



# News of Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

(April 26 – May 9, 2017)



Picture from the Facebook page of Fatima Hjaji, the 16 year-old Palestinian girl who tried to carry out a stabbing attack at the Nablus gate in the Old City of Jerusalem. The picture incites others to stab Jews. The Arabic reads, "I wish Allah will judge me when I possess Jewish blood." She used it as her Facebook profile picture on May 4, 2017, three days before her attack (Facebook page of Fatima Hjaji, date, 2017).

## Overview

- During the past two weeks popular terrorism attacks continued. Prominent among them were stabbing and shooting attacks. The most recent (May 7, 2017) was carried out at the Nablus Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem by a 16 year-old Palestinian girl, who urged her Facebook friends to stab and kill Jews "for the sake of al-Aqsa mosque." The Gaza Strip was relatively quiet.
- In internal and external Palestinian politics there were three significant events:
  - **Hamas issued a political document entitled "A Document of General Principles and Policies."** Examination revealed no significance change in Hamas' fundamental principles, which are based on the destruction of the State of Israel through terrorism and violence.
  - **Mahmoud Abbas met in Washington with Donald Trump.** After the meeting Mahmoud Abbas said he believed in Trump's ability to make "a historic deal" between the Palestinians and Israel.
  - **Hamas' General Shura Council announced the election of Ismail Haniyeh as head of its political bureau, replacing Khaled Mashaal.** Other members of the political bureau were also elected. A Hamas spokesman said Ismail Haniyeh would remain the Gaza Strip but when necessary would leave it to travel abroad.

## Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem

### Terrorist Attacks and Attempted Terrorists Attacks

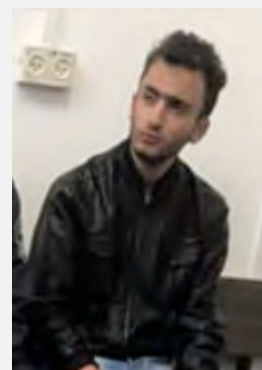
#### ■ May 7, 2017 – Stabbing attack at the Nablus Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem:

- A young Palestinian girl went to the **Nablus Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem** and approached police and Border Policemen stationed at the site. She took out a knife and shouted "Allahu akbar." The police shot and killed her. A goodbye note was found in her possession.
- The Palestinian media reported she was **Fatima Afif Hjadi**, 16 from the village of **Qarawat Bani Zeid, northwest of Ramallah** (Palinfo Twitter account, May 7, 2017). In 2016 she was detained at the Hawwara roadblock, south of Nablus, when she was found with a knife she intended to use in a stabbing attack. She was imprisoned for a month and released in June 2016 (Umama website, May 7, 2017).
- Fatima Hjadi had **two Facebook pages which could only be seen by her Facebook friends**. She opened one in August 2016 and updated it in September 2016. She opened the other in April 2016. She posted pictures of veiled girls on both pages and frequently updated the pictures and her profile. She wrote her last post on May 4, 2017, uploading a picture **inciting others to stab and kill Jews for the sake of al-Aqsa mosque**. She wrote, "I wish Allah will judge me when I possess Jewish blood," and used it as her profile picture. **Previous postings praised dying as a martyr for the sake of Allah** (Facebook page of Fatima Hjadi, May 4, 2017)



The Facebook page of Palestinian terrorist Fatima Hjaji. Left: On May 1, 2017, she wrote, "Oh Allah. I ask that I may die the death of a martyr for your sake." Right: On May 5, 2017, she posted a picture of a military-style funeral. The Arabic reads, "When will it be my turn?" She wrote, "Oh mother, make a wreath of roses and put it on my head the day I die. Don't forget to wrap me in the flag of my country, and lead me as a bride on my wedding day, my wedding with the shahada#lovetheshahada#Fatima" (Facebook page of Fatima Hjaji, April 5, 2017).

- **May 4, 2017** – A Palestinian terrorist **tried to stab Israeli security forces** stationed at the roadblock at the **Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron**. He was wounded by Israeli security force fire. A search of his person found a fragmentation grenade and a dummy pistol. The Palestinian media reported he was **Muhammad Zakariya Salim al-Salayma**, 20 (25, according to a different version), from Hebron (Ma'an, palestine.net, May 4, 2017).
- **May 4, 2017** – A Palestinian terrorist shot at an IDF post north of Jerusalem. There were no casualties. The shooter fled.
- **May 4, 2017** – A Palestinian terrorist tried to carry out a stabbing attack at the **Shuafat roadblock northeast of Jerusalem**. He was detained by the Israeli security forces. The Palestinian media reported he was Wissam al-Dabas, 21, from the Shuafat refugee camp northeast of Jerusalem (palsawa.com, May 3, 2017).



Left: The knife found in the possession of Wissam al-Dabas (Facebook page of Shehab, May 3, 2017). Right: Wissam al-Dabas (al-Hayat al-Jadeeda, May 4, 2017).

- **April 29, 2017 – Palestinians threw an IED and fired shots at the Te'enim crossing near Tulkarm.** A search revealed more than 10 shell casings and a pipe bomb nearby. Four Palestinians from the Tulkarm region were detained on suspicion of involvement in the attack.
- **April 27, 2017 – A Palestinian terrorist tried to carry out a stabbing attack near the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron.** There were no casualties. The Palestinian was detained by the Israeli security forces. The Palestinian media reported he was **Ra'fat Abd al-Hakim Ghaith**, 19, from Hebron (pal24.net, April 28, 2017)
- **April 26, 2017 – IDF soldiers prevented a stabbing attack near an IDF base south of Nablus.** A Palestinian terrorist wielding a knife ran towards an IDF force. He was shot and evacuated to a hospital. The Palestinian media reported he was **Saleh Omar Abd al-Rahim Saleh**, 16, from the Balata refugee camp in Nablus (Ma'an, April 26, 2017). The day before a similar attack was carried out at the same location. An investigation of the two incidents revealed **the two attackers were cousins.**

## Riots, Clashes and Popular Terrorism

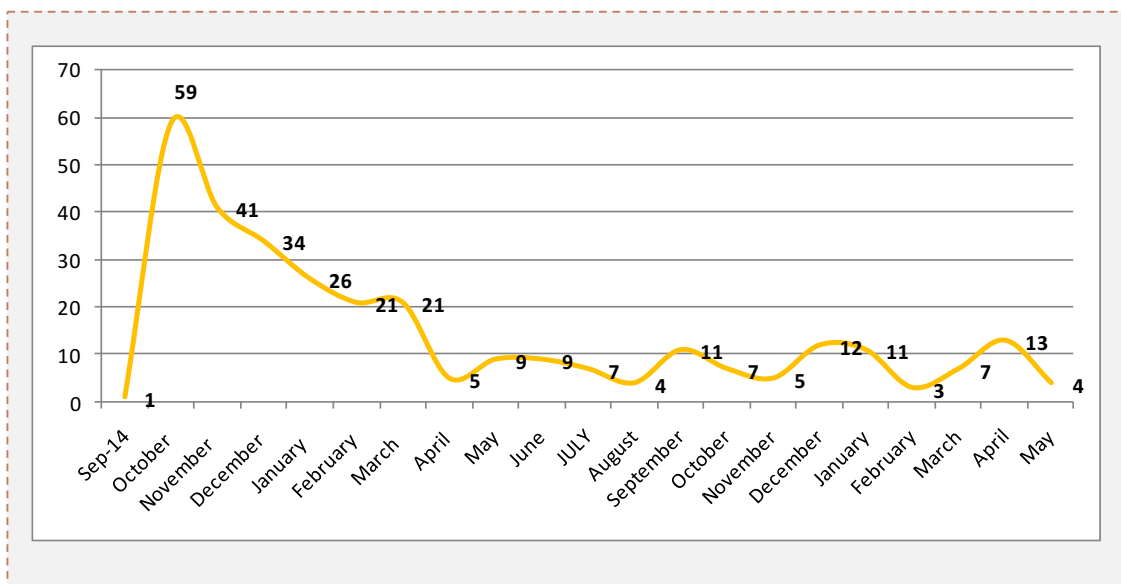
- In the meantime, demonstrations, clashes and riots continued throughout Judea and Samaria, primarily involving Palestinians throwing stones and Molotov cocktails. **Demonstrations were held at a number of locations in a show of solidarity with the hunger-striking Palestinian prisoners. Many of the demonstrations were held as part of the "day of rage" which had been declared.** Some turned into riots when demonstrators clashed with the Israeli security forces, leading to the injury of at

least ten Palestinians. In some locations Palestinian Authority (PA) security forces came between the demonstrators and the Israeli security forces.

■ The more prominent occurrences were the following:

- **May 5, 2017** – The Red Crescent reported that 56 Palestinians had been wounded in clashes with Israeli security forces in the **Nablus region** (Facebook page of Red Alert, May 5, 2017).
- **May 5, 2017** – The Israeli security forces in **Hebron** detained two Palestinians who were carrying knives. They were taken for interrogation (Facebook page of Red Alert, May 5, 2017).
- **May 4, 2017** – Palestinians threw stones at Israeli vehicles near **Hizma, southeast of Ramallah**. A number of people sustained minor injuries (Facebook page of Red Alert, May 5, 2017).
- **May 2, 2017** – A Palestinian approached the border security fence **near Qalqilya**. He detonated an IED, attacking an IDF force, and fired shots. There were no casualties and no damage was reported (Facebook page of Red Alert, May 2, 2017).
- **April 28, 2017** – Israeli security forces detained a Palestinian woman at the **Qalandia crossing**. She had two knives in her handbag. She was detained and taken for questioning (Facebook page of Red Alert, April 28, 2017).
- **April 28, 2017** – A Palestinian was shot by Israeli security forces during a riot in **Nebi Saleh** where Palestinians threw stones at them (Facebook page of Red Alert, April 28, 2017).
- **April 28, 2017** – Palestinians threw stones and Molotov cocktails at Israeli security forces operating in **Issawiya in east Jerusalem**. A female soldier incurred minor injuries. A Palestinian was wounded (Facebook page of Red Alert, April 28, 2017).
- **April 28, 2017** – Palestinians threw stones at the precinct of the **Tomb of Rachel in Bethlehem**. A policeman was wounded (Facebook page of Red Alert, April 28, 2017).

## Significant Terrorist Attacks in Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem since September 2015<sup>1</sup>



### Stabbing Attack near Beit Jala Solved

■ The Israeli security forces solved the case of a stabbing attack carried out on March 7, 2017, on the outskirts of Beit Jala (north of Bethlehem), in which an Israeli was wounded. The Israeli had taken his car to an auto shop in Beit Jala for repairs and gave the Palestinian who stabbed him a ride. The Palestinian terrorist was **Muhammad Ahmad Hadaya**, 30, from Bethlehem, a Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) operative. Investigation revealed he planned the attack in **retaliation for the death of a relative** being detained in 2003 (Israel Security Agency website, May 7, 2017). **It was another example of an attack carried out to avenge the death of a friend or relative.**

### Detention of Terrorist Squad Responsible for Shooting Attacks in Samaria

■ The Israeli security forces detained three Palestinians from the village of Fakhmeh (Jenin district) on suspicion of **carrying out at least ten shooting attacks during April 2017. The attacks targeted Israeli communities and IDF bases in Samaria.** One of the Palestinian terrorists detained was **Luai Ahmed Shafiq Sa'abana**, a lawyer affiliated with Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). Weapons and vehicles used by squad operatives to carry out attacks were seized. A search of one of the operatives' houses revealed **weapons hidden in a child's bed.** Another

<sup>1</sup> A significant attack is defined by the ITIC as involving shooting, stabbing, a vehicle, the use of IEDs, or a combination of the above. Stones and Molotov cocktails thrown by Palestinians are not included.

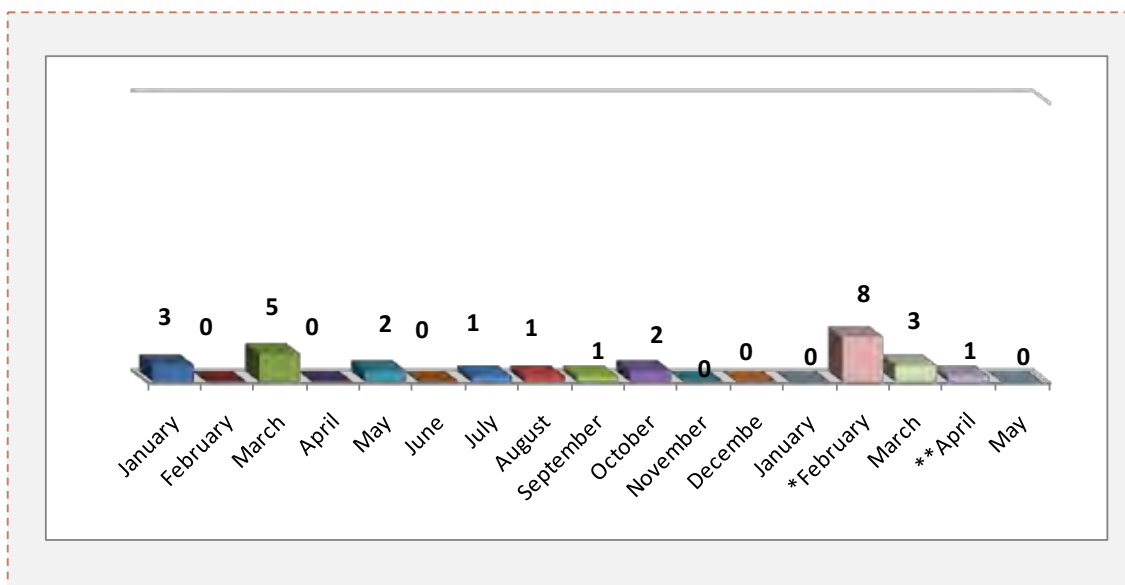
suspect left a will, assuming he would be killed during an attack (Israel Security Agency website, May 4, 2017).

## Israel's South

### Rocket Fire Attacking Israel

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

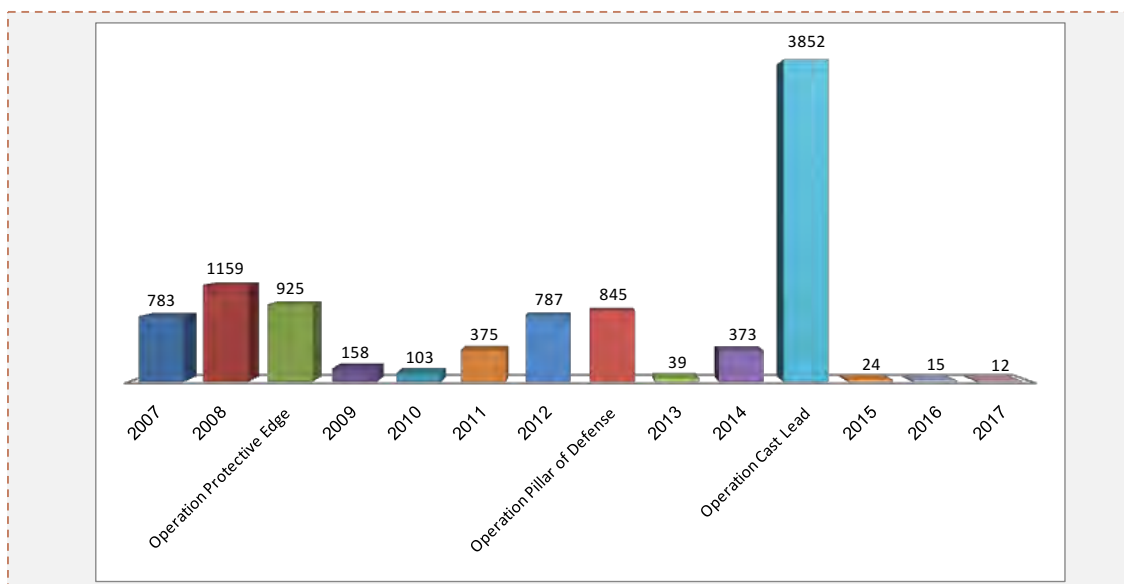
### Monthly Distribution of Rocket Hits in Israel since January 2016



\*Six of the rockets fired in February were launched from the Sinai Peninsula at Israeli territory, apparently by ISIS's Sinai Province.

\*\* The rocket fired in April was launched from the Sinai Peninsula and claimed by ISIS's Sinai Province.

## Annual Distribution of Rocket Hits in Israel's South<sup>2</sup>



### Palestinians Shoot at IDF Soldiers

- On April 27, 2017, Palestinians shot at IDF soldiers engaged in routine operational activities near the border security fence in the southern Gaza Strip. There were no casualties and no damage was reported. In response an IDF tank attacked a Hamas post in the southern Gaza Strip (IDF spokesman, April 27, 2017).

## Developments in the Gaza Strip

### The Hamas-PA Crisis Continues

- The tension between Hamas and the PA resulting from Mahmoud Abbas's economic pressure to harm Hamas led **Hamas to intensify its anti-PA protests**. On May 2, 2017, Hamas organized a "day of rage." There were marches, demonstrations and rallies throughout the Gaza Strip. During the rallies participants carried anti-PA signs reading, "Mahmoud Abbas does not represent me." **Senior Hamas figures speaking about the crisis also made threats against Israel.**

<sup>2</sup> The statistics do not include mortar shell fire or rockets which misfired and fell inside the Gaza Strip.





**Marches and protests in the Gaza Strip. Left: Burning posters of Mahmoud Abbas. They read, "Doesn't represent me." Right: Senior Hamas figures Ismail Haniyeh and Rawhi Mushtaha (Samaa News, May 2, 2017).**

■ **Senior Hamas figures attacked Mahmoud Abbas:**

- **Khalil al-Haya, member of Hamas' political bureau**, said if Mahmoud Abbas continued exerting pressure on the Gaza Strip, "the situation will blow up in his face." He said Hamas was not prepared to surrender to pressure, which would have the opposite effect of what Mahmoud Abbas intended (Gaza al-A'an, April 27, 2017).
- **Mahmoud al-Zahar, member of Hamas' political bureau**, said Hamas would not turn control of the Gaza Strip over to the Palestinian national consensus government before new elections were held. He said Mahmoud Abbas was trying to show the West that his pressure on Hamas and the Gaza Strip was successful (al-Araby al-Jadeed, April 28, 2017).
- **Ismail Radwan, a senior Hamas figure**, condemned the PA's steps against the Gaza Strip, calling them "a crime against the Palestinian people." He warned that if the "siege" of the Gaza Strip were not lifted **it would lead to an "explosion" that would harm Israel** (Paltoday, April 28, 2017).
- **Sami Abu Zuhri, a senior Hamas figure**, blamed Israel and the PA. He claimed Hamas had the means to "change all the rules." He threatened that **Israel would pay the price for having encouraged Mahmoud Abbas to tighten the rope around the Gaza Strip's neck** and that he should rethink his position before it was too late (al-Quds, May 1, 2017)

■ In view of the PA-Hamas crisis, **Munir al-Jaghoub**, head of information at the Fatah bureau of mobilization and organization, said that **Mahmoud Abbas had issued a presidential edict exempting residents of the Gaza Strip from paying fees and taxes**. He said the objective was to make it easier for people forced to pay double taxes (Gaza al-A'an, May 6, 2017). A senior member of the administrative committee, established by Hamas to direct affairs in the Gaza Strip, said the edict would not be implemented because it had not been authorized by the Palestinian Legislative Council (Ma'an, May 6, 2017).

## The Situation in the Gaza Strip

■ On May 6, 2017, the Rafah crossing opened for three days for entrance into the Gaza Strip. It had not been open for two months. Building materials, including cement, entered the Strip as well as returning Gazans. There are more than 20,000 Palestinians in Egypt waiting to enter the Gaza Strip (Ma'an and the Facebook page of the ministry of the interior in the Gaza Strip, May 7 and 8, 2017)

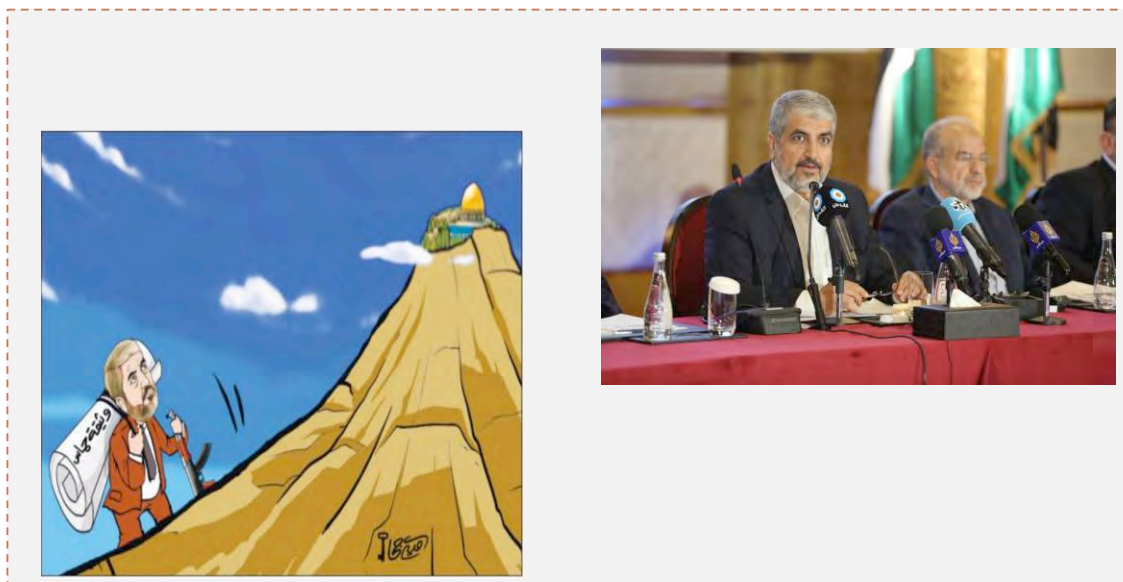


**The Rafah crossing opens and Gazans return from Egypt to the Gaza Strip (Palinfo Twitter account, May 6, 2017).**

■ The Israeli Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories and the Commander of the Israeli Navy decided to increase the fishing region south of the Gaza Strip from six to nine miles during the fishing season (May and June). Measures were examined that would help the Gazan population and it was decided to increase fishing, which supports thousands of families (Israel Hayom, May 3, 2017).

## "A Document of General Principles and Policies," Hamas' Political Document

- On May 1, 2017, Hamas issued a political document entitled "A Document of General Principles and Policies." It was published around the time Khaled Mashaal held a press conference in Qatar.



Left: Cartoon by Hamas-affiliated Omayya Joha of Khaled Mashaal climbing up the mountain to al-Aqsa mosque, with the Hamas political document on his back and using a rifle for support (alresalah.net, May 4, 2017). Right: Khaled Mashaal at a press conference in Qatar, discussing Hamas' political document (Palinfo Twitter account, May 1, 2017).

- **The document was published in English and Arabic, and was supposed to update the ideology and fundamental concepts that appeared in the Hamas charter of 1988, adapting them to the dramatic regional changes.** An analysis of the document makes it clear that there has been no change whatsoever in Hamas ideology or fundamental concepts, all of which are based on an uncompromising striving to destroy the State of Israel through terrorism and violence, even if it is carried out in stages (a conditional preparedness to establish a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders). The adjustments, changes and additions in the document are intended to present a facade of Hamas' innovation, but there is no significant change in the fundamental concepts that form the core of the document.<sup>3</sup>

- At a press conference held in Qatar, **Khaled Mashaal**, the outgoing head of Hamas political bureau, claimed **Hamas did not offer itself as a replacement for Fatah, but as a partner.** He said that four years ago, the new leadership had decided it had to compose a political document that would reflect the developments

<sup>3</sup> An analysis of Hamas' political document is available on the ITIC website in Hebrew and will shortly be translated into English.

that had occurred in the movement's political ideology over the past thirty years (al-Aqsa, May 1, 2017). He claimed the document integrated authenticity and progress with principles that were not different from those of the original document [that is, the Hamas charter of 1988] (al-Aqsa, April 30, 2017).

■ Interviewed by al-Jazeera, Khaled Mashaal said the document reflected the developments in Hamas' political ideology and its political role on the ground. That had been done, he said, without ignoring history or abandoning principles. He said its 42 paragraphs that had to be regarded as a whole and that no specific paragraph should be focused on. He said that the document related to Hamas' principles, mainly the Palestinian "right" to all Palestine and Hamas' refusal to recognize Israel. Hamas, he said, had presented the document because it was open to working together [with Fatah and the PA] on a joint political program (al-Jazeera, May 1, 2017).

■ The Fatah movement said in an announcement that the new document was compatible with the PLO's 1988 position, and that **Hamas had to apologize to Fatah for thirty years of accusations and betrayal**. According to Fatah spokesman **Osama al-Qawasmeh**, Hamas' agreement to the establishment of a Palestinian state with the 1967 borders was a compromise and implementation of international law, and compatible with the position the Palestinian organizations had declared in 1988 (Fatah website, May 2, 2017). The PIJ stressed its refusal to recognize a Palestinian state with the 1967 borders. **Ziad al-Nakhaleh**, PIJ deputy secretary general, stressed his objection to remarks made by Hamas operatives indicating that the terms of the new document represent recognition of a Palestinian state with the 1967 borders.

## **Ismail Haniyeh Elected Head of Hamas' Political Bureau**

■ After internal elections held in recent months by the Hamas institutions, on May 6, 2017 Khaled Mashaal announced that the new General Shura Council had elected **Ismail Haniyeh as the chairman of Hamas' political bureau**. He said he and all the members of the Hamas movement stood behind Haniyeh, and that he was certain the new leadership would bear responsibility for all the matters of concern to Hamas and the Palestinians (Hamas movement website, May 6, 2017).

■ The Palestinian media reported that **Ismail Haniyeh had won the election, beating Musa Abu Marzouq and Muhammad Nizal**, who had also been candidates for the position. Khaled Mashaal, who until now had been head of Hamas' political

bureau, will **now serve as head of the movement's Shura Council** (Filastin al-Yawm, May 6, 2017). Hamas spokesman **Hazem Qassem** said Ismail Haniyeh would not leave the Gaza Strip except for necessary trips abroad (al-Anadolu News, May 6, 2017).

■ On May 7, 2017, Hamas reported that a meeting of the General Shura Council **had elected other members to the political bureau**, among them Musa Abu Marzouq, Yahya al-Sinwar, Saleh al-Arouri, Khalil al-Haya, Muhammad Nizal, Maher Abeid, Izzat al-Rishq and Fathi Hamad (Hamas movement website, May 7, 2017).



**Changes in the Hamas leadership. Left: The Arabic reads, "Ismail Haniyeh instead of Khaled Mashaal. With love, admiration and great respect." Right: "New blood" (Twitter account of Paldf, May 6 and 7, 2017).**

## Death of PIJ Terrorist Operative

■ The Jerusalem Battalions, the PIJ's military-terrorist wing, announced the death of a military operative who had been wounded a number of days previously in an explosion in one of the organization's posts. He was **Kamel Taysir Qarayqa**, 24 from Gaza City, an operative in the PIJ's engineering and production unit. He lived in the Sajaiya neighborhood in the eastern part of the city. He was wounded in a "work accident" (Palinfo, Ramallah Mix, May 4, 2017).



Kamel Taysir Qarayqa, 24, from the Gaza Strip, operative in the PIJ's engineering and production unit. (Website of the Jerusalem Battalions, May 4, 2016).

## Terrorist Organizations in the Gaza Strip Continue Preparing for War

■ The National Resistance Battalions, the military-terrorist wing of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) held a military exercise. It was held together with the Shaheed Abd al-Qadir al-Husayni Battalions (one of the armed groups in the Gaza Strip affiliated with Fatah's military-terrorist wing). The training was held at one of the organization's facilities in the Gaza Strip, and included "presenting new methods" of firing rockets and mortar shells. **National Resistance Battalions spokesman Abu Khaled** said the training was intended to send to a message to Israel, that [the terrorist organizations] were continuing to prepare and equip themselves (Facebook page of the National Resistance Battalions, May 6, 2017).

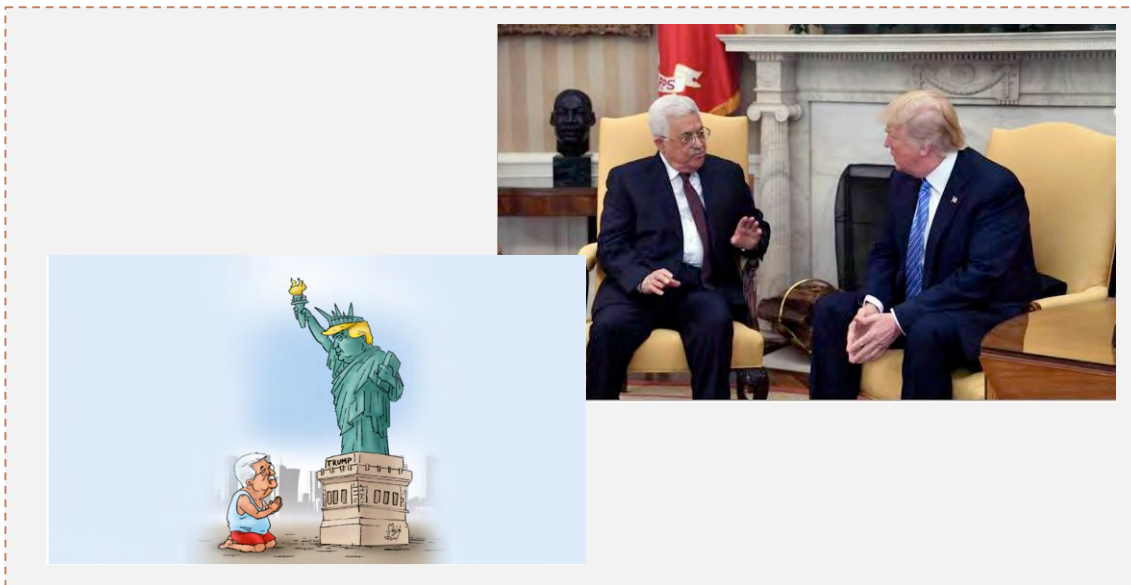


Joint military exercises carried out by the National Resistance Battalions and the Shaheed Abd al-Qadir al-Husayni Battalions. The rocket at the right is inscribed, "National Resistance Battalions – Rafah Brigade" (Facebook page of the National Resistance Battalions, May 6, 2017)

## The Palestinian Authority

### Mahmoud Abbas' Visit to the United States

■ **Mahmoud Abbas met with Donald Trump in Washington on May 3, 2017.** After the meeting they held a joint press conference. Trump said he hoped Mahmoud Abbas would be the Palestinian leader to sign a final peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians, bringing prosperity, peace and security to the region. Trump said he wanted to "do whatever is necessary" and be a mediator or arbitrator for the agreement. He praised the security coordination between Israel and the PA, and said the United States would continue working with the Palestinian security forces to fight terrorism. He called on the Palestinian leadership to speak out unanimously against incitement and violence (Palestinian TV, May 3, 2017).



Left: Hamas cartoon mocking Mahmoud Abbas, on his knees in front of Donald Trump (alresalah.net, May 3, 2017). Right: Mahmoud Abbas meets with Donald Trump in the White House (Wafa, May 3, 2017).

■ **Mahmoud Abbas said that the Palestinians' strategic goal was peace based on the two-state principle and the establishment of a Palestinian state whose capital was east Jerusalem and which would exist alongside the State of Israel with the 1967 borders.** He said the agreement would make it possible for Arab and Muslim states to have [diplomatic] relations with Israel. He said he believed in Trump's ability to make a "historic deal" that would include a solution for the problems of the Palestinian prisoners and refugees. He also said the time had come to end the Israeli occupation, which had lasted 50 years, and for Israel to recognize a Palestinian state. **He claimed the Palestinian people raised its children on a culture of peace** (Palestinian TV, May 3, 2017).

■ On the evening of the meeting, **Khaled Mashaal**, head of the Hamas political bureau, said **the American president had a "historic opportunity" to exert pressure on Israel and find an "equitable solution" for the Palestinian people.** He called on Trump to exert pressure on Israel's "intransigence" when it came to the settlements and occupation of the West Bank. He said territorial integrity was "key" to arriving at a "real and equitable peace in the region" (CNN, May 3, 2017). However, **Hamas spokesman Taher al-Nunu** said Mahmoud Abbas' positions and declarations were disconnected from the Palestinian people and did not represent them. He said Mahmoud Abbas was not fit to lead or represent the Palestinian people (Palinfo Twitter account, May 3, 2017).



## Palestinian Prisoners Continue Their Hunger Strike

■ **The hunger strike begun 24 days ago by Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails continues.** At a meeting with representatives of the families of the hunger-striking prisoners, Mahmoud Abbas claimed the issue was at the top of the Palestinian leadership's priority list. He said they were in contact with international groups to exert pressure on Israel to accede to the prisoners' demands (Facebook page of Mahmoud Abbas, April 28, 2017).

■ **Khaled Mashaal** claimed it would not be long before they would make Israel ("the occupation") pay the price and the Palestinian prisoners would be freed. **Rami Hamdallah, prime minister of the Palestinian national consensus government,** said the prisoners were the symbol of the Palestinian people's struggle for freedom and respect. He criticized the international community for its silence in the face of Israel's violations of international law (Wafa, May 2, 2017). The **Palestinian national consensus government** sent **Riyad al-Maliki, the foreign minister, to Geneva to meet with the president of the Red Cross** and to motivate the organization to force Israel to accede to the prisoners' demands (Wafa, date, 2017).

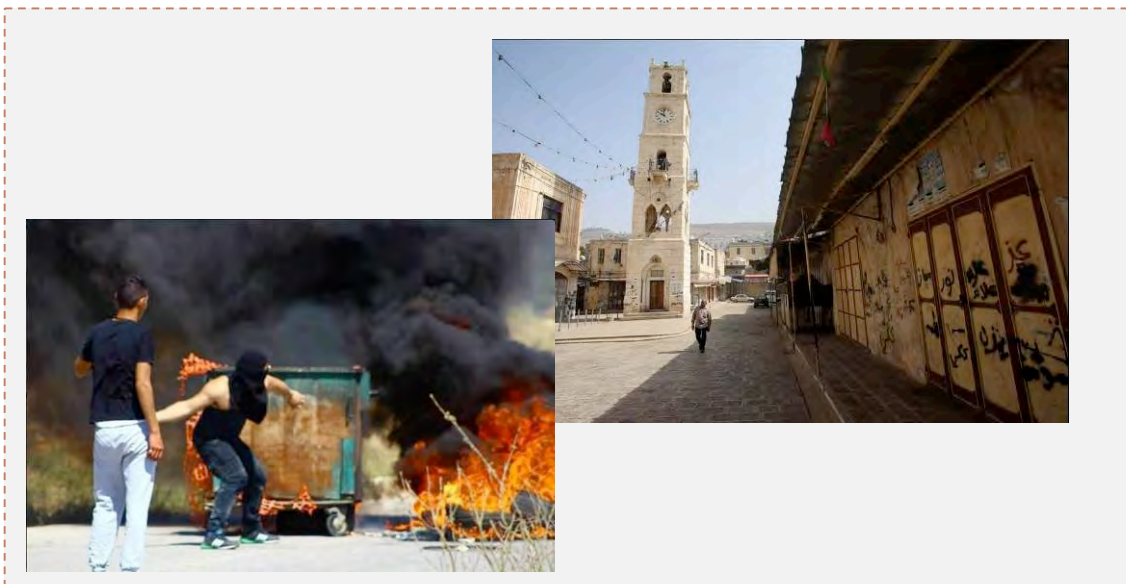


Left: Abu Obeida in a video issued by Hamas, threatening Israel over the issue of the prisoners (Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades website, May 2, 2017). Right: Hamas cartoon shows Mahmoud Abbas and the struggle for the Palestinian prisoners chained in cage because of American policy. The Arabic on the cage reads, "American Policy;" while Mahmoud Abbas claims "Solidarity with the prisoners" (Palinfo Twitter account, May 6, 2017).

■ In his first public statement since he was elected chairman of the Hamas political bureau, **Ismail Haniyeh,** during a rally held in support of the hunger-striking prisoners, said he supported their struggle. He claimed the issue of the prisoners

would continue to head Hamas' list of priorities, not only with words but with deeds (al-Jazeera, May 8, 2017).

■ **On April 27, 2017, a general strike was held throughout Judea and Samaria in solidarity with the hunger-striking prisoners.** The schools, public and private institutions, public transportation and businesses were shut down. April 28, 2017, was designated a "day of rage," during which events were held to show solidarity with the hunger-striking prisoners.<sup>4</sup>



Left: Palestinians clash with IDF forces in the village of Nebi Saleh, northwest of Ramallah in the "day of rage" (Palinfo Twitter account, April 28, 2017). Right: Trade strike in Nablus (Palinfo Twitter account, April 27, 2017).

■ The PA security forces detained **Khader Adnan, a senior PIJ operative**, at a rally in Nablus held in support of the hunger-striking prisoners (Paltoday, April 27, 2017). In the Gaza Strip, Hamas prevented Fatah from holding a rally in Gaza City in support of the prisoners and detained 200 Fatah activists. Hamas' security forces also detained several senior Fatah figures in the Gaza Strip and summoned them for interrogation (alresalah.net and Fatah media, May 3, 2017).

## UNESCO Decision

■ On May 2, 2017, UNESCO's executive board voted for a resolution calling Israel an "occupying force" in Jerusalem, stating Israeli had no right to the Old City of Jerusalem, that all the laws and measures taken by Israel in Jerusalem, particularly

---

<sup>4</sup> Mahmoud Foda wrote on the alresalah.net website that Issa Qaraqe, chairman of the PA's authority for released prisoners, said **there was little support for the prisoners' hunger strike among the Palestinian public**. Senior Fatah figures make do with hesitant participation in support marches and the Palestinian leadership is reserved in expressing support. There is also not much political and media discussion of the issue (alresalah.net, April 27, 2017).

the Jerusalem "basic law," were null and void. "As to the Tomb of Rachel and the Cave of the Patriarchs, [UNESCO] shares the conviction affirmed by the international community that the two sites are of religious significance for Judaism, Christianity and Islam."<sup>5</sup> Twenty-two UNESCO members voted in favor of the resolution, most of the African and Asian nations, as well as Russia and China. Ten members voted against, including the United States, Germany, Italy and Britain. The rest abstained.

■ **Riyad al-Maliki, foreign minister of the Palestinian national consensus government, welcomed the resolution.** He said in a statement that the world had chosen to stand with right in the face of the oppressor and the occupation [i.e., Israel]. He also praised Palestinian diplomatic efforts that resulted in the passage of the resolution. He was displeased by the countries that voted against the resolution, which he claimed gave a "shot of encouragement" to Israel to continue its "illegal" measures in Jerusalem (Wafa, May 2, 2017). **Abu Ahmed Halbia, a Hamas activist in the Gaza Strip** and responsible for the issue of Jerusalem, also welcomed the resolution (al-Ra'i, May 3, 2017).



The decision of UNESCO's executive board (Amad website, May 6, 2017).

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.timesofisrael.com/full-text-of-may-2017-unesco-resolution-on-occupied-palestine>.