



## Israeli Security Force Operation in Jenin and the Jenin Refugee Camp Review and Summary

July 9, 2023

### Overview

- ▶ Shortly before 2 a.m. on July 5, 2023, the Israeli security force operation in Jenin and the Jenin refugee camp ended; it had lasted for 48 hours. It was broadest Israeli security force activity in the Jenin area since 2002<sup>1</sup> and led to the destruction of about one thousand IEDs, the exposure and destruction of dozens of sites for the manufacture of weapons, underground shafts, and command and operation rooms. In addition, hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of shekels used to fund terrorist activities were seized. An IDF fighter was killed as the forces left the area.
- ▶ The ministry of health in Ramallah reported 12 Palestinians had been killed and 140 wounded, 30 of them critically.
- ▶ Three "revenge attacks" were carried out during the activity: a combined vehicular ramming and stabbing in Tel Aviv, a stabbing in Bnei Brak and a shooting at the settlement of Avnei Hefetz (southeast of Tulkarm). Five rockets were fired from the Gaza Strip at the Israeli communities near the border as the activity wound down. In response to the rocket attack, Israeli Air Force aircraft attacked two Hamas terrorist targets in Gaza.
- ▶ Local residents were elated when the Israeli security forces left the Jenin region and despite the destruction, went out into the streets to celebrate their "victory." Palestinian sources, mainly in Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), which tried to create a victory narrative, claimed the operation was a Palestinian achievement and victory over Israel because it reaffirmed the unity of the [terrorist] organizations and had sent that message to Israel. In the meantime, the Palestinian Authority (PA) and its security services were severely criticized for not having helped the residents of Jenin, anger expressed on the ground in the attack on the building of the Jenin district governor and the forcible removal of senior Fatah and PA figures from the funerals held for Palestinians who had been killed.

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<sup>1</sup> Operation Defensive Shield in 2002, during the second intifada.

## Israel Security Force House and Garden

### IDF activity in Jenin and the Jenin refugee camp

► Shortly before 2 a.m. on July 5, 2023, the last of the Israeli security forces left the area of Jenin and the Jenin refugee camp, ending Operation House and Garden. The activity began on July 3, 2023, and lasted 48 hours. An IDF fighter was killed as the forces left; the circumstances of his death are under investigation (IDF spokesman, December 5, 2023).



**Palestinian picture of the IDF forces as they leave Jenin (Twitter account of photojournalist Hassan Aslih, July 4, 2023).**

► The IDF spokesman reported that the main objectives of the activity were to end the status of the Jenin refugee camp as a refuge and safe harbor for terrorists and destroy the terrorist infrastructure, including its laboratories for the manufacture of weapons, the IEDs planted under the refugee camp roads<sup>2</sup> and the camp's network of cameras, which helped the terrorist operatives control events. Approximately one thousand IEDs were found and destroyed, dozens of sites for the manufacture of weapons were exposed and destroyed, along with underground shafts (two of which were located in the Ansar Mosque in the Jenin refugee camp), 14 safe houses used by Palestinians wanted for terrorist activities and a number of operations rooms. In addition, thousands of dollars' worth of terrorism-funding shekels were confiscated (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, July 5, 2023).

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<sup>2</sup> Such as the IEDs detonated in the attack on IDF armored vehicles on June 19, 2023.



**Right: A shaft were IEDs were stored (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, July 4, 2023). Left: A pit in the floor of a mosque where explosives and weapons were found (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, July 3, 2023).**



**Right: Money for financing terrorism. Left: Boxes of ammunition (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, July 4, 2023).**



**IEDs waiting to be detonated to attack Israeli security forces in the Jenin refugee camp (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, July 4, 2023).**

► During the operation 300 Palestinians suspected of terrorist activities were detained, 30 of them wanted by the Israeli security forces. Twelve Palestinians were killed, most of them terrorist operatives (see the Appendix). The IDF spokesman reported that many Palestinians were wounded because the terrorists hid within the civilian population, using civilians as human shields (IDF spokesman, July 5, 2023). The Palestinian media reported that thousands of local residents left the Jenin refugee camp.

### **Palestinian fatalities**

► The ministry of health in Ramallah reported 12 Palestinians killed and 140 wounded, three of them critically (Wafa, July 4, 2023). An examination of the names of the fatalities indicated that **at least ten of them were terrorist operatives**, most of them young. **Four of them were PIJ operatives, two were from al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades (AAMB), two from Fatah and one from Hamas**. The organizational affiliation of the remaining two is unknown, but one of them wrote on his Facebook page that he wanted to become a shaheed.

► A mass funeral was held, also attended by armed operatives. The cortège began at the Abu Sina government hospital in Jenin, and according to reports, senior Fatah and PA figures including **Fatah deputy chairman Mahmoud al-'Aloul, and Azzam al-Hindi, a member of the PLO's Executive Committee and Fatah's Central Committee**, were forcibly removed from the funeral procession by mourners to protest the fact that the PA security services did nothing to support local residents, did not stand with them during the operation and did nothing to counter the Israeli security forces (Shehab, July 5, 2023; Shehab Twitter account, July 5, 2023).

► The removal of the senior figures from the funeral procession was preceded by clashes on the night of July 4, 2023 between Jenin refugee camp terrorist operatives and PA security services' operatives, who spent the days of the activity inside the Muqata'a headquarters in Jenin. The operatives went to the headquarters and threw rocks and IEDs at the building. PA security services armored vehicles dispersed the operatives and shot teargas canisters at them (Shehab, July 5, 2023).



The mass funeral (Right: Jmedia terrorist, July 5, 2023. Left: Shehab, July 5, 2023).

## Reactions on the ground in Jenin

► During the operation three terrorist "revenge attacks" were carried out: a stabbing in Bnei Brak, a combined stabbing-vehicular ramming in Tel Aviv and shooting at the settlement of Avnei Hefetz near Tulkarm. Approximately one hour before the Israeli security forces left Jenin, five rockets were fired at Israeli territory from the Gaza Strip.

► **Stabbing-vehicular ramming attack in Tel Aviv:** On the afternoon of July 4, 2023, a Palestinian drove against traffic in Tel Aviv and mounted the sidewalk near a bus station where several people were waiting and rammed into them. He exited the vehicle armed with a knife and started stabbing people. He was shot and killed by an armed civilian at the site. He wounded nine people, three of them critically. According to reports, he worked in Israel illegally and used his employer's vehicle for the attack (Israeli media, July 4, 2023).

► The terrorist was **Abd al-Wahhab Issa Hussein Khalayleh, 20, from the village of Samu', south of Hebron**. Hamas published a notice claiming him as one of its operatives, stating the attack was a "legitimate case of self-defense [sic] in view of the Zionist slaughter in Jenin and the crimes of expulsion, killing and destruction carried out by the occupation forces" (Hamas website, July 4, 2023). A network calling itself the Samu' Battalion, which claimed it did not belong to any Palestinian organization, stated Khalayleh was one of its operatives (Samu'

Battalion Telegram channel, July 4, 2023). His mother was interviewed and said her son did not belong to any organization, including Hamas (@AhmadHudaib13 terrorist, July 4, 2023).



**Right: The scene of the terrorist attack in Tel Aviv (al-Fajr TV website, July 4, 2023). Left: Abd al-Wahhab Khalayleh (Imad al-Aqili's Facebook page, July 4, 2023.)**

- ▶ **Stabbing attack in Bnei Brak:** On the evening of July 3, 2023, a Palestinian teenager armed with a knife went to the Kiryat Herzog neighborhood of Bnei Brak. He approached a young Israel and stabbed and wounded him. The Israeli fought him off and was taken to a hospital for medical treatment. The stabber was a 14 year-old from 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 Avnei Hefetz, southeast of Tulkarm. No casualties were reported; a bullet hole was found in the wall of one of the buildings. IDF forces initiated a search to locate the shooter (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, July 3, 2023).
- ▶ **Rockets fired from the Gaza Strip:** Before dawn on July 5, 2023, about an hour after the Israeli security forces left Jenin, five rockets were fired from the Gaza Strip at the Israeli communities near the border and were intercepted by the Iron Dome aerial defense system. No casualties were reported. Debris from a rocket hit a home in Sderot. In response to the rocket fire Israeli Air Force aircraft attacked an underground facility for the manufacture of weapons belonging to Hamas' chemical department and a facility for manufacturing raw materials for rockets (IDF spokesman's Twitter account and the Israeli media, July 5, 2023). According to the Palestinian media, a Hamas post in Beit Lahia, in the northern Gaza Strip, was attacked (Twitter account of photojournalist Hassan Aslih, July 4, 2023).



**Israeli Air Force attacks in the Gaza Strip (Wafa, July 5, 2023).**

### Reactions after the activity ended

► The exit of the IDF forces, which began on the evening of July 4, 2023, was documented by the Palestinian media outlets. Once the activity ended, despite extensive destruction, refugee camp refugees went out into the streets to celebrate (Ma'an, July 4 and 5, 2023). On the morning of July 5, 2023, after the "victory" celebrations, the Palestinian media began focusing on the damage and destruction, and pictures and videos were published showing residents visiting the ruins of their houses (Wafa and Ma'an, July 5, 2023). The Jenin municipality sent teams to remove the rubble and open roads which had been blocked during the activity (Ma'an, July 5, 2023).



**Residents of the Jenin refugee camp celebrate the exit of the IDF forces ("Palestine" Post Twitter account, July 5, 2023).**



**Pictures of the destruction in the Jenin refugee camp**  
 (Right: Awda TV Facebook page, July 5, 2023. Left: Wafa Facebook page, July 5, 2023).



**Bulldozers clear the rubble (Wafa, July 5, 2023).**

► Various Palestinian sources referred to the activity as an "achievement and victory" over Israel and "the victory of the resistance in Jenin." Hamas and the PIJ claimed it reaffirmed the unity of the [Palestinian terrorist] organizations, their ability to coordinate and the "unity of the arenas:"

◆ **Hamas** claimed the Palestinians were united and adhered to the option of "resistance" and confrontation with the "fascist Zionist occupation." The announcement stressed the unity of the fighters from all the "forces and organizations" against Israel and the increase in the coordination on the ground. Moreover, according to Hamas, the "resistance" would continue defending the Palestinians, their lands and holy places, and Jerusalem would continue as the first address for "resistance" activity, because for the sake of Jerusalem they were willing to sacrifice what was most important to them (Hamas website, July 5, 2023).

◆ **Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau**, stressed the "failure" of Israel, which had retreated "defeated with its head lowered" after the operatives of the various "resistance" wings had worked together and all options to support Jenin had been on the table. He added that the "heroic action" in Tel Aviv and the events in Judea and

Samaria showed the Palestinians supported Jenin in its heroic battle, and the "resistance" was clearly the address and strategic choice of the Palestinians [in their "struggle"] to respond to aggression and expel the "occupation" from Palestinian lands. According to Haniyeh, through the negotiators, they had sent Israel the message that all the fronts were monitoring the events and Israel had to stop its aggression immediately. He claimed that despite the killed and wounded, they had taught Israel a lesson and caused it heavy losses, and the coming days would reveal the strength of the blow dealt to Israel by the "resistance," which would force it to consider its steps carefully before it acted against the Palestinians again ( Hamas website, July 5, 2023).

◆ **The Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military-terrorist wing**, congratulated the residents of the Jenin refugee camp, the fighters of the various organization and battalions, on their "victory." They claimed the coming days would prove the Israeli leadership had miscalculated. Jenin and the other cities in Judea and Samaria would become sites that would anger Israel, and the "death ambushes" in Jenin and the activity in Tel Aviv had proved it. Accounts had not yet been settled, claimed the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades, and the Palestinians would make Israel regret its actions (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades website, July 4, 2023).

◆ **Ziyad al-Nakhalah, PIJ secretary general**, said the Palestinians had chalked up a great victory thanks to the Jenin Battalion leadership and its brave fighters, it had defeated [Israel's] aggression in Jenin. The Palestinians had proved, by virtue of their unity and cohesion, that they could defeat Israel in every confrontation and battle, from "the Sword of Jerusalem" [Operation Guardian of the Walls] to "the Unity of the Arenas" [Operation Breaking Dawn], "the Free Men's Revenge" [Operation Shield and Arrow] to "the Great Power of Jenin" [the most recent operation in Jenin]. He called for national unity to reinforce the Jenin refugee camp to keep it a center for revolutionary inspiration, jihad and "resistance" [terrorism] (PIJ website, July 5, 2023).

◆ **Muhammad al-Hindi, deputy PIJ secretary general**, tweeted that if such were the results of an operation for which Israel "had been making preparations for a year," then it was to be congratulated on its achievement, deterrence and delusions. He added that Jenin was in good shape, the "resistance" was in good shape, the Jerusalem Brigades were in good shape and morale could not be higher (Shehab, July 5, 2023).

◆ **Abu Hamza, spokesman for the Jerusalem Brigades, the PIJ's military-terrorist wing**, said in a speech that Israel had been deterred in every sense of the word, which explained its claims about its great imaginary achievements. He said Israel had already been deterred when the battle started and had been deterred during the fighting. He said he saluted the Palestinians in all the arenas, especially in Jenin. He thanked all the organizations and **the "resistance axis" headed by Iran**, claiming the "resistance" fighters had not been alone, but behind them in several arenas, in "Palestine" and beyond, were loyal fighters whose fingers were on the trigger, and who were prepared to meet and fight the enemy, and if not in this particular battle, then in the future (Jerusalem Brigades website, July 5, 2023).

◆ **Fatah's media information and cultural commission** said in a statement that the battle waged by the Palestinians in the Jenin refugee camp was a qualitative change in the "struggle" against Israel and a "historic message" written by the Palestinians with sacrifice, firm stance and integrated forces. According to the statement, the Palestinians had dispelled the Israeli government's claims which tried to market its aggression as a military victory, and had defeated Israel's "barbaric aggression" despite the destructive force Israel used. The commission said it saluted the Fatah fighters and operatives who had bravely defended the Palestinians in the Jenin refugee camp with their blood brothers from the other organizations and forces. The commission also saluted the medical teams, media correspondents and operatives of the Palestinian security services, who did not hesitate to fulfill their duty to strengthen the Palestinians' firm stance (Telegram channel of Awda TV of Fatah's media information and cultural commission, July 5, 2023).

◆ **Khaled Jumaa, culture editor for the PA's Wafa News Agency**, published a column entitled "When willpower overcomes the machine of destruction." Israel, he wrote, always forgets that the issue of "resistance" to the occupation is unrelated to the possession of weapons, or connected to the ability to manufacture IEDs or rockets. Israel always thinks that a "brutal invasion" of places like Jenin, the Gaza Strip or Nablus and getting rid of a group of "resistance fighters" is enough to write finis. However, they will not overcome Palestinian will power for the simple reason that the struggle is not between a war machine and a person or a group of people, but between ideologies. The Jenin refugee camp is not the issue, erasing it will not solve the matter the way Israel

would like, because the idea is alive in the hearts [of the Palestinians] and is passed down from one generation to the next, not because it is what the Palestinians teach their children [sic], but because what Israel does keeps the problem alive (Wafa, July 5, 2023).



**Palestinians cartoons of the "victory" Right: Jenin (al-Quds al-Arabi, July 4, 2023). Left: The entrance to the Jenin refugee camp (Muhammad Sabaaneh's Facebook page, July 4, 2023).**

## Appendix

### Palestinian fatalities

- ▶ The ministry of health in Ramallah reported 12 Palestinians had been killed and 140 wounded, 30 of them critically (Wafa, July 4, 2023). An analysis of the names of the fatalities indicated that ten were terrorist organization operatives, five in their early 20's, seven of them teenagers. Among them were **four terrorists from the PIJ, three from the AAMB, two from Fatah and one from Hamas**. Another belonged to both Fatah and the PIJ. Regarding two others, no organizational affiliation was noted, although according to the Facebook page of one, he wanted to become a shaheed.
- ▶ The Palestinian fatalities, the circumstances of their deaths and their organization affiliations were the following:

- ◆ **Samih Firas Abu al-Wafa:** 20 years old, killed when a house was attacked in the Jenin refugee campaign (Wafa, July 3, 2023; Fatah's media information and cultural commission Facebook page, July 3, 2023). He was an AAMB operative. **Fatah** reported he was one of its operatives the son of Firas Abu al-Wafa, Fatah spokesman in Jenin (Telegram channel of Awda TV, Fatah's media information and cultural commission, July 3, 2023).



**Samih Firas Abu al-Wafa (Right: Awda, the Telegram channel of Fatah's media information and cultural commission, July 3, 2023). Left: Samih Firas Abu al-Wafa's Facebook page, June 6, 2023).**

- ◆ **Aws Hani Hanoun:** 19 years old. **The PIJ in Judea and Samaria** reported he was one of its operatives (PIJ website, July 3, 2023).



**Aws Hani Hanoun (Paldf Twitter account, July 3, 2023).**

◆ **Husam Muhammad Abu Deibeh:** 18 years old. **Fatah** reported he was one of its operatives (Telegram channel of Awda TV, Fatah's media information and cultural commission, July 3, 2023). The **PIJ in Judea and Samaria** also reported he was one of its operatives (PIJ website, July 3, 2023). According to reports he worked in the government hospital in Jenin (Yazan Yasin's Facebook page, July 3, 2023).



**Husam Muhammad Abu Deibeh (Right: Twitter account of journalist Firas Taneineh, July 3, 2023). Left: At work in the hospital in Jenin (Yazan Yasin's Facebook page, July 3, 2023).**

◆ **Nur al-Din Husam Marshoud:** 16 years old. The **PIJ in Judea and Samaria** also reported he was one of its operatives (PIJ website, July 3, 2023).



**Nur al-Din Husam Marshoud (Ali Muhammad Zurayiq's Facebook page, July 3, 2023).**

◆ **Muhammad Muhannad Shami (or al-Shami) Turkman:** 23 years old. Killed in an attack in the Jenin refugee camp; his uncle Muhammad Shami al-Shami was wounded in the same attack (Ibrahim Shami's Facebook page, July 3, 2023). The AAMB in reported he was one of its operatives (AAMB Panthers' Telegram channel, July 3, 2023). His current and old Facebook page profile pictures show his connection to the AAMB (Muhammad Shami's Facebook page, June 8, 2016). Nephew of Usama Sabah, a Jerusalem Brigades operative killed in a clash with IDF forces in the village of Burqin on September 26, 2021 (@jalestinian2 Twitter account, July 3, 2023).



**Right: Muhammad Muhannad Shami Turkman (Musa Turkman's Facebook page, July 3, 2023).  
Left: Muhammad Muhannad al-Shami Turkman with his cousin, Muhammad Shami al-Shami (Ibrahim Shami's Facebook page, July 3, 2023).**



**Muhammad Shami Turkman's current and old profile pictures show his ties to the AAMB (Right: Muhammad Shami Turkman's Facebook page, June 8, 2016. Left: Muhammad Shami Turkman's Facebook page, October 3, 2015).**

◆ **Ahmed Muhammad Amer (or al-Amer):** 21 years old, represented as an **AAMB** operative (AAMB Panthers' Telegram channel, July 3, 2023). He apparently belonged to

the **Jenin Battalion**. Pictures on his Facebook page show him armed; in some he wears an AAMB headband. In others there are captions indicating he belonged to the Jerusalem Brigades' Jenin Battalion. He also published a picture of himself with Yusuf Shreem, a Hamas Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades operative killed in Jenin on March 16, 2023.



**Ahmed al-Amer wearing an AAMB headband (Ahmed al-Amer's Facebook page, February 24, 2023). Left: Ahmed al-Amer, with a Jerusalem Brigades – Jenin Battalion badge on the strap of one of his rifles (Ahmed al-Amer's Facebook page, April 1, 2023).**



**Ahmed al-Amer with AAMB and Jenin Battalion armbands**



Right: Ahmed al-Amer and Yusuf Shreem (Ahmed al-Amer's Facebook page, March 16, 2023).  
Ahmed al-Amer's most recent profile picture (Ahmed al-Amer's Facebook page, June 6, 2023).

◆ **Majdi Yunes Ararawi**: 17 years old. The **PIJ in Judea and Samaria** reported him as one of its operatives (PIJ website, July 3, 2023).



**Majdi Yunes Ararawi** wearing a Jenin Battalion headband (@jeniincamp Telegram channel, July 3, 2023).

◆ **Ali Hani al-Ghoul**: 17 years old. **Hamas' Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades in Judea and Samaria** issued a mourning notice for him reporting him as one of its operatives, claiming he was killed while lying in ambush for the Israeli security forces who tried to enter the Jenin refugee camp ("West Bank Lion's" Telegram channel, July 3, 2023). His body was wrapped for burial in a Hamas flag ("Palestine" Post Twitter account, July 5, 2023).



Ali Hani al-Ghoul (Right: Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades website, July 3, 2023. Left: Ahmed al-Ghoul's Facebook page, July 3, 2023).



Ali Hani al-Ghoul's body removed from the Abu Sina Hospital in Jenin, wrapped for burial in a Hamas flag ("Palestine" Post Twitter account, July 5, 2023).

◆ **Mustafa Imad Qassem:** 16 years old. No known organizational affiliation, but his Facebook page subject picture is the shahada with the caption, "We will live and die by [the shahada]" (Mustafa Qassem's Facebook page, November 25, 2022). The inscription at the top of his Facebook page reads, "Allah is our goal, the Prophet [Muhammad] is our role model, and the Qur'an is our constitution; Jenin [refugee] camp; Amjad al-Fayid (Pharoah)."<sup>3</sup>



Mustafa Qassem's Facebook page

<sup>3</sup> Amjad al-Fayid, whose nickname was "guardian of the Jenin refugee camp," was a 17 year-old PIJ operative killed on May 21, 2023, in a clash with Israeli security forces.

◆ **Uday Ibrahim Khamayseh:** 22 years old from the village of Yamoun. A funeral was held for him in Yamoun (SND website, July 4, 2023). His body was wrapped for burial in a **Fatah** flag with an M-16 placed on top.



**The funeral held for Uday Khamayseh in Yamoun (@elthwrah Twitter account, July 4, 2023).**

◆ **Abd al-Rahman Hassan Hardan Sa'abneh:** 22 years old (according to Wafa), 17 years old according to other sources (Palestinian TV Facebook page, July 4, 2023). He was from the village of Fahma, southwest of Jenin (Wafa, July 4, 2023). The ministry of education in Ramallah issued a mourning notice stating he was an 11<sup>th</sup> grade student at in the boys' high school in Fahma (ministry of education in Ramallah Facebook page, July 4, 2023). The **PIJ** reported he was one of its operatives (PIJ Telegram channel, July 5, 2023).



**Abd al-Rahman Sa'abneh (Abd al-Rahman Sa'abneh's Facebook page, May 31, 2023).**

◆ **Jawed Mujahed Neirat:** 22 years old from the village of Meithaloun, south of Jenin (Wafa, July 4, 2023). No known organizational affiliation. His body was wrapped for burial in a Palestinian flag.



**Right: Jawed Mujahed Neirat (Jawed Mujahed Neirat's Facebook page, March 7, 2023). Left: The funeral held for Jawed Mujahed Neirat in Meithaloun. His body is wrapped for burial in a Palestinian flag (Meithaloun24 Group Facebook page, July 5, 2023).**