



Spotlight on Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

(June 28 – July 4, 2023)

Overview

- ▶ This past week there were two terrorist attacks: a stabbing in Bnei Brak and a shooting at the settlement of Avnei Hefetz (southeast of Tulkarm). Both were carried out in the wake of the events in Jenin. An attempted stabbing was prevented at the Shuafat Crossing (north of Jerusalem); the attackers were 14 and 12 years old. Hamas' military-terrorist wing denied any connection to the rockets fired from the Jenin region on June 26, 2023.
- ▶ On July 3, 2023, the Israeli security forces initiated a broad counterterrorism activity in Jenin and its refugee camp, now in its second day. So far, the forces have located and destroyed laboratories for the manufacture of weapons, IEDs, weapons, and operations rooms equipped with cameras and communications systems. Several dozen Palestinians suspected of involvement in terrorist activities have been detained. The ministry of health in Ramallah reported ten Palestinians killed and 100 wounded. The IDF spokesman reported that nine of the ten Palestinians killed were involved in terrorist activities. Despite the activity in Jenin, the routine entrance of Palestinian workers into Israel from the Jenin and other Palestinian Authority (PA) areas continues. In response to the events in Jenin, Mahmoud Abbas halted meetings and communications with Israel, reported the continuation of the suspension of the security coordination and appealed to the UN Security Council and the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague.
- ▶ About 100,000 Muslims went to al-Aqsa mosque for the Eid al-Adha prayer. Hamas hung signs on the Temple Mount with pictures of the terrorists who shot and killed four Israeli civilians near the settlement of Eli; the police removed the signs.
- ▶ The Gaza Strip remains relatively quiet. Hamas exploited the Eid al-Adha holiday for three displays of various weapons held by its military-terrorist wing. Interviewed by an Iranian newspaper, Ziyad al-Nakhalah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) secretary general, related to the support Iran gives the PIJ in developing and acquiring weapons, and in encouraging terrorism in Judea and Samaria.

► During a meeting in Ramallah with a delegation of American Congressmen, Mahmoud Abbas' spokesman warned that Israel's activities against the Palestinians would "ignite the Middle East." He continued his support for the children of Palestinian terrorists in Israeli jails and held a ceremony to honor them for Eid al-Adha. Qudri Abu Bakr, chairman of the commission for prisoners and released prisoners' affairs, was killed in a traffic accident in Samaria. The Palestinians continue bringing delegations of foreign representatives to visit the village of Turmus Aya, which was attacked by Jewish settlers in revenge for the killings in Eli.

Judea and Samaria

Stabbing in Bnei Brak

► On the evening of July 3, 2023, a Palestinian teenager armed with a knife went to the Qiryat Herzog neighborhood of Bnei Brak, approached a young Israeli man and stabbed him. The Israeli fought him off and was taken to a hospital for treatment. The stabber fled the scene and was apprehended a short time later. He was a 14 year-old Palestinian from Jenin. According to the Israeli Chief of Police, the attack came as a "response" to the events in Jenin (Israeli media, July 3, 2023).

Shots fired at the settlement of Avnei Hefetz

► On the morning of July 3, 2023, shots were fired at the settlement of Avnei Hefetz (southeast of Tulkarm). No casualties were reported; there was a bullet hole in the wall of one of the houses. IDF forces searched for the shooter (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, July 3, 2023).

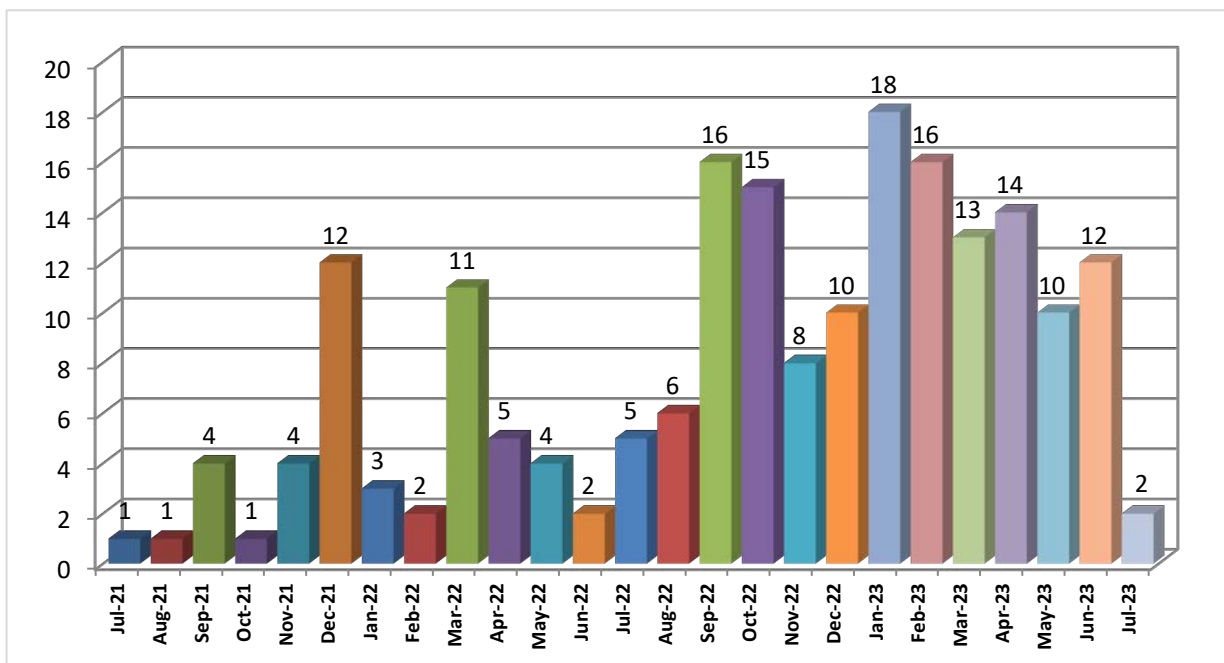
Attempted stabbing and the Shuafat Crossing

► On the evening of June 28, 2023, a 12 year-old Palestinian holding with a knife went to the Shuafat Crossing (north of Jerusalem). The fighters stationed at the crossing saw him and initiated procedure for detaining a suspect. The boy threw the knife on the ground and was apprehended (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, June 28, 2023).



The knife found in the possession of the young Palestinian who went to the Shuafat Crossing (Israel Police Force Spokeman's unit, June 28, 2023)

Critical Terrorist Attacks in Judea and Samaria since July 2021¹



The Israeli security force activity in Jenin²

► At approximately 1 a.m. on July 3, 2023, Israeli security forces began a military activity in Jenin and the Jenin refugee camp. It started with aerial attacks on terrorist targets, including the joint operations room used as a base for terrorist activities and attacks by the military-terrorist wings of the Palestinian terrorist organizations in the Jenin refugee camp. During the aerial attacks a large ground force entered the city accompanied by engineering vehicles.

¹ 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.

² For further information see the July 3, 2023, report, "Israeli Security Force Activity in Jenin and Initial Reactions – As of 1 p.m., July 3, 2023."

Several dozen Palestinians were detained by Israeli security forces on suspicion of involvement in terrorist activity.

► As of July 4, 2023, the activity continues. The IDF spokesman reported dozens of IDF attacks were carried out by UAVs to enable the forces to operate; some of them attacked terrorist targets. So far five laboratories for the manufacture of weapons and about 300 IEDs have been located and destroyed, and 120 Palestinians suspected of involvement in terrorist activity have been detained. The IDF spokesman also reported that contrary to Palestinian accusations, there has been no limitation on the movement of Palestinian ambulances or their access to the wounded. In addition, despite the activity in Jenin, about 3,000 Palestinians left the Jenin region and about 100,000 in total left the PA territories to work in Israel (IDF spokesman and Israeli media, July 4, 2023).

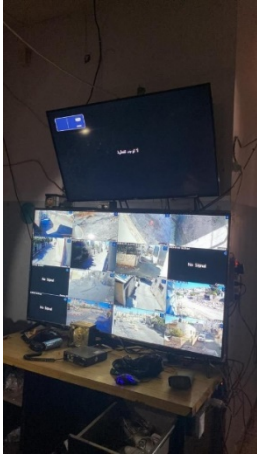
► The following were the more prominent events of the past two days (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, July 4, 2023):

- ◆ On the morning of July 4, 2023, the forces located and destroyed an underground shaft in the Jenin refugee camp used to store IEDs and two terrorist operations rooms.



Right: Underground shaft used to store IEDs. Left: Operations room (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, July 4, 2023).

- ◆ On July 3, 2023, the forces located and destroyed a laboratory containing hundreds of IEDs ready for detonation, an underground space filled with weapons, 12 magazines and an M-4 rifle, as well as several operations rooms used for monitoring and surveillance.



Right: Weapons and other military equipment found in the Jenin refugee camp. Left: An operations, monitoring and surveillance room found in the Jenin refugee camp (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, July 3 and 4, 2023).

◆ On July 3, 2023, armed Palestinians and Israeli security forces exchanged fire; the Palestinians had barricaded themselves in a mosque in the Jenin refugee camp. The forces broke into the mosque and located two underground spaces filled with weapons and explosives.



Underground space in the floor of a mosque in the Jenin refugee camp found to contain weapons and explosives (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, July 3, 2023).

► At 8 a.m. on July 4, 2023, the ministry of health in Ramallah updated the number of Palestinian fatalities to ten and the number of wounded to 100, 20 of them in critical condition (ministry of health in Ramallah Facebook page, July 4, 2023). The IDF spokesman reported that nine of the ten fatalities were terrorist operatives (IDF spokesman, July 4, 2023) (Information on the Palestinian fatalities will appear in a separate report).

► The Palestinians reported that IDF forces used loudspeakers to demand hundreds of Jenin refugee camp residents leave their houses. According to reports, they found shelter near hospitals and the Jenin municipality building (Wafa, July 3, 2023). **Kamal Abu al-Rab, deputy Jenin district governor**, reported that 3,000 of the refugee camp's 18,000 residents had so far left the camp and arrangements were being made to house them (France24 website, July 3, 2023).



Jenin refugee camp residents leave their houses (Right: Hamza Hamza's Twitter account, July 4, 2023. Left: Alhayat Press website Twitter account, July 4, 2023).

► **Saleh al-'Arouri, deputy head of Hamas' political bureau**, claimed they had expected Jenin would be attacked, and they had the capabilities to deter the Israeli forces. He said all the fighters in Jenin were united and had full popular support. He also claimed they could capture soldiers, and that one of the objectives of every battle they waged was to release Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails. He warned the Israeli forces that if they progressed towards the center of the Jenin refugee camp they would find themselves in a battle whose price would be higher than they expected [sic]. He added that they were waiting for "resistance" reinforcements [terrorist operatives] from Judea and Samaria and were holding continuous consultations in the Palestinian organizations' joint operations room in the Gaza Strip. He claimed there was no difference between the "resistance" in the Judea and Samaria and the "resistance" in the West Bank, and they were united by the issue of Jerusalem. He claimed that since the beginning of the combat in Jenin, Hamas had been conducting precise evaluations of the situation and analyzing the developments on the ground, and was taking all the necessary steps (al-Jazeera TV website, July 3, 2023; 24newspal website, July 3, 2023). During an interview Saleh al-'Arouri called on **"resistance" fighters to capture IDF soldiers**. He also said the mediators would inform Israel that if it crossed the red lines, events would spin out of control far beyond what Israel expected. He claimed it was possible the confrontation

would develop and extend beyond the West Bank, depending on developments in the Jenin refugee camp (Hamas website, July 3, 2023).

► In the wake of the events in Jenin, Mahmoud Abbas convened an emergency meeting of the Palestinian leadership. They decided the PA would suspend meetings, communications and the continuation of security coordination with Israel, appeal immediately to the UN Security Council for implementation of Security Council Resolution 2334,³ call on the ICC in The Hague to speed up treatment of the files sent by the Palestinians, call for the cancellation of Israel's UN membership and continue activities in the international arena to strengthen the Palestinian positions (Wafa, July 3, 2023).



Mahmoud Abbas chairs the Palestinian leadership emergency meeting in the Muqata'a in Ramallah (Wafa, July 3, 2023).

Palestinian killed near Beit El

► The ministry of health in Ramallah reported the death of **Muhammad Imad Hasnein, 21 years old**, killed by Israeli security force fire at the northern entrance to al-Bireh. He was wounded while participating in a "spontaneous march" in response to the IDF activity in Jenin. Originally from the Gaza Strip, he lived in Ramallah. On May 15, 2019, he was detained by Israeli security forces after being wounded in the leg (Wafa, July 3, 2023). His father is an officer in the PA intelligence apparatus (Twitter account of senior Fatah figure Muneir al-Jaghob,⁴ July 4, 2023). Fatah claimed him as one of its operatives; he was a student at al-Istiqlal University (the

³ On December 23, 2016, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 2334, which determined that the Israeli settlements in the West Bank territories and east Jerusalem, occupied in 1967 and called by the Security Council "occupied Palestinian territories," were illegal (Wikipedia).

⁴ Muneir al-Jaghob was head of the media information office of Fatah's bureau of mobilization and organization until he was detained by Palestinian military intelligence on January 18, 2023. He is currently responsible for public relations and media information in the PLO's department of negotiations.

PA academy for security studies in Jericho) (Telegram channel of the Awda TV net of Fatah's media information and cultural commission, July 3, 2023).



Muhammad Imad Hasnein (Telegram channel of the Awda TV network of Fatah's media information and cultural commission, July 3, 2023).

Hamas military-terrorist wing denies its operatives fired rockets

- ▶ A short time after rockets were fired at Israel from the region of Jenin (June 26, 2023), the al-Ayash Battalion in western Jenin, which belongs to Hamas military-terrorist wing, issued a video which they claimed documented the firing of two Qassam 1 rockets at Ram-On, an Israeli moshav west of Jenin (al-Ayash Battalion in western Jenin Telegram channel, June 26, 2023). A caption read, "Tomorrow Tel Aviv will announce mourning." The publication of the video was accompanied by a post reading, "It is only a matter of time before you hear that al-Ayash al-Qassam rockets have crushed the Zionist enemy...and soon the sirens will sound, announcing the beginning in the West Bank and a new phase of the clash with the Zionist occupier will be recorded...and Tel Aviv is not far way and will be within the sight of the jihad fighters" (@alqassam_jenin Telegram channel, June 26, 2023).
- ▶ The following day, a group of military-terrorist wing operatives held a press conference in the Jenin refugee camp, where an announcement was read claiming that the al-Qassam operatives in Jenin were not responsible for the rocket fire and had not coordinated with any group to fire them. They stated that their claims of responsibility are issued exclusively through their official websites (Jenin al-Qassam Telegram channel, June 27, 2023).



**Jenin al-Qassam denies firing two rockets at Israeli territory
(Muhammad Ali Khazem's Twitter account, June 27, 2023).**

IDF UAV intercepted in the skies over Jenin

► The Jerusalem Brigades' Jenin Battalion announced its operatives and al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades (AAMB) operatives had shot at and intercepted an IDF UAV (Jenin Battalion's alternative Telegram channel, July 2, 2023).



**Alleged remains of the UAV intercepted in Jenin
(Jenin Battalion's alternative Telegram channel, July 2, 2023).**

Eid al-Adha prayer on the Temple Mount

► The Palestinian media reported that 100,000 Muslims went to pray on the Temple Mount for Eid al-Adha (QudsN Twitter account, June 28, 2023). According to reports, a large sign was hung in front of al-Aqsa mosque signed by Hamas and reading, "Every year our soldiers shed their blood because al-Aqsa mosque is a red line." The sign showed a generic uniformed operative holding a rifle and pictures the two terrorists shot and killed four Israelis near the settlement of Eli on June 20, 2023 (al-Quds al-Arabi, June 28, 2023). The Israeli police reported the detention of 15 people suspected of hanging signs with pictures of terrorist operatives and of waving Hamas flags (Israel Police Force Arabic Facebook page, June 28, 2023).



Right: The mass prayer on the Temple Mount (QudsN Twitter account, June 28, 2023). Left: Hamas sign hung on the Temple Mount (Paldf Twitter account, June 29, 2023).



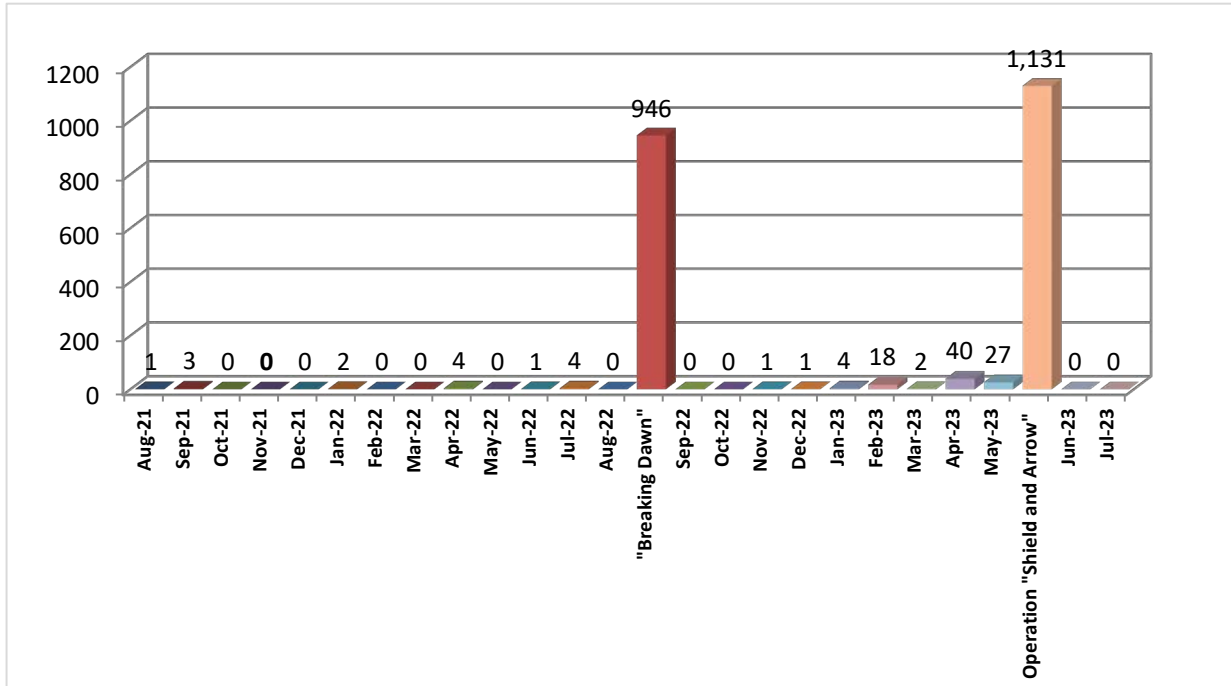
Right: A policeman removes the sign. Left: Hamas flag and bullet seized on the Temple Mount (Israel Police Force Arabic Facebook page, June 28, 2023).

Israel's South

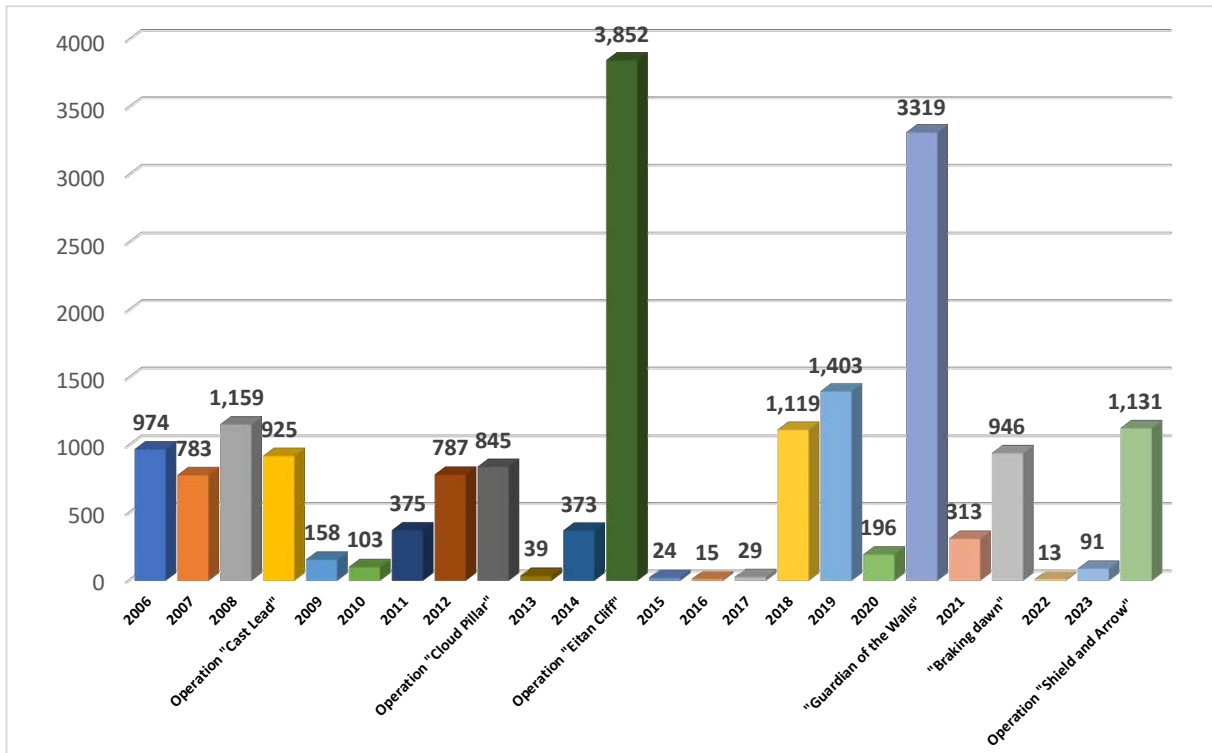
Rocket and mortar shell fire into Israel

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

Monthly Distribution of Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire since August 2021



Annual Distribution of Rocket Hits since 2006



Developments in the Gaza Strip

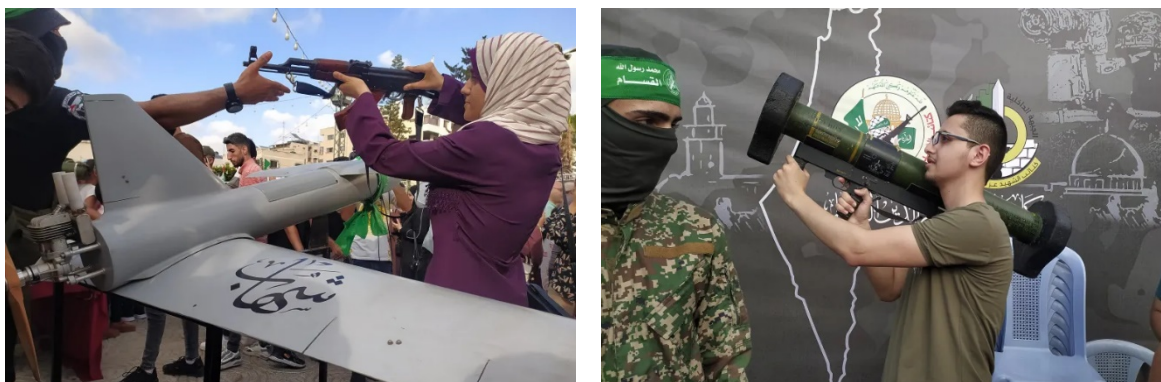
Exhibition of weapons in the Gaza Strip

- For Eid al-Adha the headquarters of Hamas' military-terrorist wing's "home front" organized exhibitions of weapons in the northern Gaza Strip, Gaza City the central Gaza Strip. Their theme was, "The resistance, pictures and souvenirs." The exhibition in the northern Gaza Strip was opened by **Abu Anas al-Ghandour, commander of the northern Gaza Strip Brigade**, who explained the weapons displayed to senior Hamas figures present at the site (Telegram channel of photojournalist Anas al-Sharif, July 1, 2023).
- According to a home front operative nicknamed "Abu Muhammad," the objective of the event was to enable the "resistance-supporting public" to see for themselves some of the military wing's weapons. He said that for the most part the weapons and other military equipment had been produced by their engineers, the most prominent of whom was Jamal al-Zebda.⁵ According to Abu Muhammad, the activity enhanced the local residents' ties to the "resistance" [terrorist organizations] and contributed to strengthening "resistance culture," especially among the younger generation. He said he was happy to see women, teenagers and entire families visiting the exhibition, taking their pictures with "resistance" weapons (Alaraby TV website, July 1, 2023; aljazeera.net, July 1, 2023).



Right: Invitation to the display (Riadh al-Bashiti's Twitter account, June 27, 2023). Left: The exhibition in Gaza City (ghadeer kamal's Twitter account, June 30, 2023).

⁵ A former senior lecturer at the Islam University in Gaza City who died in a targeted killing during Operation Guardian of the Walls (May 2021). He developed weapons for Hamas' military-terrorist wing. For further information see the July 6, 2021 report, "The attack on a senior lecturer of the Islamic University of Gaza during Operation Guardian of the Walls emphasized once again the connection between the university, which enjoys EU funding, and Hamas."



Weapons exhibited in Gaza City (aljazeera.net, July 1, 2023).



Right: Abu Anas al-Ghandour, commander of the northern Gaza Strip Brigade (wearing the black cap), a member of Hamas' political bureau, Suheil al-Hindi and Musheir al-Masri cut the ribbon to open the exhibition in the northern Gaza Strip (Telegram channel of photojournalist Anas al-Sharif, July 1, 2023). Left: The Arabic on the missiles (top to bottom) reads, "Sword of Jerusalem [the Palestinian name for Operation Guardian of the Walls]/the missile hit a jeep in Netiv Ha'Asara; "Sword of Jerusalem"/the missile hit a bus in Zikim; "Spearhead" [the name Hamas gave to the exposure of an IDF force in Khan Yunis in November 2018] (@A270545631 Twitter account, July 1, 2023).

Ziyad al-Nakhalah interviewed by al-Wefaq, an Iranian newspaper

► During his most recent visit to Iran, **Ziyad al-Nakhalah, PIJ secretary general**, was interviewed by al-Wefaq, an Iranian Arabic-language newspaper. He related to the following:

◆ **The Palestinian organizations' joint operations room in the Gaza Strip:** al-Nakhalah said the concept of the joint operations room as a center for command, direction and control, etc., was not precise. In reality, he claimed, operations' room was an expression of the "resistance" forces' coordination on the battlefield, in choosing targets for rocket fire and for mutual support. A more precise description would be a center for coordinating the "resistance" forces' direct connections on the ground and for monitoring clashes. Coordination was implemented according to need.

◆ **Weapons' development:** according to al-Nakhalah, Palestinian military activity developed through attaining expertise on the ground, experience and ties with the

Iranian Republic after the Islamic Revolution. That enabled the Palestinians to accumulate extensive experience and expertise in manufacturing [weapons] and arming themselves. He said today the Palestinians manufactured many of the weapons they use against Israel.

◆ **Arming Judea and Samaria:** asked if the call of Iranian supreme leader Ali Khamenei to arm Judea and Samaria had been implemented, al-Nakhalah said that based on the call they had formulated a program which included smuggling weapons or buying them directly from the Israelis. "There was a great focus in order for the West Bank to move from a state of coexistence and calm, to a state of resistance that we see today, and of course all of this is under the directives of Ali Khamenei," he said. "During our last meeting with him in Tehran, he renewed the call for that and for the development of resistance in the West Bank."⁶ Al-Nakhalah said that demanded a great effort from the Palestinians and help from Iran.

◆ **The PIJ and the "resistance" in Judea and Samaria:** al-Nakhalah said the PIJ had been working to establish battalions in all the Palestinian cities, and their size and strength varied from place to place according to the PIJ's ability to arm them. The Jenin Battalion was prominent because it was the first and because many of its commanders had been killed. Battalions and squads had been established in all the Palestinian cities, he claimed, but he did not mean to deny the existence of fighters from Hamas and other organizations. He said PIJ operatives had begun appealing to the lower ranks of Fatah operatives, because some of them objected to the PA and had influence on the ground. The PIJ gave them support and armed such groups, and they helped spread the "resistance" and national unity. The PIJ had also benefitted from former prisoners who had experience.

◆ **Rocket fire from south Lebanon, April 6, 2023:** al-Nakhalah claimed it was not surprising that rockets had been fired from Lebanon in solidarity with the Palestinians and their activities to defend al-Aqsa mosque. The rocket fire was also meant to raise the morale of the Palestinians, to tell them that the "resistance" in Lebanon stood with them. The rockets from Lebanon, even though there were only a few of them, were very significant because they signaled that the "resistance" in Lebanon could intervene on

⁶ <https://www.iranintl.com/en/202307014468>

the side of the Palestinians and sent a signal to Israel that the "resistance" in Lebanon would stand beside the Palestinians and not leave them alone.

◆ **Iranian aid:** the late Qassem Soleimani, commander of the IRGC's Qods Force, had been present in the Palestinian arena, said al-Nakhalah, and Iran provided the Palestinian "resistance" with knowledge, training and economic support, but "there was no need to exaggerate." Most of Iran's support was security-military, and that was important, but there was also humanitarian aid for the families of shaheeds and prisoners, and other humanitarian assistance. Iran also provided military information and weapons. Asked if the same connection would continue with Esmail Qaani [Qassem Soleimani's successor], he said that of course it would, because Soleimani and Qaani represented Iran and its policy of supporting the Palestinians (al-Wefaq, June 30, 2023).



The al-Nakhalah interview with al-Wefaq (al-Wefaq, June 30, 2023).

Senior PIJ figures visit Syria

► A delegation of senior PIJ figures, including **Nafez Azzam, PIJ political bureau secretary, Ahmed al-Mudallal, political bureau member, Fathi Hajazi, political bureau member and in charge of the northern Gaza Strip, and Abu Mujahed, PIJ representative in Damascus,** paid a visit to Syria where they held several meetings. On June 29, 2023, they met with **Abdallah Sabri, Yemen's ambassador to Syria.** They stressed the depth of the relations between Palestinians and Yemenis, and thanked the Yemeni Houthi's leadership for its support of the Palestinian issue (Paltoday, June 30, 2023).



The PIJ delegation and the Yemeni ambassador to Damascus. Left to right: Ahmed al-Mudallal, the Yemeni ambassador, Nafez Azzam and Fathi Hajazi (Paltoday, June 30, 2023).

► On July 2, 2023, the delegation met with **Hossein Akbari, the Iranian ambassador to Syria**, at the PIJ's general secretariat office in Damascus. Nafez Azzam thanked Iran for its support of Palestinian rights and the Palestinian "resistance." He made mention of the most recent PIJ delegation to Iran, when Iran stressed the importance of the Palestinian issue. **Azzam said they would continue their jihad and noted the Palestinian "resistance" relied a great deal on Iranian support.** Akbari said **Iran was performing its religious obligation to "Palestine" and would continue until the realization of "Allah's promise of victory"** (Paltoday, July 2, 2023).



Nafez Azzam meets with the Iran ambassador in Damascus (Paltoday, July 2, 2023).

The brother of the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades' Gaza Battalion dies

► The Palestinian social networks reported the death of Mahmoud Ramadan al-Hadad, the brother of Izz al-Din al-Hadad (Abu Suheib), an Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades' commander; the circumstances of his death were unclear (@Palestine202229 Twitter account, July 1, 2023; @abomhmdzae Twitter account, July 1, 2023). Later the Palestinian police in the Gaza Strip issued a mourning notice for Second Lieutenant Mahmoud Ramadan al-Hadad, of the Gaza

district police, who died of a stroke on July 1 (Facebook page of the Palestinian police commander in the Gaza Strip, July 1, 2023).



Right: Mahmoud al-Hadad (@Palestine202229 Twitter account, July 1, 2023). Left: The mourning notice issued by the Palestinian police in the Gaza Strip (Facebook page of the Palestinian police commander in the Gaza Strip, July 1, 2023).

The Palestinian Authority (PA)

Congressional delegation visits the PA

► **Nabil Abu Rudeineh, spokesman for Mahmoud Abbas**, met with a delegation of Democratic and Republican Congressmen and Congresswomen. He warned that **"Israel's aggression, which included killing, building settlements, besieging Palestinian cities, collective punishment and attacking the holy Muslim and Christian sites"** was liable to ignite the **Middle East**. He claimed the situation on the ground demanded the intervention of the American administration, because criticism and condemnation had no effect. He also said the Palestinians asked Congress to reexamine its decisions regarding the PLO, because they prevented the formation of "balanced relations" with the Palestinians (Wafa, June 26, 2023).



Right: Nabil Abu Rudeineh meets with a Congressional delegation (Wafa, June 26, 2023). Left: The expansion of the settlements in Judea and Samaria (al-Quds al-Arabi, June 29, 2023).

Israeli diplomatic activity following the Jewish settler attack on Palestinian villages and the PA foreign ministry's reaction

- ▶ Following the attacks of Jewish settlers on the Palestinian towns and villages in the wake of the shooting near the settlement of Eli on June 20, 2023, General Herzl Halevi, the Israeli Chief of Staff, Ronen Bar, head of the Israeli Security Agency, and Israeli Police Chief Kobi Shabtai issued a joint statement stressing that the attacks violated every Jewish moral value, they were nationalist terrorism in every sense, and they had to be combatted (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, June 24, 2023).
- ▶ The PA foreign ministry criticized the statement, claiming that in light of the seriousness of the events, the commanders of the IDF, the Israeli Security Agency and the police had been forced to admit the events were so serious they were described as terrorism, while expressly, clearly and publicly recognizing the existence of nationalist terrorism "by armed settlers who [allegedly] enjoyed the protection of the IDF and political support from ministers in the government of Israel."
- ▶ The ministry added that Israel had to be held accountable because it did not fulfill its obligations to protect the civilians under its control [sic], and instead protected those who attacked them. In addition, claimed the ministry, the joint statement was not intended for operational use, but rather to calm and defuse international reactions and international public opinion. Therefore, the ministry called on "all countries" to designate the "groups of settlers" and "organizations" as terrorist organizations, prosecute their members and prevent them from entering their territory. The ministry also called on the ICC and its chief prosecutor to end their silence and act quickly to complete their investigations of "the crimes of Israel and the settlers" (PA foreign ministry website, June 25, 2023).
- ▶ Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant spoke on the phone with Hussein al-Sheikh, PA minister for civilian affairs. He told him that the Israeli security forces would act to prevent terrorism wherever it was necessary, and it was necessary to act quickly and strongly against the terrorism undermining regional stability (Israeli media, June 27, 2023). Hussein al-Sheikh confirmed that Gallant had told him the Israeli security forces would continue operating against all forms of terrorism, but said the "real terrorism was the settler terrorism against the Palestinians" (al-Araby al-Jadeed, June 27, 2023).

Tribute to the children of Palestinian prisoners

► Mahmoud Abbas participated in an event in recognition of the Palestinian prisoners' children, held for Eid al-Adha and sponsored by the Mahmoud Abbas Foundation.⁷ Mahmoud Abbas blessed the children and their parents for Eid al-Adha, saying **they were the hope and the future, and would establish an independent Palestinian state with east Jerusalem as its capital** (Wafa, July 1, 2023). A previous event sponsored by the Mahmoud Abbas Foundation was held under similar circumstances in the Muqata'a in Ramallah on April 23, 2023, for Eid al-Fitr, as well as in the Gaza Strip with the participation of senior Fatah figures. The children of shaheeds received a gift and were entertained. Mahmoud Abbas said at the time that **he was happy to meet the children who were their country's hope. He called them "the cadets of the future and the hope of the Palestinian leadership"** (Mahmoud Abbas' Facebook page, April 23, 2023).



Mahmoud Abbas has his picture taken with the children of Palestinian prisoners (Mahmoud Abbas' Facebook page and the Wafa Facebook page, July 1, 2023).

Chairman of the commission for prisoners and released prisoners' affairs dies in a traffic accident

► On the afternoon of July 1, 2023, two Palestinian vehicles were involved in a traffic accident, killing three people. One of the was **Qudri Abu Bakr, chairman of the commission for prisoners and released prisoners' affairs** (Ma'an, July 1, 2023). He was on his way home after attending Mahmoud Abbas' event in the Ramallah for the children of Palestinian prisoners

⁷ The Mahmoud Abbas Foundation is a Palestinian NGO established in 2011 "to preserve Mahmoud Abbas' legacy." It helps Palestinian refugees in the PA territories and the Palestinian dispersal, especially in the refugee camps in Lebanon. It provides scholarships for Palestinian students in the camps in Lebanon; has a program for "family solidarity," gives financial aid to hundreds of Palestinian families in Lebanon, and provides various educational, health and welfare services for needy families; it also has projects in Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip (Wafa, December 21, 2021).

(Wafa, July 1 and 2, 2023). His funeral was held in the Muqata'a in Ramallah, attended by Mahmoud Abbas and senior PA figures. He was buried in Badia, west of Salfit, where he lived. Abu Bakr was sentenced to 20 years in prison in Israel for his activities in Fatah; he served 17 years. He was a founder of the Palestinian preventive security apparatus and served in it with the rank of general. Since 2018 he had been chairman of the commission for prisoners and released prisoners' affairs (Wafa, July 2, 2023).



Right: the most recent picture of Qudri Abu Bakr, taken at the event for prisoners' children in Ramallah (commission for prisoners and released prisoners' affairs Facebook page, July 1, 2023).

Left: The scene of the traffic accident in which he was killed (Shehab, July 1, 2023).



The funeral held for Abu Bakr at the Muqata'a in Ramallah (Wafa, July 2, 2023).

The Palestinian leadership denies reports the PA may declare bankruptcy

► The Israeli media reported that because of its dire financial straits the PA was considering declaring bankruptcy. That would mean closing the government ministries and the possible loss of stability in the PA territories. According to the reports, talks were being held in the PA treasury ministry with the knowledge of PA Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh. It was also reported that it was unclear if the issue had been brought to the attention of Mahmoud Abbas or so far was confined to the government (Israeli Kan News website, June 28, 2023)

► The PA denied the veracity of the report. The Arab World Press (AWP) quoted "a very senior member" of the treasury ministry as saying the leaks were untrue. **Ramzi Rabah, a member of the PLO's Executive Committee**, denied the reports, saying the situation was "the complete opposite." He claimed they were "responsibly dealing with events in the current situation." **Khaled al-Asili, PA minister of the economy**, claimed they had "financial difficulties" resulting from Israel's deductions of the tax revenues it collected for the PA, but the leaks only represented the "personal desires of some highly-placed Israelis" (AWP, June 29, 2023).

► A senior PA figure, who asked to remain anonymous, confirmed discussions had been held about the PA's financial situation, but, he claimed, there had been no in-depth deliberations. He said the Palestinian leadership was examining several possible ways of dealing with the financial crisis caused by Israel's illegal withholding of funds. He said the PA was working to cause Israel financial losses and force it to fulfill its obligations as an occupying power in accordance with international conventions and laws (al-Sharq News, June 30, 2023).

South African delegation visits Turmus Aya

► **Laila Ghannam, Ramallah and al-Bireh district governor**, accompanied the visit of a South African delegation headed by **Noxolo Kiviet, the South African minister of public service and administration** to the village of Turmus Aya (northeast of Ramallah). Ghannam showed the delegation the destruction and damage in the village caused by the revenge attacks of the settlers after the killings near Eli. She thanked them for South Africa's solidarity and support of the Palestinian issue, and called on all countries to clearly demonstrate a similar position (Laila Ghannam's Facebook page, June 30, 2023).



**The governor of the Ramallah district and Noxolo Kiviet in Turmus Aya
(Laila Ghannam's Facebook page, June 30, 2023).**

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. Apparently the events in Jenin led to an increase in attacks. The more prominent events were the following:⁸

- ◆ **July 4, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at a motorcycle rider near Havat Gilad (east of Qalqilya). No casualties were reported; the motorcycle was damaged.
- ◆ **July 4, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus in Hebron. No casualties were reported; the bus was damaged.
- ◆ **July 4, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle in Luban al-Sharqia (northeast of Ramallah). No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **July 3, 2023:** A bottle of tar was thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Ma'aleh Lavona (northeast of Ramallah). One person was injured and the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **July 3, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus near Yitav (north of Jericho). No casualties were reported; the bus was damaged.
- ◆ **July 3, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at Israeli vehicles in Hawwara (south of Nablus). No casualties were reported; vehicles were damaged.
- ◆ **July 3, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Dir Astiya (northwest of Salfit). No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.



Right: The damage to an Israeli vehicle in Hawwara. Left: The damage to an Israeli vehicle in Dir Astiya.

⁸ Information and pictures from Rescue Without Borders in Judea and Samaria unless otherwise noted.

◆ **July 3, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Havat Gilad (east of Qalqilya). One Israeli was injured and evacuated to a hospital for medical treatment; the vehicle was damaged.



The vehicle damaged near Havat Gilad.

◆ **July date, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle between Tapuah and Ariel, near Jama'in (southwest of Nablus). No casualties or damage were reported.

◆ **July 2, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Einabus Junction in Hawwara (south of Nablus) No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.

◆ **June 29, 2023:** Molotov cocktails were thrown at Israeli vehicles between the al-Khader Junction and Beitar Illit (southwest of Bethlehem). No casualties or damage were reported.

◆ **June 29, 2023:** A Molotov cocktail was thrown at an Israeli bus near Dir Astiya. The Molotov cocktail exploded and caught fire in the road. No casualties were reported.

◆ **June 29, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Luban al-Sharqia. No casualties or damage were reported.

◆ **June 29, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Jaba in Gush Etzion. No casualties or damage were reported.

◆ **June 28, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli bus near Bayt Ummar (north of Hebron) No casualties were reported; the bus was damaged.

◆ **June 28, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Ariel (north of Salfit) No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.

◆ **June 27, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle south of the Nili Junction (west of Ramallah) No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.