# Spotlight on Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict
# August 11 – 18, 2026

## Trending

► Hamas signals its willingness to relinquish formal control of the Gaza Strip.

► The United States supports Israel's right to act if Hamas rearms.

► Turkey continues its involvement in the Gaza Strip.

## Overview

► IDF forces resumed operations to eliminate terrorist threats in the Gaza Strip after a hiatus of more than a week.

► The Board of Peace representative denied claims of a financial agreement between the Board and Hamas and said that under the terms of the agreement, Hamas would relinquish its light and heavy weapons.

► Hamas announced its intention to participate in the Palestinian Legislative Council elections.

► The president of Turkey met with Mahmoud Abbas in Ankara and said he supported the establishment of a Palestinian state and reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah. The Turkish foreign minister criticized Israel's opposition to implementing the agreement.

► International officials condemned Jewish settler violence in the village of Qusra; the Palestinian Authority condemned Israel's intention to transfer enforcement powers in Judea and Samaria to the Israel Police.

## The Fighting in the Gaza Strip

### The IDF

► On August 12, 2026, the IDF resumed proactive strikes in the Gaza Strip after a hiatus of more than a week. An airstrike eliminated the head of a Hamas squad in the northern Gaza Strip who had planned to carry out terrorist attacks on IDF forces (IDF spokesperson, August 12, 2026). Gaza civil defense spokesperson Mahmoud Basal told Agence France-Presse that civil defense teams had evacuated a fatality, Muhannad Sa'ada, and several wounded people to al-Shifa

Hospital after an Israeli airstrike on a group of "residents" near the western square of Beit Lahia (FRANCE24 website, August 12, 2026).

**The strike in the northern Gaza Strip (IDF spokesperson, August 12, 2026)**

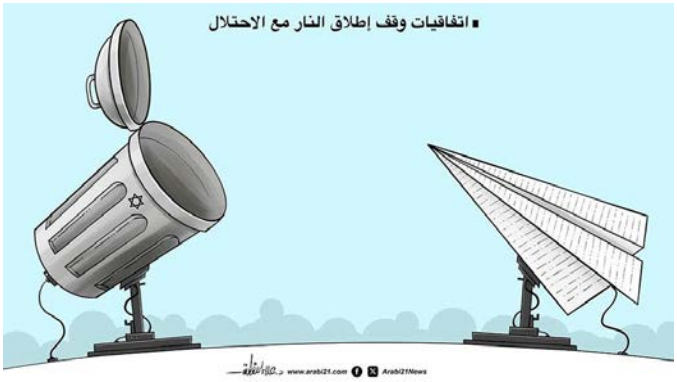
► On August 11, 2026, IDF forces shot at a Hamas sniper who posed an immediate threat near the Yellow Line region in the northern Gaza Strip. On August 12, 2026, a terrorist who crossed the Yellow Line in the southern Gaza Strip was shot (IDF spokesperson, August 11–12, 2026). On August 13, 2026, a motorcyclist who, according to the IDF, report was a Hamas commander, was eliminated in Khan Yunis. In a UAV attack in western Gaza City, Gaza District Police Commander Jamal Abu Kamil was eliminated and two other Gazans were wounded (Reuters, August 13, 2026). On August 15, an IDF tank drove over a Hamas IED in the southern Gaza Strip, no casualties were reported. IDF forces eliminated two terrorists who crossed the Yellow Line to sabotage IDF weapons (IDF spokesperson, August 11–15, 2026).

## Negotiations for the Second Phase of the Ceasefire Agreement

► Following the meeting between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Board of Peace representative Nikolay Mladenov, it was reported that "contrary to inaccurate reports," the IDF's withdrawal beyond the Yellow Line would take place only after Hamas completed its disarmament, as it had committed to the mediators, and that applied equally to light weapons, heavy weapons and tunnels (Board of Peace X account, August 3, 2026). Mladenov said the roadmap was the framework for the agreement between the Board of Peace and Hamas, while discussions with Israel were continuing, and that Israel was not required to rely on trust or take irreversible measures before verified steps had been taken on the ground (Nikolay Mladenov's X account, August 12, 2026). Mladenov also said a mechanism for monitoring violations had recently begun operating and any verified violation would be dealt with (Nikolay Mladenov's X account, August 12, 2026).

► Mladenov denied claims of a financial agreement between the Board of Peace and Hamas. He said no such a proposal had been discussed, negotiated, considered or would be on the agenda in the future. He claimed Hamas would have no role in the governance of Gaza and no access to funds (Nikolay Mladenov's X account, August 12, 2026). That was apparently his response to a report claiming that under Clause 5 of the roadmap, the Board had undertaken to pay Hamas' debts up to a sum of $400 million and a Board official had confirmed the report, explaining that the funds would be transferred to Hamas government employees who had not yet received their salaries, or to suppliers and contractors who had provided services to the Gazans and had not yet been paid by Hamas (Israeli TV Kan website, August 11, 2026).

► Hamas spokesperson Hazem Qassem related to reports in the Israeli media (August 13, 2026), stating that on the night of August 10, 2026, the IDF had received intelligence regarding a gathering of approximately 50 terrorists from Hamas' *nukhba* force suspected of planning to infiltrate Israeli territory, claiming it was "Israeli incitement propaganda" to justify Israel's "violations of the agreement" and attack Hamas. He claimed Hamas reiterated its commitment to the ceasefire agreement and the roadmap and called for Israel to be compelled to abide by it (Hazem Qassem's Telegram channel, August 13, 2026). A Hamas political source said instructions had been issued to the leadership of the al-Qassam Brigades not to carry out any "military" activity. He accused Israel of fabricating security reports to reignite tensions in the Gaza Strip and attack on flimsy security pretexts (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, August 13, 2026).




**Ceasefire agreements with the "occupation" (Facebook page of Alaa al-Laqta, Hamas' inhouse cartoonist, August 18, 2026)**

► After Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan met with Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty, he said Turkey and Egypt had agreed to increase their efforts to end the war in the Gaza Strip, bring in aid and implement the peace plan. Fidan said the process had entered a "critical" phase and if Israel did not advance to the second phase, Turkey, Egypt and Qatar might "take joint steps." He called on the United States to exert pressure on the Israeli

government and claimed Turkey had joined the Board of Peace to use diplomatic means to foil what he called "an Israeli plan to displace the Gazans" (Anadolu Agency, August 13, 2026).

► Participants at a coordination meeting of the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza (NCAG) and various UN agencies noted the need for continued close, regular coordination between UN agencies and NCAG to ensure an effective response to the immediate and future needs of the Gazans as part of the roadmap (National Committee X account, August 11, 2026). Meanwhile, the Network of Palestinian NGOs criticized the exclusion of UNRWA from the coordination meeting and claimed that excluding UNRWA, civilian organizations and local authorities from the planning and decision-making mechanisms of early recovery and reconstruction programs would undermine the effectiveness of the process, in view of UNRWA's experience and capabilities in many areas of aid, protection and welfare. The Network called for a comprehensive, transparent coordination mechanism in which UNRWA and civilian society would be incorporated as partners in planning and not merely as implementing bodies (Network of Palestinian NGOs website, August 15, 2026).

**Coordination meeting of the NCAG and UN agencies (NCAG X account, August 11, 2026)**

► Israeli officials reported that senior officers from Uganda and Burundi had arrived at the American headquarters in Kiryat Gat as part of contacts to deploy of hundreds of soldiers to the multinational force planned to operate in the Gaza Strip. The United States continues its efforts to recruit additional countries to the force. Morocco is expected to assist in training it, alongside Kosovo, Albania and Kazakhstan, since Indonesia is not expected to participate at this stage. Meanwhile, the Americans are trying to recruit more soldiers to the force from African countries (Mutabaa min al-Midan Telegram channel, August 17, 2026).

## Hamas Delegation Goes to Egypt

► A delegation headed by Khalil al-Hayya, head of the Hamas political bureau, and including Muhammad Darwish, chairman of the movement’s Shura council, Khaled Mashal, head of Hamas abroad, Zaher Jabarin, head of Hamas in the West Bank, Bassem Naim, head of Hamas’

Arab and Islamic relations office and Ghazi Hamad, member of the political leadership, arrived in Cairo for an official visit and met with the head of Egyptian General Intelligence, Major General Hassan Rashad. The delegation reviewed political and field developments in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and complained about Israel's [alleged] violations, disregard of the Sharm el-Sheikh agreement and the American plan and its declared opposition to the roadmap. The delegation also reviewed the situation in the West Bank, Jerusalem and Israeli prisons and claimed Israel's actions were dangerous and had to be countered at regional and international levels (Hamas Telegram channel, August 16, 2026).

► The delegation met in El Alamein with American envoy Jared Kushner and other senior officials and reiterated its commitment to disarm, demilitarize the Gaza Strip and turn control over to a technocratic Palestinian government. Kushner demanded concrete steps and not merely declarations and said disarmament, Hamas' relinquishment of control of the Gaza Strip and the removal of its military infrastructure were non-negotiable (Axios, August 16, 2026). Egyptian and Hamas sources reported that the movement asked the United States to pressure Israel to advance to the second phase of the roadmap, allow 600 aid trucks into the Gaza Strip and halt the targeted killings. Kushner reiterated the administration's commitment to the peace plan but conditioned its implementation on Hamas adhering to a timetable for disarming itself and its military wing and handing over the weapons to the committee for the administration of the Gaza Strip and the international stabilization force. He said that in return he would work to ensure Israel's commitment to the plan (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, August 16, 2026).

► Khalil al-Hayya met in Cairo with the heads of the Palestinian terrorist organizations and briefed them on the contacts in El Alamein. The Palestinians accused Israel of delaying progress on the roadmap and continuing the attacks, and discussed the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, the expansion of the settlements and settler activity in Judea and Samaria. Later, a Hamas delegation headed by al-Hayya met with a delegation of Fatah's democratic reform movement headed by Muhammad Dahlan and to discuss the second phase and the increase of aid to the Gaza Strip. The delegations agreed to continue cooperating, work towards a joint strategy and reorganize the Palestinian system based on national and democratic partnership (Hamas Telegram channel, August 17, 2026).

# The Gaza Strip

## The Civilian Situation

► The UN Human Rights Office in the Palestinian territories reported that Palestinians who returned to the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom and Rafah Crossings, claimed they had been beaten, threatened, humiliated, interrogated and subjected to invasive searches, including the confiscation of property, medications, medical equipment, documents, money and assistive devices. The head of the office, Ajith Sunghay, claimed that the cases reflected a pattern of violations which might deter Palestinians from returning to Gaza (Quds, August 13, 2026).

► Wafa reported that more than 21,800 patients and wounded Gazans required specialized treatment or surgery outside the Gaza Strip, but the limited operation of the crossings, delays in receiving permits, coordination difficulties and limited capacity abroad were preventing many of them from leaving. In addition, the healthcare system in the Gaza Strip was dealing with shortages of medications, dialysis equipment, laboratory tests and oncology treatments (Wafa , August 15, 2026). Mazen al-Araishi, head of the engineering and maintenance department at the ministry of health in the Gaza Strip, claimed that only 12 of 34 oxygen production stations were still operating, and were operating "beyond capacity" and suffered from malfunctions. He claimed that only four of 30 oxygen-cylinder filling machines were available, and shortages of equipment and spare parts prevented emergency repairs (ministry of health in Gaza Facebook page, August 15, 2026).

► The electricity crisis in the Gaza Strip poses a challenge for small and medium-sized business owners. According to Nasser Madhat, a shop owner in Gaza City, he and his colleagues fear they will be forced to close their businesses in the coming days because of the high cost of the electricity needed to operate their shops. He said the average daily energy consumption for a 150-square-meter shop was approximately 9,000 shekels (about $3000), which exceeded the shop's profits, and using generators was also expensive because of the high prices of motor oil, which cost 3,000 shekels (about $1000) per liter, and diesel fuel, which cost 35 shekels (about $11) per liter (al-Ayyam, August 16, 2026).

► More than 200 Gazan students have left the Strip since September 2025 to study in Italy and San Marino under the IUPALS scholarship program, but approximately 50 students who were accepted by academic institutions are still awaiting permission to leave the Gaza Strip, after the issuance of permits to travel abroad was suspended on June 1. The students and aid

organizations complain of bureaucratic delays, unclear criteria, language requirements and demands for documents which cannot be obtained because of the "collapse of institutions" in Gaza. The Italian foreign ministry said the circumstances of the students' departure were complex and depended on approval from foreign authorities (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, August 13, 2026).

## Civilian Governance

► On August 16, the deaths of two members of the same family, Hassan Anas Abu Warda and Adnan Hassan Abu Warda, were reported. They had been shot the previous day in the al-Sheikh Radwan neighborhood to the northwest of Gaza City after leaving a gym. The Gaza police announced they had arrested the shooters (Ma'an, August 16, 2026). Media outlets opposed to Hamas reported widespread anger and tension in the northern Gaza Strip, particularly in the Jabalia al-Nazla area, following the killing of the two young men. Local sources claimed that the gunmen belonged to Hamas, although that has not been confirmed (general union of Palestinian journalists in the UK X account, August 16, 2026; Jusoor News Facebook page, August 17, 2026). In response, the ministry of the interior and national security in Gaza said the relevant agencies in the ministry had opened an investigation into the incident and efforts were being made to ensure that justice was served. It called on the Abu Warda family to "exercise restraint, prioritize the public interest and await the results of the investigation" while complying with the law and maintaining order (ministry of interior and national security in Gaza website, August 17, 2026).

## Military-Terrorist Governance

► The Rada force of Hamas "resistance security" sent a message to Ghassan al-Dahini, leader of the militia in Rafah collaborating with Israel, threatening to kill him. It published a photograph of al-Dahini in which he appeared frightened, captioned, "This time was close... Next time you will not escape death." The photograph was published after an attempt to assassinate al-Dahini was made in the southern Gaza Strip several days earlier (al-Shaheed, August 16, 2026). Following the attempt, the Rada force issued an appeal to members of the "collaborating gangs" who sought to "repent," stating, "Eliminating the senior collaborators will be your lifeline to us and your people" (Rada Telegram channel, August 9, 2026; al-Sayyad channel, August 9, 2026).

**Right: The appeal to militia members to "repent" (Rada Telegram channel, August 9, 2026). Left: The threat to al-Dahini (Rada Telegram channel, August 16, 2026)**

► Hamas-affiliated sources glorified the memory of 16-year-old Suhaib Labbad, an operative in the Hamas military-terrorist wing from the Zeitoun neighborhood who was killed during 2025. It followed the publication of new footage of the teenager firing an RPG at an IDF Merkava tank and engaging Israeli forces with small arms. He was portrayed as a model of faith, sacrifice and determination, a message encouraging Gazan youth to join the fighting and glorifying their deaths (al-Sayyad Telegram channel, Shehab Telegram channel, August 14–16, 2026).

**Right: Picture of Labbad showing him firing at an Israeli tank. Left: More photographs of Labbad (al-Sayyad and Shehab Telegram channels, August 14–16, 2026)**

# Israel, Judea and Samaria

## Counterterrorism

► Palestinian sources reported that over the weekend, IDF forces operated at several locations in Judea and Samaria, including the areas of Bethlehem, Hebron, Qalqilya, Salfit, Nablus, Jenin, Tulkarm, Jericho, al-Bireh and Jerusalem. In Beit Fajar, two Palestinians were shot and killed after they were suspected of throwing a Molotov cocktail; in Qalqilya, a child was wounded by gunfire; in al-Eizariya, IDF forces entered an event hall and attacked those present (Quds, August 15, 2026). On August 13, 2026, Israel Police Special Forces detained three wanted Palestinians in Jenin who planned to carry out a terrorist attack in the immediate future (Israel

Police spokesperson, August 13, 2026). On August 17, IDF forces completed an operation in the town of Qabatiya and the Far'a refugee camp, during which two terrorists suspected of planning and advancing terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians and IDF forces were detained (IDF spokesperson, August 17, 2026).

### Settler Terrorism

► Jewish settlers besieged three houses in the village of Qusra for a week, blocked the access road and erected a tent nearby. The United States criticized the incident after it became known that one of the houses belonged to a Palestinian-American. The American ambassador to Israel, Mike Huckabee, called those involved "Israeli terrorists," and American and Israeli officials said the White House was pressuring Prime Minister Netanyahu to condemn the incident. The IDF announced that the tent erected by the settlers had been removed and it was protecting the residents (Reuters, August 14, 2026).

► Palestinian sources accused Israeli settlers of taking control of a spring and an irrigation pipe which had served the residents of the village of Fasayil in the Jordan Valley for generations, and diverting the water to a pool at the archaeological site [Herod's Pool], which had become an Israeli tourist attraction. According to Palestinian sources, the diversion prevents the cultivation of fields and damages the livelihoods of many families. According to UN data, since the beginning of the year settlers have attacked at least 160 water and sanitation facilities in the West Bank. Palestinian field researcher Fares Faqha claimed that settlers had taken control of 95% of the springs in the northern Jordan Valley. Adel Yassin, a senior official in the Palestinian Authority water commission, said the damage to water sources was "part of a campaign to drive Palestinians from their lands" (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, August 14, 2026).

► In the town of Sa'ir, a man and a girl were wounded by gunfire from armed settlers who attacked local homes; in Beit Ummar, IDF forces detained a resident after he was allegedly run over by a settler while working his land; in Deir Jarir, settlers established a new outpost near the entrance to the village. According to the Silwad Council, it is the fifth outpost established on the town's lands (Quds, August 15, 2026).

## The Palestinian Authority (PA)

### International Activity

► Turkish President Erdoğan met in Ankara with PA chairman Mahmoud Abbas. Erdoğan accused the Netanyahu government of trying to remove the Palestinian issue from the global agenda by exploiting the chaos and conflicts in the region and said Turkey would continue to

work for the establishment of a Palestinian state. He welcomed Abbas' decision to hold elections for the Legislative Council on November 28 and presidential elections at the beginning of next year and said he hoped they would advance reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas. Abbas called the talks "important and productive" and praised the defense agreement signed between Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, which he said could contribute to regional security and stability (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, August 12, 2026).

► PA deputy chairman Hussein al-Sheikh condemned the decision of the Israeli government and the defense minister to transfer law enforcement powers in the settlements in the West Bank to the Israel Police. He claimed it was a violation of international law, international legitimacy resolutions and signed agreements, and another attempt to apply Israeli law and sovereignty to the West Bank and East Jerusalem and entrench annexation (Wafa, August 14, 2026). Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad also condemned the decision. Hamas called it a "step toward imposing de facto annexation and perpetuating control over the occupied Palestinian territories by imposing Israeli laws" and called for diplomat action from the Arab and Islamic countries, the Arab League and the international community to confront Israel's measures (Hamas Telegram channel, August 14, 2026). The Palestinian Islamic Jihad said that Minister Katz's announcement effectively meant the administrative and legal abolition of the Green Line for the settlers and the de facto annexation of the occupied West Bank. It called on the International Criminal Court to prosecute the Minister Katz, who continues to [allegedly] "commit war crimes in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and south Lebanon," as well as all the ministers and officials party to the policy (PIJ information bureau Telegram channel, August 14, 2026).

► PA foreign minister Varsen Aghabekian Shahin met with Felix Ondáka, head of the European Union coordinating office for Palestinian police support and the rule of law, to discuss additional assistance for the police, training its personnel and strengthening its capabilities. Shahin called for increasing the office's activity in the Gaza Strip and at the Rafah Crossing to assist in opening the Crossing and bringing in humanitarian aid. Ondáka said the office was committed to continuing its support for the Palestinian government and police, strengthening state institutions and advancing the two-state solution (Wafa, August 13, 2026).

## PA Elections

► The Palestinian central elections commission stated that on August 10 it received a decree with the force of law that repealed a similar decree issued in June 2026 and restored the

number of Legislative Council members to 132. The decree included several provisions from the June decree, foremost among them a requirement that there be at least one woman among every three candidates on each slate, the adoption of a 1% electoral threshold, lowering the minimum age for candidacy in Legislative Council elections to 23 and retaining the condition of commitment to the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people (Palestinian central elections commission website, August 11, 2026).

► Hamas called on Palestinians to register and update their details in the voter registry, thereby ensuring their right to participate in the upcoming Palestinian elections. It said the voter registry was the gateway to exercising the right to vote and participate in national decision-making and to elect the representatives of the Palestinian people in its official institutions, especially the Legislative Council and the Palestinian National Council (Hamas Telegram channel, August 11, 2026). Meanwhile, the central leadership of the alliance of Palestinian forces, of which Hamas is a member, said it was "following with concern" the steps being taken to reorganize the Palestinian National Council, particularly abroad, by replacing free elections with appointed electoral colleges and subsequently distributing seats by agreement among some of the PLO organizations. It said it rejected the measures, which turn the National Council into an institution based on appointments and quotas instead of elections and popular representation (Hamas Telegram channel, August 11, 2026).

► Hussam Badran, head of the Hamas national relations office, interviewed by al-Aqsa TV, said the movement would participate in the Legislative Council elections as part of the broadest possible national coalition. He said the movement supported holding elections for the presidency and the Palestinian National Council and opposed appointing council members without elections. He said elections were the best means of regulating the political system, adding that Hamas would not allow it to be reshaped without its participation and without the public's decision (Hamas Telegram channel, August 12, 2026). In another interview, Badran said they were in continuous contact with the various Palestinian "organizations and forces,"[1] including Muhammad Dahlan's movement in Fatah, adding that several meetings had recently been held with them, some of which Muhammad Dahlan attended. Badran said they were seriously discussing the establishment of a broad national coalition which would participate in

[1] Terrorist organizations.

the elections, a coalition in which Hamas, Dahlan's movement, other organizations and independent national figures would be partners (Ultra Palestine, August 15, 2026.