



June 8, 2015

How the Palestinian Authority and Fatah Respond to Vehicular Attacks



Encouragement for the use of vehicles as "weapons" for terrorist attacks: On November 6, 2014, the Facebook page of the Shabiba Movement (Fatah's student faction at Al-Najah University) posted a cartoon encouraging vehicular attacks. It appeared the day after the vehicular attack in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of east Jerusalem which killed a Border Police officer and injured 13 people. The Arabic reads, "Resist, even with your car," and "Our Palestinian people are not helpless. Our Palestinian people will explode in every way. Resist and then resist once more and then resist again" (Facebook page of the Shabiba Movement in Al-Najah University, November 6, 2014). Note: The same cartoon had appeared previously on Fatah's official Facebook page in the Awarta region (south of Nablus).

Overview

1. During the first half of 2015 there was a rise in the number of vehicular attacks, continuing the trend of 2014. Since the beginning of 2015 there have been seven vehicular attacks, **four of them in Jerusalem** (a focal point for such attacks) and **three in Judea and Samaria**. The attacks killed one civilian and wounded 12 individuals, ten of them members of the Israeli security forces.¹

2. An ITIC examination of Palestinian Authority (PA) and Fatah responses to vehicular attacks revealed that they have expressed **sympathy and on occasion support** for such attacks. However it was not always expressed explicitly and formally

¹ For further information see the May 18, 2015 bulletin, "[During the past year there has been an increase in the number of vehicular attacks in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria.](#)"

by senior Fatah or PA figures. The main platform for expressions of support has been **the Fatah and PA-affiliated media, which have systematically avoided condemning the attacks** (even those targeting civilians). They have consistently given a forum to the false claims of relatives that the vehicular attacks were "traffic accidents" and accused Israel of wantonly "murdering" or "killing" the terrorists who carry them out.

3. **Political and propaganda support is given to vehicular attacks because, in ITIC assessment, it is a PA and Fatah concept that they are part of what the Palestinians call the "popular resistance."** Since the Sixth Fatah Conference (held in August 2009) vehicular attacks have been **a leading Palestinian strategy. It has been applied on the ground and integrated into the political, economic, propaganda and lawfare campaign the PA wages against Israel.**²

4. That being the case, **the PA and Fatah provide full public and diplomatic legitimacy for attacks carried out as part of the "popular resistance."** For example, for Nakba Day (May 15, 2015) **Mahmoud Abbas**, visiting Italy at the time, stated the so-called "non-violent" protests against the "occupation" would continue. On April 26, 2015, **Amin Maqboul**, secretary of Fatah's Revolutionary Council, participated in a telephone interview with the Huna Al-Quds TV channel. **He claimed the Palestinian leadership supported the "popular resistance" against Israel, saying, "We bless, encourage and support the hands of our brothers who confront the IDF forces in the streets of Jerusalem."** He added that the Palestinian leadership appealed to the "popular resistance" and supported its confrontations against Israel in Jerusalem and all the Palestinian cities (Quds.net, April 26, 2015).

5. The PA and Fatah repeatedly claim, for political and propaganda purposes, that the "popular resistance" is a **peaceful, non-violent protest**. That is untrue because **in reality massive and continual violence has accompanied the "popular resistance."** Rocks, stones and Molotov cocktails are consistently hurled at the Israeli security forces and Israeli civilians. **In addition, in "popular resistance" attacks knives, axes, meat cleavers and vehicles are included, used for stabbing and vehicular attacks. They are used mostly by "lone wolf" terrorists not affiliated with established terrorist organizations.**

² For further information about the "popular resistance" see the May 20, 2013 study, ["The Palestinian "Popular Resistance" and Its Built-In Violence."](#)

Findings of the Examination of Fatah-PA Reactions to Vehicular Attacks over the Past Year

6. The ITIC examination revealed the following:
- 1) **The PA and Fatah did not formally condemn the vehicular attacks** (even when they resulted in the deaths of Israeli civilians).
 - 2) In some instances the PA-affiliated media (Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda and the Palestinian news agencies) simply did not report them. In other instances their reports were informative but **gave the families of the attacking drivers a prominent platform for making false claims.**
 - 3) In some instances the **Palestinian media claimed the attacks were not nationalistically motivated but were rather "traffic accidents."** In other instances they were represented as **" 'events' in which an individual was run over."**
 - 4) The **Fatah-affiliated media** (primarily the social networks) more openly support vehicular attacks, **although the PA-affiliated media are more circumspect.**
7. **Following are examples of Fatah and PA responses to some of the vehicular attacks carried out during the past year:**
- 1) On **May 20, 2015**, a vehicular attack was carried out at **the A-Tur junction on the road to the Mt. of Olives in Jerusalem.** A Border Policeman and Policewoman sustained minor injuries. The driver of the vehicle was shot and killed. The PA and Fatah claimed the incident had been a **"traffic accident"** and that **Israel had killed the terrorist "in cold blood."** The Palestinian foreign ministry even appealed to the UN to appoint an international commission of inquiry to investigate the circumstances of that and similar events (For the vehicular attack at the A-Tur junction as a case study of PA and Fatah responses, see the Appendix.)



Umran Omar Abu Dheim (Abu Hamza), who carried out the vehicular attack at the A-Tur junction in Jerusalem as he appeared on Fatah's Facebook page (May 20, 2015). The caption reads, "Abu Hamza, shaheed, and Jabel Mukaber is revolting."

2) On **May 14, 2015**, a vehicular attack was carried out at the entrance to the village of Alon Shvut, in the Etzion Bloc (south of Jerusalem). Four young Israeli men standing at a bus stop were injured; three of them suffered minor injuries and one was seriously hurt. The terrorist who drove the car, who had previously served time in an Israeli jail, was detained. The PA did not formally respond to the attack. The Fatah-affiliated social networks praised the terrorist. Fatah's official Facebook page posted a picture of **Muhammad Irfa'iya Abu Sneineh**, 22, from Hebron, who carried out the attack. Postings called him a "hero," and said "May Allah protect you, may Allah defend you, give you a long life and strengthen you in the presence of your enemies," "May Allah be with you and may your hands be blessed." In response to the false claim on Fatah's Facebook page that one of the Israeli victims had died of his injuries, comments were posted expressing joy and encouragement, including "Allah is the greatest," "If Allah so wishes, [may there be more deaths]," "Go to hell and may [the Israelis'] fate be bitter" (Official Facebook page of Fatah, May 14, 2015).



The official Fatah Facebook posting of a picture of the terrorist operative who carried out the vehicular attack, with comments supporting him at the left (Official Facebook page of Fatah, May 14, 2015).

3) On **November 5, 2014**, a vehicular attack was carried out in the **Sheikh Jarrah** neighborhood of east Jerusalem, killing a Border Police officer and wounding thirteen Border Policemen and civilians. The terrorist was shot and killed. Senior Fatah figure **Sultan Abu Al-Einein**, advisor to Mahmoud Abbas for NGO affairs, posted support for the terrorist on his Facebook page. There were also messages of support on his page from visitors, such as "This is the proper response to the crimes of the occupation," "May Allah have mercy on him and keep a place for him in paradise" (Facebook page of Sultan Abu al-Einein, November 5, 2014).³ **Nimr Hammad, Mahmoud Abbas' political advisor**, issued a statement blaming Israel for the so-called "deterioration" of the situation in Jerusalem. He claimed Mahmoud Abbas was trying to keep the Palestinian people from being drawn into a cycle of violence and counter-violence. Hamad demanded the Americans intervene and restrain Israel. The announcement made no mention of the vehicular attack. (Palestinian TV, November 5, 2014).

³ As of June 2015 the comments and reactions remain on Sultan Abu al-Einein's Facebook page.



The Facebook page of Sultan Abu al-Einein shows a picture of the terrorist who carried out the vehicular attack and the sympathetic responses it prompted.

4) On **October 22, 2014**, a vehicular attack was carried out at the **Ammunition Hill light railway station in Jerusalem**, killing a **three month-old baby girl** and wounding eight people, one of them critically. The terrorist was shot and killed by a policeman. The Palestinian media, including its official Wafa News Agency, reported that "a resident of Jerusalem died after having been shot by the [Israeli] occupation forces" (No mention was made of the fact that he was shot during the vehicular attack or the infant's death.). **Riyadh al-Maliki**, the Palestinian foreign minister, offered his condolences on the death of terrorist but did not condemn the attack or the death of the infant. **Fatah** issued statement in which it admitted (exceptionally) that a vehicular attack had been carried out against settlers in occupied Jerusalem.



The death notice for Palestinian terrorist Abd Al-Rahman al-Shaloudi issued by Fatah in the Silwan area. It describes him as "the shaheed who carried out the Jerusalem operation that led to running over settlers in occupied Jerusalem."



The baby girl Chaya Zissel Braun, killed by al-Shaloudi in the vehicular attack (Photo courtesy of the family).

Hamas' Position

8. **Hamas explicitly and bluntly calls for vehicular attacks**, as opposed to the PA (and generally, but not always, Fatah). The PA and Fatah do not go one step further and specifically call for vehicular attacks, although that is implied by the consistent praise they give the **terrorists** who carry them out. Hamas' approach is expressed by its media, including the media of the Hamas-affiliated student organizations in Judea and Samaria.

Hamas Media Calling for Vehicular Attacks



Left: Cartoon from Hamas' Facebook page encouraging vehicular attacks against IDF soldiers (Facebook page of PALDF, April 26, 2015). Right: Display of a vehicular attack. The bleeding body of an Israel lies near the front wheels of a car. Above the vehicle are the pictures of Palestinian terrorists who carried out vehicular attacks during the past year (Facebook page of the Islamic Bloc at Al-Najah University, March 1, 2015).



The vehicle's cabin is the Al-Aqsa mosque dome, and the Arabic reads, "Israeli killed in a vehicular operation in Jerusalem" (PALDF, November 6, 2014).



Left: Poster in which the gas pedal is the magazine of an assault rifle. The Arabic reads, "Take your weapon in hand, hero" (PALDF, November 6, 2014). Right: The Arabic reads, "The vehicular intifada" (PALDF, November 5, 2015).



Poster issued by the campaign calling itself "At your orders, Al-Aqsa mosque." The Dome of the Rock flies the Palestinian flag and to its right is a car ramming into a person. The Arabic reads, "Run over the Zionists for the sake of Al-Aqsa" (PALDF, November 6, 2014).



Left: The Arabic reads, "Run [them] over, son of Hebron...and son of Jerusalem, run [them] over with your car...run over the Zionists (PALDF, November 6, 2016). Right: A poster with the speedometer calibrated with the map of "Palestine," and whose needle is an assault rifle, with the mileage given as "Jerusalem." The Arabic reads, "Rise up, put your foot on the gas pedal until we restore Palestine." The small print reads, "Revolutionary violence" (PALDF, November 6, 2014).

Appendix

The Vehicular Attack on the Road to the Mt. of Olives – Case Study of PA and Fatah Responses

Overview

1. On the morning of May 20, 2015, a Palestinian rammed into a group of Border Policemen standing at the A-Tur junction, which leads to the Mt. of Olives in Jerusalem. The driver was shot and killed by one of the policemen. A Border Police policeman and policewoman were injured and evacuated to a hospital.
2. The Palestinian terrorist who carried out the attack was **Umran Omar Abu Dheim (aka Abu Hamza)**, 41, from Jebel Mukaber (south Jerusalem), married and father of five (Facebook page of PALDF, May 20, 2015). He apparently was not affiliated with a Palestinian terrorist organization and carried out the attack on his own initiative. **He was related to Alaa Hashem Abu Dheim, who carried out the shooting attack at the Mercaz Ha'Rav yeshiva in Jerusalem on March 6, 2008.**⁴ According to his brother, Umran Omar Abu Dheim worked as a vehicle security officer for several Israeli transportation companies. His funeral was held before dawn in Jebel Mukaber, where a mourning tent was erected. Palestinians in Jabel Mukaber rioted during the funeral.



The funeral held in Jabel Mukaber for Palestinian terrorist Umran Omar Abu Dheim (Facebook page of Almukaber.net, May 21, 2015).

⁴ On March 6, 2008, a Palestinian terrorist carried out a mass-killing attack at the Mercaz Ha'Rav yeshiva in Jerusalem. He entered the yeshiva with a Kalashnikov assault rifle, and shot and killed eight yeshiva students and wounded ten, three of them critically and one seriously. For further information see the March 10, 2008 bulletin, ["Terrorist shooting at Yeshivat Mercaz Ha'Rav in Jerusalem leaves eight students dead."](#)

Reactions to the Vehicular Attack

Overview

3. The responses in the Palestinian and Fatah media **corresponded to those in previous vehicular attacks, as noted above**. The PA and Fatah claimed it had been "a traffic accident" and that Israel killed the shaheed Umran Omar Abu Dheim "in cold blood." The Palestinian foreign ministry called for the appointment of an international commission of inquiry to investigate the so-called "execution" of Abu Dheim and other Palestinians killed in similar events.

4. Some of the PA and Fatah responses were the following:

1) **The Palestinian news agency Wafa**, which is directly subordinate to the office of PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas, reported the incident with a headline reading, "The event of the death of a young Palestinian man." Reporting the death of a Jerusalem resident, Umran Omar Abu Dheim (41) it claimed he had been killed by "occupation" fire on the Mt. of Olives on the claim that he had tried to run over two policemen (Wafa.ps, May 20, 2015).

2) On **May 21, 2015, Wafa reported that hundreds had attended the pre-dawn funeral** of Umran Abu Dheim. It quoted the claim of **Muhammad Mahmoud**, attorney for the Palestinian Addameer institution, that **Abu Dheim was killed in a traffic accident and not a vehicular attack**. Proof of that, he claimed, was that Israel rushed to turn the body over to the family and confiscated the security cameras near the scene of the event. Therefore, he claimed, Umran Abu Dheim was a "victim" of the Israeli occupation, "whose finger is always on the trigger when it comes to the Palestinians." He also called for an investigation of the event and for lawfare to defame the State of Israel (Wafa.ps, May 21, 2015).

3) **Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda**, the PA's official newspaper, reported the incident on the front page of its May 21, 2015, edition with a headline reading, "The [Israeli] occupation killed a young [Palestinian] man from Jerusalem on the claim he tried to run over two policewomen." Family members of the terrorist were interviewed and were reported as saying that he was a normative individual [who was unlikely to have done what was attributed to him]. So-called "eyewitnesses" were interviewed who claimed the incident was a traffic accident and not a vehicular attack (Alhayat-j.com, May 21, 2015).

4) **Fatah spokesman Osama Qawasmeh issued a formal statement strongly condemning** the so-called "cold-blooded" shooting of Umran Omar

Abu Dheim at the hands of the Israeli police, who claimed he had carried out a vehicular attack. He also took the opportunity to claim Israel's activities in Jerusalem were "ethnic cleansing." He said Fatah would continue its struggle against Israel "regardless of the price" (Kofiapress.net, May 20, 2015).

The Political Arena

5. The PA's foreign ministry said in a statement that it strongly condemned the "execution on the ground" of Jerusalem resident Umran Omar Abu Dheim from Jabel Mukaber at the hands of "the Israeli occupation police." It also condemned **the previous shootings [of Palestinian terrorists who carried out vehicular attacks] in Jerusalem**, which it claimed were carried out with intent to kill. In addition, according to the announcement, **Israel justified killing them on the false grounds of security considerations**. According to the claims of the Palestinian foreign ministry, Israel distinguished between traffic accidents caused by Israelis and those caused by Palestinians, and discriminated against the Palestinians. The statement accused Israel of killing Abu Dheim without a trial.

6. In consequence, **the Palestinian foreign ministry called on the UN to appoint an international commission of inquiry to investigate the "executions" of Abu Dheim and others like him in Jerusalem**. It also claimed that the PA was continuing to prepare "files" on such matters to present to the International Criminal Court in The Hague⁵ (Website of the Palestinian foreign ministry, May 21, 2015).

الخارجية تطالب بتشكيل لجنة تحقيق دولية في جريمة الإعدام الميداني للمواطن أبو دهيم وغيره

التاريخ: مايو 21، 2015 | في: بيانات الوزارة

تدين وزارة الخارجية بشدة الإعدام الميداني الذي مارسته شرطة الاحتلال الإسرائيلي في القدس بحق المواطن عمر، عمر أبو ظهير (41 عاماً) من جبل المكبر وهو ولي لخمسة أبناء، كما تدين الوزارة عملية إطلاق النار المفصولة التي تعرض لها من قبل شرطيين واثنين كان وضعاً أثناء توقيف فني هذه الجريمة وغيرها من جرائم القتل السليقة. نلاحظ ان الجندي أو الشرطي الإسرائيلي يقوم بدمج المصنوع والتقاضي والقتل والاعتداء والتعذيب، وقض النظر عن طبيعته وسننوف وجهه وتقلبه لئلا يلقى والنوجهيات والملاحية بإيجاد قرار سرقة حياة المواطن الفلسطيني العربي ووضع حد لها، ومن ثم تأتي سلطات الاحتلال لتلصق وسنح وريبات كاذبة ومختلفة وفي أقل من نصف ساعة لتبرير الجريمة والتغطية عليها وتشرها تحت حجج واهية، تبدأ بعدها بعض وسائل الإعلام بترويجها على أنها حقائق دافعة وسلم بها.

لقد دأبت سلطات الاحتلال على ممارسة هذا التلصق التغطيل إذ جرائم القتل المفصولة التي تستهدف أبناء شعبنا في القدس وتدعى دوماً أنها لأسباب أمنية في محاولة للتغطية على الجريمة، وإلغاء الأبعاد الإحتلالية العنصرية التي تغلفها، في حين ترى كيف تتعامل هذه السلطات مع حوادث السير المشابهة التي يتوسط بها إسرائيليون، وعليه ترى الوزارة أن هذه الجريمة المنفصلة هي شكل من أشكال التفرقة العنصرية التي تمارسها سلطات الاحتلال في العنصرية العنصرية وهي امتداد للسياسة الإحتلالية التي تعرض لها المواطن الفلسطيني من هدم للمنازل وسحب للهويات وإغراقه بالغازات السامة والاعتقالات والإبعاد، وأمره وأمره آخراً لقد بقى عقوبة الفلسطيني التي يرتكب جارت سير في القتل والإعدام الميداني ويدين محاكمة.

تطالب الوزارة الأمم المتحدة ومنظماتها المختصة بتشكيل لجنة تحقيق دولية ذات صلاحات للكشف عن ملامات هذه الجريمة الكراه وغيرها من جرائم الاحتلال ضد أبناء في القدس كما تطالب المجتمع الدولي بضرورة الإسراع في تظهير الحقيقة الدولية لأبناء شعبنا، وسنواصل الوزارة تحضير ملفات هذه الجرائم المفصولة من أجل رفعها للمحكمة الجنائية الدولية.

إلى.....
وزارة الخارجية / رام الله
21/5/2015

The statement issued by the Palestinian foreign ministry calling for an international commission to be appointed to investigate the death of Abu Dheim and other Palestinians "executed" by Israel (Website of the Palestinian foreign ministry, May 21, 2015)

⁵ The Palestinian foreign ministry's false representation of the vehicular attack may be an indication of the reliability of the information included in the "files" the PA is planning to present to the ICC.