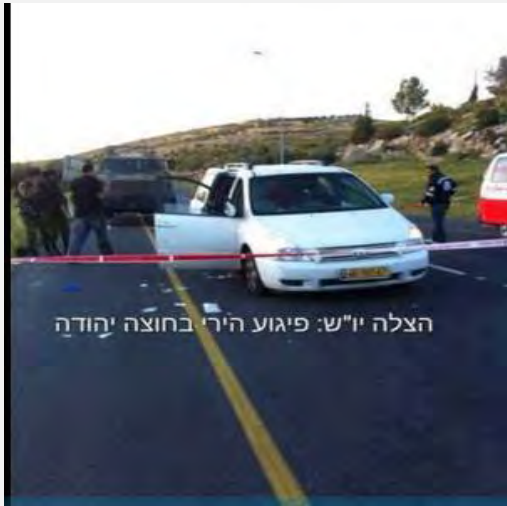




News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

April 14 – 23, 2014



Left: Baruch Mizrahi's car at the scene of the attack (Judea and Samaria Rescue, April 15, 2014).
Right: Chief Superintendent Baruch Mizrahi, 47, killed in a shooting attack en route to Kiryat Arba (Israel Police Force Facebook page, April 15, 2014).

Overview

- The focus of terrorist events this past week (the Israeli Passover holiday) was the murder of an Israeli citizen in a shooting attack as he was driving to Hebron. Three passengers were also wounded. Twelve rockets were fired at the western Negev, seven of which fell in Israeli territory (one in Sderot, landing near a crowded synagogue). In response the Israeli Air Force struck terrorist targets in the southern and central Gaza Strip.
- Next week on April 29, 2014, the nine months allotted for the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations will expire. The crisis in the negotiations continues as the Palestinians insist on Israel's agreeing to strict preconditions in return for extending them.
- In the internal Palestinian arena, delegations of Fatah and Hamas met in the Gaza Strip and announced a reconciliation agreement. According to it, a unity government will be established and previous understandings reached in Cairo and Doha will be implemented. In an initial response, the Israeli prime minister's office announced it was canceling the meeting set for April 23, 2014, between the Israeli and Palestinian negotiating teams. A speaker for the American State Department expressed disappointment at the agreement and its timing.

The Security Situation in Israel's South

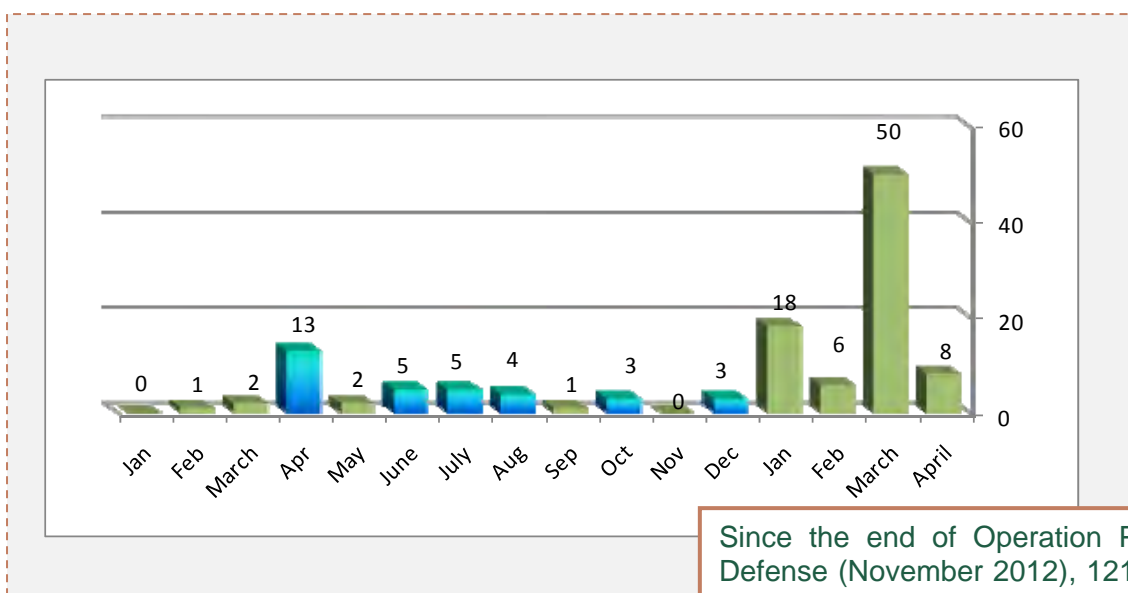
Rocket Fire

- On April 21, 2014, 12 rockets were fired at the western Negev from the Gaza Strip, **seven of which landed in Israeli territory**. One of them exploded on a street in Sderot near a crowded synagogue. There were no casualties; property damage was reported. Another rocket exploded in an open area in Sderot. An hour beforehand four rockets landed in open areas in the western Negev, among them Sderot. There were no casualties and no damage was reported.
- On the morning of April 21, 2014, an RPG was fired at an IDF force engaged in operations near the security fence in the southern Gaza Strip. It was the first time an IDF force had been attacked with an RPG from the Gaza Strip since Operation Pillar of Defense (November 2012).



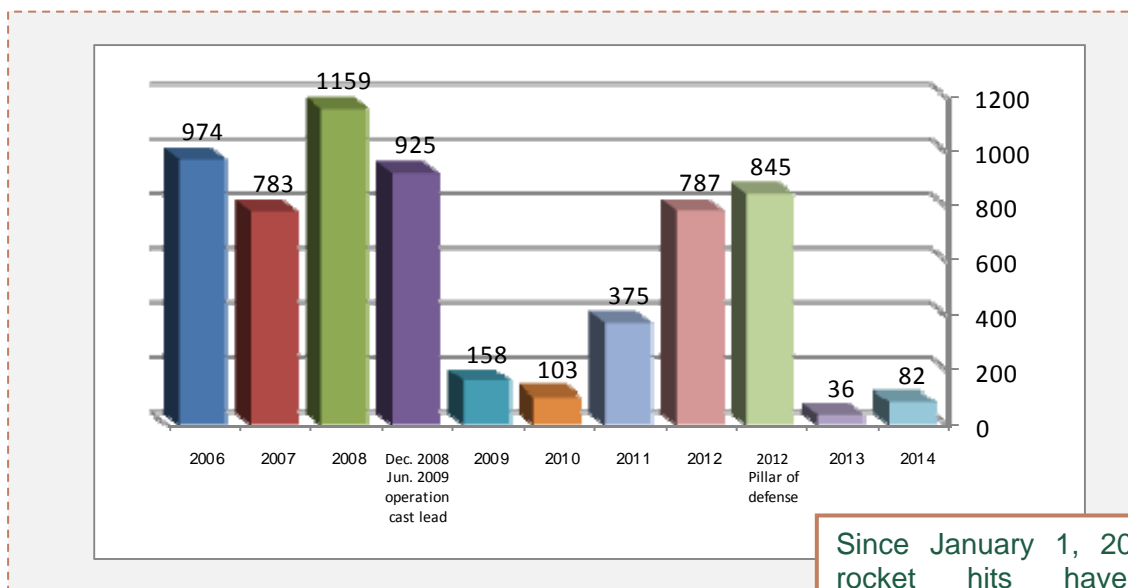
Left: The synagogue in Sderot, located a few meters from where the rocket exploded (Photo by Noam Badin for the Sderot Media Center, April 21, 2014). Right: The site of the rocket hit near a playground in Sderot.

Rocket Hits in Israeli Territory since January 1, 2013¹



Since the end of Operation Pillar of Defense (November 2012), 121 rocket hits have been identified in Israeli territory, including eight rockets fired at the southern Israeli city of Eilat.

Annual Distribution of Rocket Fire in Israel's South²



Since January 1, 2013, 121 rocket hits have been identified.

Israeli Air Force Response

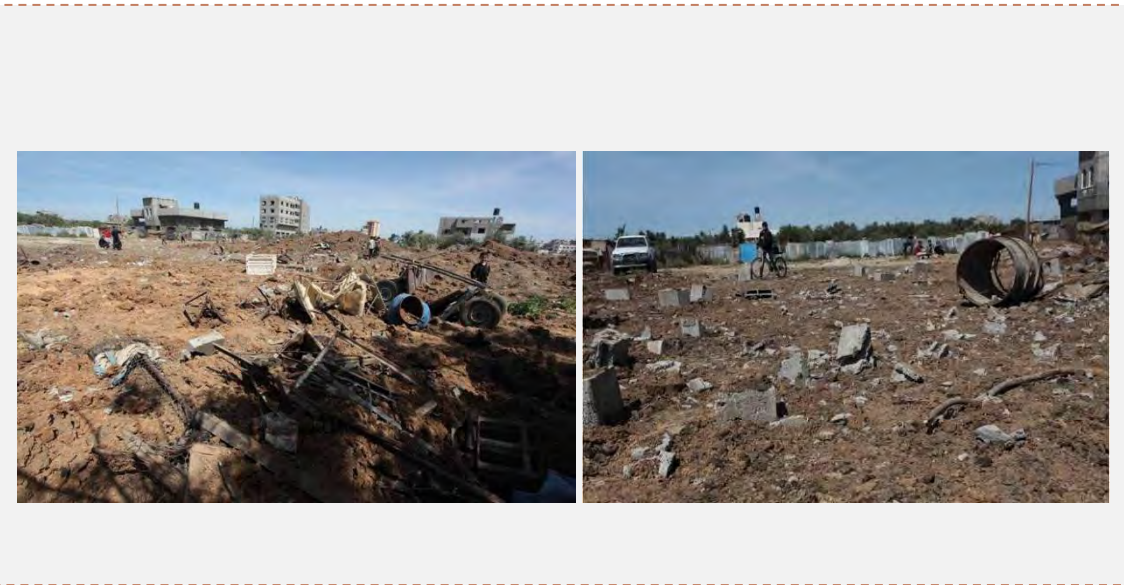
- On April 21, 2014, the Israeli Air Force (IAF) struck two terrorist targets in the southern Gaza Strip and one in the central Gaza Strip. The strikes were carried out in

¹ As April 23, 2014. The statistics do not include mortar shell fire and rocket hits inside the Gaza Strip.

² The statistics do not include mortar shell fire.

response to the rocket fire into Israeli territory and the RPG attack on IDF forces in the southern Gaza Strip (IDF Spokesman, April 21, 2014).

■ The Palestinian media reported that the IAF struck a post in the region of Nuseirat in the central Gaza Strip belonging to the de facto Hamas' administration's "restraint force." According to the report, one "restraint force" operative and a Palestinian civilian were wounded. A target struck by the IAF in the southern Gaza Strip near Khan Yunis was a training facility of Hamas' Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades (Filastin Al-'Aan, April 21, 2014).



Pictures from the IAF attack on the "restraint force" post in the Nuseirat region (Palestine-info.info, April 21, 2014).

Palestinians Clash with IDF Forces in the Northern Gaza Strip

■ On April 18, year, young Palestinians confronted IDF forces near the security fence in the region of the village of Nahal Oz in the northern Gaza Strip. They threw stones at the soldiers and hung Palestinian flags on the electric poles nearby (Filastin Al-'Aan and Paltoday.ps, April 18, 2014). Recently young Palestinians have held several demonstrations to challenge the IDF near the security fence in the northern Gaza Strip.

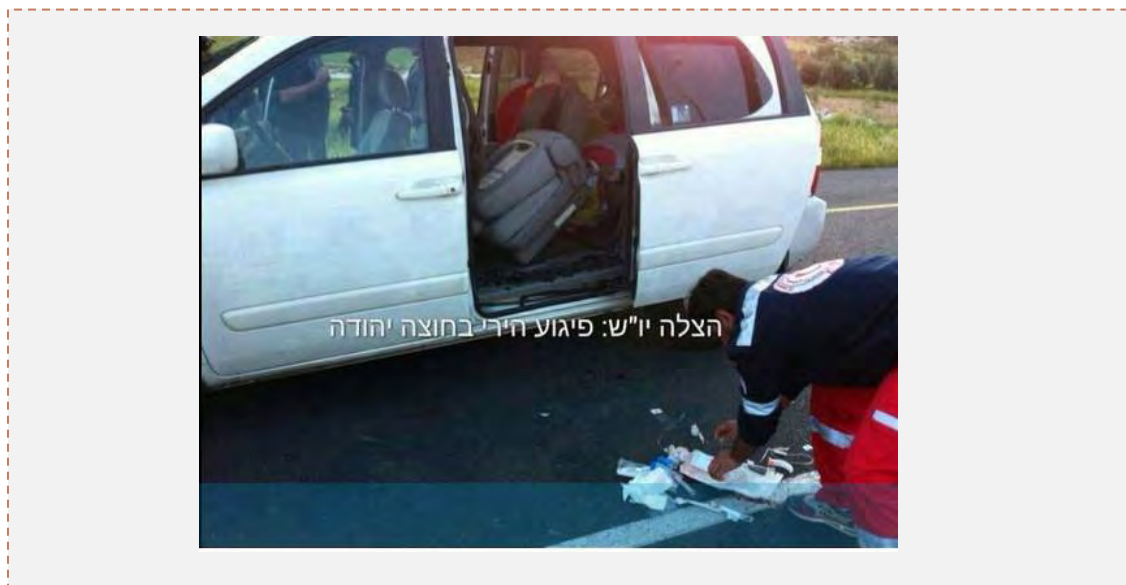


Young Palestinians gather near the security fence in the northern Gaza Strip to confront IDF forces (Filastin Al-'Aan, April 18, 2014).

Judea and Samaria

Shooting Attack near Hebron

- On April 14, 2014, a few hours before the beginning of the traditional Passover Seder, a shooting attack was carried out on the road to Hebron near the Tarqumia crossing. Palestinians shot at the car of an Israeli family on its way to celebrate the Seder in Kiryat Arba. The father of the family was shot and killed. He was Chief Superintendent Baruch Mizrahi of the Israel Police Force, 46, married and father of five. His wife was also seriously wounded. Two of the children suffered minor injuries.
- According to the results of the IDF's initial investigation, at least one Palestinian approached the section of the road on foot and at close range fired automatic weapons at the first passing Israeli vehicle. They then moved to a nearby location from where they continued shooting at Israeli vehicles and then fled the scene. A closure was imposed on the village of Idna, located west of Hebron and near the site of the attack (Ynet, April 14, 2014).



The Mizrahi family's car at the scene of the attack (Judea and Samaria Rescue, April 15, 2014).

Israeli Response to the Attack

■ In response to the murder of Baruch Mizrahi, **Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu** said the following: "This reprehensible murder of a man who was traveling with his family to a meal for the Festival of Freedom is the result of the incitement for which the Palestinian Authority is responsible. The Palestinian Authority continues to constantly broadcast – in its official media – programs that incite against the existence of the State of Israel. Last night this incitement was translated into the murder of a father who was traveling with his family to celebrate the first night of Passover. The incitement of the Palestinian Authority continues in that it has yet to see fit to condemn this abominable and reprehensible act" (Prime minister's office, April 15, 2014).³

■ Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) praised the shooting attack, noting that "it was the natural response to Israeli violations" (Al-Aqsa TV and Paltoday.ps, April 14, 2014). **Ismail Haniya**, head of the de-facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip, also praised the attack in a speech he gave in Gaza City in an event marking Palestinian Prisoners' Day. He praised the "heroes of Hebron who have restored life to the path of resistance" (Al-Aqsa TV, April 15, 2014).

³ <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Spokesman/Pages/spokehebron150414.aspx>

■ Palestinian Authority (PA) spokesmen condemned the shooting, although only to Israelis:

- **Mahmoud Abbas** condemned the shooting at meeting with Israeli journalists in Ramallah on April 22, 2014. However, he added that during the past year 60 Palestinians were killed and he had not heard condemnations from Israel (Haaretz, April 23, 2014). As far as the ITIC has been able to ascertain, Mahmoud Abbas' condemnation of the murder of Baruch Mizrahi was not published in the Palestinian media.
- **Mahmoud al-Habash**, PA minister of religious endowments, condemned the shooting attack in a meeting with Israeli journalists. He said that "Palestinian blood is like Israeli blood, human blood is precious, and no one wants the death of the other" (PNN TV.ps, April 16, 2014). Hamas and Palestinian activists throughout Judea and Samaria were extremely critical of al-Habash' remark, calling for his resignation and for him to be tried in a court of law for what he had said. He also cancelled his participation at the opening of a new mosque in Tulkarm after local residents launched a campaign to protest his visit (Al-Faraj TV website, April 20 2014).



Residents of Tulkarm demonstrate to protest the visit of Mahmoud al-Habash after he condemned the shooting attack near Hebron (Al-Faraj TV website, April 20 2014)

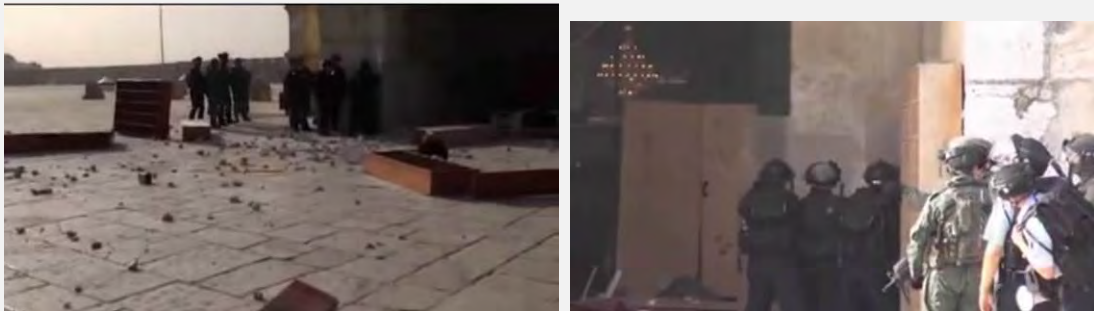
Violence on the Temple Mount

■ This past week there were a number of violent confrontations on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. On April 17 and 20 Palestinian youths clashed with Israeli security forces. They barricaded themselves inside one of the Temple Mount

mosques, threw stones, Molotov cocktails and furniture at the police. It was reported that a number of Palestinians were wounded in the clashes (YouTube, April 17 and 20, 2014).



Young Palestinians armed with clubs and stones have their picture taken on the Temple Mount plaza before the clashes with the Israeli security forces (Filastin Al-'Aan, April 20, 2014).



Palestinians barricade themselves inside one of the Temple Mount mosques and throw stones, Molotov cocktails and furniture at police (YouTube, April 17, 2014).

Palestinian Prisoners Day

■ Every year on **April 17** the Palestinians mark **Palestinian Prisoners Day**. Generally speaking this year **the day passed relatively quietly**, with the exception of local confrontations with IDF forces in the Old City in Hebron and near the region of Bituniya. Marches and rallies were held throughout Judea and Samaria in the large

cities and attended by hundreds of local residents (Ma'an and Wafa news agencies, April 17, 2014). Marches and rallies were also held in the Gaza Strip where participants called for the issue of the Palestinian prisoners to be internationalized and demanded the PA take action to release all the Palestinian prisoners (Ma'an News Agency TV, April 17, 2014).



Palestinian Prisoners Day demonstration in Ramallah (Wafa News Agency, April 17, 2014).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

Hamas Security Forces Simulate Abducting an Israeli Soldier

■ On April 17, 2014, the national security apparatus of the Hamas administration held graduation exercises for their seventh officers' training course. Its theme was "freedom for the prisoners." **Fathi Hamad**, Hamas minister of the interior, was present at the exercises, which included various displays. In one display **graduates simulated storming an IDF post and abducting an Israeli soldier** (Filastin Al-'Aan, April 17, 2014). **The Hamas administration ministry of the interior posted a video of the exercise** (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3dGPWJAwaml>).



The graduation exercises of the officers' training course of Hamas' national security apparatus. The graduates simulate abducting an Israeli soldier (Filastin Al-'Aan, April 7, 2014).

The Palestinian Authority

The Crisis in the Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations Continues

- Next week on April 29, 2014, **the nine months allotted for the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations will expire**. So far **the crisis in the negotiations continues** and the American efforts have not yet led to an agreement that will enable them to proceed. This past week the Israeli and Palestinian negotiating teams held three meetings brokered by American special envoy Martin Indyk. So far no significant results have been achieved.
- The Palestinians continue to adhere to their strict preconditions for extending the negotiations. Palestinian intransigence was demonstrated by Mahmoud Abbas at a meeting with Israeli journalists at the Muqata'a in Ramallah on April 22, 2014. He accused Israel of responsibility for the crisis and set forth his **preconditions for continuing the negotiations**: the implementation of the fourth phase of prisoner release, including 14 Israeli Arabs; freezing the construction in the settlements; and Israel's acceptance of the 1967 borders as the basis for the negotiations. He also claimed that Israel had emptied the PA of all substance and made it insignificant. As for recognizing Israel as a Jewish state, he said that he would not recognize Israel as Jewish and that he left Israel to decide what its character was (Wafa News Agency, April 22, 2014; Haaretz, April 23, 2014).
- However, Mahmoud Abbas did make a number of positive remarks aimed at Israeli public (and not quoted by the Palestinian news agency Wafa, which is directly

subordinate to his office). **The Israeli media reported that Mahmoud Abbas had expressed willingness to continue the negotiations after April 29, 2014:** "We talk all the time and we will continue to talk. We call it preparatory talks for extending the talks." He also said he was in favor of continuing security coordination with Israel, adding that relations with Israel's military and security personnel were good (Haaretz, April 23, 2014).

■ "Senior sources in Jerusalem" **strongly criticized the conditions proposed by Mahmoud Abbas**, saying "what he means is that he does to want peace. Someone who wants peace does not impose condition after condition he knows Israel cannot accept." The sources in Jerusalem stressed that the Palestinians had already aired the preconditions mentioned by Mahmoud Abbas during negotiating team meetings over the past weeks. According to the sources, Israel had already rejected the Palestinian demands (Haaretz, April 23, 2014).



Mahmoud Abbas meets the Israeli press at the Muqata'a in Ramallah (Wafa News Agency, April 22, 2014).

The Internal Palestinian Reconciliation

■ In the shadow of the crisis with Israel, the PA and Hamas had another round of contacts for the internal Palestinian reconciliation. Mahmoud Abbas sent a reconciliation delegation headed by senior Fatah figure **Azzam al-Ahmad** which entered the Gaza Strip on April 22, 2014 through the Erez crossing. The delegation held an initial meeting with Hamas representatives led by **Ismail Haniya**, head of the Hamas administration, and **Musa Abu Marzouq**, deputy chairman of the Hamas

political bureau, who came to the Gaza Strip from Egypt on April 21, 2014 (Filastin Al-'Aan and the Ma'an News Agency, April 21, 2014).

- After the Hamas and Fatah delegations held two meetings they reached understandings about implementing the reconciliation agreements signed in the past in Cairo and Doha.

- The following is the **initial report** of the understandings:
 - a. Mahmoud Abbas will hold consultations about forming a unity government at the end of five weeks.

 - b. Elections will be held simultaneously for the presidency, the Palestinian Legislative Council and the Palestinian National Council, no later than six months after the establishment of the unity government.

 - c. The activity of the "social reconciliation committee" and the "liberty committee" will be renewed (the "liberty committee" deals, among other things, with the mutual release of political prisoners, Hamas political activity in Judea and Samaria and Fatah political activity in the Gaza Strip).

 - d. A committee will meet within five weeks to deal with the future of the PLO.

Threats to Dismantle the PA

- The crisis in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations as they approached their expiration date was accompanied by Palestinian media discourse originating with people close to Mahmoud Abbas and given prominence in the Israeli media, according to which the PA was considering dismantling the Palestinian Authority and "giving the keys [got governmental responsibility in the PA]" to Israel.

- The PLO's central council (one of the organization's interim bodies) is supposed to meet in Ramallah on April 26-27, 2014, to discuss a number of important issues regarding the peace process and the internal Palestinian reconciliation. One issue is the possible dismantling of the PA and the holding of general elections. According to **Ms. Hanan Ashrawi**, a member of the PLO's Executive Committee, and **Mahmoud al-Alul**, a member of Fatah's Central Committee, **the dismantling of the PA is one of the options that will be discussed at the meeting** (Elwatannews.com, April 20, 2014). However, **Adnan al-Dmeiri**, spokesman for the PA's security services, said that the information about the intention to dismantle the PA was totally false and that

they were used to leaks and news that reached the Israeli media from senior security and political sources in Israel (Voice of Palestine Radio, April 20, 2014).

■ Jen Psaki, spokesman for the American State Department, said that the United States was aware of recent reports regarding Abbas' intention to dismantle the PA but said that there would be serious consequences. She added that the United States was investing millions in economic aid to the Palestinians, with the money going to build institutions, and it was certainly not in their interest that the aid be lost (US State Department website, April 21, 2014).

■ In response to the news items, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that "Today we see the Palestinian Authority, which yesterday spoke about disbanding, talking with Hamas about unity. They should decide whether they want to disband or have unity, and when they want peace, they should let us know..." (Office of the Prime Minister, April 21, 2014).⁴

Tawfiq al-Tirawi Continues Making Defiant Statements against Israel

■ On April 14, 2014, **Tawfiq al-Tirawi**, a member of Fatah's Central Committee, participated in a conference held at Al-Quds University in Dura (Hebron district) to mark Palestinian Prisoners Day and the anniversary of the killing of Abu Jihad in Tunis. He said that peace without the release of all the Palestinian prisoners imprisoned in Israel was out of the question. He said the Palestinians would not give up one inch of the land of Palestine, and that they would found their independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital on their "**historic land**" **from Rafah to Naqoura**. He said that the vision of two states was dead and **therefore the Palestinians had only one option, [which was] one country from the [Mediterranean] sea to the [Jordan] river**. He also said that the negotiations with Israel were useless and did not restore the rights of the Palestinian people (Tawfiq al-Tirawi's Facebook page, April 14, 2014).

⁴ <http://www.pmo.gov.il/English/MediaCenter/Events/Pages/maimouna220414.aspx>



Tawfiq al-Tirawi, a member of Fatah's Central Committee at a conference in Al-Quds University in Dura on April 14, 2014 (Tawfiq al-Tirawi's Facebook page, April 14, 2014)

Global Terrorism

Hezbollah Attack in Thailand Prevented

- On April 14, 2014, the Thai police arrested two Lebanese who belonged to a Hezbollah squad suspected of planning to attack Israeli tourists during the Passover holiday.

- According to the Bangkok Post, April 17 – 21, 2014:
 - The two suspects were detained in [two different] hotels in Bangkok. One was **Daoud Farhat**, a Lebanese Shi'ite who carried a French passport and arrived in Bangkok from France. It was his first visit to Thailand. The other was **Yussuf lyad**, a Lebanese who held a Philippine passport, who arrived in Bangkok from the Philippines. It was his 17th visit to Thailand. There was a third suspect, **Bilal Bahsoun**, who may not have entered Thailand.



From left to right: Daoud Farhat, Yussuf Iyad and Bilal Bahsoun
(Photos from the Bangkok Post, April 17, 2014, based on the Stop910 website).

- The Hezbollah squad planned to carry out a terrorist attack against Israeli tourists on Khao San Road in north Bangkok, a district popular with Israeli tourists. **According to reports, the attack was supposed to take place during the traditional Songkran New Year's festival, which falls close to the Passover holiday.** The two Lebanese arrived in Thailand on April 13, a few days before the beginning of the festival.
- An aid to Thai police chief Winai Thongsong reported that the Thai investigators believed that nine foreign terrorists with links to Hezbollah were somewhere in Thailand and that the authorities were trying to find them. The police chief also reported that **Yussuf Iyad** had given the police "helpful information." **He confessed that the squad to which he belonged had entered Thailand to carry out "a bomb attack" on Israeli tourists and other Israeli groups on Khao San Road during the Songkran festival.** The information he provided enabled the police to find materials used in making bombs that would be used in the attack. According to the officer, they were still looking for additional material.
- **Israel tourists are a favorite target for Hezbollah terrorist attacks** (the most recent was the attack on the Israeli tourist bus in Bulgaria on July 18, 2013). In addition, **Thailand is one of Hezbollah and Iran's favorite locations** for terrorist attacks, in our assessment because it is operationally convenient and many Israeli tourists go there. In Thailand in 2012 two Hezbollah and Iranian Qods Force terrorist

attacks were prevented: in the middle of January an attack on Israeli tourists in the center of Bangkok was prevented, and on January 14, 2012, an attack on an Israeli diplomat was attempted when a bomb was attached to his car with a magnet.⁵

⁵ For further information see the December 29, 2012 bulletin ["Hezbollah: Portrait of a Terrorist Organization."](#)