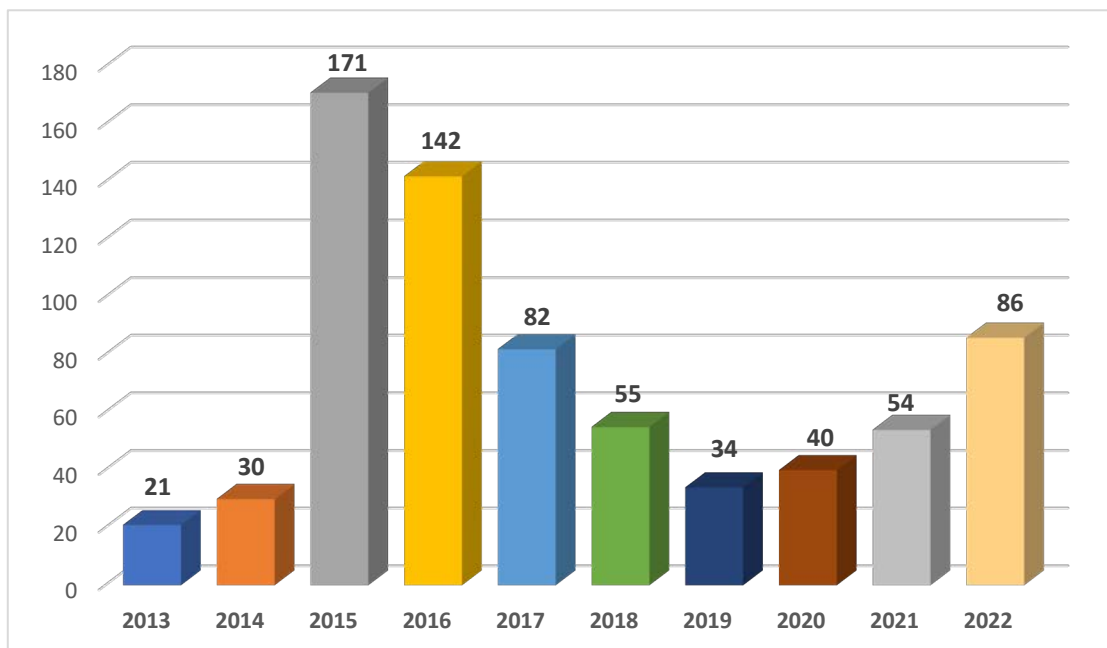
► In the meantime, **incitement to attack Israel continues in the Palestinian social networks, strongly influencing the younger generation.** Young and adolescent Palestinians are exposed to posts and pictures encouraging violence, justifying terrorist attacks and praising those who carry them out. The most popular platforms are WhatsApp and Telegram, while videos are uploaded to Instagram and TikTok, which are especially popular with the younger generation, and for many almost the exclusive source of information. Clear evidence for the trend towards increasing incitement was provided by a public opinion poll conducted by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, whose December 2022 poll showed that 55% of respondents answered that a return to the "armed struggle" [terrorist attacks] was necessary, and 72% supported the establishment of the various local armed groups. However, apparently support for terrorism was not translated into broad enlistment and remained only digital.⁷

⁷ For further information about the poll, see the January 9, 2023, bulletin, "Palestinian public opinion poll reveals increase in support for armed terrorist attacks against Israel and attacks inside Israeli territory."

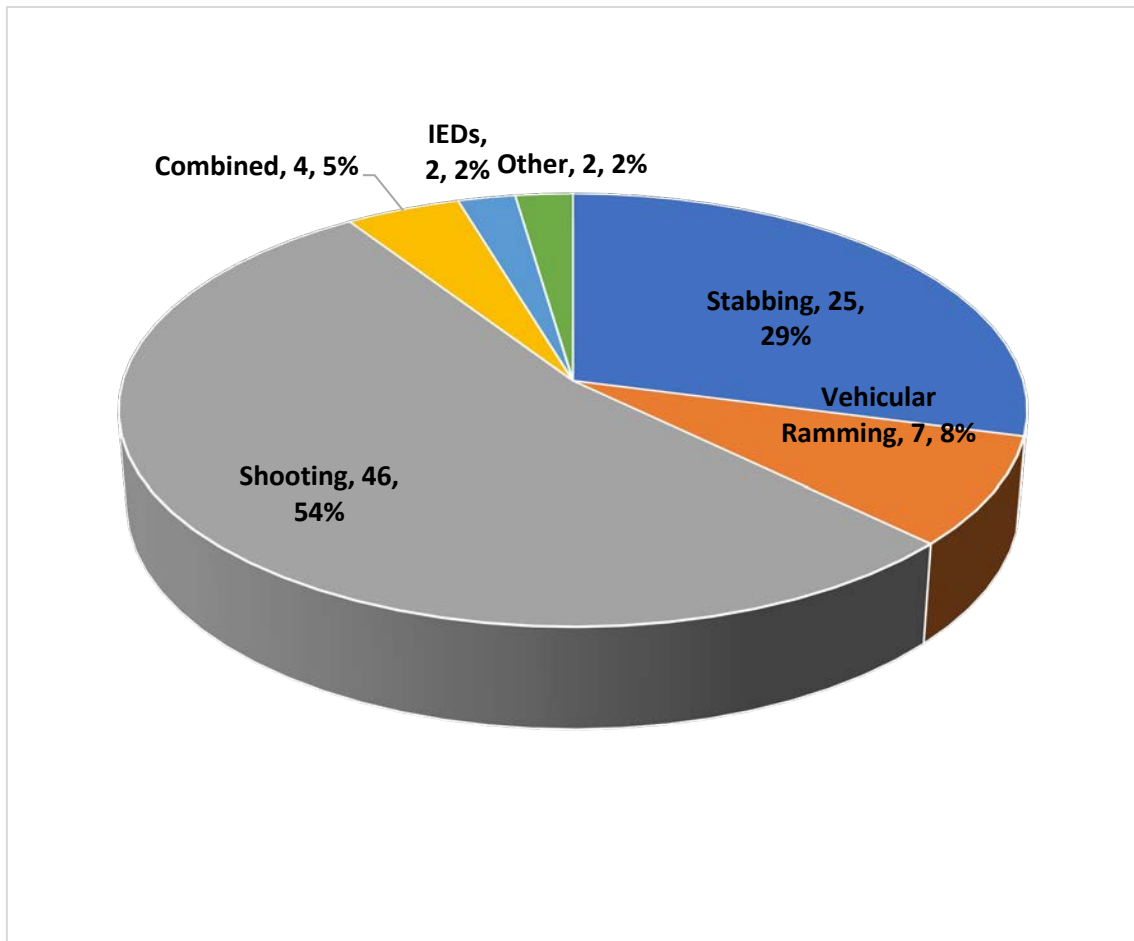
Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem

- ▶ During 2022 there was a substantial rise in the number of terrorist attacks. A total of 86 significant attacks were carried out, up from 54 in 2021. This past year **the PA included shooting attacks** in its definition of "peaceful popular resistance." As opposed to past years, when most of the attacks were carried out by lone terrorists with no organizational affiliation, this past year many were carried out by network operatives. The attacks also became more deadly, with 30 Israelis killed in 2022, four in 2021.
- ▶ This past year shootings were the most common form of attack. There **were 46 during the year, 54% of the total number** (12 in 2021, five in 2020). There were 25 stabbing attacks, 29% of the total (30 in 2021, 19 in 2020). Seven were vehicular ramming attacks, 8% of the total (eight in 2021) and four were combined attacks. In addition, according to official sources, there were 3,075 instances of rock-throwing (7,589 according to the IDF spokesman) and 525 instances of Molotov cocktail-throwing (1,286 according to the IDF spokesman). The discrepancy in the numbers is apparently caused by the IDF's inclusion of instances of rock and Molotov cocktail-throwing during clashes between Israeli security forces and the Palestinian population during counterterrorism activities, riot dispersal, etc.
- ▶ **Palestinian popular terrorism was accompanied by an increase in nationalist violence on the part of Jewish settlers against Palestinians.**

Annual Distribution of Significant Terrorist Attacks



Distribution of Types of Terrorist Attacks



The Gaza Strip

► In 2022 Israeli territory was hit by 959 rocket and mortar shells fired from the Gaza Strip, 946 of them in August during Operation Breaking Dawn. The Operation was relatively short and targeted the PIJ in the Gaza Strip, which was planning to attack Israel because of events in Judea and Samaria. As opposed to Operation Guardian of the Walls in May 2021, there was no violence from Judea and Samaria or Israeli Arabs.

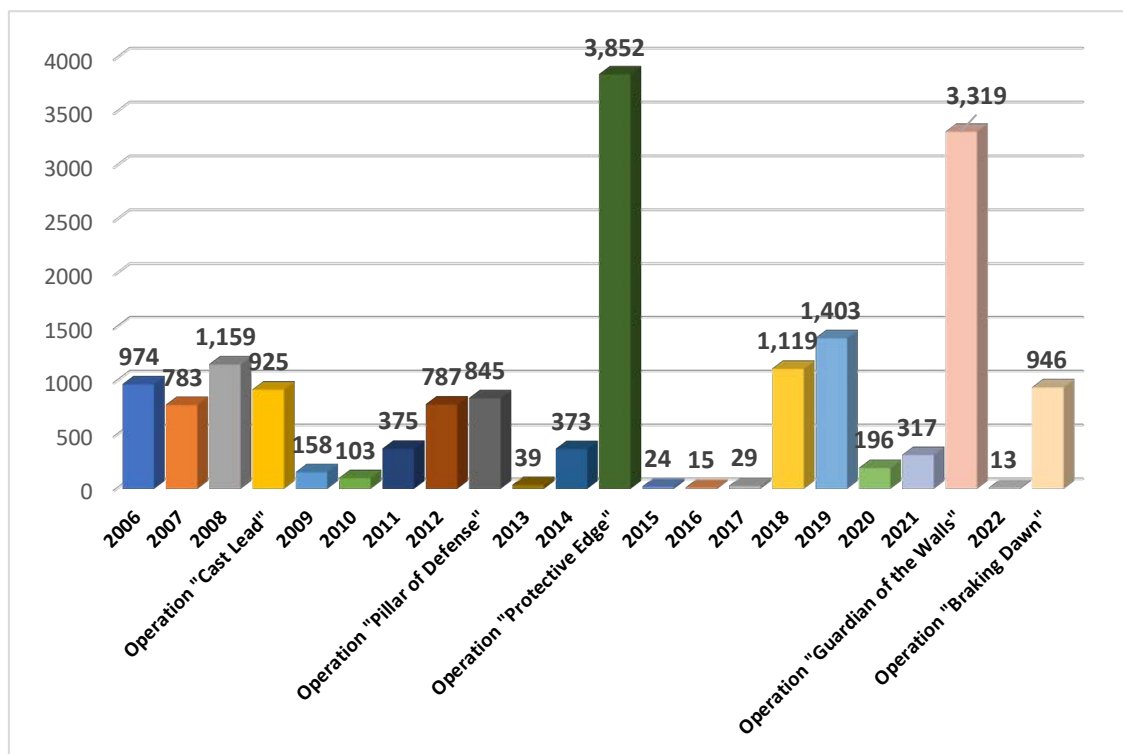
► Activity in the Gaza Strip:

- ◆ Discounting the rockets and mortar shells fired during the Operation, 13 rockets were fired during the year, 11 before the Operation and two after. Most of them were fired by groups collectively known as "rogue organizations" and for which no claim of responsibility was issued.
- ◆ Along the border, only isolated clashes with IDF forces were recorded.
- ◆ There were no popular terrorism activities, no return marches, balloon launchings or night harassment unit activities.

◆ Hamas, the PIJ and other organizations continued fomenting unrest in Judea and Samaria and encouraging local residents to carry out terrorist attacks. At the same time, the organizations were careful to preserve relative calm in the Gaza Strip, for which Hamas' policies were criticized.

- ▶ The decline of terrorist activity in the Gaza Strip was most likely the result of Hamas policies to improve the local economic situation – although naturally not at the expense of its military buildup – and insofar as was possible, to avoid another round of fighting with Israel. **Yahya al-Sinwar, head of the Hamas political bureau in the Gaza Strip, claimed the movement's order of priorities focused on civilian conditions and a military buildup in preparation for a future round of combat with Israel.** The PIJ in the Gaza Strip was relatively restrained during the year, as opposed to its activities in Judea and Samaria, especially in Jenin.
- ▶ However, the relative quiet in the Gaza Strip is fragile, because Hamas and the PIJ repeatedly threaten that unusual events in Judea and Samaria, especially in Jerusalem, difficulties in transferring aid funds to the Gaza Strip and the worsening of the conditions of the security prisoners in Israeli jails would provide an excuse to renew and/or escalate rocket fire and other terrorist activities.

Annual Distribution of Rockets Launched from the Gaza Strip



Monthly Distribution of Rockets and Mortar Shells 2022

