



Spotlight on Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

(April 3-18, 2023)

Overview

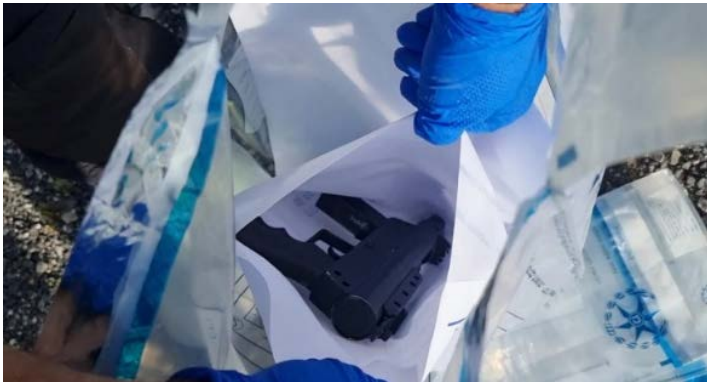
- ▶ During the past two weeks Palestinians carried out nine terrorist attacks in Judea, Samaria and inside Israeli. Six were shooting attacks, the most deadly of which was at the Hamra Junction (northern Jordan Valley) where a mother and her two daughters were murdered. Two were stabbing attacks and one was a vehicular ramming attack in Tel Aviv in which a tourist from Italy was killed and others were injured. The Israeli security forces continued their counterterrorism activities, detaining terrorist operatives and seizing weapons. The main arenas were Jericho, Nablus and Jenin.
- ▶ On the night of the Passover Seder and in the following days dozens of rockets were fired at Israeli territory, atypically from three different arenas: about 50 from the Gaza Strip, 40 of which fell inside Israel or were intercepted by the Iron Dome aerial defense system (April 5 and the night of April 6, 2023, the first rocket fire since March 18, 2023); 34 from south Lebanon (April 6, 2023), the heaviest barrage since the Second Lebanon War (2006); and three from southern Syria, two of which fell inside Israel (April 8, 2023). In response the IDF attacked Hamas targets in the Gaza Strip and south Lebanon, and the rocket launchers in southern Syria and a number of military targets in Syria.
- ▶ The pretext for the rocket fire was the riot at al-Aqsa mosque where Israeli police and Palestinians clashed on the night of April 4, 2023. The riots were documented by videos which were uploaded to Palestinian and Arab-Muslim media outlets and received extensive coverage. **In the meantime, the Nujaba Movement issued a video threatening to attack Israel with drones.**
- ▶ Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau, paid a visit to Lebanon, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) leader Ziyad al-Nakhalah paid a visit to Iraq. The Palestinian Authority (PA) leadership continues meeting with foreign diplomats and exploiting the meetings to defame and demonize Israel. The Palestinians scored a political achievement in the UN, and on May 15 the General Assembly will mark Nakba Day.

Judea, Samaria and the State of Israel

Shooting attack in Jerusalem

► On the morning of April 18, 2023, an armed Palestinian arrived in the Shimon Hatzadik neighborhood of east Jerusalem. He approached two Israelis sitting in their parked car, shot and wounded them both and then fled the scene. The victims were evacuated to a hospital. Israeli security forces located the shooter's improvised Carlo machinegun and apprehended the shooter the following day (Israeli media, April 18, 2023).

► **Muhammad Hamada, Hamas spokesman for Jerusalem affairs**, praised the attack, calling it the "natural response" to Israel's activities in Jerusalem and al-Aqsa mosque. He called on the Palestinian public to protect the shooter in every way possible (Hamas website, April 18, 2023).



Right: The scene of the attack (Hamas website, April 18, 2023). Left: The gun used by the terrorist, located by the Israeli police (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, April 18, 2023).

Shooting attack at Kibbutz Meirav

► On the night of April 17, 2023, shots were fired at Kibbutz Meirav (in Israeli territory on the border between the Gilboa and the PA, to the east of Jenin). No casualties were reported, but there were bullet holes in one of the houses (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, April 18, 2023). The Palestinian media reported that during the night IDF forces entered the villages of Jalameh and Jalboun (northeast of Jenin) to search for the shooters. Riots broke out during which IDF forces used teargas to disperse the rioters (Wafa, April 17, 2023).

Stabbing attack at the Gush Etzion Junction

► On the evening of April 17, 2023, a Palestinian woman armed with a knife went to the bus station at the Gush Etzion Junction (south of Bethlehem) and stabbed an Israeli civilian waiting for a bus. IDF soldiers securing the site shot and wounded her (IDF spokesman's

Twitter account and the Israeli media, April 17, 2023). She was Fatma Shahin, 33 years old, married and mother of one, from the Dheisheh refugee camp near Bethlehem (Wafa and Ra'i Press, April 17, 2023).



The knife used in the stabbing attack (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, April 17, 2023).

Shots fired at an IDF post in Alon Moreh

► On the afternoon of April 11, 2023, shots were fired from a moving vehicle at an IDF post in Alon Moreh (east of Nablus). IDF fighters at the site returned fire, shooting and killing two armed passengers. The forces searched the area near the scene of the attack and found three M-16 assault rifles and two hand guns (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, April 11, 2023).



The weapons found near the scene of the attack (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, April 11, 2023).

► The ministry of health in Ramallah reported the deaths **of Saud Abdallah Saud Titi and Muhammad Ghazi Muhammad Abu Dhara', from the Balata refugee camp**, who were killed near Deir al-Hattab, east of Hebron. Another Palestinian was wounded and evacuated to a hospital in Nablus (Wafa, April 11, 2023). A network in the Balata refugee camp calling itself al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades (AAMB) Revenge and Liberation Youth issued a mourning notice for the death of two of its commanders (AAMB network Telegram channel, April 11, 2023):

◆ **Muhammad Ghazi Muhammad Abu Dhara'**, aka al-Bob, 35 years old. He was named for his grandfather Muhammad, who was killed in a clash with IDF forces on March 3, 1986, during which an IDF soldier was killed. When he was 15 years old he was wounded in a clash with the Israeli security forces in the Balata refugee camp. Less than a year later, at the age of 16, he was detained, spent eight years in an Israeli jail and was released in the Gilad Shalit prisoner exchange deal. In 2016 he was detained by the PA security services for anti-PA activities in the refugee camp and spent 16 months in the prison in Jericho. He no longer received his monthly salary even though he was a released [Israeli jail] prisoner. After his release he moved to Jordan and lived there for four years, returning to the Balata refugee camp two years ago. He joined the AAMB and was on Israel's wanted list (Ultra Palestine and Palestine Online, April 15, 2023; Safa, April 13, 2023).

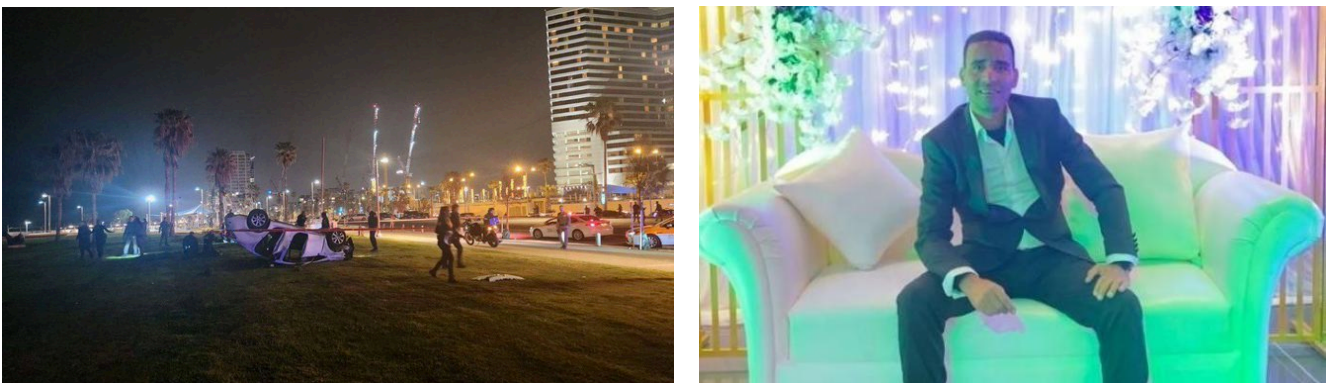
◆ **Saud Abdallah Saud Titi**, 37 years old. Released from an Israeli jail in March 2022 after detentions totaling 16 years. His brother Mahmoud Titi, who was killed, was one of the Palestinians who founded the AAMB in Nablus in 2002. His other brothers served long sentences in Israeli jails. Family members said that after his release the security forces pursued him because he had renewed his AAMB activity and participated in the founding of the AAMB Revenge and Liberation Youth network. Despite holding the rank of colonel in the PA's security services and being a Fatah member, he refused every offer to abandon his ideology and the path of "resistance" [terrorist activities], and was therefore pursued by the Israeli security services. His family also said he had been forced to sell his car to purchase weapons (Palestine Online, April 15, 2023; Safa, April 13, 2023).



Right: Muhammad Abu Dhara' (Ultra Palestine, April 15, 2023). Center: Saud al-Titi (Telegram channel of Awda TV of Fatah's media information and cultural commission, April 11, 2023). Left: The mourning notice issued by Fatah for the two terrorists (Facebook page of Bahaa Hashish, April 11, 2023).

Vehicular ramming attack in Tel Aviv-Jaffa

► On the evening of April 7, 2023, an Israeli Arab drove his vehicle from north to south along the Charles Clore Promenade in Tel Aviv-Jaffa, drove up on the sidewalk and rammed into a group of tourists. He continued driving on the bicycle path and overturned. A police officer who was at a nearby gas station rushed to the vehicle along with municipality wardens who were in the area. They initially thought there had been an accident but when they saw the driver reach for a gun they shot and killed him. One person was killed in the attack, a tourist from Italy, and seven others were injured, all tourists (Israel Police Force Twitter account, April 7, 2023). The terrorist was **Yusuf Abu Jabber, 45 years old, from Kafr Qasem**, married and father of six, who had no past security offenses (Israeli media, April 8, 2023).



Right: Yusuf Abu Jabber (Masdar News, April 11, 2023). Left: The scene of the attack (New Press Twitter account, April 7, 2023).

► Hamas issued a notice claiming the attack had been carried out "as the natural, legitimate [sic] reaction" to the crimes of the "occupation" [Israel] and its government against al-Aqsa mosque, and the ongoing crimes committed by their "extremist Zionist terrorist gangs"

against the Palestinians in Judea, Samaria and Israel [sic]. Hamas called for all forms of the "resistance" to continue (Hamas website, April 7, 2023).

► **Tareq Izz al-Din, PIJ spokesman for Judea and Samaria affairs**, welcomed the attack on behalf of his organization. He claimed the "heroic attack" on the first anniversary of "hero" Raad Hazem's¹ death, and in the same city, was a direct message for Israel that the blood of the shaheeds and their memory would pursue Israel everywhere (Daffa_media, the PIJ's Telegram channel in the West Bank, April 7, 2023).



PIJ Tulkarm Brigades operatives distribute candy and pastries in the Nur al-Shams refugee camp to celebrate the terrorist attack in Tel Aviv (Daffa_media, the PIJ's Telegram channel in the West Bank, April 8, 2023).

Shooting attack at the Hamra Junction in the Jordan Valley

► On the morning of April 7, 2023, Palestinian terrorists fired shots from a moving vehicle at an Israeli car with three passengers, a mother and her two daughters, at the Hamra Junction in the Jordan Valley. The vehicle rolled straight ahead and then veered to side, hitting the Palestinian vehicle which had overtaken and blocked it. The terrorists continued shooting at the mother and her daughters at pointblank range and then drove off. The daughters were declared dead at the scene. The mother died three days later. Twenty-two empty Kalashnikov bullet casings were found. Following the attack, IDF forces closed the roads in the area and initiated a pursuit of the terrorists. Several days later their vehicle was found by the PA security services in Nablus (IDF Twitter account and the Israeli media, April 7, 2023).

¹ On April 7, 2022, Raad Hazem carried out a shooting attack on Dizengoff Street in Tel Aviv, killing three Israeli civilians.



**Right: The scene of the shooting attack at the Hamra Junction (Palinfo website, April 10, 2023).
Left: A bullet hole in the door of the vehicle (spokesman's unit, Fire and Rescue Services, Judea and Samaria, April 7, 2023).**

Shooting attack at the Adam Traffic Circle

► On the morning of April 6, 2023, shots were fired at an IDF force at the Adam Traffic Circle (north of Jerusalem). The soldiers returned fire. One IDF soldier was wounded (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, April 6, 2023). The following day, during an Israeli security force activity in the village of al-Ram, a Palestinian suspected of having carried out the shooting was detained (IDF spokesman, April 7, 2023).

Stabbing attack at the Tzrifin Junction

► On the morning of April 4, 2023, a Palestinian armed with a knife arrived at the Tzrifin Junction (central Israel), assaulted and stabbed an IDF soldier and tried to steal his weapon. The soldier fought with him and was critically wounded. Another soldier was also wounded. The Palestinian was detained by passersby and police forces before he could escape. He was Mahmoud Awawda, 21 years old, from the village of Dura (south of Hebron). He held a permit to work in the Israeli settlements in Judea and Samaria and had entered Israeli territory illegally (Israeli media, April 4, 2023).

► Hamas praised the attack, claiming it had been carried out as a response to Israel's actions against Muslim worshippers and to Israeli plans to sacrifice a Paschal lamb on the Temple Mount. **Hamas spokesman Abd al-Latif al-Qanua** claimed the attack and one before it, the vehicular ramming attack near Bayt Ummar (April 1, 2023), showed the failure of Israeli security and "proved" the capabilities of the "resistance" (Shehab website, April 4, 2023).



The scene of the stabbing attack at the Tzrifin Junction (Magen David Adom Facebook page, April 4, 2023).

Shots fired at Ma'aleh Gilboa

► On the evening of April 3, 2023, shots were fired at Kibbutz Ma'aleh Gilboa (in Israeli territory on the border between the Gilboa and the PA, to the east of Jenin). No casualties were reported. Searches conducted in the kibbutz found bullet holes in the walls of several houses. IDF forces initiated a search for the shooters (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, April 3, 2023).

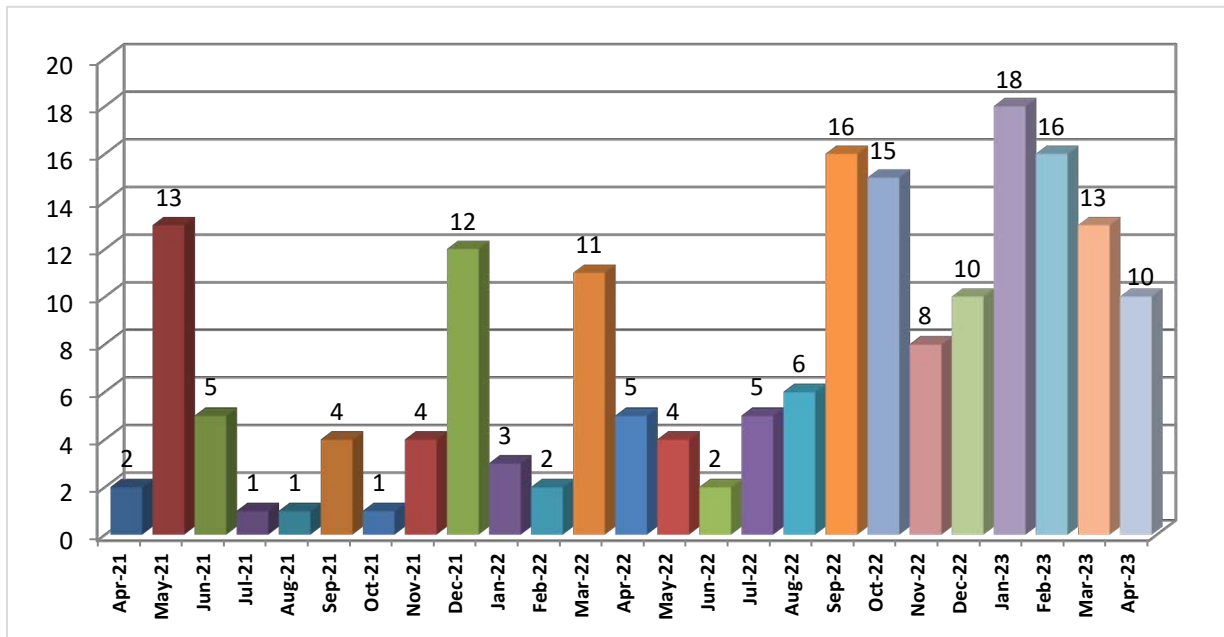
Attempted stabbing attack in Jerusalem

► On April 2, 2023, Border Police fighters detained a suspicious Bedouin from Rahat near the Damascus Gate in Jerusalem. A search revealed a pair of scissors. During interrogation she admitted she was planning to stab a policeman (Israel Police Force Twitter account, April 3, 2023).



The pair of scissors found in the woman's possession (Israel Police Force, April 3, 2023).

Critical Terrorist Attacks in Judea and Samaria since April 2021²



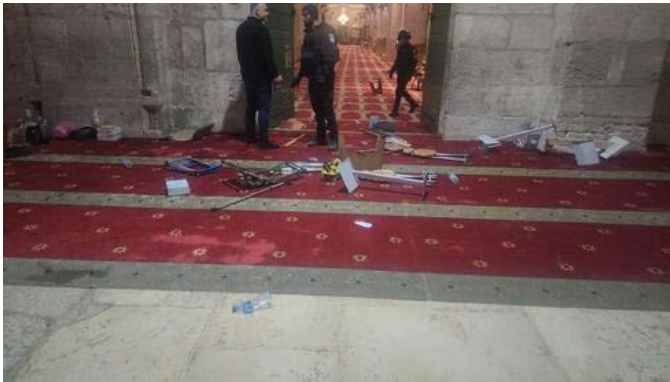
Jerusalem and the Temple Mount

Tension on the Temple Mount

► On the night of April 4, 2023, several hundred Palestinians rioted against Israeli security forces on the Temple Mount after entering al-Aqsa mosque, barricading themselves inside and refusing to leave. The pretext for the riot was the intention of a group of Israelis to sacrifice a Paschal lamb near the Temple Mount. A campaign was conducted calling on Palestinians to occupy the Temple Mount to prevent the sacrifice. After attempts to dialogue with the Palestinians inside al-Aqsa failed, the Israeli security forces entered the mosque to evacuate them. They threw chairs and other objects at the forces and shot fireworks at them. **There were also claims that they had pipe bombs in the mosque.** The Israeli security forces used tear gas and shock grenades to disperse the rioters. The Palestinians reported many wounded and claimed people inside the mosque had been beaten by the Israeli police. Considerable damage to the mosque was also reported. Dozens of Palestinians who refused to leave the mosque were detained by the police (Israeli media, April 5, 2023).

² A critical 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.

► Riots broke out on the Temple Mount again on the night of April 6, 2023, after Palestinians again tried to barricade themselves inside al-Aqsa to spend the night there (Israeli media, April 6, 2023).



Right: Rocks for throwing at Israeli police, prepared by rioters on the Temple Mount. Left: The damage done to al-Aqsa mosque by the rioters (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, April 5, 2023).



Palestinian cartoon warns Israelis not to enter the Temple Mount and raises an alert of the intention of Israeli extremists to sacrifice a Pascal lamb (al-Quds, April 5, 2023).

Reactions to the events on the Temple Mount

► The riots and other violence on the Temple Mount were documented by videos which were widely disseminated and received much Palestinian and general Muslim attention. Following the events Palestinians rioted in east Jerusalem and other locations in Judea and Samaria, and **carried out a number of terrorist attacks. Rockets were launched at Israel from three arenas, the Gaza Strip, south Lebanon and southern Syria.** The PA and terrorist organization leaders strongly condemned Israel's actions and called for action and issued threats in response:

- ◆ **Nabil Abu Rudeineh, spokesman for Mahmoud Abbas**, warned Israel not to cross the red lines of the holy sites, which would lead to "an explosion." He said "attacking" the holy sites (such as al-Aqsa mosque) and the worshippers were "the equivalent of waging war against the Palestinians and the Arab nation, and would ignite fires in the

Middle East." He assigned full responsibility to the government of Israel for any deterioration in the situation, and called on it to act responsibly [sic] (Wafa, April 5, 2023).

◆ **PA Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh** called what happened in Jerusalem "a great crime against the worshippers." He added that the [alleged] "Judaization" of al-Aqsa mosque was being carried out to prevent Muslims from praying there, and said that praying in al-Aqsa mosque was their right and did not depend on permission from Israel (Wafa, April 5, 2023).

◆ **Hussein al-Sheikh, general secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee**, said the "storming" of al-Aqsa mosque by Israeli security forces and the "barbaric attack" on the worshippers demanded urgent action at the Palestinian, Arab and international levels, and "everyone" had to be made responsible for protecting the holy sites and worshippers from Israel (Hussein al-Sheikh's Twitter account, April 5, 2023).

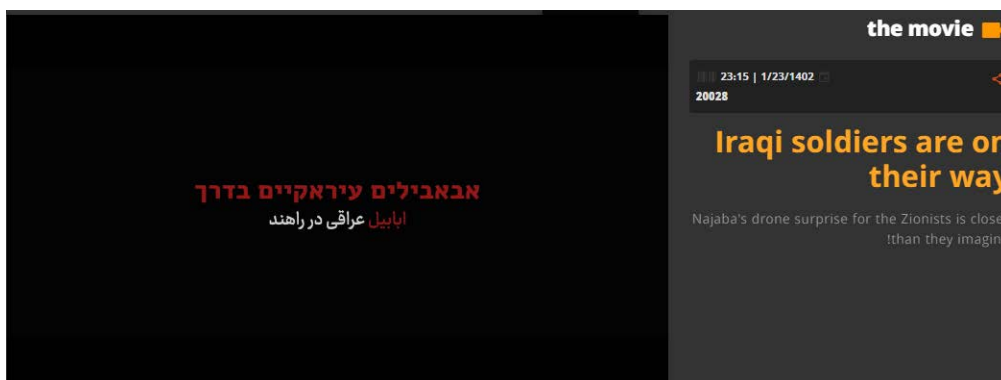
◆ **Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau**, and his deputy, **Saleh al-'Aroui**, issued announcements regarding the events. **Haniyeh** claimed that the events at al-Aqsa constituted an "unprecedented crime" which would have consequences. He called on the Palestinians in Judea and Samaria and on Israeli Arabs to go to al-Aqsa mosque to defend it. **Al-'Aroui** said aggression against al-Aqsa mosque and the worshippers was a crime the Palestinians and the "resistance" would respond to with force (Hamas website, April 5, 2023).

◆ **PIJ leader Ziyad al-Nakhalah** said what had happened in al-Aqsa mosque was a serious threat to the holy places, and the Palestinians had to plan for an inevitable confrontation in the coming days (PIJ website, April 5, 2023).

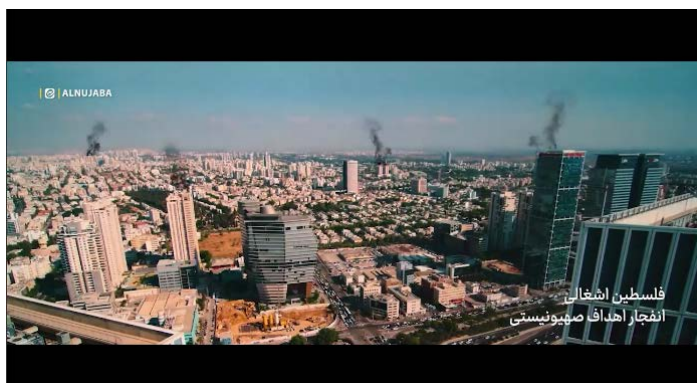
Not only Palestinians threatened Israel. The Nujaba Movement³ in Iraq issued a video threatening to send drones to attack Israel. The video begins with scenes from the riots on the Temple Mount. The main part is devoted to the movement's operations room where operatives examine and mark potential attack sites in Israel. It ends with an aerial

³ The **Nujaba Movement** is a pro-Iranian Shi'ite militia in Iraq established in 2013 by **Sheikh Akram al-Kaabi** (its secretary general) and the IRGC's Qods Force. It is one of the largest popular mobilization militias operated by the Qods Force, which funds it, provides it with weapons and trains its operatives. The militia is also supported by Hezbollah, with which al-Kaabi has had close relations for years. The militia adopted the ideology of the Islamic Revolution in Iran and took Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei as its own leader. For further information, see the May 25, 2020 report, "The Nujaba Movement, an Iraqi Shiite militia handled by Iran, also operates in the Gaza Strip."

photograph of Israel with several photoshopped columns of smoke rising from "attacked sites" with reports in the background in several languages, including Hebrew, about "attacks the movement carried out" against Israeli targets (Nujaba Movement website, April 12, 2023).



The beginning of the video. The Hebrew title, "The Iraqi Ababils [Iranian-manufactured drones] are coming" is in the original, and underneath is the translation into Persian. At the right is a link to the video, Google translation from Persian (Nujaba Movement website, April 12, 2023).



Right: The operations room. Left: Tel Aviv after a simulated attack (Nujaba Movement website, April 12, 2023).

The Friday prayer on the Temple Mount

► April 14, 2023, was the last Friday of Ramadan. The Islamic *waqf* on the Temple Mount reported that 250,000 Muslims had participated in the final prayer (Wafa, April 14, 2023). After the prayer a demonstration was held on the Temple Mount, which included an oath to defend al-Aqsa mosque and the promise of support for the "resistance," the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades (Hamas' military-terrorist wing) and its commander, Muhammad Deif, and for the Lion's Den network (al-Araby al-Jadeed, April 14, 2023). According to the Israeli police, shortly before the end of the prayer, several masked men waved flags and notices to incite the Muslims in the Temple Mount plaza. Eight suspects were detained (Israel Police Force Twitter account, April 14, 2023).



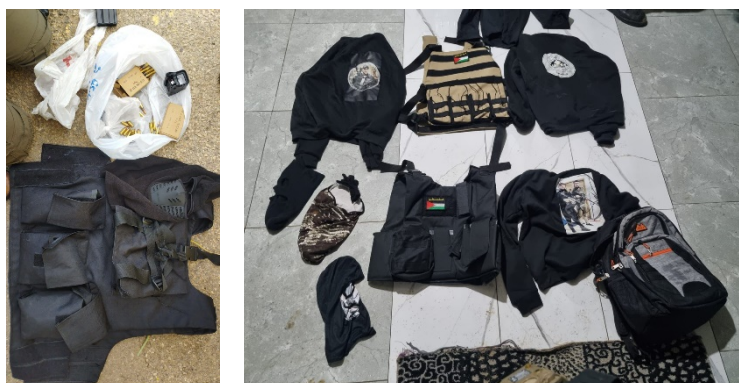
Right: The prayer on the Temple Mount on the last Friday of Ramadan (Wafa Facebook page, April 14, 2023). Left: A sign hung on the Temple Mount reading "Don't test our patience, the Sword of Jerusalem⁴ will not return to its sheath." Next to the text, the time, 18:00, is written, and the sign bears the picture Abu Obeida, spokesman for Hamas' military-terrorist wing, and the shadow image of Muhammad Deif (Twitter account of Haba al-Natshe, April 14, 2023).

Counterterrorism Activities

► This past week the Israeli security forces continued intensive counterterrorism activities in Judea and Samaria, detaining Palestinians suspected of involvement in terrorism and confiscating large quantities of weapons:

Jenin

► On April 11, 2023, the Israeli security forces operated to detain a terrorist squad in Jenin which was planning to carry out an attack. During the activity shots were fired at the forces and an IED was thrown at them. The forces returned fire. Five wanted Palestinians were detained (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, April 11, 2023).



Weapons seized in the activity in Jenin (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, April 11, 2023).

⁴ The name Hamas gave Operation Guardian of the Walls in 2021, which began with Hamas rocket fire targeting Jerusalem.

The Aqabat Jabr refugee camp

► On April 10, 2023, the Israeli security forces operated in the Aqabat Jabr refugee camp (south of Jericho) to detain a Palestinian wanted on suspicion of involvement in terrorist activities. During the operation riots broke out in several locations. As the forces left the camp Palestinians shot at them and threw IEDs and Molotov cocktails. The forces returned fire (IDF Twitter account, April 10, 2023).

► The ministry of health Ramallah reported the death of **Muhammad Fayiz Balhan,⁵ 15 years old** (Wafa, April 10, 2023). According to his father, Fayiz Balhan, he went shopping and saw young Palestinians throwing rocks at IDF forces, and when he went to help the Palestinians wounded by IDF fire he saw his dead son (al-Jazeera Mubasher, April 11, 2023).



Muhammad Fayiz Balhan (Wafa, April 10, 2023).

► **Nabil Abu Rudeineh and Muhammad Shtayyeh** related to his death while condemning a march to the Eviatar outpost attended by Knesset members and ministers Bezalel Smotrich and Itamar Ben-Gvir (Wafa, April 10, 2023).

Preventing arms smuggling

► On the morning of April 16, 2023, IDF surveillance identified two vehicles and suspicious movement near Kibbutz Neveh Ur in the Jordan Valley. Israeli security forces were dispatched to the site and halted a suspicious vehicle in which they found 15 handguns. Three suspects were detained (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, April 15, 2023).

⁵ In the media his name appears as Muhammad Fayiz Balhan Awadat.



The 15 handguns (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, April 16, 2023).

Palestinian killed in Azzun

► On April 8, 2023, during an IDF activity to secure a road near Azzun (east of Qalqilya), an IED was thrown at the forces. The soldiers shot at suspects who threw it (IDF Twitter account, April 8, 2023). The ministry of health in Ramallah reported the death of **'Aad Azzam Mahmoud Salim, 20 years old, from Azzun** (Wafa, April 8, 2023). **His mother said he wanted to die a shaheed and his wish had been fulfilled** (al-Jazeera Mubasher, April 12, 2023). **A military funeral was held for him with the governor of the Qalqilya district in attendance** (Facebook page of the governor of the Qalqilya district, April 9, 2023). The AAMB issued a mourning notice for him. Armed AAMB operatives also attended the funeral (Facebook page of photojournalist Ihab Radwan, April 9, 2023).



Right: The mourning notice issued for 'Aad Azzam Mahmoud Salim by AAMB military information (@nedalps Telegram channel, April 8, 2023). The funeral held in Qalqilya (Facebook page of the governor of the Qalqilya district, April 9, 2023).

Israel's South

Rocket and mortar shell fire into Israel⁶

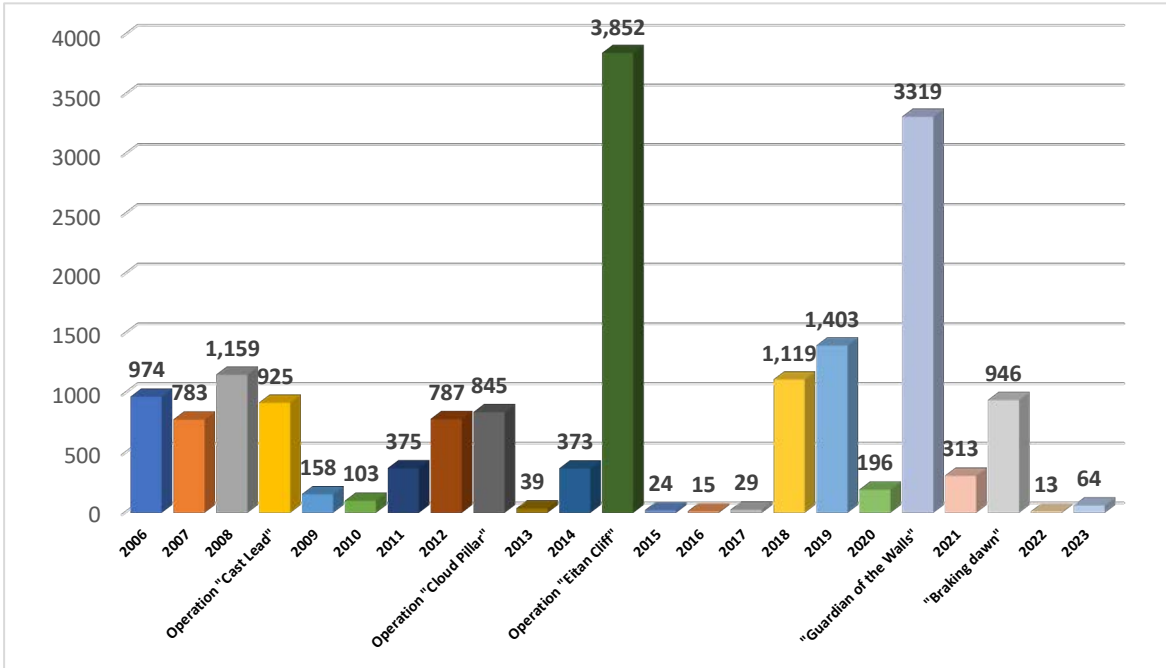
► At 3:00 in the morning on April 5, 2023, nine rocket launches were identified from the Gaza Strip. Four were intercepted by the Iron Dome aerial defense system and four fell in open areas. Somewhat later another rocket was fired at Israeli territory and also fell in an open area (IDF spokesman, April 5, 2023). The military-terrorist wing of the Popular Resistance Committees (PRC) claimed responsibility for the rocket fire. The media in the Gaza Strip reported the rockets were the "first response" to the events in al-Aqsa mosque, adding that the joint operations room of the Palestinian organizations had begun its official response to the "aggression."

► Another barrage of rockets was fired from the Gaza Strip on the night of April 6, 2023, in response to IDF attacks. **A total of 44 rockets were fired, eight intercepted by the Iron Dome aerial defense system and 23 falling in open areas.** The others apparently fell into the sea or inside the Gaza Strip. A house in Sderot was directly hit while the residents were in a protected area. The residents of the communities near the Gaza Strip were asked to stay in their protected areas. Several organizations and networks in the Gaza Strip claimed responsibility for the rocket fire.

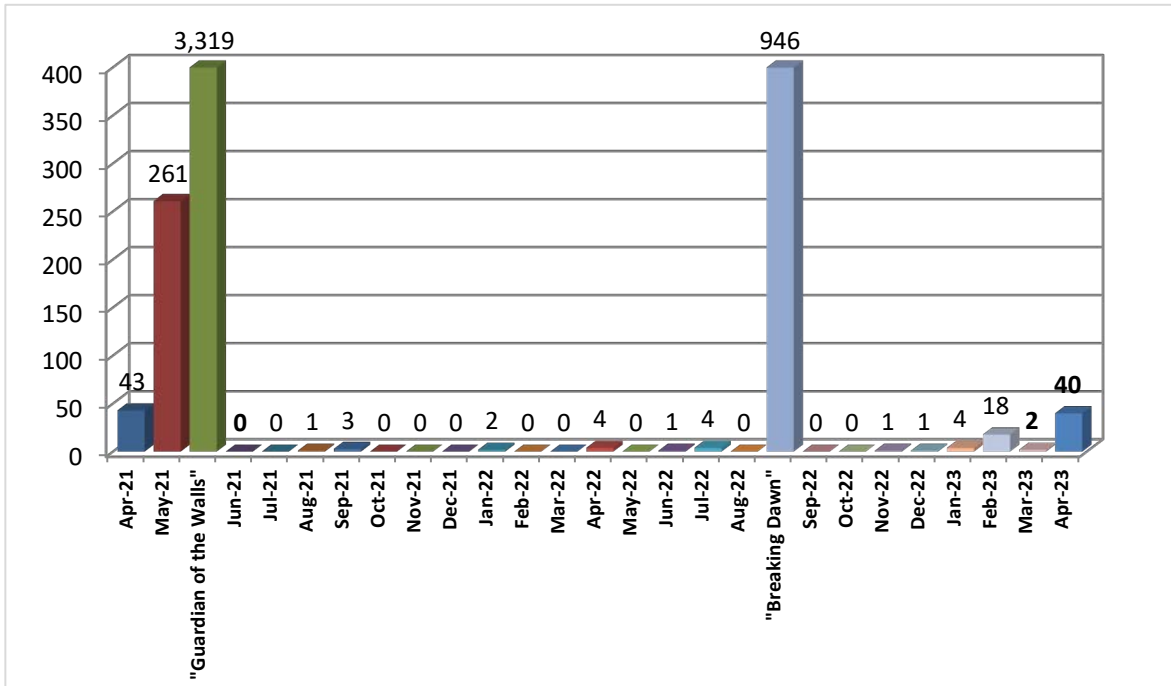
⁶ For further information see the April 17, 2023 report, "Rocket Fire Targeting Israel – Summary."

► In response to the rocket fire Israeli Air Force aircraft attacked Hamas terrorist targets, and artillery was fired at a number of Hamas posts. Hamas and other organizations reported having launched surface-to-air missiles at the IDF planes (Shehab, April 6, 2023).

Monthly Distribution of Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire since April 2021



Annual Distribution of Rocket Hits since 2006



Smuggling prevented from the sea to the southern Gaza Strip

► On the night of April 17, 2023, Israeli Navy forces halted a boat suspected of being used to smuggle arms to the Gaza Strip. The boat and its four passengers were taken for investigation (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, April 17, 2023).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

Isma'il Haniyeh visits Lebanon

► On April 5, 2023, **Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau**, arrived in Lebanon for a visit. He held a number of meetings, among them the following:

◆ **He held a meeting with Hassan Nasrallah.** Also present were Haniyeh's deputy, Saleh al-'Arouri, and a delegation of the Hamas leadership. According to reports they discussed developments in the Palestinian arena and al-Aqsa mosque, the escalating "resistance" in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip and regional political developments. Another issue reportedly discussed was the preparedness of the "resistance axis" and cooperation among its members for events and developments (Hezbollah's public relations website, April 9, 2023).

◆ On April 6, 2023, **he met in Beirut with the heads of the Palestinian organizations.** They discussed recent events, especially those in al-Aqsa mosque. After the meeting Haniyeh issued a statement condemning "Israel's aggression" and calling on the international community, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Arab League to take responsibility and act urgently. **The statement also called on the Palestinian organizations to close ranks and escalate their activities against Israel** (Hamas website, April 6, 2023).



Right: Nasrallah meets with the Hamas leadership (Hamas website, April 10, 2023). Left: The heads of the Palestinian organizations meet in Beirut (Hamas website, April 6, 2023).

Remarks from Saleh al-'Arouri at the "Shield of Jerusalem" conference in Lebanon

► On April 12, 2023, a conference was held in Beirut on the eve of World Jerusalem Day⁷ with the motto, "The Shield of Jerusalem: the West Bank goes forth into a new era." The conference was organized by the Bahth Center for Palestinian Studies and Strategy at the Imam Khomeini Center of the Iranian community in Beirut. Speeches were given by Hashem Safi al-Din, chairman of Hezbollah's Executive Council, the Iranian ambassador to Lebanon and ranking members of the Palestinian organizations (qudsnet.com, April 13, 2023).

► **Saleh al-'Arouri, deputy head of Hamas' political bureau**, gave a speech on behalf of the movement. His main points were the following (Hamas website, al-Andalou News, qudsnet.com, April 12, 2023):

◆ **The events on the Temple Mount:** During the final ten days of Ramadan the "resistance" halted the settlers' "invasion" of al-Aqsa mosque. The Israeli government did not prevent the settlers from entering al-Aqsa mosque on the last day of Passover because it developed a conscience but rather thanks to the "resistance." He added that the response of the "resistance" from Lebanon, Judea, Samaria, the Gaza Strip and the territories of Israel "proved" the mosque had Allah to protect it, the people and the "resistance" which redeemed it, and Israel chose to surrender. He also claimed the "resistance" had become a "great obsession" for Israel, and the Palestinian "resistance" would stop the aggression and liberate al-Aqsa mosque.

◆ **The situation inside Israel:** Israel's internal situation was one of unprecedented conflict and division, and Israel was going to disintegrate internally and be lost.

◆ **The "resistance axis:"** According to Saleh al-'Arouri, conditions were moving swiftly in a good direction for the "resistance axis." The entire Muslim nation belonged to the "resistance axis," which was growing and accelerating. In addition, the wave of normalization [of diplomatic relations between Israel and the Arab states] was receding.

◆ **Iran:** Saleh al-'Arouri praised the Islamic Republic for its open support of the "resistance" and refusal to recognize Israel's legitimacy. Iran, he said, was the only

⁷ **World Jerusalem Day has been marked annually on the last Friday of Ramadan since 1979** according to a decision made by Khomeini, the originator of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. The objective of the day is to symbolize the support of Iran and the Arab-Muslim world for the Palestinian issue and the "liberation" of Jerusalem.

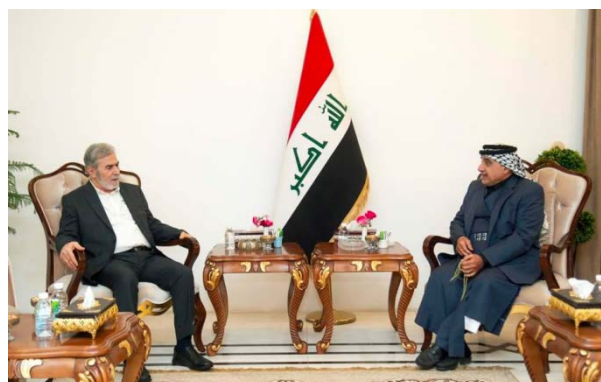
country talking about eradicating Israel as a cancerous tumor and as the main cause of tragedy in the Middle East.



Right: The conference in Beirut (qudsnet.com, April 13, 2023). Left: Saleh al-'Arouri (YouTube, April 12, 2023).

Ziyad al-Nakhalah visits Iraq

- ▶ On April 12, 2023, **PIJ leader Ziyad al-Nakhalah** arrived for an official visit in Iraq, heading a delegation of PIJ members (Shehab Twitter account, April 12, 2023). On April 14, 2023, he met separately with **Muhammad Shi'a al-Sudani, the Iraqi prime minister**, and held a meeting on the same day with **Abd al-Latif Rashid, the Iraqi president**. They both welcomed the delegation's visit and said Iraq stood with the Palestinian people and supported all forms of the "resistance." Al-Nakhalah thanked them for their support of the Palestinian people (PIJ Twitter account, April 14, 2023).
- ▶ Before the visits al-Nakhalah met with 'Adel Abd al-Mahdi, former Iraqi prime minister who said the Iraqi people and government were an integral part of the Palestinian "struggle," adding that it was necessary to oppose Israel's plans on the Temple Mount and to work to end the "occupation" (al-'Ahad, April 13, 2023). Al-Nakhalah also met with Mohamed Kazem al-Sadeq, the Iranian ambassador to Iraq



Left: Ziyad al-Nakhalah meets with former Iraqi prime minister al-Mahdi (al-'Ahad, April 13, 2023). Left: al-Nakhalah meets with the Iranian ambassador to Iraq (IRNA website in Arabic, April 13, 2023).

The Palestinian Authority (PA)

The PA leadership meets with foreign diplomats and defames and demonizes Israel

► During the past two weeks members of the Palestinian leadership continued meeting with foreign diplomats to defame and demonize Israel. They accused Israel of responsibility for the current situation on the ground and regional escalation, and called for international intervention and for pressure to be exerted on Israel:

◆ **Hussein al-Sheikh, general secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee**, met with **Hady Amr, deputy assistant secretary for Israeli and Palestinian affairs in the American State Department's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs**. Al-Sheikh stressed the need for active, influential American intervention to exert pressure on Israel and force it to stop its "escalation" against the Palestinians (Hussein al-Sheikh's Twitter account, April 13, 2023).

◆ **PA Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh**, interviewed on April 11, 2023 by CNN, claimed the "occupation" was the source of all the violence, the policy of the government of Israel was to shoot to kill and its ministers called for the obliteration of Palestinian cities, such as Hawwara. He claimed the violence employed by the Israel police when they entered the Temple Mount enraged the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, Ramallah, Judea and Samaria, Lebanon and Syria. He claimed Israel had created the escalation and it also had the power to defuse the situation. He also claimed all Israel's activities on the Temple Mount, the killings in the refugee camps and the appropriation of land were the cause of a tragedy leading to violence (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, April 11, 2023).



Right: Hussein al-Sheikh meets with Hady Amr (Hussein al-Sheikh's Twitter account, April 13, 2023). Left: Muhammad Shtayyeh interviewed by CNN (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, April 11, 2023).

The Palestinian government authorizes its budget for 2023

► At the weekly government meeting on April 3, 2023, Muhammad Shtayyeh said the government had authorized the PA's budget for 2023 and brought it to Mahmoud Abbas for confirmation. He said it would be an emergency budget, which meant expenditures would be made in accordance with the funds in the PA treasury, adding that **the PA's budget deficit was \$360 million, and after Israel deducted the tax revenues it collected for the PA it would be \$610 million.** He also said Israel's deduction of the revenues and the decrease in international aid had exerted pressure on the PA, but they would not change their policy [of paying monthly salaries to Palestinian terrorists in Israeli jails, wounded Palestinian terrorists and the families of shaheeds] in return for money (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, April 3, 2023).

Nakba Day to be marked by the UN General Assembly

► The Palestinians chalked up another UN achievement. **Riyad Mansour, the Palestinian delegate to the UN,** said that for the first time, Nakba Day,⁸ which falls on May 15, would be marked this year by the UN General Assembly. The UN, he said, had recognized the Nakba and the need to mark it in the General Assembly. Mahmoud Abbas will give a speech for the occasion.

► On another note, Mansour said that on April 25, 2023, the foreign ministers of the Security Council would meet, headed by the presiding president, Sergey Lavrov, the Russian foreign minister. The Palestinian foreign minister, Riyad al-Maliki, would be in attendance and raise the issue of Israel's aggression against the Palestinians (Ma'an, April 16, 2023).

⁸ The day marking the day the Arabs left, fled or were expelled during Israel's War of Independence in 1948, turning them into refugees.

Appendix

Rocks, Molotov cocktails and other attacks

► **In Judea, Samaria and east Jerusalem Palestinians continued throwing rocks and Molotov cocktails at Israeli vehicles driving on the roads.** The more prominent events were the following:⁹

- ◆ **April 18, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus and other vehicles near al-Aroub (north of Hebron) No casualties were reported; vehicles were damaged.
- ◆ **April 18, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Sinjil (northeast of Ramallah). No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **April 15, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus and other vehicles near Efrat (southwest of Bethlehem). The bus driver was injured.
- ◆ **April 13, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus near Yitav (north of Jericho). No casualties were reported; the bus was damaged. A similar attack occurred on April 3.
- ◆ **April 13, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle from a passing car near Sinjil (northeast of Ramallah). No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **April 9, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle on the Nebi Elias bypass road (east of Qalqilya). Rocks were thrown at the same location the previous day. No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **April 9, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle between the Postal Junction and Ras Karkour (northwest of Ramallah). No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **April 9, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle north of Ofra (northeast of Ramallah). No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **April 8, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Turmus Aya (northeast of Ramallah). No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **April 8, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near the Postal Junction. One passenger was injured and the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **April 7, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle in Hawwara (south of Nablus). No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.

⁹ Information and pictures from Rescue Without Borders in Judea and Samaria unless otherwise noted.

◆**April 6, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus and other vehicles on the Husan bypass road (west of Bethlehem). No casualties were reported; vehicles were damaged.

◆**April 4, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Bayt Ummar (north of Hebron) No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.